

Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Annual Report

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

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

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2023

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IWT Challenge Fund Project Information

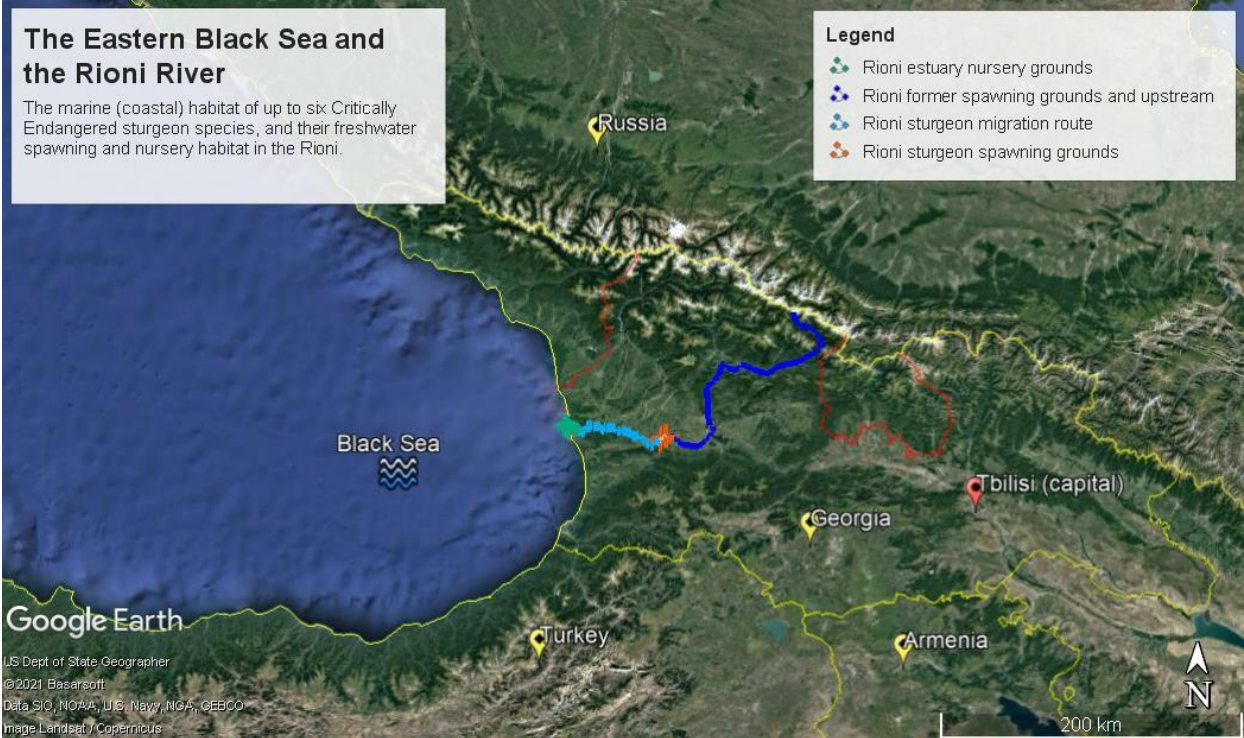
Project reference	IWT082
Project title	Combating poaching and trafficking of Critically Endangered sturgeon
Country/ies	Georgia, Turkiye
Lead Partner	FFI - Fauna & Flora International
Project partner(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School of Justice (HSoJ) • School of Natural Sciences and Engineering, Ilia State University (ISU) • Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia • Ministry of Finance of Georgia, Revenue Service, Customs Department
IWTCF grant value	£307,152
Start/end dates of project	01/04/2020 - 30/09/2023
Reporting period (e.g. April 2022-Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 Annual Report 3
Project Leader name	Bianca Roberts, Projects Manager, Georgia, Caucasus Programme
Project website/blog/social media	N/A
Report author(s) and date	Bianca Roberts, 30 th April 2023

1. Project summary

After many centuries of structural overharvesting all around the world, all 27 sturgeon species worldwide are now on the brink of extinction. A unique assembly of up to six sturgeon species still inhabit the eastern Black Sea, using one single river in Georgia as their last spawning habitat, the Rioni River. Although all species are Critically Endangered, legally protected and enlisted in

CITES appendices, and local populations of all sturgeon species are alarmingly small, trafficking is still ongoing. Specimens that are captured, accidentally or by targeted fishing by commercial fishers at sea or by local anglers and poachers at the river, are usually sold to local traders, independent of size or species. The fish is then sold for consumption to local hotels and restaurants, or to private customers; for commercial breeding to local fish farms; or for entertainment of tourists to local hotels. Some sturgeon might also be sold for consumption across the Turkish border. Due to the very small population sizes, any increased mortality can bring these Georgian sturgeon to extinction. Therefore, Fauna & Flora International (FFI) is working to bring a halt to poaching and illegal trade so that the marginalised populations will get a chance to recover.

This project takes a multi-faceted approach that is delivered in partnership with local and national stakeholders and that ranges a broad spectrum from awareness raising, enhancement of local ownership, and working towards long-term sustainable income generation in fisheries, to crime prevention, law enforcement, and improvement of judicial processes. Bottom-up conservation activity by local citizens and fishers is combined with training and operational support to law enforcement bodies, prosecutors, and judges to address poaching and trafficking issues. Key Government agencies and local communities take leading roles in the project, while transboundary trafficking is addressed through international platforms.



2. Project stakeholders/ partners

The project engages with a number of local and international partners and key stakeholders to deliver the desired outcome, outputs and activities, as set out below:

The *Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture* continues to work with the project, both at project sites to address illegal fishing (output 2.1), at a central (national) level by supporting capacity development of legal actors and law enforcers (output 2.3), as well as, more broadly supporting the project to engage in national policy and technical discussions to inform species and habitat conservation outcomes in Georgia. The Ministry and other departments also attended the platform meetings held in Year 3, and regular one-on-one engagement now takes place with a number of departments, including the Environmental Supervision Department and the Biodiversity and Forest Policy Department, which are now actively supporting the project to engage in national and regional fora (Output 4).

In Year 3, the project strengthened the relationship with the *Georgian Customs Department of the National Revenue Services* with the view to building their capacity to address IWT. This included a knowledge exchange and training visit to Kazakhstan with the Head Trainer of the

Cynology Team (Georgian) to build his understanding of training sniffer dogs to detect CITES listed species (in support of Activity 4.1). This is a first step towards building local cynologists capacity to address IWT at Georgian borders, as well as, regional connections to address IWT (outside the scope of the current project, but very much needed in the region).

In support of Outcome 4, the project has prioritised engagement of Black Sea focused actors in Year 3, including the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and EU Commission funded projects such as, Developing Optimal and Open Research Support for the Black Sea ('DOORS') & Black Sea CONNECT ('CONNECT'). Developing such relationships is essential for building our legitimacy as a conservation actor working to protect sturgeon in the eastern Black Sea and Rioni River, as well as, across the region. This will enable us to realise aspirational outcomes across the Black Sea Basin (BSB) focused on reducing IUU and bycatch of endangered species, including sturgeon (outside of the scope of this project, but a future goal for FFI Caucasus Programme, the foundation for which is built by Outcome 4 of the current project).

High School of Justice (HSoJ), continues to be a key project partner. Throughout project Years 1 and 2 a productive relationship has developed with HSoJ and the ongoing development of training materials and planning of workshops has continued positively. In Year 3, HSoJ supported the training workshops for judges (Activity 3.1) and expressed their desire to continue the Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops and other trainings to support Georgian judges to build their capacity to address wildlife crimes beyond the life of this specific project – a very positive indication of the value of the project's work thus far and their desire for ongoing engagement.

Two new partners, *Conservation Litigation and Ucha Dzimistarishvili* (a local lawyer), have supported the project's capacity building outcomes by reviewing Georgia's new liability legislation and investigating it's potential to act as a mechanism to address wildlife crime. In Year 3, these partners developed a report regarding the liability legislation, which has been used as a capacity building tool for legal actors and law enforcers in both training workshops and platform meetings (Activities 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4).

Given the Covid-19 pandemic has eased, the project was able to hold in-person Youth River Council activities in Year 3, engaging *six local schools and students* in the Rioni river area (Activity 1.3). Both the students and the schools have proved to be enthusiastic supporters of both sturgeon and Rioni river conservation, supporting the next generation to be both influencers of, and supported by, local conservation outcomes. *Kolkheti National Park* has also proved to be a very valuable partner for education and community outreach, supporting the delivery of Youth River Council activities in Year 3. They are a crucial and enthusiastic actor for community engagement at the project sites, as well as, supporting broader project activities by allowing the project to utilize their facilities in western Georgia (Activity 1.3). Finally, with support of the project, the *UG School* attended the I-FEST2 2023 international conference in Tunisia in March 2023 and presented the poster "*Research of Conservation Status of Sturgeons in the Rioni River (Eastern Black Sea Region)*". They were listed in the top ten best presentations and received a gold medal.

FFI's ongoing partnership with *Iliia State University (ISU)* has continued to be very productive in Year 3 of the project, and without this relationship much of the sturgeon research and other project activities taking place would not be possible. More specifically, ISU has contributed to:

- Fish trade data collection and markets monitoring (output 2.4);
- Organising awareness raising and educational activities at regional schools (output 1.3)
- educating the judiciary, law enforcers and prosecutors on genetic techniques (output 2.3);
- Advising on technical aspects of the project and developing training materials (output 3.1);
- Contributing to the state of knowledge related to sturgeon conservation and broader biodiversity conservation in Georgia (which is currently data deficient) (output 2.3).

Further, the project works closely with ISU to build capacity via internships and support of university staff with the long-term goal of developing a pipeline of local technical expertise and a robust evidence base on which to base sustainable and informed conservation outcomes for

Georgia. This partnership has been essential to enable the gender equity elements of the work, with the project supporting numerous female scientists at various stages of their careers from ISU. In Year 3, this included one PhD student and two master's students.

The research outputs of the project & ISU are made possible by support from a number of technical experts to provide their time and knowledge, including:

- David Kazyak – Ph.D, Supervisory Research Fish Biologist, Eastern Ecological Science Center, U.S. Geological Survey, United States.
- Shannon White - Ph.D, Leetown Research Laboratory, Eastern Ecological Science Center, U.S. Geological Survey, United States.
- Dewayne Fox-Professor, Fisheries, Delaware State University, Dover, Delaware, United States.

Our international and/or academic research partners assisted with genetic data collection and analysis to differentiate and characterize wild and commercial sturgeon specimens. Results are informing the monitoring of wild sturgeon populations in the Rioni River and the Black Sea and commercial sturgeon and support to detect illegally traded wild sturgeon on markets (as part of this project and beyond). Much of the data collected & methods tested are novel and the findings are the first and only of their kind in Georgia.

Overall, the project Outputs are not possible without the robust and productive partnerships and relationships that the project has fostered and we will continue to develop and utilise these in Year 4 of the project, with a particular focus on further developing our regional relationships in support of Output 4.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Under output 1: Local citizens protect sturgeons against poaching for illegal trade and support legal fishing activities, on the Rioni River spawning migration route.

Activity 1.1: FFI's Citizen Inspectors patrol the Rioni River to monitor poaching and IWT activities throughout the sturgeon spawning season, reporting incidents to the Environmental Supervision Department.

Progress: Activity 1.1 has been delivered as planned in Year 3, with:

- Six Citizen Inspectors (CI/s) patrolling a 90km stretch of Rioni River spawning grounds. Of the six CIs, one was a female inspector;
- Distance covered: 2,578 km;
- Hours patrolled: 2,316;
- Use of SMART patrol and Cybertracker software to record and analyse incidents;
- Patrols conducted between March and September 2022;
- 750 observations of fishing in the Rioni river, of which four were identified as illegal and reported to the Environmental Supervision Department;
- Carrying out four joint poaching monitoring activities with participation from nine Supervision Department (SD) inspectors. As a result, the SD inspectors confiscated eight illegal tunnel nets.

SMART patrol data collected under the poaching monitoring programme, including for the 2022 season (March 2022 - September 2022) paired with findings from previous years evidence a decrease in poaching incidents year-on-year, despite increased patrolling effort (kilometres patrolled & hours spent patrolling). This may suggest that patrolling, education and awareness raising efforts and relationship building with communities could be reducing illegal fishing in the lower Rioni River (i.e. the 90km patrolled under the project). This may also have been impacted by out-migration and/or emigration from the region, as people leave to search for work in urban

areas or neighbouring countries, resulting in population decreases among Rioni River communities.

Activity 1.2: FFI trains 100 fishers on legal fishing techniques, raise awareness on sturgeon conservation, and invites and encourages them to actively support sturgeon conservation and research.

Progress: To date, including Years 1, 2 and 3 of the project, 92 fishers have been trained through formal training workshops by Citizen Inspectors and field-based project staff. Through one-on-one engagement and mentoring, awareness has been raised among 165 fishers, with at least 95% of fishers agreeing to report sturgeon sightings to the project team. In Year 3, 37 reports of sturgeon by-catch have been made to the project by Rioni River fishers. As such the project has exceeded the original target (100 fishers) for this activity, which was possible due to the relationships built with the fishers of the Rioni River and Black Sea coast. That is, the field-based team and Citizen Inspectors have incorporated fisher engagement as part of their patrols. They have been initiating conversations and building relationships with fishers over a number of years, which has produced tangible results and has aided the implementation of activities across the project, including fishers actively sharing videos and photos of sturgeon releases (that is, when accidentally caught as by-catch). Across the 3 years of the project a total of 185 reports have been made by fishers of sturgeon catches and 165 samples collected. This less formal (one-on-one) engagement of fishers, paired with more formal trainings & structured outreach, engages these key stakeholders in an accessible and locally appropriate manner that is proving to be highly successful in the Rioni River & Black Sea context.

Activity 1.3: FFI and River Councils jointly organise 6 meetings, discussions, and awareness raising festivals and events per year, reaching 800 local villagers, teachers and schoolchildren.

Progress: Activity 1.3 was one of the activities most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as it required one-on-one community engagement, in-person meetings and/or events. Moving to an online format was challenging, and often impossible, as many individuals could not easily access the internet (as reported in previous years). As such, a change of approach was required in Year 1 and 2 of the project, including engagement via social media.

In Year 3 with the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, Activity 1.3 has progressed well and a lesson plan has been created to enable teachers to educate students about sturgeon. This approach (i.e. a lesson plan) was chosen based upon lessons learnt during Years 1 and 2, that is, the lesson plan can be disseminated by the project and utilised by schools, even if Covid-19 prohibits direct contact and one-on-meetings.

Rioni River Youth Council activities were delivered the latter half of Year 3, between October 2022 through March 2023. This included:

- Conducting awareness raising activities that provided information to local schools (students and teachers) about the importance of sturgeon and Rioni river for their current and future wellbeing;
- Education about sturgeon biology, ecology and the threats to their survival;
- Providing students with ideas about positive actions they can undertake to help protect sturgeon and/or the Rioni river to foster ownership over local, hands-on conservation activities, and;
- Sharing information on the Rioni Youth River Council in order to determine which schools and students might wish to start & lead their own River Councils.

Our team visited six schools and in total 189 students and teachers attended FFI's presentations at the schools. From the initial presentations, and based upon the level of interest of the schools and students, the project supported the creation of the Youth Rioni River Council comprised of 25 students and eight teachers. Both the schools and the Youth River Council members have planned ongoing activities and community engagement to save sturgeons and help protect the Rioni river. Furthermore, Kolkheti National Park provided a presentation about the National Park and importance of National Parks to saving biodiversity.

To support Activity 1.3, FFI hired an intern to provide guidance regarding youth & community engagement activities. Given the challenges of engaging women on the project, this intern was a female scientist who has recently finished her masters at Ilia State University. This internship enabled her to gain experience and build contacts to support her career as a woman in a STEM field. Further, the project has actively supported this female scientist to pursue her PhD in the Czech Republic by facilitating discussions with Czech universities.

External communication via Facebook has also engaged the general public in awareness raising around the importance of biodiversity, project outputs and the need to protect Georgia's sturgeon. One particularly successful post reached 8,654 people and had 512 engagements.

Finally, with support of the project, the UG School attended the I-FEST2 2023 international conference in Tunisia in March 2023 and presented the poster "*Research of Conservation Status of Sturgeons in the Rioni River (Eastern Black Sea Region)*". They were listed in the top ten best presentations and received a gold medal.

As reported previously, engagement of adults via the River Council mechanism has presented challenges, that is, adults showed little interest in forming an adult centred River Council despite the project using various and repeated approaches to generate interest. As such, the project adjusted its approach and has utilised other activities and avenues to engage & raise awareness among adults in Rioni River communities, including via social media and via Activity 1.2. The alternative strategies adopted by the project due to Covid-19 has meant that thousands of adults have been engaged via social media and community outreach, far exceeding the original goal of reaching 800 individuals. Due to the challenges engaging adults directly via the River Council mechanisms and the delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Year 3 of the project has prioritised engagement via the Youth River Council, which has been met with great enthusiasm by both schools and students.

Under output 2: Increased capacity of law enforcement and government agencies to enforce laws on poaching and trafficking of sturgeon in Georgia (Rioni River and Black Sea).

Activity 2.1 FFI's Citizen Inspectors provide in-situ intelligence and logistical support to Environmental Supervision Department to reach, detect, handle, and confiscate illegal fishing equipment on the water.

Progress: During the Year 3 poaching season (April-September 2022), engagement of Environmental Supervision Department inspectors has been ongoing by the poaching monitoring team and Citizen Inspectors, with four reports of illegal activities made to the department. Ten Environmental Supervision Department (ESD) inspectors have received on-site training and/or mentoring by FFI's poaching monitoring team in Year 3 and all four incidents of illegal fishing were reported to the ESD in Year 3.

Activity 2.2 FFI organises central-level training events for authorities on IWT, CITES, threats and international obligations two days a year, every year.

Progress: In Years 1 and 2 of the project, 109 members of Georgia's national Environmental Supervision, Customs, and Police departments were trained on IWT and its impacts, detection, species identification, regulations and application of crime prevention techniques in a wildlife crime context. In Year 3, 35 law enforcement actors were trained via a workshop held in November 2022. Additionally, through our growing relationship with Central Asian partners, one customs official attended a cynology training in Kazakhstan, along with a senior member of the Czech Republic Customs Cynology Department (who work closely with Georgia) and who are internationally renowned Cynology trainers. Further, law enforcement officials received additional training & capacity development via the platform meetings in Years 1 and 2 (and upcoming in Year 4). The Law Enforcement Departments emphasised the importance of regular cooperation with NGOs, and noted that the identification of CITES species is a significant challenge. They requested regular training due to frequent employee turnover. Additionally, most participants suggested conducting such events in person for maximum effectiveness, so we decided to follow

their suggestion and hold upcoming wildlife crime platform meetings face-to-face in Year 4 (held online in past years).

In Year 3, the project worked with Georgian legal experts and international consultancy, Conservation Litigation, to review and develop a report regarding the potential for liability legislation to be utilised as a mechanism to stem environmental degradation and wildlife crime in Georgia. The report has been produced in both English and Georgian and will be used as a capacity building tool for both legal actors and law enforcers.

We are also proud to say that upon our last meeting with our governmental partner, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, we were informed that several other agencies had personally spoke to them in support of our work on Sturgeon conservation and with regards to the above trainings.

Activity 2.3 FFI and Ilia State University develop molecular techniques for species identification, provide sampling instructions to authorities, disseminate sampling kits, and provide technical support for prosecution.

Progress: As a direct result of this grant, molecular genetics analysis techniques are available at Ilia State University, and are being used for genetic identification of sturgeon in the Rioni River and Black Sea, including trafficked sturgeon. Specifically, the following tests are available and have been used to inform our understanding of sturgeon populations in Georgia:

- Sturgeon species identification;
- Sex-specific test for sturgeon sex identification for two species: Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaetii*); Beluga sturgeon (*Huso huso*) – a globally novel technique that was developed in 2021 and has been trailed in Georgia;
- Beluga sturgeon species-specific test;
- Russian sturgeon species-specific test;
- Stellate sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*) specific test;
- Sterlet sturgeon (*Acipenser ruthenus*) specific test, this species is not native for Georgia, however it is widely used for commercial consumption. This test will help identify commercial hybrids involving Sterlet in Georgian markets, and;
- Multiple sturgeon species-specific nuclear markers for hybrid detection and population genetic analysis.

All above mentioned tests are designed to identify sturgeon species and species-specific parental contributions to detect sturgeon hybrid individuals, this is crucial for population management & genetic conservation, as well as the detection of wild versus farmed sturgeon (i.e. wild caught sturgeon are illegally captured/consumed and farmed sturgeon are legal). Since 1 April 2022, 21 sturgeon genetic samples have been tested. Samples collected from the Rioni River and the Black Sea between October 2021-March 2022 include:

- four individuals identified as Beluga sturgeon (*Huso huso*);
- 10 individuals identified as Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaetii*);
- six individuals identified as Stellate sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*);
- one individual identified as non-native Siberian sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*); and
- two interspecies hybrids between Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaetii*) and Stellate sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*) were detected in the Rioni River.

Additionally, the project is supporting two interns from Ilia State University (ISU). One intern is using the aforementioned molecular genetics techniques to analyse Russian sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaetii*) samples from the Black Sea and the Rioni River to produce her master's thesis and update a database focused on sturgeon populations in Georgia. As mentioned above, the second intern has supported project activities and outputs including supporting research on the Black Sea and community outreach activities. Taking into consideration the gender elements of the project, and the fact that women are underrepresented in STEM fields, both interns are female scientists.

The project is also supporting two PhD students and one master's student at ISU to develop a sturgeon research group in Georgia (all women), and the group has now developed a close relationship with sturgeon scientists from the EU and the USA. Again, the development of this group is being led by female scientists, with the goal of enabling women as research leaders in Georgia. Finally, one of the PhD students noted above was supported to undertake an exchange in America, where she built her capacity to lead on sturgeon research, including attending the North American Sturgeon and Paddlefish Society (NASPS) Annual Meeting in California (October 2022). Here she presented "Sturgeon diversity and interspecies hybridization in Eastern Black Sea, Georgia" to communicate key findings and build connections with US and Canadian scientists working on sturgeon research and conservation.

Further, one scientific journal article has been published, capturing research findings supported by the project, focusing on Ship sturgeon in the Rioni River utilising novel genetic techniques to determine the identity and gender of sturgeon samples. A second journal article is in preparation focusing on utilising genetic analysis to differentiate wild and commercial sturgeon using nuclear molecular markers.

With regards to providing technical support for prosecution, to date including Years 1, 2 and 3 of the project, 18 prosecutors, 49 judges and 144 law enforcement members have received training to build their understanding of techniques used in the genetic identification of trafficked sturgeon. These trainings have been led by a female researcher from Ilia State University – another important gender focused output for the project. Knowledge and awareness around wildlife crime been raised for the first time as a result of activities implemented throughout this project. Ongoing, long term capacity development work is needed in country to change attitudes and build capacity of stakeholders involved in wildlife crime and its prosecution – an ongoing goal of FFI that extends beyond the life of this project but has been enabled by activities under IWT082.

2.4 FFI supports and encourages Environmental Supervision Department to inspect markets for illegal sturgeon sales and use genetic sampling techniques to distinguish wild meat from farmed.

Progress: As reported in previous years, engagement with the Environmental Supervision Department (ESD) is on-going with the goal of supporting Activity 2.4. Continued focus is needed to make the ESD comfortable using genetic sampling techniques in their day to day enforcement work, and despite ongoing efforts, they show hesitancy to inspect markets for illegal sturgeon sales and use genetic sampling techniques. This level of hesitation is not surprising given they are still building their capacity and confidence to handle such enforcement matters consistently. Further, staff turnover and lack of resourcing for ESD officers national present challenges for Activity 2.4. As such, Year 4 of the project will continue to provide training, kits and raise awareness of the impact that genetic techniques can have on sturgeon-related (and other fish, mammals, etc) law enforcement (timeline updated per the Change Request).

Under output 3: Increased capacity of prosecutors and judiciary to interpret wildlife laws and effect increased successful prosecution and sentencing of wildlife crime cases

Activity 3.1 FFI and High School of Justice develop environmental law and IWT training module for judges and the module taught annually in HSoJ's regular teaching curriculum.

Progress: This activity was delivered as planned in Year 3 and a training for judges was held on the 15^h and 16th of October in Tbilisi in partnership with the High School of Justice (HSoJ). FFI supported 29 judges and judge's assistants to travel from across Georgia to attend the workshop, which focused on:

- Biodiversity-related national and international legislation, conventions, agreements and case laws;
- Types of administrative penalties, general principles and standards for reviewing court cases and making decisions, rules and procedures;
- The importance of biodiversity and scale and impact of illegal wildlife trade, and;

- Opportunities to use forensic science in court (links to Output 2).

Furthermore, sessions were led by two of the judges who attended the Training-of-Trainers (ToT) course delivered by the project in February 2021. The HSoJ has expressed interest to receive similar trainings from FFI in upcoming years and requested FFI to hold another ToT course to train additional judges, which would enable the HSoJ to expand upon their existing work (outside of the scope of the current project). After the trainings, we received verbal feedback from some judges, that they applied knowledge received during training regarding CITES on real life cases. Whilst this sits outside the scope of the current project, the approach of training & empowering local partners has been very successful and FFI aims to continue these activities & utilise this approach across our programme and beyond the life of this project.

Activity 3.2 FFI and High School of Justice facilitate learning visit of selected Georgian judges to European institution for training on EU Directives and Bern/Bonn Conventions.

This activity was successfully actioned in Year 2 of the project as planned.

Activity 3.3 FFI and High School of Justice develop training materials and train 20 prosecutors in best practice protocols for collecting evidence and presenting it in court.

This activity was successfully actioned in Year 2 of the project as planned, and in Year 3 we received information that the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia included Environmental Crime as one of their priorities to work on in the coming years, as listed in their updated strategy document.

Additionally, In Year 3, Project team members attended a workshop held by the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA). The workshop focused on "Criminal Law of Environmental Protection" and presented findings from a legal review conducted to assess the effectiveness of Georgian environmental law and support harmonization with EU legislation. This workshop was the first of its kind and speaks to the shift in thinking among legal practitioners, that is, towards prioritization of environmental law. During this meeting, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia highlighted that environmental cases have been identified as a top priority for coming years – as identified in their new strategy document. They also mentioned that they received training on environmental issues first time in Georgia by the project and participated in stakeholder discussions (i.e. platform meetings) held by the project. This example evidences the flow on impact of activities led under this Project (and informs next steps for FFI beyond the scope of this project i.e. that we will continue to prioritise capacity building in the coming years as a critical part of our design).

Activity 3.4. FFI and High School of Justice establish a wildlife crime platform and organise 2 platform meetings every year to stimulate exchange enforcers-prosecutors-judges.

Progress: Per the log frame, the platform was established in Year 1 of the project for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcers to share relevant information to streamline the process of prosecuting traffickers. The design of the upcoming platform meetings has shifted slightly, building upon work done in Years 1,2 & 3 of the project. That is the knowledge & relationships built will be utilised to strengthen governance with multiple actors working on wildlife crime detection and prosecution. The next two platform meetings will bring together actors working within the wildlife crime systems from detection to prosecution to identify, collaborate and strengthen processes that result in prosecution of IWT cases. The goal is to understand and agree on the most common types of IWT in Georgia and the constraints of effective detection, law enforcement and prosecution. Additionally, the need for trainings, legislative changes and resources required to increase the effectiveness of different institutions will be determined to support ongoing work beyond the current project. As stakeholders have previously requested, efforts will be made to hold the meeting face-to-face and create a comfortable working environment, hence why these meetings will take place in Year 4. The following stakeholders will be invited:

- The High School of Justice and criminal and administrative law judges;

- The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, including, the Department of Prosecutorial Activities Supervision and Strategic Development and the Prosecutorial Activities Supervision and Strategic Development Department (responsible for reviewing & improving prosecution procedures);
- The Investigation Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- The Environmental Supervision Department and the Department of Biodiversity and Forestry of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, and;
- The Customs Department of Revenue Service of Georgia.

As above, in Year 3, the project developed a report regarding the potential for liability legislation to be utilised as a mechanism to stem environmental degradation and wildlife crime in Georgia. The report has been produced in both English and Georgian and will be used as a capacity building tool for both legal actors and law enforcers.

Under output 4: Increased coordination and action by key actors within Black Sea range states to address IWT.

It is noted that due to the Covid-19 pandemic and Ukraine war, Output 4 has not progressed as planned and a formal Change Request has now been approved resulting in adjustment to the project log frame and project timeline, allowing more time to complete this output under Year 4 of the project.

Activity 4.1: FFI initiates 8 exchanges with high-level national decision-makers in Georgia and organises one large multi-stakeholder meeting per year to lobby and advocate for sturgeon.

Progress: With the growing socio-political complications in Georgia and neighbouring countries, engagement of the government has been more challenging given their focus has had to shift during the pandemic and in response to the conflict in the Ukraine. Further, with leadership changes within the project and staffing changes in government, relationships with key ministries have had to be re-developed and strengthened. Progress in Year 3, however, has been robust and regular meetings have been established with the Environmental Supervision Department and the Biodiversity and Forest Policy Department (national level). Further, FFI attended key meetings that supported the project to lobby and advocate for sturgeon, including a National Sturgeon Conservation Working Group meeting, several workshops focusing on the Black Sea (see Activity 4.3) which is of crucial importance to migrating Sturgeon, and the National Aquaculture Development Strategy of Georgia stakeholder consultations, which sought input regarding the creation of a national plan for aquaculture development in Georgia (key to protecting sturgeon habitats, ensuring trafficking and/or laundering of wild sturgeon is not taking place via sturgeon farms and genetic protection of wild populations).

Additionally, in year 3, the project has built a relationship with the Georgian Customs Department of the National Revenue Services with the view to building their capacity to address IWT. This included a knowledge exchange a training visit to Kazakhstan with the Head Trainer of the Cynology Team to build his understanding of training sniffer dogs to detect CITES listed species. The trip enabled both the project and the Customs staff member to build key relationships with regional actors from across Central Asia and to foster transboundary knowledge sharing and collaboration. This is promising first step in what we hope to be a long-term partnership that supports the Cynology Team of the Customs Department to train dogs in detecting CITES products for the first time in Georgia (sits outside of the scope of the current project). This activity will also enable regional engagement (across Eurasia) to address & share information on IWT, which is aspirational, but again, a promising first step.

The project was also instrumental in consulting on a National Sturgeon Monitoring Plan with national stakeholders, including WWF-Caucasus, MEPA and national and international technical experts and NGOs. The project's engagement in the development of this plan was crucial to ensure it was informed by the latest research (conducted under the project), poaching monitoring outcomes (also conducted as part of this project) and grounded in the needs of local community stakeholders and fishers (with whom the project has strong relationships given our current and historic engagement).

Additionally, members of the project team sit on, and consult via, various sturgeon working groups led by WWF-Caucasus. In Year 3, this included engagement with private sector to mitigate the impact of energy production – in particular hydropower – on critical sturgeon habitats.

Activity 4.2: FFI meets several times a year with Turkish agencies and research institutions and collaborates on data collection and knowledge exchange regarding transboundary sturgeon trade.

Progress: As above, socio-political complexities (i.e. the Ukraine Russia war, Erdogan’s crackdown on silencing Universities and NGOs), COVID-19 isolation rules, and catastrophic earthquakes have hindered progress against this activity. The project is currently reviewing the stakeholder landscape, conducting key informant Interviews and undertaking desk research to understand governance systems in Georgia and Turkiye, including by-catch and illegal fishing in the Black Sea that supplies sturgeon for markets in western Georgia. Further, contact has been made with stakeholders in Turkiye to support a scoping visit in Year 4 to facilitate a knowledge exchange regarding transboundary sturgeon trade and IUU fishing.

In Year 3, an exchange visit was held with project counterparts from the region, including Turkish NGO, Akdeniz Koruma Dernegi (AKD) (the founder won the 2023 Goldman Environmental prize). This included visits to project sites and two-way information sharing sessions to identify lessons learnt and gather information on Turkish conservation issues and contextual approaches that will work best in Turkiye. Two visits are planned to Turkiye in Year 4, including a companion visit to AKD’s sites to learn more about their work on the Mediterranean Sea.

Activity 4.3: FFI stimulates prioritisation of sturgeon conservation in regional planning and decision making regarding fisheries, bycatch, and IWT in 4 regional and international Black Sea fora.

Progress: Though Covid-19, and now the war, has hindered regional / international fora some progress has been made by meeting with key stakeholders individually and attending available regional and/or international fora in Year 3, for example, presenting at the International Conference on Biodiversity, Ecology and Conservation of Marine Ecosystems on ‘Interspecific Hybridization in Natural Sturgeon Populations of the Eastern Black Sea’ and presenting at the North American Sturgeon and Paddle Fish Society Conference on ‘Sturgeon diversity and interspecies hybridization in Eastern Black Sea, Georgia’.

Given that opportunities to engage via fora have been reduced in previous years and regionally, the project is also undertaking research and interviewing key stakeholders to inform next steps for engagement of the fisheries sector of the Black Sea with the long-term vision of reducing by-catch and illegal fishing nationally and regionally (a goal that is planned beyond the scope of this project). A report has been developed capturing information about fisheries and key stakeholders of the Black Sea, including:

- Conducting semi-structured, in-country interviews with representatives of identified segments of three key destructive fisheries;
- Through desk-based analysis, investigative research and additional in-country stakeholder dialogue, constructing a "system map" of power dynamics that govern Black Sea fisheries, with particular focus on how bi-lateral/multi-lateral fishery decisions (e.g. quota) are made + the governance of Turkish fleets;
- Reviewing the landscape of national NGO actors focused on fishery governance and reform to assess their approaches, and;
- Reviewing existing and emerging global FFI relationships across sectors focused on relevant systemic drivers (e.g. subsidies, multi-lateral/transboundary fishery governance, corporate fishery crime, distant water fleet governance) of Black Sea fisheries.

With regards to regional and/or transboundary engagement in Year 3, the project has prioritised engagement in regional fora & workshops, including engagement with the GFCM’s BlackSea4Fish project and the EU’s H2020 DOORs and CONNECT projects in the Black Sea.

The project is actively pursuing relationship development and collaboration regionally and in Year 3 has worked with organisations in Romania and Central Asia to take first steps towards

transboundary engagement that reduces IWT and supports protection of sturgeon in the Black Sea Basin (BSB). As mentioned above, this included exchange visits for project staff and partners from Central Asia and Black Sea range states (Romania and Turkey) to Georgia to visit project sites and engage in knowledge exchange that supports active development towards collaborative projects. Via our engagement in regional fora, the project is now consulting with counterparts at WWF Romania, Turkiye and Austria to exchange knowledge and information around the trade of sturgeon across Black Sea Basin countries.

In Year 4, activities will include attending a conference in Romania and site visits in the Black Sea. An intern will also commence work on her master's thesis via Cambridge University's Masters in Conservation Leadership, studying 'Promoting transboundary conservation and restoration of the Black Sea' with the view to further supporting regional collaboration across the BSB.

Finally, to build our legitimacy as a regional actor and elevate sturgeon conservation as an issue on the regional political agenda, the project has invested time in developing a suite of external communications collateral that is designed to share information about our sturgeon research and inform policy makers of science-based recommendations for sturgeon in the eastern Black Sea & Rioni river.

Under output 5: Evidence-based behaviour change strategy developed to tackle demand post project.

Activity 5.1: FFI produces a supply and demand study report and develops a behaviour change strategy.

Progress: To support the production of a supply & demand report regarding sturgeon in Georgia, the following research has been conducted:

- Surveys of fish farms in Georgia known to be farming sturgeon, including the volume produced, source of fingerlings and genetic sampling (where possible) to confirm if wild sturgeon is being sold to and bred in farms;
- Market surveys to detect if wild sturgeon is being sold in fish markets in western Georgia;
- Surveys with fishers on the Black Sea regarding sturgeon by-catch;
- Summarising findings from poaching monitoring that speak to the supply of wild sturgeon from the Rioni River & Black sea, and;
- Findings from a demand study focusing on the consumption of sturgeon meat in western Georgia.

The supply & demand report is currently under development and due to be completed by the end of Year 4. Additionally, findings from the demand study have been used to draft a behaviour change strategy and Theory of Change. Findings thus far indicate that sturgeon meat is in demand in western Georgia, and that consuming sturgeon meat is a part of the socio-cultural fabric of these populations, as well as an attraction for tourists visiting these coastal areas. Three consumer profiles have been identified:

- Profile 1: Local consumer who loves eating sturgeon and eats it whenever and wherever they can find it. They are only prohibited by the cost and rarity of sturgeon meat (western Georgia is generally a lower socio-economic status region of Georgia);
- Profile 2: Domestic and international tourists visiting the coastal town of Batumi, often higher socio-economic status than the local population, eating sturgeon as a special treat whilst on holiday;
- Profile 3: Local consumer who eats sturgeon for a special occasion. They see fish generally, and sturgeon especially, as a luxury that is special and/or rare and tied to culture events such as weddings, vacations at the seaside. This profile group doesn't eat sturgeon meat regularly.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Local citizens protect sturgeons against poaching for illegal trade and support legal fishing activities, on the Rioni River spawning migration route.

Without the project no patrols would be taking place and local fishers and communities would not be aware of IWT, sturgeon conservation, the importance of biodiversity nor how biodiversity loss threatens their own wellbeing (especially as socio-economically vulnerable communities). The project has utilised education & outreach activities to nurture feelings of ownership and pride for sturgeon species and the Rioni River. Direct feedback suggests that awareness raising activities with fishers, school children and local communities more broadly are promoting positive attitudes and behaviour towards protecting the river and sturgeon. Education & capacity building outputs also focus on improved monitoring outcomes and decreased poaching of sturgeon.

In Year 3, support for sturgeon conservation in the project region continues to grow. Engagement of fishers, and communities of the Rioni River region more broadly, have increased the participation of community members in natural resource management and decision making. Evidence suggests that this is changing attitudes and behaviours towards sturgeon and their conservation, as evidenced by reports from fishers, uptake of social media posts, genetic sampling by fishers & other community members, and anecdotal reports from the field. Now, team members in the field encounter, on a daily basis, fishers who openly support sturgeon conservation. In Year 3, 37 fishers reported, photographed and released sturgeons following the Project's awareness raising activities. Ninety-five percent of fishers reported their willingness to continue to work with and provide data to the project (and FFI beyond the life of Project IWT082). Further, despite ongoing patrolling effort, a smaller number of poaching incidents have been detected year on year, suggesting poaching has decreased in the patrolled sites.

Output 2: Increased capacity of law enforcement and government agencies to enforce laws on poaching and trafficking of sturgeon in Georgia (Rioni River and Black Sea).

FFI's activities again made significant steps towards this output. Throughout Year 3, the FFI team has been building the capacity of law enforcement officers and government agencies through online and in-person trainings and in total 145 law enforcement officers were trained. Not only did these officers learn about regulations, detection and prevention, but they also learned practical lessons, for example, species identification and genetic sampling.

All illegal fishing gear found in the Rioni by FFI's team was reported to the authorities, and in all cases, authorities arrived on site. In each incident, FFI's Citizen Inspectors provided support on the ground by showing law enforcement officers how to detect illegal gear, how to access the river, how to collect the equipment, and how to record the offence. The FFI team thus not only provided authorities with the theoretical knowledge but also with practical skills to enforce laws that protect sturgeon in Georgia.

In Year 4, the project has designed the platform meetings to foster collaboration between critical legal and law enforcement actors to strengthen governance. This thematic focus builds upon the platform meetings held in past years, as well as feedback provided by attendees and other critical stakeholders. In short, in order to successfully detect and prosecute wildlife crime in Georgia the actors working across these systems need to review the systems, articulate gaps and challenges, and collaborate to strengthen governance. Our upcoming platform meetings aim to do exactly this – bringing such stakeholders into the same room for such discussions, for the very first time. Whilst these platform meetings will be a first step – the plan is to continue to work towards governance strengthening outcomes beyond the life of this project based upon findings and feedback ascertained under the current project.

Output 3: Increased capacity of prosecutors and judiciary to interpret wildlife laws and effect increased successful prosecution and sentencing of wildlife crime cases.

Without FFI's intervention, no prosecutors or judges would be trained on wildlife crime, international environmental legislation, or on domestic laws protecting biodiversity. The first

successful steps to engage judges and prosecutors were made in Year 1, laying the foundation for high-impact trainings in Years 2 and t3 for judges and prosecutors. The trainings that FFI offered to judges and to prosecutors were highly successful, organised in close collaboration with international and national institutions, government agencies, and NGOs. As above in Output 2, the project has designed the platform meetings to focus on collaboration of critical legal and law enforcement actors to strengthen governance & build capacity nationally.

In Year 3, FFI worked with a Georgian legal expert and an international consultancy, Conservation Litigation, to review and develop a report regarding the potential for liability legislation to be utilised as a mechanism to stem wildlife crime in Georgia. The report has been produced in both English and Georgian and will be used as a capacity building tool for legal actors and law enforcers.

Additionally, in Year 3, project team members attended a workshop held by the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA). During this meeting, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia highlighted that environmental cases have been identified as a top priority for the coming years in their new strategy document. They also mentioned that they received training on environmental issues for first time in Georgia from the project and participated in stakeholder discussions (i.e. platform meetings) held by the project. This example evidences the wider impact of activities led under this project, suggesting heightened awareness that is leading to legal actors nationally prioritising environmental law as a result of project activities (again, a first nationally).

Output 4: Increased coordination and action by key actors within Black Sea range states to address IWT.

With regards to regional and/or transboundary engagement in Year 3, the project has prioritised engagement in regional fora & workshops, including engagement with the GFCM's BlackSea4Fish project and the EU's H2020 DOORs and CONNECT projects in the Black Sea.

The project is actively pursuing relationship development and collaboration regionally and in Year 3 has worked with organisations in the Black Sea Basin and Central Asia to take first steps towards transboundary engagement that reduced Illegal Wildlife Trade and support protection of sturgeon in the Black Sea Basin. These activities in Year 4 will be informed by two reports that investigate the context and stakeholders of the Black Sea Basin.

Output 5: Evidence-based behaviour change strategy developed to tackle demand post project

As above, the supply & demand report is currently under development and due to be completed by the end of Year 4. Additionally, findings from the demand study have been used to draft a behaviour change strategy and theory of change. Findings thus far indicate that sturgeon meat is in demand in western Georgia, and that consuming sturgeon meat is a part of the socio-cultural fabric of these populations, as well as an attraction for tourists visiting these coastal areas.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome: Sturgeon are protected by local and national actors; with illegal activity monitored, and demand-driven threats identified, thereby effectively mitigating the current and future threat of IWT in Georgian territorial waters.

Indicator 0.1 90km of spawning route patrolled for IWT and illegal fishing activity by FFI and government inspectors, which leads to confiscation of poaching equipment on over 20 occasions per season.(Baseline: no confiscations currently taking place at all.).

Progress: In Year 3, all 90km of spawning route were patrolled, with 2,316 patrolling hours and a total distance of 2,578 km patrolled between March – September 2022. In total, 4 cases of illegal fishing were found, including 8 fyke nets and 1 electrofishing case by the FFI team and Citizen Inspectors, all of which were confiscated by the authorities. This outcome indicator has been achieved as planned, and it is noted that found poaching equipment has decreased over time, suggesting that the project's patrol and awareness raising efforts are having a positive

impact (i.e. there was less than 20 instances of illegal fishing / confiscated equipment in Year 3). However, all cases of illegal fishing that were detected were reported to the ESD and the gear was confiscated.

Indicator 0.2 By year 3, more than 170 government and law enforcement authorities have received targeted training and information to support the detection and prosecution of wildlife crime cases, and have thus increased capacity to respond to IWT crimes. (Baseline: zero effort and zero capacity therefore zero detections.)

Progress: Please note this output was updated per a change request approved in January 2023. To date, including Years 1, 2 and 3, 145 government and law enforcement authorities have received targeted training (145 excludes those trained via platform meetings). In Year 3, a total of 35 government and law enforcement authorities have received targeted training and information to support the detection and prosecution of wildlife crime cases (excludes official trained in Kazakhstan).

With regards to the platform meetings, 34 government officials and law enforcers received training & shared information via this mechanism in Year 1 and 2. The two final platform meetings will be held in Year 4. Further, the project engages directly with law enforcement officials at the project's field sites to build their capacity and share information that enables detection of wildlife crimes (as above). As such the project has exceeded its goal under Outcome Indicator 0.2.

Indicator 0.3 By year 3, more than 70 judges and prosecutors have received targeted training and have participated in information sharing platforms focused on IWT crime in Georgia, and have thus increased awareness and capacity to support the prosecution of IWT cases. (Baseline: no capacity to prosecute sturgeon criminal IWT cases).

Progress: Please note this output was updated per a change request in January 2023. To date, including Years 1,2 and 3 of the project, 67 judges and prosecutors have received training, excluding those trained via platform meetings. A total of 29 judges were trained in Year 3 of the project. With regards to the platform meetings, 23 judges and prosecutors built their capacity via this mechanism in Years 1 and 2 of the project, with the platform meetings planned for Year 3 now taking place in Year 4, the goal of 70 judges and prosecutors trained will be exceeded for Outcome Indicator 0.3.

Indicator 0.4 By year 4, connections are established and governance systems mapped to support sturgeon conservation outcomes in Georgia and Black Sea range states. (Baseline: no knowledge or communication with actors regarding sturgeon in Georgia or Black Sea range states.)

Progress: Please note this output was updated per a change request in January 2023, however considerable progress has been made engaging national and regional stakeholders in Georgia and the Black Sea Basin in Year 3 and the project is on track to deliver this Outcome Indication by the end of the project.

Indicator 0.5 By year 3, an evidenced based behaviour change strategy to shift traders, vendors and consumers away from sturgeon meat has been developed. (Baseline: No existing research on traders, vendors and consumers and no behaviour change strategy available).

Progress: Per section 3.2, above.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

0.1.1 Poaching equipment is detectable: this statement holds true for Year 3 of the project as no new poaching techniques have been introduced; based on frequent exchange with authorities, fishers, and observations in the field.

0.1.2 It is understood that Enforcement success from a zero baseline results in an increase in the number of seizures: this still holds true for Year 3 of the project.

0.1.3 Organised crime does not become engaged in sturgeon IWT in Georgia: this seems to have held true, however very little data exists on organised crime in the region, especially with regards to wildlife crime, so it is impossible to be 100% sure of this assumption. To date, including Year 3 of the project, we have not found any strong indications for organised crime despite having conducted market surveys to investigate the supply of sturgeon products in Georgia. Demand study findings suggest the market / demand exists for sturgeon meet but is mostly met by incidental bycatch.

0.2 Prosecutors and judges agree and are enabled, through appropriate laws and processes, to deal with IWT cases: this still holds true in Year 3 of the project, though systemic challenges with detecting and prosecuting wildlife crime – whilst addressed by this project – require ongoing action and collaboration over the long term to enable legal actors and law enforcers to deal effectively with IWT cases.

0.3 Legal basis for action by enforcement personnel is present: this held true for Year 3 of the project, however, there are concerns over a current lack of political will to enforce environmental legislation, including where private sector / industry have competing demands with regards to resource use (e.g. the hydropower and mining sectors have considerable sway over the rule of law).

0.4.1 The political situation between Georgia and Turkey and Turkey's other Black Sea neighbours do not deteriorate to the point of the ending of diplomatic relations. This holds true generally, though the socio-political context is complex in the region, not in the least due to the Ukraine Russia war and Erdogan's crackdown on silencing Universities and NGOs.

0.4.2. International and regional actors are willing and able to engage on sturgeon conservation and illegal wildlife trade issues, including a secure socio-political environment that enables action and are not facing additional socio- and geo-political constraints prohibiting their engagement, especially as a result of the on-going Russian-Ukraine war. Please note this assumption was added as part of a formal change request approved in January 2023. It currently holds true.

Under Output 1: Local citizens protect sturgeons against poaching for illegal trade and support legal fishing activities, on the Rioni River spawning migration route, we formulated three assumptions:

1.1 Local support for FFI is sufficient to allow safe patrolling: this remained accurate for Year 3 of the project, and we continue to observe that the project is widely supported and none of our team members are experiencing any safety issues in the field.

1.2 FFI retains positive image in the region and continues to maintain trust amongst fishers and local communities throughout project duration: this remains true and relations with local stakeholders are excellent. There are no reasons for concern identified by the project.

1.3 River Council members remain motivated to play an active role. FFI succeeds in maintaining a trustworthy reputation in the region and parents and schoolchildren trust their children to participate in FFI activities: This assumption proved challenging with youth being willing to engage in the River Council but adults showing less willingness. This assumption was also challenged by contextual issues in Years 1 and 2 the project, in particular the Covid-19 pandemic which prevented direct community engagement. Youth & school engagement has been positive and productive in Year 3.

Under Output 2: Increased capacity of law enforcement and government agencies to enforce laws on poaching and trafficking of sturgeon in Georgia (Rioni River and Black Sea), we formulated the following assumptions:

2.1 Staff turnover or reassignments at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) do not hinder capacity, and Ministry continues to invest time in sturgeon anti-poaching: We have not observed any key staff changes or lack of commitment from MEPA in Year 3.

2.2 Officers are appropriately authorised and resourced to be able to attend trainings as well as respond to incidences: In Year 3, law enforcement officers from the Supervision Department (SD) responded to all cases reported by the project (n=4), however, feedback from MEPA at a national level highlighted considerable resourcing challenges that make it difficult for Supervision Department officers to adequately respond to cases and attend trainings. Over the three years of the project FFI has found it challenging to engage locally based SD officers to attend formal trainings, so more direct and less structured training approaches have been used in the field as SD officers respond more positively to this. At a national level, government staff and SD officers are more open to / available for formal trainings and workshops.

2.3 Sufficient sturgeon samples are available of various species, to allow for development of molecular markers to identify species and hybrids: This held true and in Year 3 a sufficient supply of samples were collected.

2.4 Officers are appropriately authorised and resourced to be able to undertake illegal trade monitoring: This still held broadly true in Year 3 of the project, however, willingness to partake in trade monitoring and access to resources (sufficient time, access to transport) is reported as a challenge by the Environmental Supervision Department at a national level.

Under Output 3: Increased capacity of prosecutors and judiciary to interpret wildlife laws and effect increased successful prosecution and sentencing of wildlife crime cases, we identified the following assumptions:

3.1 No change to the law to the detriment of wildlife protection: this still holds broadly true and no change to the law to the detriment of wildlife protection has occurred in Year 3, however new laws such as the national aquaculture law could pose a threat and FFI is actively engaging with national actors to support sustainable implementation of this law, with a particular focus on environmental and genetic contamination from aquaculture activities and preventing trafficking of wild sturgeon into fish farms.

3.2 Language barriers do not prevent uptake of knowledge of the crucial texts: This holds true and FFI is working with translators to enable accessible documents.

3.3 Law enforcement officers enabled to apply learning by their superiors and have access to the sharing Platform (Activity 3.4), which assists prosecutors in gathering evidence that is admissible in court: This held true for Year 3 of the project.

3.4 All stakeholders recognise the need for participation: This still holds true and uptake of materials and activities has been positive in Year 3.

Under Output 4: Increased coordination and action by key actors within Black Sea range states to address IWT.

4.1 Government capacity is not diverted to other, as yet unknown, issues on the political agenda, and there is some continuity in staff at the relevant Ministries: this remains relevant. Political challenges including the law on foreign agents and Ukraine-Russia war have diverted political capacity to other issues to some extent and made the status of NGO's increasingly tenuous in country. However, the project is continuing successfully.

4.2 Relevant Turkish institutions show interest and ability to exchange knowledge on IWT, sturgeon, fisheries and Black Sea management with Georgian and international NGO counterparts: this remains highly relevant, the practice of knowledge exchange has been hampered by ongoing challenges as mentioned in the rest of this report, including socio-political complexities, Covid-19, and catastrophic environmental crises (2023 earthquakes). Willingness to engage and information exchange may also be hampered by the nature of the work, for example, openness with regards to illegal activities (i.e. bycatch of endangered species, IUU and IWT) is generally sensitive and challenging. However, we have had positive communications with contacts made thus far.

4.3 EU and FAO continue to promote sustainable fisheries and reducing bycatch and IWT in the Black Sea: this still holds true for Year 3 of the project, though the EU is focusing on discards rather than by-catch which does reduce the focus on sturgeon as they are not a discarded species. The project's work to advocate for sturgeon continues to be important.

Under Output 5: Evidence-based behaviour change strategy developed to tackle demand post project, the following assumptions still hold true.

5.1 There is no significant downturn in other legally tradable products, which would increase reliance on sturgeon. This holds true for Year 3.

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

As set out in the project design & previous reports, our proposed impact is the recovery of six native sturgeon species in Georgia due to the removal of threats posed by illegal bycatch, poaching and trafficking. Even though the project's focus species is sturgeon, the project significantly contributes to:

- Addressing IWT issues more widely through increasing national capacity of law enforcement, and;
- Setting up systems that can be used as models for other illegally traded species or products.

It does so in a number of ways, including:

- Increasing capacity of prosecutors and judiciary to interpret wildlife laws leading to increased successful prosecution and sentencing of wildlife crime cases (see 2);
- Training high court judges, including on national and international laws and conventions;
- Establishing a platform for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcers to share relevant information to streamline the process of prosecuting traffickers (see 3.4); and
- By developing national environmental law and IWT training module for judges to be taught annually (see 3.1).

This project will benefit:

- The 71,000 residents of 31 villages along the Rioni River;
- Some 200 riverine and coastal fishers along the Georgian Black Sea coast, and;
- 70 local fish traders at six local fish markets, as the project will create the conditions to support sturgeon population recovery and eventually enable sustainable fishing.

By working towards a more sustainable management of sturgeon populations in Georgia, the project will directly contribute to the health and viability of multiple other fish species, and support secure livelihoods for local communities and artisanal fishers. Local governance will be enhanced through community consultations, which will include fish traders, businesses, and consumers, enabling an environment for negotiating sustainable and legal business methods.

Another beneficiary of the project is the academic partner, ISU, whose capacity will be built by developing and applying tools for molecular diagnostics and taxonomy. Importantly, ISU can continue to develop into the first, and only, academic institution in Georgia that has expertise in, and ambitions for, scientific research on eastern Black Sea sturgeon. This will build research and analytical skills of staff, and provide career opportunities and internships for current young scientists as well as jobs at a larger scale within the university.

4. Thematic focus

The project directly works towards strengthening law enforcement and the criminal justice system in Georgia, IWT Challenge Fund's 2nd key objective. It ensures that by Year 4, data and learning from regional and international fora is being used to guide decision-making relating to management of Black Sea fisheries, bycatch use and IWT, supporting IWT Challenge Fund's 3rd key objective. It addresses the IWTCF's 4th theme through the development of an evidence-based behaviour change strategy developed to tackle demand post project.

The project's approaches also support multiple commitments under the London Declarations (2014, 2018) and the Kasane Statement (2015), including: Kasane Actions 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, and 12; London 2014 Actions A15 (I, VI), B16 (X, XI), C17 (XIII, XV, XVI), and D18 (XVIII, XIX, XX); and London 2018 Statements 9 and 13–20).

5. Impact on species in focus

In the short term, as wild sturgeon poaching and trade at the Rioni River will be brought to a historic low, mature individuals of spawning age will no longer be removed from the population before they can reproduce. This means that a higher number of sexually mature sturgeon will participate in the annual spawning run, leading not only to a higher number of births as well as a reduction in inbreeding and hybridisation, which are threatening the genetic fitness and health of the populations. In the medium and long term, this will allow sturgeon populations to recover in the eastern Black Sea.

However, the sturgeon's longevity and infrequent spawning cycles, combined with the reduced genetic diversity, will not allow for quick recovery. Therefore, the project does not only support immediate, direct protection measures, but also introduces systemic measures that protect the sturgeon and allow the populations to grow over the next decades.

6. Project support to poverty reduction

As touched upon in Section 3.5 above, this project is indirectly benefitting the 71,000 residents of 31 villages along the Rioni River; some 200 riverine and coastal fishers along the Georgian Black Sea coast, and 70 local fish traders at six local fish markets, as the project will create the conditions to support sturgeon population recovery and eventually enable sustainable fishing. Currently, local villagers who once relied on sturgeon fishing for their livelihoods no longer do so because of the scarcity of the species. Black Sea commercial fishers have voiced concerns that all fish stocks have become very small, and incomes are dropping. Anglers at the Rioni have witnessed all fish populations drop sharply in the last decades and have advised that the river is 'nearly empty'. Local fishers, their families, and communities will hence benefit from improved fisheries management and conservation of fish that allows growth of local fish populations.

There are also links between law enforcement & poverty reduction, with improved law enforcement – an output for this project - contributing to poverty reduction as losses to crime may account for up to 14% of GDP in the developed world with the losses disproportionately affecting poor people (DFID, 2000).

The project also focuses on the capacity of ISU, which will be built by developing and applying tools for molecular diagnostics and taxonomy. Importantly, by being involved in the project, ISU can continue to develop into the first, and only, academic institution in Georgia that has expertise in, and ambitions for, scientific research on eastern Black Sea sturgeon. This provides career opportunities for current young scientists, and jobs at a larger scale within the university (laboratory technicians, administration, etc.).

By training and employing our Citizen Inspectors, who come from lower socio-economic status communities, we are also not only offering direct benefits through providing an income source, we are also teaching them skills, knowledge and values that they will in the future be able to use for new career steps.

More broadly, by working towards more sustainable management of fish populations in Georgia, with less bycatch, poaching and illegal trade of fish, the project will directly contribute to the health and viability of multiple fish species and enable the sustainable utilisation and support secure livelihoods for local communities and artisanal fishers. Through our activities, all of the above benefits were supported throughout Year 3 and will continue in Year 4.

7. Gender equality and social inclusion

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board ¹ .	57% (project lead is female)
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women ² .	N/A

We have increased visibility of female scientists, consultants and FFI team members by sending them into the project region to role model and highlight their work to fishers and local communities. In Year 3 we supported :

- 1 female Citizen Inspector (17% of CI team);
- 2 female interns (100% of interns);
- 1 female PhD student to conduct research;
- The establishment of a sturgeon research group based out of ISU, which is being developed by three female researchers (2 PhD students and one masters student);
- Assisted one female student to study her PhD in the Czech Republic, and;
- 1 scientific journal article with a female lead author, and 3 out of 4 female researchers on the paper.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

FFI's UK-based Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) team have continued to work closely with the project team to develop internal systems to monitor and evaluate the project. In Year 3 of the project the MEL framework has been reviewed and robust MEL systems are in place, measuring impacts before and after every conservation activity and including a recent review of the project Theory of Change and further development of the Evaluation Framework to provide greater insight on project evaluation year-on-year.

The MEL team continue to provide ongoing support by facilitating regular reflection meetings, during which we refer back to the Monitoring & Evaluation tracker and discuss any adjustments needed in the MEL (particularly in response to COVID-19) and how progress is being made against each element of the project. Indicators of achievements include records of patrols, test results from pre-and post- training knowledge tests, and many more. All data are collected before, during, and after activities such as training of fishers, poaching monitoring, and attending events. As the Monitoring and Evaluation is deeply engrained in the project, it allows us to follow adaptive management practices to ensure our assumptions and activities are evidence-based.

9. Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt in Year 3 of the project include:

- Direct, one-on-one engagement at a local level worked well, especially with community members, fishers, youth and ESD officers based locally. These stakeholders were less interested in, and/or available for, formal workshops and trainings and responded more to one-on-one relationships building, smaller informal meetings and/or ongoing informal engagement that built trust over time with specific, field-based project staff that they could recognise and relate to;

¹ A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

² Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

- The research outputs produced by the project have been highly successful and were made possible through relationship building with national and international experts but also via local engagement with fishers (per above bullet). They have also enabled the gender outcomes of the project as they have empowered female scientists to deliver research, gain valuable experience and position themselves as leaders in their respective fields; and
- This project informs, and has built the foundation for, considerable future work – which is referred to throughout the report, most notably in Section 3.

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

Based on comments from the IWTCF reviewer the following actions were taken:

- A formal change request was submitted and approved to adjust some measurable indicators, means of verification, and important assumptions in response to significant contextual changes regionally, including the Covid-19 pandemic and war in the Ukraine;
- Based upon advice from the reviewer, Outcome indicators 0.2 and 0.3 were removed from the log frame, again via the formal change request;
- A no cost extension was sought to allow additional time (6 months) to deliver Outputs particularly effected by the global pandemic and other contextual changes, most notably Output 4 and 5; and
- An adjustment to the project timeline was also made via the formal change request.

11. Risk Management

Ukraine War: The Ukraine war, paired with the Covid-19 pandemic, have resulted in a challenging socio-political context . This has presented challenges for the project, most importantly because government officials have understandably needed to divert attention to more pressing matters. Although it should be noted that the report shows we still have managed to successfully engage the government in the project a great deal, especially given the circumstances. Further, inflation in Georgia was 14% in 2022 and paired with war in Ukraine has led to cost increases on goods and services and has impacted product availability, including increasing project costs, such as fuel, food and accommodation, thereby impacting project expenditure.

Further, with the war in Ukraine there has been an influx of Russian migrants and tourists to Georgia who may be driving development in the Adjara region and supporting tourism sector growth. Whilst this is important for economic growth, unless tourism related development is managed sustainably it could pose a threat to the region’s natural heritage. Finally, the influx of tourists may drive consumption of sturgeon products, which have historically been in high demand in Russia^{3, 4}. Therefore, we must consider this shift in immigration when planning future sturgeon conservation projects.

Covid-19 Pandemic: As seen globally the Covid-19 pandemic impacted Georgia over a number of years, with travel and other restrictions in place through April 2022. Whilst it is possible to deliver against many of the activities delayed until Year 3, other activities necessitated action in Years 1 and 2 and therefore could not be fully delivered in Year 3 alone. For activities which could not be fully realised in Year 3 alone changes to the project timeline and log frame have been made via a change request and an extension was granted.

12. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

Not applicable.

³ <https://transparency.ge/en/post/georgias-economic-dependence-russia-trade-tourism-remittances-and-russian-companies-georgia>

⁴ <https://www.zois-berlin.de/en/publications/zois-spotlight/georgias-new-wave-of-russian-migrants>

13. Sustainability and legacy

The design of this project focuses on capacity building of local actors to ensure the longevity, effectiveness, and sustainability of conservation actions. Specific examples of capacity building as a mechanism for sustainability & local leadership in Year 3 of the project are:

Training of judges: Working in partnership with the High School of Justice (HSoJ), a training-of-trainers event was organised in Year 1 of the project, seeing 5 judges trained to deliver subsequent workshops. The use of training-of-trainers (ToT) approaches was selected to engender ownership of community-focused project activities, and increase post-project sustainability. In Year 3, a training of judges continued with the support of the HSoJ and the judges who received the initial ToT training.

Training of law enforcement actors: Government agencies will be provided with species and conservation knowledge, practical skills and analytical tools that can be used without FFI's continued involvement.

Prosecutor trainings: Working with local partners and international experts, FFI has delivered training to Georgian prosecutors to enable them to be more effective in the prosecution of wildlife crimes cases regardless of FFI's involvement.

Fisher trainings: Working with fishers to uptake legal fishing techniques and understand the importance of protecting the Rioni River and reducing illegal fishing FFI is establishing a legacy of sustainable fishing the will hopefully last well beyond the life of this project.

Fostering academic excellence to build local conservation leaders and inform local action: Though or partnership with ISU, FFI is working to build local technical expertise, foster young scientists and build an research and evidence base from which to support robust conservation outcomes that exist independent of the specific outputs of this project.

Further, the new sturgeon research group initiated by FFI and led by local actor, ISU, will be attracting funds and identifying research opportunities independently from FFI. Another forensic science research group is also being established at ISU with support from FFI, which aims to enable evidence collection in order to successfully try wildlife crimes cases in Georgia.

Community outreach & education to build local awareness: FFI's community outreach and education outputs are targeted at raising awareness of conservation issues to foster environmental values among those communities most dependant on healthy ecosystems, that is the people who live closest to them. Active involvement of communities in conservation efforts is essential, and through awareness raising FFI hopes to build the values that see people acting to protect the Rioni River and its sturgeon.

14. IWT Challenge Fund identity

Support from the IWT Challenge Fund has been communicated during meetings and events, such as during the wildlife crime trainings for judges and prosecutors and the wildlife crime platform meetings. Further, publications produced under the project include the IWT Challenge Fund logo and thank the fund for its ongoing support, for example, the report produced on the new environmental liability legislation of Georgia.

15. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	Yes
Have any concerns been investigated in the past 12 months	No

Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes, we have two – one male and one female	
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	Yes	
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	100%	
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.		
No, although we would like to invest more time in training partners, which will continue to be challenging given the considerable knowledge gaps and language barriers surrounding safeguarding. This is an ongoing focus for the project and FFI more broadly, which is being realised via a safeguarding review and the development of environmental and social safeguard tools that ensure equitable engagement of key stakeholder groups.		
Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify.		
As above.		

16. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (April 2022-March 2023)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2022/23 Grant (£)	2022/23 Total actual IWT Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	94,833	94,833	0%	

As agreed with IWTCF as part of a formal change request (approved January 2023), £7,828.50 GBP will be carried over into Year 4 of the project, with a no cost extension of 6 months having been approved for Project IWT082 resulting in an end date of 30 September 2023.

Table 2: Project mobilising of matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

	Matched funding secured to date	Total matched funding expected by end of project
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project.		

Total additional finance mobilised by new activities building on evidence, best practices and project (£)		
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17. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (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).

Notable achievements during the second year of the project are:

- One peer reviewed article published in scientific journals sharing novel, ground breaking sturgeon research conducted in Georgia;
- Ongoing effort but proportionally far fewer incidents of illegal fishing in the Rioni River suggesting a decline in illegal fishing at the project sites;
- Publication of grey literature report to build capacity around new environmental liability legislation of Georgia as a mechanism to stem IWT, and;
- Utilise platform meetings as governance strengthening mechanisms that bring IWT actors together from across the enforcement chain to identify systemic weaknesses and challenges and collaborate on challenges.



Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against log frame for Financial Year 2022-2023

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Impact: Six native sturgeon species in Georgia are recovering due to the removal of threats posed by illegal bycatch, poaching and trafficking.</p>		<p>Wildlife crime and environmental protection have been put on the agenda of law enforcement and judiciary; sturgeon conservation and research is carried out in close collaboration with local fishers and local and international academia; and the presence and activities of FFI's anti-poaching team is widely supported by communities and fishers in the region. All of this is leading to a reduction in uncontrolled poaching and trade, which is allowing populations to recover through a higher number of sturgeons that can successfully reproduce in the Rioni River.</p>	
<p>Outcome: Sturgeon are protected by local and national actors; with illegal activity monitored, and demand-driven threats identified, thereby effectively mitigating the current and future threat of IWT in Georgian territorial waters.</p>	<p>0.1 Every year throughout the full sturgeon migration season (March-September), 90km of spawning route patrolled for IWT and illegal fishing activity by FFI and government inspectors, which leads to confiscation of poaching equipment on over 20 occasions per sturgeon migration season. (Baseline: no confiscations currently taking place at all.)</p> <p>0.2 By year 3, more than 170 government and law enforcement authorities have received targeted training and information to support the detection and prosecution of wildlife crime cases, and have thus increased capacity to respond to IWT crimes. (Baseline: zero effort and zero capacity therefore zero detections.).</p> <p>0.3 By year 3, more than 70 judges and prosecutors have received targeted training and have participated in information sharing platforms focused on IWT crime in Georgia.</p>	<p>0.1 Delivered for Year 3, that is, the full 90km of spawning route patrolled for IWT and illegal fishing activity by FFI and government inspectors and four instances of illegal fishing have been reported to the Environmental Supervision Department.</p> <p>0.2 Delivered in Year 3, that is, more than 170 government and law enforcement authorities have received targeted training and information to support the detection and prosecution of wildlife crime cases.</p> <p>0.3 Delivered in Year 3, that is, more than 70 judges and prosecutors have received targeted training and have participated in information sharing platforms focused on IWT crime in Georgia.</p> <p>0.4 In Year 3 connections have been established and governance systems have been mapped to support sturgeon conservation outcomes in Georgia and</p>	<p>0.1 None. Fully delivered in Year 3 per project log frame.</p> <p>0.2 None. Fully delivered in Year 3 per project log frame.</p> <p>0.3 None. Fully delivered in Year 3 per project log frame.</p> <p>0.4 FFI is working with partners to identify and prepare for upcoming meetings in Year 4 of the project and three exchange & scoping visits are planned to Turkey & Romania.</p> <p>0.5 Data analysis is completed and the report is underway, due to be completed by the end of Year 4.</p>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	<p>and have thus increased awareness and capacity to support the prosecution of IWT cases. (Baseline: no capacity to prosecute sturgeon criminal IWT cases).</p> <p>0.4 By year 4, connections are established and governance systems mapped to support sturgeon conservation outcomes in Georgia and Black Sea range states. (Baseline: no knowledge or communication with actors regarding sturgeon in Georgia or Black Sea range states.)</p> <p>0.5 By Year 4, an evidenced based behaviour change strategy to shift traders, vendors and consumers away from sturgeon meat has been developed and is included in a proposal for a follow-up project. (Baseline: No existing research on traders, vendors and consumers and no behaviour change strategy available).</p>	<p>Black Sea range states. In Year 4 this information will be utilised to conduct scoping & knowledge exchange visits and more actively engage key actors across the Black Sea Basin and regionally.</p> <p>0.5 An evidenced based behaviour change strategy is in development based upon data collected in Years 2 and 3.</p>	
<p>Output 1: Local citizens protect sturgeons against poaching for illegal trade and support legal fishing activities, on the Rioni River spawning migration route.</p>	<p>1.1 The full freshwater spawning route, 90 km of the Rioni River, is patrolled night and day by FFI's 6 local Citizen Inspectors who monitor illegal activities, during the entire spawning season in every year of the project (compared to no patrolling at all without this project).</p> <p>1.2.1 At the Rioni River, 100 riverine fishers are trained and competent to use legal fishing methods that do not harm the sturgeon, effectively ensuring that the all riverine fishers are trained by end of year 2 (100% of fishers population). Baseline: 50 riverine fishers already trained by FFI before the project starts (amounting to 1/3 of the total river fishers population) while 2/3 (100 fishers) are not trained at all.</p> <p>1.2.2 By end of year 2, awareness is raised in all 150 riverine fishers and 20% of fishers</p>	<p>1.1 The full freshwater spawning route, 90 km of the Rioni River, has been patrolled night and day by FFI's 6 local Citizen Inspectors for the entire spawning season.</p> <p>1.2.1 92 riverine fishers are trained and competent to use legal fishing methods.</p> <p>1.2.2 Awareness has been raised in 165 riverine fishers (regarding 53 fishers out of 165, awareness has been raised a second time) and 95% of fishers agree to report illegal activities as well as sturgeon sightings to the local FFI team. In the 3 years of the project a total of 175 reports have been made by fishers of sturgeon and 155 samples collected.</p> <p>1.3 Local acceptance of poaching and illegal trade have decreased under influence of the Youth River Council, 35 members of the</p>	<p>1.1 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p> <p>1.2.1 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p> <p>1.2.2 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p> <p>1.3 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	<p>agree to report illegal activities as well as sturgeon sightings to the local FFI team. (Baseline: fishers do not report to FFI at their own initiative at all.)</p> <p>1.3 By year 3, local acceptance of poaching and illegal trade have decreased gradually under influence of River Council and Youth River Council, demonstrated in participation of 800 local citizens in a Council-associated activity and tested through interviews and knowledge tests. All thirteen members of River Council demonstrate knowledge of, and commitment to the sturgeon and its conservation in the Rioni, and all fifteen members of Youth River Council have become active sturgeon supporters. (Baseline: local citizens are not organising any activities or gatherings; the adult and youth River Councils are inactive and no outreach to any fellow citizens in the region.)</p>	<p>Youth River Council are planning future activities and >8,000 local citizens have been engaged under the 3 years of the Project (including via social media).</p>	
<p>Output 2: Increased capacity of law enforcement and government agencies to enforce laws on poaching and trafficking of sturgeon in Georgia (Rioni River and Black Sea).</p>	<p>2.1 By the end of every poaching season (March-September), over 20 official Environmental Supervision Department inspectors have received on-site training and/or mentoring by FFI's poaching monitoring team on practical detection and seizure of illegal equipment on the water, supported by SMART technology. As a result, on >6 occasions/month throughout poaching season each year, these Environmental Inspectors are directly applying this knowledge.</p> <p>2.2 By Year 3, >150 members of Georgia's national Environmental Supervision, Customs, and Police departments trained at their headquarters in Tbilisi on IWT occurrence and impacts, detection, species identification and regulations and application of crime prevention techniques in a wildlife</p>	<p>2.1 10 Environmental Supervision Department (ESD) inspectors have received on-site training and/or mentoring by FFI's poaching monitoring team on practical detection and seizure of illegal equipment on the water and all four incidents of illegal fishing were reported to the ESD in Year 3.</p> <p>2.2 145 members of Georgia's national Environmental Supervision, Customs, and Police departments have been trained in the 3 years of the Project (includes one Customs official trained in Kazakhstan). A further 34 government and law enforcement officials built their capacity via platform meetings in Years 1 & 2.</p> <p>2.3 Previously unavailable molecular genetics/stable isotopes techniques have</p>	<p>2.1 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p> <p>2.2 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p> <p>2.3 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p> <p>2.4 Genetic testing kits to be disseminated and further training delivered to ESD officers in Year 4.</p>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	<p>crime context. (Baseline: no training for new staff members is in place.) Members of these departments will be present at all incidences of IWT and poaching, relevant to their competencies, as well as their active presence in policy and IWT meetings in Tbilisi against the baseline.</p> <p>2.3 By year 2, previously unavailable molecular genetics/stable isotopes techniques have been developed, described in an article, and are available to use, with an Ilia State University lab technician trained in their use, to allow reliable genetic or isotopic identification of trafficked sturgeon to serve as evidence in court that the sturgeon sold originated from the wild and not from aquaculture. (Compared to baseline: no availability of this identification, and species identification in fining/enforcement/prosecution remains entirely based on morphological identification).</p> <p>2.4 By year 4, Environmental Inspectors working for the Environmental Supervision Department enabled to detect IWT using the techniques developed and fine illegal sturgeon sales in the region, which was not the case previously. As a result of genetic sampling kits and methodology provided, Environmental Inspectors are collating and sharing data regarding restaurants / markets vending trafficked sturgeon throughout Georgia, which is being used to support timely, effective law enforcement. (Baseline: at current, no detection of IWT at markets.)</p>	<p>been tested and developed and one article was published in Year 3. A further two articles are in development and/or under review.</p> <p>2.4 Training has been delivered to 144 law enforcers and 18 prosecutors in genetic testing and forensics techniques. Platform meetings have also focused on strengthening the governance systems to support legal actors and law enforcement to collaborate and utilised genetic techniques as part of their evidence base.</p>	

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Output 3: Increased capacity of prosecutors and judiciary to interpret wildlife laws and effect increased successful prosecution and sentencing of wildlife crime cases</p>	<p>3.1 As a result of project training on environmental law and IWT, by year 3, 50 judges show higher levels of knowledge on these subjects, to be measured with exams pre and post training, and which they can use when sentencing relevant wildlife crime cases (Baseline: zero judges trained, judges have no knowledge on wildlife crime and trafficking that they can apply in IWT cases)</p> <p>3.2 By year 2, 10 selected high court judges have gained new knowledge on Conventions (CITES, Bonn, Bern) and EU Directives (Habitats) (Baseline: no judges trained, despite interest no knowledge gathered.)</p> <p>3.3 By year 2, >20 prosecutors are skilled in best practice protocols for collecting evidence and presenting it at court (inclusive of witnesses). (Baseline: no training of prosecutors in wildlife crime at all.)</p> <p>3.4 By year 1, platform established for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcers to share relevant information to streamline the process of prosecuting traffickers (baseline: no such meetings are conducted at all, no formal exchange is taking place)</p>	<p>3.1 29 judges were trained in Year 3.</p> <p>3.2 Not applicable for Year 3, completed in Year 2 per project timeline.</p> <p>3.3 Not applicable for Year 3, completed in Year 2 per project timeline.</p> <p>3.4 Platform meetings were established in Year 1 of the project and have been held twice per year for each of the three years of the project.</p>	<p>3.1 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p> <p>3.2 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p> <p>3.3 None. Fully delivered per project log frame.</p> <p>3.4 Platform meetings were slightly delayed in Year 3 and will now be held in the first half of Year 4.</p>
<p>Output 4: Increased coordination and action by key actors within Black Sea range states to address IWT</p>	<p>4.1 By year 4, high-level national decisionmakers within key government Ministries and agencies are regularly engaged to increase awareness of sturgeon conservation issues and inform decision making in support of sturgeon protection / conservation. (Baseline: no decisions have been taken in favour of sturgeon conservation and engagement is infrequent. Government is unaware and not informed)</p> <p>4.2 By end of Year 4, Turkish agencies are</p>	<p>4.1 High-level national decisionmakers within key government Ministries and agencies were regularly engaged in Year 3 with former and new relationships solidified and regular meetings planned with MEPA officials for approx. every 6 weeks.</p> <p>4.2 Planning is underway for Year 4 scoping & knowledge sharing visits. Pathways to prevent trafficking of Georgian sturgeon into Turkey have been challenging to articulate given data gaps & access to intelligence</p>	<p>4.1 continued engagement of key government officials throughout Year 4.</p> <p>4.2 By end of Year 4, we aim to actively engage Turkish agencies in knowledge sharing about transboundary trade via a number of scoping and knowledge sharing visits. We hope these visit further elucidate sturgeon trafficking route through Turkey as well.</p>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	<p>actively engaged in knowledge sharing about transboundary trade. As a result, by Year 3 pathways to prevent trafficking of Georgian sturgeon into Turkey are being identified. (Baseline: no communication or information exchange at all.)</p> <p>4.3 By Year 4, data and learning from regional and international fora is being used to influence planning and decision making relating to management of Black Sea fisheries, bycatch use and IWT, and the sturgeon is acknowledged as being a specific and important subject for Black Sea management. (Baseline: sturgeon is not considered at all.)</p> <p>4.4 By Year 4, key Black Sea fisheries stakeholders and governance systems are mapped, key actors engaged, and learning from fora is being used, to inform planning for future efforts focused on the management of Black Sea fisheries, bycatch and IWT (Baseline: sturgeon is not considered at all.)</p>	<p>regionally, however, priority areas such as by-catch and IUU reduction (to address supply) have been fully articulated and first steps to address these with Black Sea Basin actors are underway.</p> <p>4.3 Data and learning from regional and international for a has now been used to influence planning and decision making relating to management of Black Sea fisheries, bycatch use and IWT. The project is actively communication with Black Sea Basin actors to participate in, and share, data and knowledge that informs national and regional strategies to protect sturgeon.</p> <p>4.4 A report has been drafted that captures key Black Sea fisheries stakeholders and governance systems are mapped. Key actors have been engaged and the Project has participated in national actions to articulate challenges and threats surrounding Black Sea fisheries championing a specific need for sturgeon bycatch, IUU and IWT to be considered.</p>	<p>4.3 attendance at national and regional meetings, workshops and fora will be ongoing, knowledge & data sharing will be prioritised and relationships will be fostered to position FFI and partners as key actors informing sturgeon conservation nationally and regionally.</p> <p>4.4 Finalisation & dissemination of the Black Sea report, and ongoing engagement of key actors, including via EU funded projects and the GFCM.</p>
<p>Output 5: Evidence-based behaviour change strategy developed to tackle demand post project.</p>	<p>5.1.1 By year 2, motivations, needs, trade strategies and profiles of consumers, traders, and vendors are collected in a database and presented and analysed in an FFI report that informs development of a behaviour change strategy. Baseline: no research conducted, no structured data available or data analysis carried out; only anecdotal information is available to FFI.</p> <p>5.1.2 By end of year 3, a funding proposal is prepared for a follow-up sturgeon conservation project that includes activities on</p>	<p>5.1.1 Report on sturgeon consumer, trader and vendor motivations and needs is drafted, including consumer profiles. Report on markets surveys and sturgeon supply was completed in Year 2.</p> <p>5.1.2 Evidenced based Behaviour Change strategy including M&E is drafted and development will continue into Year 4.</p>	<p>5.1.1 Report to be finalised in Year 4.</p> <p>5.1.2 A report bringing together sturgeon meat supply and demand data to inform an evidenced based Behaviour Change strategy to be finalised in Year 4.</p>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	reducing demand for sturgeon meat, using evidence and analysis from the trade report (5.1.1.) as well as a robust behaviour change strategy. (Baseline: no behaviour change strategy is developed and no future consumer-focussed actions are planned).		

Annex 2: Project’s full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Below log frame is per the latest approved change request (Jan 2023).

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Six native sturgeon species in Georgia are recovering due to the removal of threats posted by illegal bycatch, poaching and trafficking.			
<p>Outcome: Sturgeon are protected by local and national actors; with illegal activity monitored, and demand-driven threats identified, thereby effectively mitigating the current and future threat of IWT in Georgian territorial waters</p>	<p>0.1 90km of spawning route patrolled for IWT and illegal fishing activity by FFI and government inspectors, which leads to confiscation of poaching equipment on over 20 occasions per season. (Baseline: no confiscations currently taking place at all.)</p> <p>0.2 By year 3, more than 170 government and law enforcement authorities have received targeted training and information to support the detection and prosecution of wildlife crime cases, and have thus increased capacity to respond to IWT crimes. (Baseline: zero effort and zero capacity therefore zero detections.).</p> <p>0.3 By year 3, more than 70 judges and prosecutors have received targeted training and have participated in information sharing platforms focused on IWT crime in Georgia, and have thus increased awareness and capacity to support the prosecution of IWT cases. (Baseline: no capacity to prosecute sturgeon criminal IWT cases).</p> <p>0.4 By year 4, connections are established and governance systems mapped to support sturgeon conservation outcomes in Georgia and Black Sea range states. (Baseline: no knowledge or communication with actors regarding sturgeon in Georgia or Black Sea range states.)</p> <p>0.5 By year 3, an evidenced based behaviour change strategy to shift traders,</p>	<p>0.1.1 SMART records and monitoring reports</p> <p>0.2.1 FFI records of contact with law enforcement agencies.</p> <p>0.2.2 SMART records and monitoring reports</p> <p>0.2.3 Meeting minutes & training records, including feedback forms, before & after testing results and attendance forms.</p> <p>0.3.1 Meeting minutes & training records</p> <p>0.4.1 Meeting agenda, reports and minutes</p> <p>0.5.1. Report on sturgeon consumer, trader and vendor motivations and needs.</p> <p>0.5.2. Evidenced based Behaviour Change strategy including M&E available.</p>	<p>0.1.1 Poaching equipment is detectable</p> <p>0.1.2 It is understood that Enforcement success from a zero baseline results in an increase in the number of seizures</p> <p>0.1.4. Organised crime does not become engaged in sturgeon IWT in Georgia</p> <p>0.2 Prosecutors and judges agree and are enabled, through appropriate laws and processes, to deal with IWT cases</p> <p>0.3 Legal basis for action by enforcement personnel is present</p> <p>0.4.1 The political situation between Georgia and Turkey and Turkey’s other Black Sea neighbours do not deteriorate to the point of the ending of diplomatic relations.</p> <p>0.4.2. International and regional actors are willing and able to engage on sturgeon conservation and illegal wildlife trade issues, including a secure socio-political environment that enables action and are not facing additional socio- and geo-political constraints prohibiting their engagement, especially as a result of the on-going Russian-Ukraine war.</p>

	vendors and consumers away from sturgeon meat has been developed. (Baseline: No existing research on traders, vendors and consumers and no behaviour change strategy available).		
Output 1: Local citizens protect sturgeons against poaching for illegal trade and support legal fishing activities, on the Rioni River spawning migration route.	<p>1.1 The full freshwater spawning route, 90 km of the Rioni River, is patrolled night and day by FFI's 6 local Citizen Inspectors who monitor illegal activities, during the entire spawning season in every year of the project (compared to no patrolling at all without this project)</p> <p>1.2.1 At the Rioni River, 100 riverine fishers are trained and competent to use legal fishing methods that do not harm the sturgeon, by end of year 2, effectively ensuring that the entire fisher population is trained.</p> <p>1.2.2 Awareness is raised in all these fishers and 20% of fishers agree to report illegal activities as well as sturgeon sightings to the local FFI team. (Baseline: fishers do not report to FFI at their own initiative at all.)</p> <p>1.3 Local acceptance of poaching and illegal trade decreased gradually under influence of River Council and Youth River Council, demonstrated in participation of 800 local citizens in a Council-associated activity. All thirteen members of River Council demonstrate knowledge of, and commitment to the sturgeon and its conservation in the Rioni, and all fifteen members of Youth River Council have become active sturgeon supporters.</p>	<p>1.1.1 SMART patrolling records and annually published poaching monitoring reports with data analysis by FFI.</p> <p>1.2.1.1 Trainings attendance sheets and programmes, monitoring records.</p> <p>1.2.1.2 Observations during patrols of uptake of legal fishing methods.</p> <p>1.2.2.1 Records of local fishers reporting illegal activities to FFI, to be included in the annual poaching monitoring report by FFI.</p> <p>1.3.1 Pre and post targeted interviewing of activity participants as well as River Council and Youth River Council members.</p> <p>1.3.2 Events reports, photographs.</p> <p>1.3.3 Monitoring and evaluation report including case examples on local passive and active support for conservation and law enforcement.</p>	<p>1.1 Local support for FFI is sufficient to allow safe patrolling.</p> <p>1.2 FFI retains positive image in the region and continues to maintain trust amongst fishers and local communities throughout project duration.</p> <p>1.3 River Council members remain motivated to play an active role; FFI succeeds in maintaining a trustworthy reputation in the region and parents and schoolchildren trust their children to participate in FFI activities.</p>
Output 2: Increased capacity of law enforcement and government agencies to enforce laws on poaching and trafficking of sturgeon in Georgia (Rioni River and Black Sea).	2.1 By the end of every poaching season (April-September), over 20 official Environmental Supervision Department inspectors have received on-site training and/or mentoring by FFI's poaching monitoring team on practical detection and	2.1.1 Evidence of on-site training and mentoring, included in FFI's patrol team reports and annual poaching monitoring reports	2.1 Staff turnover or reassignments at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture do not hinder capacity, and Ministry continues to invest time in sturgeon anti-poaching.

	<p>seizure of illegal equipment on the water, supported by SMART technology. As a result, on >6 occasions/month throughout poaching season each year, these Environmental Inspectors are directly applying this knowledge.</p> <p>2.2 >150 members of Georgia's national Environmental Supervision, Customs, and Police departments trained at their headquarters in Tbilisi on IWT occurrence and impacts, detection, species identification and regulations and application of crime prevention techniques in a wildlife crime context. (Baseline: no training for new staff members is in place.) Members of these departments will be present at all incidences of IWT and poaching, relevant to their competencies, as well as their active presence in policy and IWT meetings in Tbilisi against the baseline.</p> <p>2.3 By year 2, previously unavailable molecular genetics/stable isotopes techniques are in place with an Iliia State University lab technician trained to support genetic identification of trafficked sturgeon to serve as evidence in court that the sturgeon sold was wild and not a specimen from aquaculture. By year 3, law enforcement and prosecutors are familiar with the use of the technique and are using the technique in all sturgeon IWT court cases (compared to baseline: no availability of this identification at all, and species identification in fining/enforcement /prosecution remains entirely based on morphological identification).</p> <p>2.4 By year 4, Environmental Inspectors working for the Environmental Supervision Department enabled to detect IWT using the techniques developed and fine illegal sturgeon sales in the region, which was not</p>	<p>2.1.2 SMART patrolling records, including photographs of confiscations</p> <p>2.2.1 Training programmes and attendance sheets</p> <p>2.2.2 Incidents report sheets showing level of involvement from the various departments</p> <p>2.2.3 Baseline from FFI records 2018 and 2019</p> <p>2.3.1 Molecular markers/isotope analysis techniques are tested and in use.</p> <p>2.3.2 Research findings generated by the genetics study will be published in open access journals, e.g., PLOS One or equivalent. Furthermore, all experimental protocols and empirical findings will be posted on open access websites with appropriate focus.</p> <p>2.4.1 Data sharing with police and prosecutors</p> <p>2.4.2 Periodic follow-up on use of genetic sampling kits</p> <p>2.4.3 Monitoring reports</p>	<p>2.2 Officers are appropriately authorised and resourced to be able to attend trainings as well as incidences.</p> <p>2.3 Sufficient sturgeon samples are available of various species, to allow for development of molecular markers to identify species and hybrids.</p> <p>2.4 Officers are appropriately authorised and resourced to be able to undertake illegal trade monitoring.</p>
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	<p>the case previously. As a result of genetic sampling kits and methodology provided, Environmental Inspectors are collating and sharing data regarding restaurants / markets vending trafficked sturgeon throughout Georgia, which is being used to support timely, effective law enforcement. (Baseline: at current, no detection of IWT at markets.)</p>		
<p>Output 3: Increased capacity of prosecutors and judiciary to interpret wildlife laws and effect increased successful prosecution and sentencing of wildlife crime cases</p>	<p>3.1 As a result of project training on environmental law and IWT, by year 3, 50 judges are taking better informed decisions when considering and sentencing relevant wildlife crime cases (Baseline: no judges trained and wildlife crime is not sentenced like other crimes.)</p> <p>3.2 By year 2, 10 selected high court judges have gained new knowledge on Conventions (CITES, Bonn, Bern) and EU Directives (Habitats) (Baseline: no judges trained, despite interest no knowledge gathered.)</p> <p>3.3 By year 2, >20 prosecutors are skilled in best practice protocols for collecting evidence and presenting it at court (inclusive of witnesses). (Baseline: no training of prosecutors in wildlife crime at all.)</p> <p>3.4 By year 1, platform established for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcers to share relevant information to streamline the process of prosecuting traffickers (baseline: no such meetings are conducted at all, no formal exchange is taking place)</p>	<p>3.1.1 Training module available, training records plus monitoring and evaluation report on knowledge level change before and after training</p> <p>3.2.1 Pre and post knowledge surveys.</p> <p>3.2.2 Exchanges, trainings EU demonstrated in a document that outlines learning</p> <p>3.3.1 Best practice guidelines available.</p> <p>3.3.2 Pre and post training participant surveys</p> <p>3.3.3 Training attendance sheets</p> <p>3.4.1 Inter-agency data sharing protocols in place, where required.</p> <p>3.4.2 Twice-yearly platform meeting notes, programmes.</p>	<p>3.1 No change to the law to the detriment of wildlife protection.</p> <p>3.2 Language barriers do not prevent uptake of knowledge of the crucial texts.</p> <p>3.3 Law enforcement officers enabled to apply learning by their superiors and have access to the sharing Platform (Activity 3.4), which assists prosecutors in gathering evidence that is admissible in court.</p> <p>3.4 All stakeholders recognise the need for participation.</p>
<p>Output 4: Increased coordination and action by key actors within Black Sea range states to address IWT.</p>	<p>4.1 By year 4, high-level national decisionmakers within key government Ministries and agencies are regularly engaged to increase awareness of sturgeon conservation issues and inform decision making in support of sturgeon protection / conservation. (Baseline: no decisions have been taken in favour of sturgeon</p>	<p>4.1.1 Written communication and meetings notes.</p> <p>4.2.1 Written communication and meeting notes.</p> <p>4.3.1 There is evidence of data sharing on transboundary IWT.</p>	<p>4.1 Government capacity is not diverted to other, as yet unknown, issues on the political agenda, and there is some continuity in staff at the relevant Ministries.</p> <p>4.2 Relevant Turkish institutions show interest and ability to exchange knowledge on IWT, sturgeon, fisheries and Black Sea</p>

	<p>conservation and engagement is infrequent. Government is unaware and not informed)</p> <p>4.2 By end of year 4, Turkish agencies are actively engaged in knowledge sharing about transboundary trade. As a result, by year 3 pathways to prevent trafficking of Georgian sturgeon into Turkey are being identified. (Baseline: no communication or information exchange at all.)</p> <p>4.3 By year 4, data and learning from regional and international fora is being used to influence planning and decision making relating to management of Black Sea fisheries, bycatch use and IWT, and the sturgeon is acknowledged as being a specific and important subject for Black Sea management. (Baseline: sturgeon is not considered at all.)</p> <p>4.4 By Year 4, key Black Sea fisheries stakeholders and governance systems are mapped, key actors engaged, and learning from fora is being used, to inform planning for future efforts focused on the management of Black Sea fisheries, bycatch and IWT (Baseline: sturgeon is not considered at all.)</p>	<p>4.3.2 Evidence of team attendance for lobbying and information sharing at events</p> <p>4.3.3 International conference programmes, publications by FAO, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean; and by European Commission.</p> <p>4.4.1 Report produced regarding Black Sea fisheries & governance.</p>	<p>management with Georgian and international NGO counterparts.</p> <p>4.3 EU and FAO continue to promote sustainable fisheries and reducing bycatch and IWT in the Black Sea.</p>
<p>Output 5: Evidence-based behaviour change strategy developed to tackle demand post project.</p>	<p>5.1.1 By year 2, data will be available and understanding of the consumers, traders and vendors motivations and needs will be available to inform behaviour change.</p> <p>5.1.2 By end of year 3 evidence used to inform robust behaviour change strategy that will guide activities on reducing demand for sturgeon, post this project. (Baseline: no existing research data available).</p>	<p>5.1.1.1 Report on sturgeon consumer, trader and vendor motivations and needs.</p> <p>5.1.2.1 Evidenced based Behaviour Change strategy including M&E available.</p>	<p>5.1 There is no significant downturn in other legally tradable products, which would increase reliance on sturgeon.</p>

Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

- 1.1 FFI's Citizen Inspectors patrol the Rioni River to monitor poaching and IWT activities throughout the sturgeon spawning season, reporting incidents to the Environmental Supervision Department.
- 1.2 FFI trains 100 fishers on legal fishing techniques, raise awareness on sturgeon conservation, and invites and encourages them to actively support sturgeon conservation and research.
- 1.3 FFI and River Councils jointly organise 6 meetings, discussions, and awareness raising festivals and events per year, reaching 800 local villagers, teachers and schoolchildren.
- 2.1 FFI's Citizen Inspectors provide in-situ intelligence and logistical support to Environmental Supervision Department to reach, detect, handle, and confiscate illegal fishing equipment on the water.
- 2.2 FFI organises central-level training events for authorities on IWT, CITES, threats and international obligations two days a year, every year.
- 2.3 FFI and Ilia State University develop molecular techniques for species identification, provide sampling instructions to authorities, disseminate sampling kits, and provide technical support for prosecution.
- 2.4 FFI supports and encourages Environmental Supervision Department to inspect markets for illegal sturgeon sales and use genetic sampling techniques to distinguish wild meat from farmed.
- 3.1 FFI and High School of Justice develop environmental law and IWT training module for judges and the module taught annually in HSoJ's regular teaching curriculum.
- 3.2 FFI and High School of Justice facilitate learning visit of selected Georgian judges to European institution for training on EU Directives and Bern/Bonn Conventions.
- 3.3 FFI and High School of Justice develop training materials and train 20 prosecutors in best practice protocols for collecting evidence and presenting it in court.
- 3.4 FFI and High School of Justice establish a wildlife crime platform and organise 2 platform meetings every year to stimulate exchange enforcers-prosecutors-judges.
- 4.1 FFI initiates 8 exchanges with high-level national decision-makers in Georgia and organises one large multi-stakeholder meeting per year to lobby and advocate for sturgeon.
- 4.2 FFI meets several times a year with Turkish agencies and research institutions and collaborates on data collection and knowledge exchange regarding transboundary sturgeon trade.
- 4.3 FFI stimulates prioritisation of sturgeon conservation in regional planning and decision making regarding fisheries, bycatch, and IWT in 4 regional and international Black Sea fora.
- 5.1 FFI produces a supply and demand study report and develops a behaviour change strategy.

Annex 3 Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

Please note that the new standard indicators have been used where possible, but many did not align with the design of the Project and as such many outputs of the project are not covered below as they were not measurable against the new standard indicators (as the project has completed its third year and was not designed based upon the new standard indicators introduced in 2023). In short, the below is a partial representation of the project only. For a comprehensive overview of the project please use the log frame and section 3 of this report.

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 the project
IWTCFB09	1.1 The full freshwater spawning route, 90 km of the Rioni River, is patrolled night and day by FFI's 6 local Citizen Inspectors who monitor illegal activities, during the entire spawning season in every year of the project (compared to no patrolling at all without this project)	Duration or frequency of patrols by law enforcement rangers supported through the project.	Duration (hours or days)		797 hours	5,334 hours	2,316 hours	8,447 hours	Not applicable, the original indicator was not defined by number of hours.
IWTCFB24	Output 2: Increased capacity of law enforcement and government agencies to enforce laws on poaching and trafficking of sturgeon in Georgia (Rioni River and Black Sea). Output 3: Increased capacity of prosecutors and judiciary to interpret wildlife laws and effect increased successful prosecution and sentencing of wildlife crime cases.	Number of government institutions/ departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues	Government institutions	Govt. Organisation Type (local, national, treasury, planning, environmental, agricultural, forestry)	1. High School of Justice (HSoJ) 2. School of Natural Sciences and Engineering, Ilia State University (ISU) 3. Environmental Supervision Department 4. Police 5. Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia 6. Ministry of Finance of Georgia, Revenue Service,	Same as Year 1	Same as Year 1	8	N/A

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 the project
					Customs Department 7. Prosecutors office of Georgia 8. Judicial authority of Georgia				
IWTCF-D01 (Core)	<p>3.1 As a result of project training on environmental law and IWT, by year 3, 50 judges are taking better informed decisions when considering and sentencing relevant wildlife crime cases (Baseline: no judges trained and wildlife crime is not sentenced like other crimes.)</p> <p>3.2 By year 2, 10 selected high court judges have gained new knowledge on Conventions (CITES, Bonn, Bern) and EU Directives (Habitats) (Baseline: no judges trained, despite interest no knowledge gathered.)</p>	Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project	People/ Number trained	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group: Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Nationals, public sector, civil society, private sector; Type of training should be outlined (i.e. Sustainable Livelihoods, Law Enforcement etc.)	5 (It is noted that 5 judges specifically received ToT to support them to train other judges, this was a design choice not specifically set out in the original indicators but was decided as a sound approach at a later date. It is further noted that the ToT training was just one part of the training delivered to judges under the project)	-	-	5	Not applicable, the original indicator was not defined in such a way.
IWTCF-D05	N/A	Number of postgraduate students who received training.	People/ Number trained		1 (PhD)	2 (PhD)	3 (two masters, and one PhD)		N/A
IWTCF-D12	2.3 By year 2, previously unavailable molecular genetics/stable isotopes techniques are in place with an Iliia State University lab technician trained to support genetic identification of trafficked sturgeon to serve as evidence in court that the sturgeon sold was wild and not a specimen from aquaculture. By year 3, law	Number of papers published in peer reviewed journals	Number	Annual downloads, Journal.	0	1	1	2	Not applicable, the original indicator was not defined in such a way.

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 the project
	enforcement and prosecutors are familiar with the use of the technique and are using the technique in all sturgeon IWT court cases (compared to baseline: no availability of this identification at all, and species identification in fining/enforcement /prosecution remains entirely based on morphological identification).								
IWTCF-D13	N/A	Number of other publications produced	Number	Annual downloads, publication typology.	0	0	1 (grey literature report)	1	Not applicable, the original indicator was not defined in such a way.
IWTCF-D20	3.4 By year 1, platform established for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcers to share relevant information to streamline the process of prosecuting traffickers (baseline: no such meetings are conducted at all, no formal exchange is taking place)	Number of webinar attendees.	Number	Attendee gender balance, national/international balance, number of webinars, live/catch-up views	42	75	(taking place in Y4)	117	Not applicable, the original indicator was not defined in such a way.

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)
Rare but Not Gone: A Relict Population of the Black Sea Ship Sturgeon <i>Acipenser nudiiventris</i> Persists in the Rioni River, Georgia	Peer Reviewed Journal Article	Tamar Beridze, Fleur Scheele, Tamari Edisherashvili, Cort Anderson 2022	Female	Georgian	MDPI <i>Diversity</i> Basel, Switzerland	https://doi.org/10.3390/d14121102 (copy also saved in means of verification folder – link above)
Legal Recourse for Illegal Wildlife Trade: An Analysis of Georgia's Liability Legislation	Report (grey literature)	Maribel Rodriguez, Ucha Dzimistarishvili and Jacob Phelps	Female	Unknown	FFI	Copy saved in means of verification folder – link above