



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report (due 31st October 2021)

Project reference	IWT087
Project title	Combating Palawan pangolin trafficking: empowering community-based protection and pro-active enforcement
Country(ies)	Philippines
Lead organisation	Zoological Society of London
Partners(s)	Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS), Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau/Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade (DENR-BMB/POGI), Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (DENR-CENRO), Local Government Units of El Nido and Taytay, Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC), and Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)
Project leader	Godofredo T. Villapando Jr.
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	October 2021, (HYR1)
Project website/blog/social media	www.zsl.org

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

A. Project implementation plan

The project start date is approximately five months later than originally planned due to the delay in awarding funding (we received the formal offer letter on 23 September). We started the mobilisation activities as indicated in the project implementation plan after receiving notification on 20 August that the project had been approved for funding. This included creating the team composition and refining the project plan. As part of refining the project plan, the team conducted a series of work planning sessions to update the logframe and budget to reflect the later start date. We also incorporated the helpful feedback from the IWT Advisory Group on how to strengthen the project. The changes were reflected in the changed request submitted on 03 September.

Our field team has started setting up the field office in Taytay (site 1), while we are still searching for potential sites to establish a field office in El Nido (site 2).

As part of our project inception plan, our team had an online session with one of our partners, the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC) – an environmental NGO committed to helping communities uphold their constitutional right to a healthful and balanced ecology. The online meeting focused on refining on the engagement of ELAC in this project, which includes

formation of local and paralegals from among law enforcement volunteers and local government staff; site-based law enforcement clinics; and advocacy and network building with prosecutors and court judges. Inception meetings with other project partners are planned for October and we are in the process of developing collaboration agreements where relevant.

B. Darwin Initiative and Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund New Projects Workshop

Our field team attended the series of virtual webinars and workshop sessions for new projects awarded under Round 7 of Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund. All existing staff (Godofredo Villapando - Project Leader, Charity Apale - Project Manager, Nesa Medina - Finance/Admin Assistant, Ronald Amada - Community Organizer, Darlyn Coroña - Project Officer and John Tuboc - Research Assistant) attended the Finance, admin and technical reporting webinar on 13th September. Meanwhile, Project Manager Charity Apale and Project Officer Darlyn Coroña attended both the workshop sessions on Community Strategy and M&E Plan, and Common issues & complementarities and sharing experiences on M&E.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for COVID-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The delay in awarding funding has resulted in a shortened project timeframe and associated cost savings (primarily staff time in Y1). We submitted a change request to modify the budget in order to allocate some Y1 funding to Years 2 and 3, and to recruit additional staff members in the first half of the project to help ensure the project can be delivered within the new reduced timeframe.

2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of COVID-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

Most of the government offices in the Philippines have adopted a skeleton workforce system wherein they will be operational but with limited workforces as a COVID-19 management protocol. Meanwhile, some of our government agency partners are not even allowing face-to-face appointments. As an adaptive response, our team is organising an online project inception meeting in October 2021, inviting our partners to join us as we present and discuss the project.

2c. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: Yes

Formal change request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

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

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

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

No.

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

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

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