

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/>).

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2022

IWT Challenge Fund Project Information

Project reference	IWTR6S2/1018
Project title	Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Nigeria-Cameroon Green Corridor
Country	Nigeria
Lead partner	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
Project partners	Africa Nature Investors Foundation (ANI) Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Bauchi State Nigeria National Park Service
IWTFCF grant value	£430,000
Start/end dates of project	1 October 2020 to 30 September 2023
Reporting period	April 2021-March 2022 Annual Report Two
Project Leader name	Andrew Dunn
Project website/blog/social media	nigeria.wcs.org Twitter: @WCS_Nigeria and @ANI_Foundation
Report authors and date	Andrew Dunn, Tunde Morakinyo and Nacha Geoffrey

1. Project summary

A transboundary Green Corridor (see Map 1 below) to connect eight protected areas between Nigeria and Cameroon has long been proposed to protect important populations of elephant, lion, chimpanzee and pangolins. The border region between the two countries is a hotspot for illegal wildlife trade (IWT) and there is a well-established transboundary smuggling route for ivory and pangolin scales from central Africa into Nigeria, where it is then exported to Asia. Nigeria is also considered by CITES as Africa’s centre for the illegal pangolin trade, much of which originates from neighboring Cameroon. With as many as 1 million pangolins killed annually the trade is clearly unsustainable. Illegal trade in lion cubs for the pet trade, as well as body parts for traditional medicine, threatens the small and vulnerable lion population in Yankari Game Reserve. Trade in chimpanzees for bushmeat, for juju markets, and for the pet trade threatens the chimpanzee population in Gashaka Gumti National Park, the largest stronghold for the species in Nigeria. Although CITES suspended all commercial trade of rosewood from Nigeria in 2018, logging of the species continues and is now spreading to protected areas.

Regional insecurity and weak inter-agency cooperation allows IWT to flourish. At the same time Nigerian authorities have little existing capacity and knowledge of IWT, and a lack of information prevents development of strategies to tackle the problem. The specific aim of the project is to strengthen the green corridor by addressing illegal wildlife trade in and around Yankari Game Reserve (YGR) and Gashaka Gumti National Park (GGNP) as well as along the Nigeria-Cameroon border. Regional insecurity and general lawlessness surrounding both protected areas have allowed illegal wildlife trade to flourish and has frustrated government efforts to promote tourism at both YGR and GGNP. Insecurity associated with poorly managed protected areas adversely affects the surrounding communities, including kidnapping, armed robbery, and cattle rustling. Continued insecurity in the region is also a major hindrance to government efforts to alleviate poverty through ecotourism.



Map 1: Nigeria-Cameroon Transboundary Green Corridor

The project focuses on Nigeria where protection is weakest but also hopes to gather intelligence in Cameroon on criminal networks trading wildlife across the international border. A needs-assessment in local communities will be an entry point for gathering IWT intelligence and will inform an alternative livelihoods programme around Yankari Game Reserve and Gashaka Gumti National Park. Working with law enforcement agencies and local communities we will gather IWT intelligence; reduce IWT and improve regional security by fostering improved inter-agency cooperation and capacity building of relevant agencies (Customs, NESREA and Police).

2. Project partnerships

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Africa Nature Investors Foundation (ANI) jointly developed the project design and have maintained a close collaborative relationship throughout the project, sharing technical knowledge and exchanging ideas on a regular basis. For example, WCS advised ANI on the ranger training at Gashaka Gumti National Park and ANI advised WCS on the social surveys and tools to be used in Yankari. As far as possible we are using the same methods and similar approaches at both sites, such as the development of intelligence networks.

WCS and ANI have strong partnership agreements with the National Parks Service and Bauchi State Government respectively, and as legal custodians of Gashaka Gumti National Park and Yankari Game Reserve they represent our most important partners. ANI has a 30-year partnership agreement with the National Park Service for the co-management of Gashaka Gumti National Park and WCS has a 10-year memorandum of understanding with Bauchi State Government for the co-management of Yankari Game Reserve. These partnerships are essential to our work. WCS and ANI also have strong partnerships with traditional authorities in the local area – including the three District Heads around Yankari and the Paramount Ruler (Lamdo) of the Gashaka Chiefdom. Working with traditional authorities was an important first step in the social surveys that have now been completed around YGR and GGNP as part of this project. Local communities are key partners in our work to help tackle illegal wildlife trade and save elephants, lions, chimpanzees, and pangolins in Nigeria. We are working with local communities to develop an informant network around YGR and GGNP and through the development of an alternative livelihood strategy.

WCS has developed strong partnerships with the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) and the Nigeria Customs Service and we have recently extended this relationship to the transboundary Green Corridor in Adamawa State on the border with Cameroon. WCS and ANI work closely with the Local Government Administrations (Alkaleri LGA in YGR and Gashaka LGA in GGNP) – particularly through the development of local security partnerships, an important part of the project to strengthen security for local communities and for wildlife. We discontinued our relationship with Maisha Consulting Limited and have been working instead with Inquisitio Ltd and the WCS regional Counter Trafficking office for Africa. A new counter trafficking intelligence report has been produced. In Yankari we are working with a Lagos-based security firm to advise on the development of an intelligence network and management. WCS and ANI maintain strong relationships with the British High Commission in Abuja and the British Deputy High Commission (BDHC) in Lagos. Information on project progress has been shared with relevant staff by email and through regular participation in the ‘Friends of Nigeria Wildlife’ group that was established by the BDHC. WCS and ANI have utilised several technical specialists to help with certain project activities including Translantic Development Limited (TDL), the Centre for Micro-Enterprise Development (CMD) and staff from the University of Jos who completed community baseline surveys/needs assessments and development of an alternative livelihood strategy for GGNP and Yankari. We are also working with a well-regarded international ranger training company to train rangers in GGNP and YGR and to help develop a patrol strategy for rangers in GGNP.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1. Improved understanding of IWT within the Green Corridor through community surveys and gathering of intelligence from communities, Nigerian and Cameroonian agencies.

Activity 1.1 Conduct community baseline surveys and gathering of IWT intelligence.

Social baseline surveys/community needs assessments have been completed in YGR and the final report distributed to project partners. A team of three consultants from the University of Jos surveyed a sample of twelve communities around YGR (four communities in each of the three districts). Findings from the YGR survey indicate that IWT is not prevalent in the local area although there are several hunters based in the communities surrounding the reserve. There is clearly a lack of basic infrastructure including safe water, roads, and health centres in many of the communities surrounding YGR. Although the government has built schools in many of the communities surveyed, many of the schools lack teachers and are not functioning adequately. Other problems include the lack of veterinary support for their livestock and lack of government support for improved crop production (new varieties, fertiliser and access to credit). The final report is attached and listed in Annex 4.

A social survey of the settled communities living within GGNP and a sample of settled communities living in the support zone outside the park boundary has been completed (a final report is attached). In October 2021 ANI commissioned a survey of the pastoralists who use the park for grazing during the dry season by two pastoralist specialists. The report is still in

preparation, but key findings suggest that incursions by nomadic Fulani who set fire to the park in the dry season (to improve grazing by fresh flush grasses) is by far the biggest threat to the park. Surveys found the cattle herders come from 3 sources: semi-nomadic Fulani living in park enclaves; semi-nomadic Fulani living outside the park boundary; and nomadic Fulani from other parts of Nigeria and other parts of West Africa (from as far afield as Central African Republic, Cameroon, and Niger). The park is worst affected during the dry season when nomadic and semi-nomadic Fulani groups come to occupy a large proportion of the total park area. The semi-nomadic Fulani living in the park are unhappy to have fully nomadic Fulani coming into the park because they compete with them for grazing. In addition, there can be a criminal element to the fully nomadic Fulani that make the resident Fulani in the park feel unsafe. Traditionally herders would pay farmers to graze their cattle on farmland in the dry season. However, in recent years, farmers have become antagonistic to Fulani grazing on their land, forcing them to use the park instead. This is partly due to farmers perception of security risks in relation to the Fulani and the Fulani asking for farmer permission less and less (because they think it will be refused). There is a huge increase in hunting in the park in the dry season, but it is not clear if the hunters are the same people as the Fulani coming into the park.

With increased ranger patrols, there has been a reduction in an influx of cattle herders and an improvement in the security situation within the park. This has led to increased community intelligence on incursions because communities want rangers to patrol near their villages to make them feel safe. In order to resolve the conflict between the need for grazing land by the Fulani and the need to protect the park for animals (and to reduce the Illegal Trade in Wildlife), there are two solutions which the project will have to develop: 1. Identify and secure two grazing reserves (one to the north of the park and one to the south) outside the park that can serve as grazing alternatives to the park itself 2. Resolving conflict between farmers and herders outside the park so that farmers and herders can co-exist relieving grazing pressure on the park. Although there is much more work needed going forward to gain the trust of the Fulani, success will have profound positive effects on IWT in the region by reducing hunting and grazing pressures on wildlife, improving livelihoods, and reducing the pressure on communities to engage in IWT.

Activity 1.2 Training and mentoring of informant network around YGR and GGNP.

In YGR we worked with a Lagos-based company to provide training and mentoring for four WCS staff who manage the existing informant network. The need for additional training is currently being discussed. In GGNP, the social surveys that took place in April/May 2021 and October/November 2022 have allowed the project to strengthen relationships between the park and communities. Communities have been supportive of increased ranger patrols because many of the illegal loggers, cattle herders and miners are the same people who are bandits raiding villages in the project area. In recent months, we have received increased intelligence that have resulted in ranger patrols stopping illegal activity that impacts wildlife including hunting, illegal cattle grazing, logging, and artisanal mining in the park.

Activity 1.3 Gathering of IWT intelligence from Cameroon.

We have established strong links with the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and the African Wildlife Foundation to gather IWT intelligence from Cameroon that can be used to strengthen the transboundary wildlife trafficking report (see 1.5 below) and to provide actionable intelligence on individuals and groups engaged in trafficking wildlife in the transboundary region.

ANI has started to exchange information with Faro National Park in Cameroon and has facilitated two zoom calls between the two parks to learn about each other's activities and have found that we face common problems. Cattle herders cross the border between the two parks setting fire to forests (to improve grazing for their cows). We have agreed that a coordinated approach to managing pastoralist issues will be important. Similarly, criminal networks hunting in the park and trading in illegal wildlife products operate across the international boundary separating the two parks. We have agreed to work more closely in the coming year to coordinate ranger patrols.

Activity 1.4 Gathering of IWT intelligence from Nigerian agencies.

We have established strong working relationships with the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and with the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA). The NCS recently established a Special Wildlife Office in Lagos with support from Focused Conservation Solutions and others. Inquisitio Ltd completed a field trip to Cross River State in February/March 2022 to gather IWT intelligence from the region.

Activity 1.5 Produce a Transboundary Wildlife Trafficking Report.

Based on 1.4 above a counter trafficking intelligence report has been produced by Inquisitio Ltd. Given the confidential nature of the report it has only been shared with trusted NGO partners and not with the Nigeria Customs Service or NESREA. A copy of the confidential report is available on request to the WCS Counter Trafficking Coordinator for Africa.

Activity 1.6 Produce an alternative livelihood strategy for communities surrounding YGR and GGNP.

The community baseline surveys/needs assessments completed in YGR and GGNP are helping to guide efforts to improve livelihoods in the communities surrounding Yankari Game Reserve and Gashaka Gumti National Park. For example, the scarcity of clean drinking water in communities surrounding YGR is helping guide the development of a new USAID-funded project 'Watershed Protection for Safe and Sustainable Water Supply'. In YGR, the recommended livelihood interventions included: veterinary support for pastoralists; planting of tree species for firewood and NTFPs; agricultural extension support to include new improved crop varieties; improved access to safe water; fuel efficient wood stoves; and beekeeping. In GGNP, key recommendations are support for more intensive, sustainable agriculture, establishment of woodlots and fuel efficient cookstoves and support to pastoralist livelihoods. We have established and registered eight women's groups in 8 support zone villages surrounding GGNP for the harvest and processing of shea nuts from the park's support zone forests. They are about to undergo financial training before they start trial harvesting, processing, and sale of shea butter.

Output 2. Improved levels of border control between Nigeria and Cameroon by fostering enhanced transboundary cooperation, training and capacity building of local enforcement agencies result in more arrests by law enforcement agencies.

Activity 2.1 Facilitate inter-agency training courses for Customs, Police, Army and NESREA.

We have established strong working relationships with Customs, Police, Army and NESREA in the transboundary area. A two-day capacity building workshop for 32 customs officers from Taraba and Adamawa States on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trafficking and Trade was provided in March 2022 in Yola (a full report is attached and listed in Annex 4). Key findings from the workshop were: there is insufficient knowledge about IWT, skills, and training to officers who police the borders; the Adamawa/Taraba border area is not seen as a worthy posting so many officers try to avoid being posted there; limited NCS provided during the court process; there is insufficient understanding of their roles by some of the officers and a need for improved of proper intelligence gathering training and resources for logistics.

Activity 2.2 Provide logistical support for IWT operations within the Green Corridor by the Nigeria Customs Service.

This activity has not yet been done. However, based on findings from the Yola workshop (activity 2.1 above) and working with the newly created Wildlife Crime Office of the Nigeria Customs Service we have identified certain key individuals to help facilitate IWT operations in the transboundary area and expect to be able to provide the necessary logistical support soon.

Output 3. Improved levels of security and stability for the region by fostering inter-agency collaboration and establishing security partnerships between 2 protected areas and local communities.

Activity 3.1 Organise ranger training in YGR and GGNP.

In YGR, refresher ranger training was provided in September-November 2021. The rangers were separated into two groups and each group was trained for 21 days. A total of 61 rangers participated in both interventions, and 58 successfully completed the course. The ranger training

focused on renewing practical skills, including weapons handling and safety, drill, ambush techniques, patrol techniques, arrest techniques, physical fitness, information gathering and informant networks, marksmanship, first aid, field deployment, human rights, community safeguards, and code of conduct. The training report is attached and listed in Annex 4. In GGNP we trained another 16 park rangers and 7 direct recruits from the local community bringing the total number of trained rangers to 66. All the rangers come from the local communities. Additional training for rangers had been planned for January/February 2022, however the park appealed for the ranger training to be delayed until the onset of the rains in May/June 2022. This is because the dry season months are when the rangers of the park are most over stretched having to constantly react to incursions of loggers, cattle herders, poachers, and artisanal miners. Ranger refresher training has thus been delayed until then.

Activity 3.2 Purchase of essential field equipment for rangers in YGR and GGNP.

Activity was completed in Year 1.

Activity 3.3 Provide support for law enforcement patrols by rangers in YGR and GGNP.

In YGR, 135 ranger patrols were facilitated by WCS, covering 16,539 km over a total of 7,243 patrol man-days. A total of 42 arrests were made including 30 hunters, 10 firewood collectors, and 2 fishermen and all 42 were successfully prosecuted. In GGNP, rangers have been systematically patrolling 30% of the park (mostly the more accessible SW of the park). We encountered far more logging and poaching than expected. GGNP park rangers have made many arrests and seizures in the park. ANI has undertaken an analysis of arrests made over the period between April 2021 and March 2022. In total during the 12-month period, 276 offenders were arrested, including 29 loggers, 30 bushmeat poachers, 78 artisanal miners, 125 cattle herders, and 7 trespassers. A total of 26 motorcycles, 3 logging trucks and 7 Toyota Hilux pickup trucks (used for logging operations) were confiscated and 46 poachers' camps were destroyed.

Activity 3.4 Formation of Conservation Security partnerships in YGR and GGNP.

In YGR, we had numerous informal meetings with the police and army to maintain security in and around the game reserve. A total of 33 joint patrols were arranged with the army to strengthen security in the communities surrounding the reserve. In GGNP, ANI has helped foster increased collaboration between the park rangers, the army, and the police. In the north of the park, all three agencies collaborate on patrols and recently arrested three lorry loads of logs being evacuated from the park. This inter-agency collaboration has been very effective and will strengthen protection of the park and a reduction in IWT activities in the region.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1. Improved understanding of IWT within the Green Corridor through community surveys and gathering of intelligence from communities, and Nigerian and Cameroonian agencies.

Community needs assessments were completed in YGR and GGNP in Year 1, improving our understanding of IWT within the Green Corridor. Additional surveys were completed in Year 2 at GGNP. A counter trafficking intelligence report (Transboundary Wildlife Trafficking Report) has been produced by Inquisitio Ltd, a copy of which is attached.

Output 2. Improved levels of border control between Nigeria and Cameroon by promoting training and capacity building of local enforcement agencies which results in more arrests by law enforcement agencies.

A two-day capacity building workshop for 32 customs officers from Taraba and Adamawa States on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trafficking and Trade was provided in March 2022 in Yola (a full report is attached and listed in Annex 4). No arrests have yet been made.

Output 3. Improved levels of security and stability for the region by fostering inter-agency collaboration and establishing security partnerships between 2 protected areas and local communities.

Support for ranger patrols in YGR and GGNP has improved levels of security and stability for local communities and wildlife. Security partnerships at both sites are helping to increase collaboration between park rangers, army, and police. This inter-agency collaboration is helping to strengthen protection of both sites and reduce IWT activities in the region.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Project Outcome: Enhanced capacity and commitment to combat illegal trade in elephant ivory, pangolin scales, chimpanzees and lion body parts by key enforcement agencies leads to greater rates of successful convictions.

Although key partnerships have now been established, relatively little progress has been made towards the project's intended outcome, and no arrests have yet been made in the Nigeria-Cameroon Green Corridor (outside of the two protected areas). However, there is growing interest and increasing political will to tackle IWT, and, with the necessary intelligence and training we are confident that arrests will be made in Year Three and that the arrests will result in successful prosecutions.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 1: Relevant government authorities maintain current interest in addressing IWT.

Comment: there is growing interest in addressing IWT in Nigeria. The Nigeria Customs Service recently established a Special Wildlife Office in Lagos, with support from the NGO Focused Conservation. There are also quarterly inter-agency meetings (Nigeria Stakeholders Meeting on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade) organized by the Ministry of Environment and funded by UNODC.

Assumption 2: Government and law enforcement partners act on intelligence provided.

Comment: this assumption remains valid and critical to the success of the project.

Assumption 3: Corruption does not interfere unduly with the programme.

Comment: this assumption remains valid and critical to the success of the project.

Assumption 4: There is sufficient political will to ensure that all arrests are effectively prosecuted.

Comment: this is a critical assumption, we are still waiting to hear news about the prosecution of the large seizure of pangolin scales, ivory and lion bones that was made by Customs in January 2021. In GGNP, it has been discovered that many of the arrests made by the park rangers are settled out of court as a means of generating revenue for the cash-strapped National Park Service.

Assumption 5: Communities are incentivised to form conservation-security partnerships.

Comment: this assumption remains valid; communities are generally keen to support conservation and work with rangers to improve local security levels which are generally worsening.

Assumption 6: Communities willing to be surveyed and to actively participate in data collection.

Comment: surveys at both YGR and GGNP completed with active participation from local communities; additional surveys completed at GGNP this year.

Assumption 7: Law enforcement and judiciary partners continue to collaborate with WCS and ANI at Yankari Game Reserve and Gashaka Gumti National Park and make records available.

Comment: there is good collaboration between WCS/ANI and law enforcement and judiciary partners at YGR and GGNP.

Assumption 8: Customs, police and prosecutors willing to collaborate with WCS and ANI and maintain an interest in capacity building activities.

Comment: this assumption remains valid and critical to the success of the project.

Assumption 9: Government agencies and individuals are committed to addressing the gender imbalance.

Comment: this assumption remains valid and critical to the success of the project.

Assumption 10: Nigerian agencies incentivised to follow arrests through the courts resulting in effective deterrence of further offenses.

Comment: this assumption remains valid and critical to the success of the project; in GGNP more work is needed to ensure that arrests are prosecuted through the courts and that offences are not merely 'compounded' and settled out of court.

Assumption 11: Government authorities are willing to come together to develop a coordinated response to IWT.

Comment: in April 2022, the Federal Ministry of Environment published a National Strategy to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime in Nigeria, with support from UNODC.

Assumption 12: YGR and GGNP willing to have their rangers trained and equipped.

Comment: rangers already trained in GGNP and YGR, additional ranger training in GGNP planned for later this year.

Assumption 13: Local communities surrounding Yankari Game Reserve and Gashaka Gumti National Park are interested in joining conservation-security partnerships.

Comment: community representatives are an important part of the Alkaleri Security Council (YGR).

Assumption 14: These same partnerships are more effective at tackling IWT in the Nigeria-Cameroon Green corridor

Comment: this assumption remains valid and critical to the success of the project although the partnerships have been more effective at tackling IWT and insecurity at the local level, than within the Nigeria-Cameroon Green corridor itself.

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

Impact: *Stronger law enforcement disrupts and degrades illegal wildlife trade within the Nigeria-Cameroon Green Corridor and provides improved security for wildlife and local communities.*

Strengthened law enforcement at both YGR and GGNP (see activity 3.3 above) has weakened illegal wildlife trade in the region and improved security for local communities and wildlife (critical populations of savanna elephants, Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzees, and West African lions). Although the project has yet to make a significant impact on the illegal wildlife trade within the Nigeria-Cameroon Green Corridor, recent training for officers of the Nigeria Customs Service is expected to yield results in Year 3.

4. Thematic focus

The project focuses on two key themes:

Strengthening law enforcement: providing support for ranger patrols in YGR and GGNP; training of law enforcement agencies to raise awareness of IWT and development of security partnerships to improve levels of security for local communities and wildlife.

Developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people directly affected by IWT: community baseline surveys/needs assessments completed in YGR and GGNP are helping to guide efforts to improve livelihoods in surrounding communities. We have established and registered 8 women's groups in 8 support zone villages surrounding GGNP for the harvest and processing of shea nuts from the park's support zone forests. They are about to undergo financial training before they start trial harvesting, processing, and sale of shea butter

5. Impact on species in focus

As a result of improved law enforcement within the region, critical populations of savanna elephants, Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzees and lions are now more secure. There are no relevant indicators in the logframe.

6. Project support to poverty reduction

The project is working to reduce poverty by disrupting the illegal wildlife trade which negatively affects local economies and increases levels of insecurity. The project beneficiaries are the communities in and around YGR and GGNP. The recently completed social baseline survey/needs assessments are being used to help design improved livelihoods programme for the surrounding communities. At a time when security across Nigeria is worsening dramatically, the conservation security partnerships around YGR and GGNP are helping to address security threats to local people (armed robbery, kidnapping, and cattle rustling) as well as security for wildlife. There are no specific poverty indicators in the logframe.

7. Consideration of gender equality issues

While the project does not directly affect gender inequality, it very much takes gender equality into account. During the social baseline/community needs surveys in YGR and GGNP, we held specific meetings with women's groups in the surveyed villages and will use the results of the surveys to design specific interventions that will target and empower women in the design of the alternative livelihoods programme. In GGNP we have established and registered eight women's groups in eight support zone villages for the harvest and processing of shea nuts from the park's support zone forests. Training in financial management will be provided before they start trial harvesting, processing, and sale of shea butter later this year.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

By carefully monitoring key indicators of achievement, we can demonstrate that project outputs and activities contribute to the project outcome: *enhanced capacity and commitment to combat illegal trade in elephant ivory, pangolin scales, chimpanzees and lion body parts by key enforcement agencies leads to greater rates of successful convictions*. We are monitoring progress of the project based on the following key indicators (taken from the logframe):

- Number of arrests made. *Recorded in project database.*
- Number of successful prosecutions. *Recorded in project database.*
- Number of communities surveyed during social baseline/community needs assessments. *Recorded in survey report.*
- Number of staff from law enforcement agencies trained. *Recorded in training workshop report.*
- Number of rangers trained and equipped. *Recorded in training workshop report.*
- Number of conservation-security partnerships established. *Minutes of each partnership meeting.*

Responsibility for M&E work is shared equally project WCS and ANI. In addition to the indicators listed above, WCS monitors levels of elephant and lion poaching in YGR. Information generated from M&E work is shared amongst partners/stakeholders by email and through regular calls and online meetings.

9. Lessons learnt

- Support for ranger patrols has worked well at both sites to strengthen levels of security for local communities and wildlife.
- Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, we were unable to complete all the planned training workshops for law enforcement agencies and have a significant underspend this year.
- Plan ranger training for the wet season when threats to the park have reduced.
- Many arrests made in GGNP are settled out of court as a means of generating revenue.

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

Not applicable.

11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

No additional comments.

12. Sustainability and legacy

Yankari Game Reserve and Gashaka Gumti National Park are both important sites for biodiversity conservation in Nigeria, with growing profiles within the country. YGR contains one of only two remaining populations of the critically endangered West African lion in Nigeria and the largest elephant population in the country. GGNP is the most important site in Nigeria for the endangered Nigeria-Cameroon Chimpanzee and is an important pangolin stronghold. There is growing interest in wildlife conservation in Nigeria and there is increased interest in the project via social media, a key tool for engaging young people and politicians across the country.

As part of the project's open access plan, quarterly and annual reports from YGR are posted on the WCS website <https://nigeria.wcs.org/> and reports from GGNP are posted on the ANI website. Project activities implemented under this project are also shared on Facebook @YankariWCS and @AfricaNatureInvestors and via Twitter @WCS_Nigeria and @ANI_Foundation

The proposed exit strategy for the project remains valid. WCS and ANI both have well established and growing programs in Nigeria, with a long-term commitment to conservation in the country. We are gradually building the capacity of government partners, through technical training and knowledge management systems. The enhanced capacity of government agencies, increased political will and wider support for wildlife conservation will catalyse greater commitment from individuals and agencies to combat wildlife trafficking, helping to sustain the project's results in the long-term. WCS and ANI recognise the need for continued funding to support counter wildlife trafficking activities in Nigeria, including complimentary initiatives funded by USAID and the US Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

13. IWT Challenge Fund identity

The UK Government's contribution to this project through the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund is recognised and acknowledged in quarterly and annual reports shared with partners and stakeholders in the region and publicly on the WCS and ANI websites. This project forms part of a larger ongoing conservation programme aimed at protecting lions, elephants, chimpanzees and pangolins in Yankari Game Reserve and Gashaka Gumti National Park, and funding from the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund is complemented by funding from other sources. Many of the activities funded by the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, such as the social baseline surveys, are distinct activities however other activities, such as support for ranger patrols are clearly part of a larger programme. Both WCS and ANI have an active social media presence and regularly acknowledge support from the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund on Twitter and Facebook. We have also sought to recognise UK Government's contribution to our work in press releases and press statements.

14. Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery

The Covid-19 global pandemic affected our ability to implement certain conservation activities during the first year of the grant and due to the risks involved we postponed the project start date until 1 October 2021. Although we were able to start certain activities at the site-level, other activities such as large training workshops were postponed until Year Two.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic there is heightened public interest in the risk factors that lead to such events. The commercial wildlife trade and associated commercial wildlife markets for human consumption have been widely recognized as a major risk factor. Through habitat

destruction and deforestation, we are creating more edges for viruses from wildlife to spill over to humans. Declines in the integrity of ecosystems have been linked to increased risk of emerging infectious disease outbreaks that originate in wildlife. The project outcome, which aims to disrupt the illegal wildlife trade, is clearly linked to reducing the risk of future pandemics. Although the trade in live animals is not specifically targeted by the project, by preserving the integrity of existing protected areas we will reduce the chance of future spill over events. WCS is actively promoting the One Health approach, which recognizes the essential link between humans, wildlife, domesticated animals and plants, and all nature; and ensures the conservation and protection of biodiversity which, interwoven with intact and functional ecosystems, provides the critical foundation infrastructure of life, health, and wellbeing on our planet.

In Year Two we reduced the frequency of both domestic and international travel and used virtual meetings much more frequently. Some project activities in Year Two were delayed because of Covid-19 travel and quarantine restrictions although most of these restrictions have now been lifted.

15. Safeguarding

Please tick this box if any safeguarding or human rights violations have occurred during this financial year. If you have answered yes, please ensure these are reported to ODA.safeguarding@defra.gov.uk as indicated in the T&Cs.

The WCS Code of Conduct requires compliance with a set of principles and organizational policies including respect for human rights, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, combatting human trafficking, respect in the workplace, prevention of harassment/sexual harassment, and protection of whistleblowers. Failure to comply with the WCS Code of Conduct and its specific social safeguards is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. In addition to its Code of Conduct, WCS has in place specific policies and commitments focused on safeguarding and protection of human rights in the context of our conservation work, including: WCS Social Safeguard Mechanisms, WCS Safeguarding Policy and WCS Global Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). Children and vulnerable adults are not the focus of WCS's field activities. WCS does, as a matter of policy and practice, evaluate the impacts of our work on vulnerable populations to ensure engagement in planning and decision-making.

16. Project expenditure

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

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2021/22 Grant (£)	2021/22 Total actual IWT Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)	██████	██████	█	
Consultancy costs	██████	██████	█	Only a portion of planned IWT intelligence survey implemented during reporting period due to delays caused by international logistics/travel restrictions.
Overhead Costs	██████	██████	█	As part of overhead cost is calculated on percentage of total project cost, variance on this budget category is due to overall project underspend
Travel and subsistence	██████	██████	█	
Operating Costs	██████	██████	█	Training workshops for law enforcement agencies & informants did not hold during the period due to Covid restrictions and non-availability of training organisations.
Capital items (see below)	█	█	█	
Others (see below)	██████	██████	█	Cybertrackers yet to be purchased and some purchased items yet to be shipped due to delays encountered during the reporting period. This resulted in a lower recorded shipping cost.
TOTAL				

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

Not applicable.

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	Yes
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk putting the project number in the subject line.	Yes
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the subject line.	Yes
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	Yes
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	No
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Yes
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Yes
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	