

## 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: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

### IWT Challenge Fund Project Information

Project reference	IWT087
Project title	Combating Palawan pangolin trafficking: empowering community-based protection and pro-active enforcement
Country/ies	Philippines
Lead partner	Zoological Society of London
Project partner(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)
IWTCF grant value	£559,553
Start/end dates of project	1 September 2021 to 31 March 2024
Reporting period (e.g. April 2021-Mar 2022) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	1 September 2021 to 31 March 2022; Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Godofredo T. Villapando Jr.
Project website/blog/social media	<a href="http://www.zsl.org">www.zsl.org</a>
Report author(s) and date	Carly Waterman and Charity Apale; 30 April 2022

### 1. Project summary

Endemic to Palawan province, western Philippines, the Critically Endangered Palawan pangolin (*Manis culionensis*) has the smallest range of all extant pangolin species. It is experiencing severe ongoing population declines (estimated at >80% for 2012-2033), primarily due to overexploitation for illegal trade. Poaching and trafficking occurs despite an international trade ban (CITES zero export quota [2000-2016]; Appendix 1 listing [2017]) and the prohibition, since

2004, of all collection and trade under the Philippine Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

There are currently no enabling conditions for communities at the two project sites (Lake Manguao, Taytay municipality [site 1] and Barangay Teneguiban, El Nido municipality [site 2], both in Northern Palawan; see Figure 1) to engage in sustainable natural resource management or combat IWT in a meaningful or participatory way. Site 1 lies within a municipal 'paper park', the Lake Manguao Municipal Conservation Area and Ecotourism Zone (LMMCAEZ), and Site 2 is subject to existing forest/land-use management plan. However, there is no functional management body at either site and no mechanism for collaboration between municipal/national government agencies and local communities for effective enforcement. This results in open access, illegal/unregulated extraction and subsequent depletion of pangolins and natural resources.

Across the two project municipalities (Taytay and El Nido), 67% of local and marginalized communities live below the poverty line. c.10% of local community members poach pangolins as a livelihood option; alternatives are limited as forest clearing for slash-and-burn agriculture is prohibited, and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) collection is hindered by difficult and costly permitting process. Traders incentivise vulnerable local people to poach pangolins for a fraction of the final market value (pangolin meat fetches c.£5/kg in Palawan, increasing to £80/kg in Manilla and >£500/kg in Vietnam). There are currently no informal social controls around pangolin poaching to counter these strong incentives to poach; some community members even display a sense of pride that they have caught pangolins.

Enforcement of wildlife crime legislation nationally has been described as ineffective and inadequate to deter pangolin trafficking. IWT has been a low priority for enforcement agencies, with minimal resources allocated for combating pangolin trafficking. Weak enforcement controls have contributed to IWT going largely undetected, resulting in limited knowledge on pangolin trafficking dynamics to drive pro-active enforcement action. Perpetrators frequently circumvent law enforcement efforts as a result of ineffective allocation and deployment of resources and limited political support for the judiciary and investigations. Penalties for pangolin traffickers are low; in the few cases where successful prosecution has resulted in a conviction, lack of a code of charging and sentencing standards resulted in minimal penalties, which did not positively influence future offender behaviour.

This project will protect two important Critically Endangered Palawan pangolin populations through developing community-led pangolin conservation models or Local Pangolin Conservation Areas (LPCAs) for replication across the species' range. This model: i) empowers local communities to manage their natural resources; ii) creates incentives for protecting pangolins, explicitly linking pangolin conservation to financial benefits from sustainable livelihoods and community banking schemes; iii) increases social benefits from positive pangolin stewardship; and iv) strengthens disincentives for poaching/trafficking through building law enforcement capacity and commitment to combating illegal wildlife trade (IWT).

The project implements key recommendations from the [2018-2043 Palawan pangolin national conservation strategy](#). It builds on ZSL's successful pangolin programme which has: assessed community perceptions of Palawan pangolin status and threats across its range ([Archer et al., 2020](#)); initiated a multi-stakeholder approach to ranking shortlisted sites for LPCA establishment; and initiated participatory conservation and poverty-alleviation activities at the highest-ranked LPCA site, LMMCAEZ. Specifically, this project aims to expand upon activities in LMMCAEZ to create a model co-managed LPCA with effective enforcement, community engagement and poverty alleviation strategies in place. The model will be replicated in Site 2, with on the ground action at both sites supported by more effective law enforcement at the provincial level.

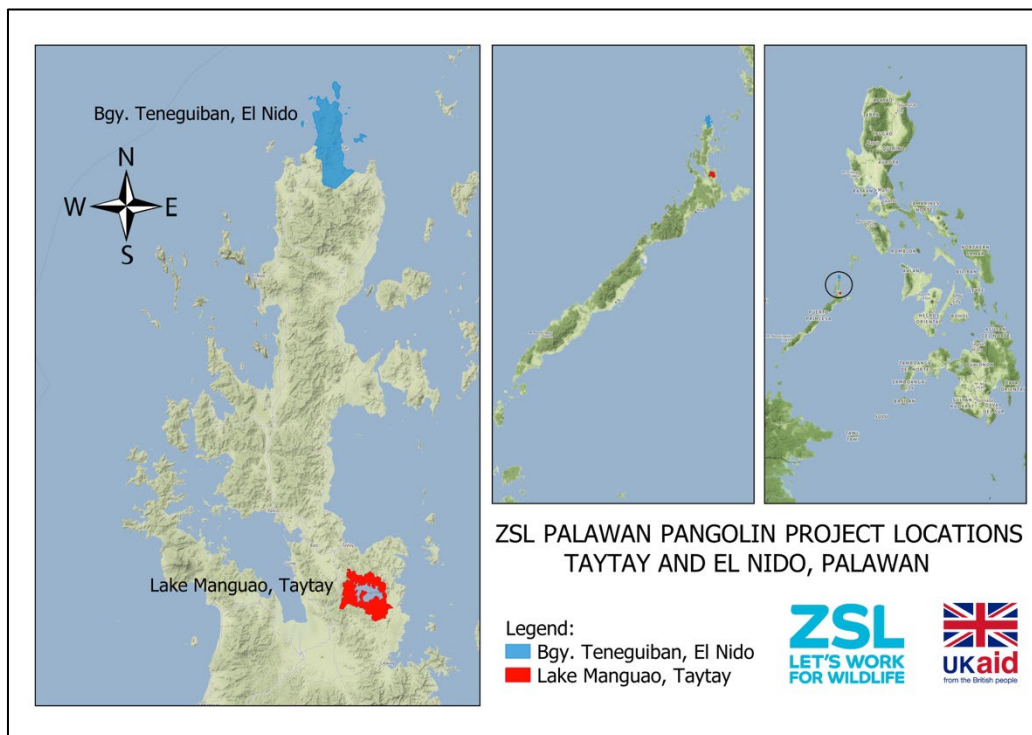


Figure 1. Map of ZSL Philippines pangolin project sites in Palawan, Philippines.

## 2. Project partnerships

The Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan Act (SEP) created a distinct and proactive law to govern the sustainable development of Palawan. It created a unique body that carries powerful responsibilities and works locally in the province, called the **Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)**. It is a multi-sectoral and inter-disciplinary body responsible for the governance, implementation and policy direction of the SEP. The Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) is tasked to provide the infrastructure to coordinate Council policy and function, implement programs and organise such services required by the Council in the exercise of its functions. The PCSDS is the regular professional staff of the PCSD and is headed by an Executive Director who directs and supervises all its operations. ZSL supported PCSDS to develop the Palawan Pangolin Conservation Strategy (2018-2043) in 2018, and PCSDS has supported ZSL's pioneering work to create an LPCA within LMMCAEZ in 2019. PCSDS has co-developed this project and is providing support for the LPCA to be formally declared a Critical Habitat through a national ordinance, which would provide an additional layer of protection for the pangolins and other wildlife in the LPCA. Critical habitats refer to areas that are known habitats of threatened species and designated as such based on scientific data taking into consideration species richness, presence of man-made pressures and threats to the survival of wildlife living in the area. The PCSDS has also supported the law enforcement trainings conducted through this project, such as the Basic Forest Protection and Paralegal training, including through the provision of resource speakers.

The **Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Community Environment and Natural resources Office (DENR-CENRO)** of Taytay-El Nido, Palawan is responsible for implementing the mandate of the department in locality. DENR-CENRO supported ZSL and local communities to establish an LPCA in LMMCAEZ, particularly in the development of the site management plan and zoning. We engaged and consulted with DENR-CENRO on the development of this project. DENR-CENRO supported the law enforcement trainings conducted in Taytay by providing resource speakers. The DENR-CENRO has also actively participated in the formation of the Municipal Environmental Law Enforcement Team by sending its eight Forest Guards to attend and to become members of the composite team.

ZSL has worked in partnership with the **municipal government of Taytay**, Palawan since 2018. The **Local Government Unit (LGU) of El Nido** become a new partner at the start of this project. The LGU of El Nido expressed their full support for the project by releasing an Endorsement Letter (Annex 4.1) through the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO). The Municipal Tourism Development and Management Office (MTDMO) of Taytay is also active in leading the development of the LMMCAEZ General Management Plan and championing the revised Municipal Ordinance, with the LMMCAEZ's different management zones including the LPCA, at the Taytay Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council) for eventual approval and adoption.

**Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC)** is an environmental NGO committed to helping communities uphold their constitutional right to a healthful and balanced ecology. ELAC provides legal representation in environmental court cases, legal advice in drafting environmental laws and paralegal trainings for both community volunteers and government law enforcers. In this project, ELAC supports training and formation of local paralegals from among law enforcement volunteers and local government staff; site-based law enforcement clinics; advocacy and networking building with prosecutors and court judges to strengthen prosecution and conviction of cases; pre-litigation legal support and actual legal assistance. ELAC has already conducted the Paralegal Training to the volunteers from the community of Lake Manguao, and the staff from the DENR-CENRO.

**Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)** is an independent civil society organisation and the only organisation outside of the UN that is dedicated exclusively to building the evidence basis and strengthening responses to transnational organised crime. It's role in this project is to oversee research into drivers and dynamics of Palawan pangolin trafficking through on-the-ground research and via 'The Cascade,' an innovative data discovery engine it has developed to investigate online IWT. GI-TOC has conducted the on-the-ground research in Palawan and visited the ZSL Palawan Field Office and met with the project team.

We have informally partnered with other NGOs working in Lake Manguao in order to streamline our activities and ensure complementarity. USAID's Safewater project is supporting the LGU of Taytay to develop its General Management Plan through provision of maps of LMMCAEZ. Meanwhile, C3 Philippines has activities related to site-based protection. We pooled our resources in conducting the law enforcement trainings as C3 Philippines has partnered with the community in a village on the other side of Lake Manguao.

### **3. Project progress**

#### **3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities**

The project started in September 2021 and is due to end in March 2024. We planned for an immediate start as most of our field team were already in place, albeit working on another project. However, transitioning them to this project took slightly longer than planned due to delays with finding cover for them on the other project. Fieldwork activities were further disrupted in November 2021 when one team member contracted Covid-19 and had to quarantine for two weeks. The remaining team members had to home quarantine for a week. Another delay was when Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) battered the Philippines, which made landfall on Palawan on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021. It caused widespread damage and disruption, knocking out mobile phone networks and significantly damaging several bridges leading north out of Puerto Princesa City. As our field team are based in Puerto Princesa City, accessing both field sites became extremely difficult in December 2021/January 2022, pushing our fieldwork further behind schedule. However, the field team strategically worked in the last two months of Year 1 to deliver 92% of the planned activities.

**Output 1: Site-level governance systems in place to combat IWT through the creation of two Local Pangolin Conservation Areas (LPCAs), operating under effective community management and monitoring, supported jointly by law enforcement agencies to tackle**

## **poaching at source, providing a scalable model for the establishment of a provincial network.**

**Activity 1.1** Inception meeting and signing of Memorandum of Agreement between target LGUs, DENR CENRO, PCSDS and ZSL relating to project implementation and resource sharing

The project team conducted an online inception meeting to the project's in-country partners which was attended by the British Embassy-Manila, DENR-CENRO and the LGU of El Nido. Since the PCSDS was not able to join, the team conducted a face-to-face project presentation and this session led to the plan of applying the Local Pangolin Conservation Area in Lake Manguao to be declared a Critical Habitat by the PCSD Council. We have also secured a Gratuitous Permit (GP) from PCSDS (Annex 4.2). The GP is a privileged permit and a requirement issued to any individual, academic, research institution or organisation to conduct research/conservation project in Palawan.

Drafting and signing of MoA with the LGU of El Nido, through Sangguniang Bayan (SB), has been rescheduled to Q2Y2, which is after the National and Local elections in May 2022. The delays outlined at the beginning of section 3.1 impacted the timeline for securing a MoA with the LGU of El Nido. The preliminary activities (courtesy calls, community meetings, etc.), which had been scheduled for Q3 Y1, were conducted in Q4Y1. However, the presentation to the SB of El Nido has had to be put on hold because SB members are no longer convening; the local lawmakers who seek re-election are busy campaigning as the campaign period for locally elected positions started on 25 March 2022. Newly elected officials will assume their positions in July 2022.

**Activity 1.2** Dialogs, meetings and consultations with communities and local government in Site 2 to generate Free Prior and Informed Consent for the establishment of LPCA

Dialogues, project presentations and consultations were held with 329 local community members (208 female; 121 male) in seven sitios/hamlets, including Teneguiban Proper, Dagmay, Diapila, Maranlao, Ligad, Wasay and Cagbuli, in Barangay Teneguiban, El Nido (Site 2). These were undertaken to generate Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for the establishment of LPCAs (Annex 5.1). The majority of the participants were willing to engage with the conservation of pangolin and other wildlife, agreed to prioritise their protection by establishing the LPCA.

**Activity 1.3** Development of Environmental and Social Management System (including risk assessment and mitigation, Access Restriction Process framework, Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for enforcement, grievance/feedback mechanism and stakeholder engagement plan)

As part of the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) practice at ZSL, the project is undergoing assessment and implement requirements throughout the cycle. We have developed the Key Environmental and Social Safeguarding Project Risks and Mitigation (Annex 6.1), Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 6.2), Code of Conduct and SOPs for enforcement documents (Annex 8). These documents will be treated as working documents throughout the project life.

**Activity 1.4-1.5** Participatory resource use assessment, spatial planning/mapping and digitization in Site 2 to identify location, demarcation/delineation and size of LPCA / Conduct camera trap survey in Site 2 for pangolin presence/absence and occupancy data

The project team conducted the participatory resource use assessment and spatial mapping in four sitios of Barangay Teneguiban, with a total of 110 participants (youth, men and women). The importance of community mapping is to understand the local resource use and to gather information on the areas pangolins occupy based on the reported sightings of the participants (Annex 5.2). The map allowed us to identify the areas to include in our camera trapping research design (Annex 5.3). We have started deploying camera traps in Barangay Teneguiban for pangolin presence/absence and occupancy data collection. A total of 34 camera traps will be deployed, with the majority being installed in April 2022.

**Activity 1.6** Community assemblies, firming up Barangay (village) resolutions in Site 2 for the establishment of LPCA

We have secured the Resolution of the Barangay Council of Teneguiban (Annex 4.3) endorsing the project activities of the ZSL Palawan pangolin in the village. This document is a prerequisite for all project activities, with the exception of community meetings.

**Activity 1.7** Presentation of the LPCA proposal to Sangguniang Bayan in Site 2 (SB is the local legislative council at Barangay and Municipal levels), and subsequent lobbying/negotiations towards eventual approval of LPCA ordinance by SB and Mayor

Rescheduled to Q2Y2 due to the National and Local Elections in the Philippines

**Activities 1.8 and 1.9** to be implemented in Year 2.

**Activity 1.10-1.14** Capacity needs assessment for law enforcement personnel (Municipal staff, local police, DENR, PCSDS, PNP Maritime Group, Customs to inform training programme development); Formation of Bantay Gubat (community volunteer forest guards) groups in each LPCA; Basic forest protection and wildlife enforcement training and deputation of Bantay Gubat in each LPCA (using DENR Wildlife Enforcement Officers Training module including Code of Conduct and SOPs for enforcement); Formation and/or strengthening of Municipal Environmental Law Enforcement Team (MELET, comprising MENRO, local police, DENR/PCSDS WEOs, Philippine National Police Maritime Group (PNP-MG), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), integrating community Bantay Gubat; and Paralegal training and formation of paralegals from deputized Bantay Gubat and municipal and DENR-CENRO wildlife enforcement teams (through Environmental Legal Assistance Center [ELAC])

We have formed a total of 15 (6 Female; 9 Male) *Bantay Gubat* (community volunteer forest guards) in Lake Manguao who have undergone the Basic Forest Protection and Wildlife Enforcement Training (Annex 5.4) on 6-10 December 2021 and the Paralegal Training (Annex 5.5) on 8-9 March 2022. The Basic Forest Protection and Wildlife Enforcement Training is designed to create the team of law enforcement multiplier within the vicinity of LMMCAEZ, providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge for proper enforcement of environmental laws. Meanwhile, the Paralegal Training is designed to capacitate the Bantay Gubat in evidence handling and documentation to support effective prosecution. An additional eight Forest Guards of the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) of Taytay also attended the trainings. The MENRO staff expressed their gratitude for having wildlife law enforcement capacity development activities in Taytay as these are one of the gaps they have identified in implementing IWT enforcement. All trained *Bantay Gubat* and MENRO Forest Guards submitted their requirements to DENR-CENRO for the processing of the Deputation Papers. ZSL assisted the *Bantay Gubat* trained members to secure their documents as well as provided the endorsement letter (Annex 5.6) to DENR CENRO to process the Deputation Papers.

Before convening the Municipal Environmental Law Enforcement Team (MELET) of Taytay, our team conducted the Capacity Needs Assessment of the law enforcement personnel first. The data collected will inform the training programme development of the illegal wildlife trade framework. The MELET of Taytay was eventually formed with a total of 36 members (8 Female; 26 Male), which consists of the *Bantay Gubat*, MENRO staff, DENR-CENRO staff, Philippine National Police (PNP), PNP Maritime, Coastguard and the Philippine Marines. The MELET formation is designed to integrate the *Bantay Gubat* into the system and the Code of Conduct and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for enforcement training were developed (Annex 9). The MELET will be officially formed once an executive order is produced and signed by the Mayor of Taytay. Processing of this document was put on hold due to the National and Local Elections.

**Activities 1.14.1 – 1.20** to be implemented in Years 2 and 3.

**Output 2. Communities supported to overcome financial barriers to behaviour change through community banking scheme (VSLAs) and sustainable livelihoods pilots, benefitting at least 50 households across the two LPCA sites**

**Activity 2.1-2.2** Develop socio-economic survey design to monitor improvements in wellbeing; and Conduct baseline and end-line socio-economic survey in target sites

We developed the socio-economic (SE) survey design (Annex 5.7) to measure improvements in well-being of our target beneficiaries. In Site 1 (Taytay), we trained three (3) enumerators to

conduct the mid-line survey in December 2021 using tablets with the Open Data Kit (ODK) platform to collect the data. We conducted a midline survey to assess any changes since ZSL started working at the site as well as to develop baseline for activities undertaken through this grant. The hired enumerators are locals of Taytay, who are very familiar with the area and can understand the local language of the community. A total of 70 households in Barangay Poblacion, the target village within the catchment of Lake Manguao (Taytay), were interviewed.

Meanwhile, we trained and hired four enumerators who are locals of Barangay Teneguiban, El Nido (Site 2). The team conducted the baseline SE surveys here in March, interviewing a total of 302 households covering five (5) sitios/hamlets. We are still sanitising the data and analysing will be prioritised in Q1Y2.

**Activities 2.3 and 2.8** People's organisation (PO) reorganisation and strengthening to build capacities to implement and manage sustainable livelihoods and conservation enterprises linked to pangolin conservation and forest protection; and Feasibility assessment of conservation enterprise/sustainable livelihood options of target communities

We have conducted an initial People Organisation's (Annex 5.8) to assess the status of the PO at Site 2. This will be followed, in April 2022, by the Vision-Mission-Goals and Constitution and By-Laws Review, and Leadership and Organisational Management Training. The feasibility assessment of the conservation enterprise/sustainable livelihood option of the PO in El Nido, which was initially scheduled for March 2022, will also be undertaken in April 2022. These activities are slightly behind schedule because of the events outlined at the beginning of this section. During Year 1 the project team prioritised building relationships with the community at Site 2 in order to secure the FPIC and official endorsement of the Barangay Council.

**Activity 2.4-2.6** VSLA training and formation in both sites; Establishment of VSLA Environmental Funds (EF) with agreed upon utilization plan; and Monitoring and mentoring support to formed VSLAs

Our project team conducted Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) orientation sessions at both project sites, and participants' buy-in rate was high as they were very interested in the concept of community banking. After the orientation activities, we were able to establish two new VSLA groups, one in each project site. In Taytay, the Nagtakayan Savers Group (NaSaG) was established in December 2021, with 16 members (13 Female; 3 Male). We are also monitoring two VSLA groups in Taytay, which were established with ZSL's support prior to this grant. The Lake Manguao Community Savers Group (10 Female; 6 Male) is on its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, while the Danao Savers Group (14 Female; 8 Male) is on its 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Members of both groups have already received an average 20% return on their savings. In El Nido, the Diapila Savings Group (DiSaG) was established in February 2022, with 20 members (18 Female; 2 Male). All formed and assisted VSLA groups have Environmental Funds embedded in their weekly sessions (Annex 5.9).

**Activity 2.12** Provision of basic sustainable livelihood/conservation enterprise start-up assets/capital

The project team conducted a focus group discussion (Annex 5.10) with the members of the Lake Manguao Community Indigenous Peoples Agriculture Cooperative (LMCIPAC) to identify how to utilize the livelihood start-up cost budget of the project. A total of 28 members (13 Female; 15 Male) attended the session. The cooperative decided to utilize the livelihood assistance to construct the Livelihood Processing Centre in line with their existing tilapia production livelihood, which ZSL has supported since 2020. A plan of action was also agreed among the participants, including the LMCIPAC members, MENRO staff, Municipal Tourism Development and Management Office staff, and ZSL wherein all pledged to carry out their assigned actions.

**Activities 2.7, 2.9-2.11** to be implemented in Years 2 and 3.

**Output 3. LPCA community attitudes and behaviour shifts towards active and sustainable support for pangolin conservation, encouraging positive engagement in pangolin stewardship as a result of associating improved social benefits with the continued presence of pangolins**

**Activity 3.1-3.5 and 3.7** Participatory mapping of actors, problems, and threats; analysis and report generation relative to behaviour change campaign in Site 2; Selection of non-divisible end-

start behaviour for campaign to target sites; Development of Theory of Change and behaviour change models; Identify barriers and benefits to desired behaviour; Develop campaign strategy and Development of Community-based Social Marketing outreach materials

ZSL Philippines Social Marketing Specialist assisted the project team in conducting the activities related to the community-based social marketing in Year 1. We mapped the actors, problems, and threats, and identified the selection of non-divisible end-start behaviour for campaign in Site 2 (Annex 5.11) in March 2022. As a result, the draft Goals of the Campaign are: 1) To discourage people from poaching and consumption of pangolin; 2) For the community members to have a sense of pride towards pangolin as flagship species; 3) For people to realise the benefits of pangolin conservation; and 4) Encourage youth to participate in pangolin conservation. The development of the full Theory of Change is planned for Year 2, but we were able to develop a draft in March 2022. The data collected were used to develop the draft Theory of Change for El Nido (Annex 5.11). Meanwhile, we also reviewed the existing TOC for Taytay site.

**Activity 3.6** to be implemented in Year 2.

**Activity 3.7** Development of CBSM outreach materials

We produced a total of 1,112 pieces of materials (i.e., calendars, caps and fabric facemask, etc.) and one mascot is being produced (Annex 5.13). In other ZSL Philippines social marketing activities, we identified that mascots reinforce a campaign's personality and open the door for our target audience. The mascot will be fully produced and available in Q2Y2.

**Activity 3.8** Campaign implementation

As part of our campaign implementation, we celebrated the World Pangolin Day (19 February) in the two project sites. A total of 28 individuals participated in our fun games in Taytay, while 43 individuals participated in our activity in El Nido (Annex 5.12).

**Activity 3.9-3.10** Develop attitudinal survey (knowledge-attitudes-practices) design to measure positive behaviour change; and Conduct baseline and end-line attitudinal survey in two target communities

The Knowledge-Attitudes-Practices (KAP) design was integrated into the SE survey we developed under Activity 2.1 (Annex 5.7). There is a specific section that covers the attitudinal survey. The SE respondents were also interviewed for the KAP survey. All data are now being sanitised and analysis will be available in Q1Y2.

**Activity 3.11** to be implemented in Year 2.

**Output 4. Disincentives for pangolin trafficking are strengthened through developing a robust understanding of trafficking drivers, methods and routes and building the capacity of customs and judiciary agencies in Palawan to undertake pro-active enforcement.**

**Activity 4.1-4.3** Key informant interviews, market surveys and desk-based research to understand drivers, routes and methods of pangolin trafficking from the site-level through to ports of exit; Key informant interviews market surveys and desk-based research to understand pangolin markets in Metro Manila; and Monitoring of illicit online trade in pangolins using Cascade software tools

Our partner organisation, Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) conducted initial research, which involved reviewing secondary sources (academic papers, government reports, NGO reports, news articles, etc.) (Annex 8). This gave a high-level overview of the global pangolin trade and highlighted the gaps in past research regarding the Philippine pangolin. Alongside this research, they conducted virtual interviews with a wide range of individuals whose specialties included academia, environmental activism, journalism and research, amongst others.

The fieldwork was focused on Metro Manila and Palawan Province, which included interviews in Puerto Princesa City, Roxas, Taytay, El Nido and Coron. The backbone of the research involved semi-structured interviews with government and enforcement officials, ex-traffickers, local fisherfolk with experience in the trade, local journalists, conservationists and environmental lawyers. GI-TOC researchers also visited locations suspected to have linked to the trade in pangolins, including Manila's China town, casinos, seaports restaurants and shops. Further, the



GI-TOC canvassed several people about the online trade in wildlife in the Philippines and the presence of pangolins within it.

**Activities 4.4 – 4.8** to be implemented in Year 2.

### **3.2 Progress towards project Outputs**

**Output 1: Site-level governance systems in place to combat IWT through the creation of two Local Pangolin Conservation Areas (LPCAs), operating under effective community management and monitoring, supported by jointly by law enforcement agencies to tackle poaching at source, providing a scalable model for the establishment of a provincial network.**

In Taytay, the Technical Working Group, which includes ZSL, has developed the General Management Plan (GMP) for the Lake Manguao Municipal Conservation Area and Ecotourism Zone (LMMCAEZ) (Annex 7). This includes the proposed 1,321.22 ha LPCA. The proposed Municipal Ordinance, which sets out the different management zones for the LMMCAEZ, also includes the LPCA, which is the core/strict protection zone of the protected area. Both documents have been lodged at the Sangguniang Bayan of Taytay for processing. This will occur after the National Election in May 2022. Since the GMP and the revision of the Municipal Ordinance have not yet been formally approved, the LMMCAEZ management council has not yet been convened. However, work is underway to develop signage for the LMMCAEZ, with a local artist having been hired to carve signage out of wood.

We have trained 15 community forest guards (Bantay Gubat) in Taytay, 14 (6 Female; 9 Male) of which are being processed for the deputation. The remaining member is above the age limit for deputation but is still active in the protection activities and is considered a key asset. The Bantay Gubat's papers are still being reviewed by the DENR Regional 4 Office, since DENR is the assigned government agency to formally deputise community members (Annex 5.4). Once the Bantay Gubat have been formally deputized they will begin monitoring and enforcement of the LMMCAEZ.

The MELET in Taytay has been convened and formed, with a total of 36 members (8 Female; 28 Male) comprising Bantay Gubat, MENRO staff, DENR-CENRO staff, Philippine National Police (PNP), PNP Maritime, Coastguard and the Philippine Marines (Annex 9).. We are still working on the Local Executive Order which will be signed by the Mayor creating the MELET. This will happen following the May 2022 National Election.

In El Nido, we have secured the endorsement letters from the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources of Office of the LGU and the Barangay Council of Teneguiban, approving and supporting us to conduct the activities related to the project. Further, we have made progress in engaging with the former poachers in the area. We hired some of them as local guides for our camera trap research and started to initially identify them as potential community champions.

**Output 2. Communities supported to overcome financial barriers to behaviour change through community banking scheme (VSLAs) and sustainable livelihoods pilots, benefitting at least 50 households across the two LPCA sites**

Two new VSLA groups were formed, one in each site, with a total of 36 members (31 Female; 5 Male), representing 36 households (Annex 5.9). All established VSLA groups have an Environmental Fund. The annualised returns of the VSLA groups will be identified on the 52<sup>nd</sup> weekly session of each group, one year after they were established.

The project team conducted a focus group discussion (Annex 5.10) with the members of the Lake Manguao Community Indigenous Peoples Agriculture Cooperative (LMCIPAC) to identify how to utilize the livelihood start-up cost budget of the project. A total of 28 members (13 Female; 15 Male) attended the session. The cooperative decided to utilize the livelihood assistance to construct the Livelihood Processing Center in line with their existing tilapia production livelihood, which ZSL has started supporting since 2020.

**Output 3. LPCA community attitudes and behaviour shifts towards active and sustainable support for pangolin conservation, encouraging positive engagement in pangolin**

## **stewardship as a result of associating improved social benefits with the continued presence of pangolins**

The KAP surveys using sensitive questioning techniques were conducted in Taytay in November 2021 and in El Nido in March 2022. We interviewed 70 households in Taytay and 302 in El Nido (Annex 5.7). We will finalise data processing and analyses by Q1Y2. We have completed mapping of actors, problems and threats, and selection of non-divisible end-start behaviour. This information was used to inform the development of a Theory of Change for social marketing activities El Nido (Annex 5.11).

Both VSLA groups have established an Environmental Fund (EF), which will be used to support pangolin conservation/forest protection. NaSag has accumulated ₱ [REDACTED] in its EF from December 2021 to March 2022, while DiSaG has accumulated ₱ [REDACTED] from February 2021 to March 2022 (Annex 5.9)

We have identified six Community Champions in Taytay (exceeding our tagged of five champions), with 50% are women (Annex 5.15) We are targeting former poachers and those who were formerly engaged in illegal activities to become pangolin protectors from the community members. Meanwhile, we are still working on our relationship with the community in El Nido and still assessing the commitment of the locals with regards to pangolin conservation.

### **Output 4. Disincentives for pangolin trafficking are strengthened through developing a robust understanding of trafficking drivers, methods and routes and building the capacity of customs and judiciary agencies in Palawan to undertake pro-active enforcement.**

GI-TOC's fieldwork and interviews have shown that both the domestic and international trade in Philippine pangolins is unlikely to rely significantly on Filipino e-commerce and social media sites. This is primarily due to the highly clandestine nature of the trade and its reliance on trading between people known to each other, which contrasts with other illegal wildlife trade species traded online. However, GI-TOC intends to verify this notion by conducting manual monitoring of selected websites to determine whether there is an absence of Philippine pangolins traded online. The GI-TOC intends to use its internal Open Source Intelligence Source (OSINT) expertise to gain a deeper understanding of the actors involved in the pangolin trade which will allow for a more rounded commentary on their personalities and motivations.

The Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC) reported there is no organised database or monitoring on the number and extent of illegal wildlife trade (IWT) crimes in the two focal municipalities. Further, the trial of IWT cases have generally been delayed based on ELAC's experience. The baseline of Outputs 4.3 and 4.4 will be finalized in Q1Y2.

### **3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome**

**Outcome:** Palawan pangolin poaching and trafficking disrupted by empowering communities to tackle IWT at source, improving human wellbeing, and building knowledge and capacity to combat trafficking across the IWT chain.

Progress towards the original project outcome has been hampered by the delays in project implementation caused by COVID-19 travel restrictions, team members being off sick and the aftermath of the super typhoon in December 2021. Despite these challenges, we have made significant progress towards the project outcome and are on track to achieve it by the end of the project. We have conducted the socio-economic and attitudinal surveys in Taytay and in El Nido in Year 1 and still processing the data for the final report (Indicators 0.1 and 0.3). Processing of the data from the survey will be a key focus for the project manager in Y2. We conducted awareness activities, which contributed to the wider behaviour change campaigns, by celebrating World Pangolin Day at both sites. Bringing the awareness about the LPCA to the general public in Taytay and starting to inform the locals of Barangay Teneguiban, El Nido on pangolin conservation. Six community champions area already identified in Taytay with 50% of the members are women (Indicator 0.2). Meanwhile, a draft Theory of Change for El Nido has been developed and will be refined in Y2 (Indicator 0.2). 15 community members from site 1 (Taytay) volunteered to become Forest Guards (*Bantay Gubat*) of Lake Manguao. They have undergone Basic Forest Protection and Wildlife Enforcement Training and Deputation, and the Paralegal

training (Indicators 0.1). The MELET in Taytay has been formed and convened, a composite team including the Bantay Gubat, DENR-CENRO, MENRO, PNP, PNP MG, Philippine Coastguard and Philippine Marines (Indicator 0.1). We also made progress at site 2 (El Nido) with the Barangay Council releasing a barangay resolution supporting the project activities. Our partner GI-TOC conducted the IWT research building the evidence base and strengthening responses to trafficking of pangolins (Indicator 0.4). More significant updates on other indicators (0.4-0.5) will be reflected in Years 2 and 3 of the project. Meanwhile, we presented the pangolin research results in Taytay for the LPCA establishment to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development. The very successful presentation led to the Executive Director of the council team to push for the LPCA to be declared as a Critical Habitat (Indicator 0.6) through a national ordinance, providing pangolins and other wildlife in the area with further layer of protection.

### **3.4 Monitoring of assumptions**

#### **Assumption 1. Host country remains politically stable and supportive to combating IWT; policy environment and related legal frameworks remain unchanged during the project.**

The Philippine national and elections will be held on 9 May 2022, during which a new president and vice-president will be elected together. The president and vice-president candidates covered some environmental issues in their political platforms, such as climate change, the passage of national land use law, and regulation of mining or pushes for responsible mining. However, other environmental issues, such as deforestation, illegal and unregulated fishing and wildlife trade, and air pollution did not surface in this year's election season. Still, environmentalists in the Philippines remain hopeful that whoever wins the presidency will urgently act on the country's climate and environmental challenges. Legal frameworks, such as the Wildlife Act which provides conservation and protection of wildlife resources and their habitats, is however, a national law that is repealed only by subsequent ones, and their violation or non-observance shall not be excused by disuse, or custom or practice to the contrary.

#### **Assumption 2. Provincial and municipal policy environment continues to support environmental conservation despite growing demand for land use conversion for agricultural plantations.**

The May 2022 Philippine national and local elections will also include electing a new provincial governor and the local chief executives/mayors in Palawan. We are hopeful that whoever wins in the local elections will still prioritise and continue to support environmental conservation efforts in Palawan. On a positive note, the Executive Director (ED) of PCSD is extremely supportive of the project; he has already recommended the LPCA in Lake Manguao, Taytay be declared a Critical Habitat and is considering recommending the project site in Barangay Teneguiban, El Nido to be declared a Critical Habitat as well. The support of the ED will highly influence the decision-making of the members of the council as well as fast-tracking the process of the establishment.

#### **Assumption 3. Communities across Palawan are willing to engage in LPCAs, as has been demonstrated at Site 1.**

We already established strong partnerships with the community and other stakeholders at Site 1. We will use our best practises, such as hiring high calibre local community organisers, identifying champions in the local government unit, etc. and replicate it to Site 2. This is also where our community-based social marketing campaigns will play a key role in generating active and sustainable support for combating pangolin trafficking through associating increased social and economic benefits with the continued presence of pangolins.

We made progress in Site 2 as well. We already secured the endorsement documents from the MENRO of LGU El Nido and the Barangay Council of Teneguiban to implement the project on site. We also hired former poachers as our local guides for the camera trap research – which demonstrates that we have started to build trust with the community members.

#### **Assumption 4. Incentives and regulations implemented by the project to conserve pangolins outweigh those to poach them, as set out in this project's theory of change.**

Though we might be dealing with more poachers at Site 2, based on a series of discussions with the barangay officials in Teneguiban, El Nido, we believe that this is still a reasonable assumption as has been demonstrated at Site 1.

Since ZSL started the pangolin project in 2019 in Site 1, we have made noteworthy conservation gains. Community members, who are identified as involved in illegal activities and who were hesitant to join our project activities before, are now members of our youngest VSLA group in Taytay. Our efforts have also resulted in having 15 community members volunteered to become Bantay Gubat to actively protect the pangolins and Lake Manguao.

**Assumption 5. ZSL Philippines continues its track record of attracting high calibre staff at a local level (community organisers are hired locally where possible).**

In our change request submitted in September 2021, we requested to amend the budget across all three financial years to account for increase to the base salaries of the existing Philippines-based field team members, to acknowledge their excellent performance since work commenced in 2019. We have also increased the base salaries of the Supervising Community Organiser and Community Organiser (both had to be hired in September 2021 and started to work in November 2021 and December 2021, respectively) to ensure ZSL is competitive with other NGOs in the Philippines and can attract and retain highly qualified applicants.

**Assumption 6. The significant national and local investments into planning (emergency response plans, disaster risk reduction plans), training (first responder networks) and infrastructure (evacuation centres) are sufficient to cope with any future severe typhoons, reducing disruption to project activities.**

Typhoon Rai did not spare Palawan province from destruction as its powerful winds knocked off houses and bridges and cut electricity supply and telecommunication lines when it made its landfall in December 2021. The wrath of the typhoon caught almost everyone in Palawan largely unprepared. According to a piece of editorial news, the typhoon has taught the Palawan government and its people a painful crash course on disaster preparedness. It made the policymakers and stakeholders change their previous mindset in dealing with emergency response plans and disaster risk reduction plans. With this call, we hope that this assumption will hold true for the remainder of the project. But we will be assessing this again when the new political candidates will be elected this coming national and local elections.

It is also good to note that despite the ‘unpreparedness,’ the Palawan government were fairly quick to provide temporary solutions to solve several damaged bridges going up north. This resulted in having access to our two project sites in late December and early January. However, it was just a temporary fix and hopefully will be completely repaired before the wet season starts in June.

**Assumption 7. The short-medium term impacts of COVID on all stakeholders, government and communities continue to be assessed and integrated into project planning, delivery and sustainability.**

We are continually assessing the impacts of COVID on all stakeholders, government and communities and integrating strategies into project planning, delivery and sustainability. Though one field staff member unfortunately contracted COVID-19 in November 2021 and had to go through government-mandated self-isolation, COVID-19 precautionary protocols are implemented in the office and during field visits, and all field staff are fully vaccinated. Protocols such as these may have had controlled the transmission of the virus among team members as they all tested negative.

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

**Impact:** Palawan pangolin conservation status and local community wellbeing improved through a network of community-protected pangolin strongholds with associated livelihood benefits, supported by effective and targeted law enforcement action.

Pangolins are the world’s most trafficked wild mammal. Our tried-and-tested approach creates, enables and incentivises community-led pangolin stewardship at source while reducing

incentives for poaching through disrupting the supply chain. This project focuses on two Local Pangolin Conservation Areas (LPCA) containing 905 households and law enforcement agencies in wider municipalities. We have progress with establishing a governance structure for effective management of the Local Pangolin Conservation Area in Lake Manguao Municipal Conservation Area (LMMCAEZ) in Taytay. We co-developed the draft General Management Plan of LMMCAEZ and produced the proposed Municipal Ordinance revision including the LPCA. We have trained 15 *Bantay Gubat* members from the local community in Basic Wildlife Protection, and Paralegal. We formed the MELET with 36 members which is composed of the DENR-CENRO Forest Rangers, PCSDS Wildlife Environment Officer, PNP, PNP MG, PCG, Marines and the newly trained *Bantay Gubat members* in Taytay. Further, we identified six Community Champions in Taytay who were formerly involved in illegal activities in the area. We have made huge progress in establishing our relationship with the LGU and local communities in El Nido, which enables us to conduct the project activities in Year 1. Meanwhile, we have a better understanding of the dynamics of pangolin trafficking, as conducted by our partner GI-TOC, and capacity of law enforcement agencies to address it. This will underpin actions in Y2 and Y3 of the project that will ensure effective protection for pangolins at both sites and better law enforcement to deter pangolin poaching and trafficking which will have a positive impact on pangolin populations.

On the human wellbeing and poverty alleviation component, we established two groups of VSLAs, one on each site, and continue assisting the two VSLA groups formed during the first pangolin project of ZSL. We provided additional livelihood capital to our existing cooperative partner LMCIPAC in Taytay to construct the Livelihood Processing Center for their existing tilapia production livelihood which ZSL has started supporting since 2020. In El Nido, we have identified the people's organization in which we will partner with, a group of farmers whose some members are currently involved in illegal wildlife trade of pangolins.

#### **4. Thematic focus**

##### **Strengthening law enforcement:**

A strong coordinated enforcement response to IWT will be established in the two target municipalities (Taytay and El Nido, Palawan), facilitating sharing of knowledge and information between law enforcement agencies, wildlife management departments and local communities, enhancing cooperation to combat pangolin trafficking in a timely and effective manner. To date, we have trained 15 volunteer forest guards at Site 1 (Taytay) in Basic Wildlife Forest Protection and Paralegal training. The MELET in Taytay is already formed, and capacity will be strengthened on effective intelligence direction, collection and use. Capacity of prosecution and judges will be built to improve investigations and prosecutions of pangolin trafficking and other wildlife crimes. Palawan customs officers will be trained and mentored to undertake proactive enforcement action informed by a more robust understanding of trafficking drivers, methods and routes gained from GI-TOCs Year 1 research findings.

##### **Sustainable livelihoods and economic development:**

Sustainable livelihoods development and community banking will enable participants at two key sites for pangolin conservation to pursue sustainable livelihoods, save money, receive loans, build social capital, reduce the need to engage in pangolin poaching, and other illegal activities, and build financial resilience to improve well-being. Progress to date: two VSLAs are already established and monitored. Community-based Social Marketing (CBSM) programmes at the two project sites will generate active and sustainable support for combating pangolin trafficking through associating increased social and economic benefits with the continued presence of pangolins.

#### **5. Impact on species in focus**

The endemic Palawan pangolin is undergoing widespread population declines, estimated at >80% due primarily to poaching and trafficking. The two LPCAs created will provide a model for community stewardship of key pangolin populations; achieving a positive shift of attitudes and behaviours towards protecting pangolins and their habitats as community members understand the social and financial benefits from pangolin conservation. Pangolin populations at each site will no longer decline and, over time, will thrive as poaching pressure eases (pangolin presence

and occupancy will be measured via camera trap surveys). Protecting pangolin habitat will also help to maintain ecosystem function for both pangolins and human wellbeing to thrive.

Supporting proactive law enforcement will increase chances of detection; combined with appropriate sentencing, this will enable the criminal justice system to effectively deter poachers and traffickers from offending, thus restricting supply and reducing buyer demand fuelling poaching.

This model of securing pangolin strongholds and enhancing law enforcement capacity will ultimately be scaled and replicated across Palawan, creating a network of LPCAs, securing remaining populations of pangolins throughout the province.

With evidence that pangolins are trafficked alongside other illegally traded species (turtles, porcupines), disrupting the trade through improved law enforcement will have wider benefits for other IWT species, some of which are also endemic to Palawan.

## **6. Project support to poverty reduction**

This project focuses on two Local Pangolin Conservation Areas (LPCA) containing 905 households and law enforcement agencies in wider municipalities. Former poachers will be provided with viable sustainable livelihood alternatives to poaching and former poachers will be supported to become pangolin champions, thereby reducing, if not eradicating, the local demand-supply dynamics, releasing individuals from financial hardship and a cycle of poverty and crime. Other key beneficiaries include LPCA management councils, marginalised groups and farming/fishing communities that will be empowered to govern their natural resources and livelihoods. The poverty alleviation will be attained through sustainable livelihood development provided to >50 households, prioritising cooperative/people's organization members whose living below the poverty threshold, underpinned by Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). VSLAs will provide members across both sites credit to finance sustainable livelihoods, resulting in improvements in household income and reduction in multi-dimensional poverty, such as increased food security.

Progress to date, we have formed two groups of VSLAs in Taytay and El Nido, while continuously providing assistance to the initially formed two VSLA groups in Taytay during the former pangolin project. We also provided additional livelihood capital to our existing cooperative partner – LMCIPAC in Taytay for their fish processing centre. We have identified the community, the Dagmay Farmers Association in Sitio Dagmay, Barangay Teneguiban in El Nido which will be the beneficiary of the livelihood component (Annex 5.16). Livelihood identification and feasibility assessments will be conducted in Q1Y2.

## **7. Consideration of gender equality issues**

The Philippines (#10) has relatively high gender equality with a gender gap index lower than the UK (#15). Despite nationwide progress gender issues prevail, including unequal representation in positions of influence or politics. Our participatory and transformative implementation approach will increase gender equality and empower female participation and integration into all aspects of governance, poverty alleviation and security. While it is too soon to report on transformative changes in relation to GESI, as the project is still in the early phases of implementation, we are pleased to report progress on the gender equality component. To date, 83% of VSLA members are women total in both sites, while 68% of LMCIPAC (our cooperative partner in Taytay) members are women. The women in Taytay are also active in monitoring and enforcement; they comprise 40% of the Bantay Gubat (community volunteer forest guards). Women's potential roles as enablers of behavioural change is utilised through them to become pangolin conservation champions – 50% of the identified community champions in Taytay are women.

ZSL is also ensuring that regulations, penalties and benefits around pangolin and forest protection are equally accessible through open, and participatory communication channels like regular community feedback sessions, strategic positioning of outreach materials, and proactive social marketing methods.

## **8. Monitoring and evaluation**

To ensure targets are met on-time and on-budget, the project team produces monthly work plans attend monthly meetings and submits monthly reports (Annex 7.2) to the Project Leader. The Project Leader and Pangolin Technical Specialist will visit Palawan biannually (for mid-year review, annual review, and planning; and project evaluation), conducting site visits and training, and meeting with staff and communities. However, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, technical support was done via email, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp. This has enabled adaptive management of the project, informing adjustment of workplans and logframe, as required, to ensure they are 'living' documents.

As this is too early on for several of the project indicators, we still made progress on the M&E activities to date. These activities relate to the collection baseline data of the VSLAs, behavioural/attitudinal changes (knowledge-attitudes-practices [KAP], and well-being improvements. Other indicators will be monitored periodically by the Project Manager and Leader in the next year.

## **9. Lessons learnt**

The project start date is approximately five months later than originally planned due to the delay in awarding funding. We considered submitting a request to extend the project end date to 31 August 2024 to make up for the delayed start date. However, this would still have resulted in the movement of funds between financial years. We decided against requesting an extension in recognition of the expectation from the IWT Challenge Fund that projects should finish no later than March 2022. Instead, we collapsed the Year 1 activities into six months only. However, this left us with no contingency for other factors that could impact the project delivery such as the new COVID-19 travel restrictions in later part of 2021 and the Super Typhoon Rai.

We had budgeted for an immediate start as most of our field team were already in place, albeit working on another project. However, transitioning them to this project took slightly longer than planned due to delays with finding cover for them on the other project. As such we would propose a slightly staggering initiation of in-country activities in the first year to allow for such eventualities when a new project is being initiated, even in a country where organisational infrastructure exists.

What worked well, despite these delays, is having high-calibre team members to implement the project. The majority of the team members of the project are from Palawan Province and have work experience in community-based projects and are committed to deliver the activities with positive work attitude despite all the challenges encountered.

The Project Leader and the Pangolin Technical Specialist were due to make a visit to Palawan in Year 1, but they were not able to do so due to the COVID-19 Omicron variant. Overall, this has not significantly affected the activities as we maximised providing technical support through regular online meetings.

One of the primary project outputs will be a lessons learnt manual with guidance for those wishing to adopt the LPCA model within Palawan and beyond, enhancing knowledge-sharing with other community-based pangolin projects in Asia (e.g. ZSL Nepal's Community Managed Pangolin Conservation Areas). Further, high-level meetings with PCSDS, DENR and law enforcement agencies will be organized to present our lessons learnt manual and policy brief, sharing project results and recommending replication of the LPCA model.

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

N/A

## **11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere**

We included a £3,000 budget for conducting the Grievance Mechanism Redress (GRM) training as part of the ESMS for the project staff in Year 1. The project team contacted several potential in-country consultants. However, we were not successful in contracting any of them. Our plan now is to conduct a hybrid session wherein ZSL UK will provide the basic principles of GRM through online training and ZSL Philippines Human Resources Officer will organize a face-to-

face session in supporting the team in developing the GRM manual with community-based applications.

Our project team conducted a 3-day Year 1 project review on 30 March to 1 April 2022. The activity was designed to evaluate whether project objectives in Year 1 were met and to determine how effectively the first year of the project was run. Strategic plans were discussed and developed for the Year 2 implementation of the project. It was also the best time to conduct a team-building session in order for the team members to foster stronger relationship and cohesiveness, and improve team communication effectiveness.

## **12. Sustainability and legacy**

We are building the profile of the project in Palawan Province, Philippines over this reporting period. On our community-based activities, community visits, consultations and assemblies, project presentations and briefings were given at eight sitios in two barangays at two municipalities in Palawan. As we have already established our relationship with our target community in Lake Manguao, this project is giving us the opportunity to continue supporting the local government unit of Taytay. We, as member of the Technical Working Group, have provided our technical support in drafting the General Management Plan and the proposed revision of the Municipal Ordinance of Lake Manguao. The local communities and the village council of Barangay Teneguiban, El Nido have also expressed their interest in supporting the project. We have secured the Barangay Resolution from the village council as well as an endorsement letter from the MENRO of El Nido supporting the activities of the project. In return, we are required to submit an Affidavit of Undertaking, which requiring the project team to include submission of the results of the study once completed.

At the province-wide level, ZSL Philippines is a member of the Palawan Knowledge Platform (PKP) of PCSDS. PKP is an online platform designed as a device for sharing of biodiversity information and data regarding Palawan. It conducts a bi-monthly meeting, and each member presents its updates on its projects or research activities. We regularly and actively attend the meetings and present the IWT Challenge Fund project, the updates and preliminary research results. Meanwhile, the PCSDS approved the creation of the seven sub-committees under the Environment and Natural Resources Committee including the Sub-Committee on Pangolin Conservation and Management (SPCM). The SPCM functions include to review and endorse the final research design, protocol and work plan of research teams wanting to work in Palawan to the ENRC; monitor status of research implementation by the research team; review and endorse policy recommendations for the conservation of the Palawan pangolin. ZSL Philippines was nominated and appointed to be the Vice-Chair of the SPCM, with Mr Godofredo T. Villapando Jr as the permanent representative as Ms Charity Apale as the alternate representative. The SPCM conducts quarterly meetings, and its members are required to provide updates on each project or research activities.

Our exit strategy plan detailed in our proposal is still valid as we are working on the project's long-term viability being fostered through our community-led participatory approaches to tackling IWT and promoting Palawan pangolin conservation.

## **13. IWT Challenge Fund identity**

This project is the first IWT Challenge Fund of ZSL to be carried out on the province of Palawan. We have acknowledged the support of the IWT Challenge Fund and UK Aid in all project presentations to stakeholders and inception meetings, trainings and community consultations. We also included the UK Aid logo in the LPCA signage made for Lake Manguao in Taytay. The IWT Challenge Fund will further be acknowledged in the scientific papers, policy briefs and manuals resulting from this project and in any infrastructure that will be built for the livelihood component of the project. The IWT Challenge Funding is being recognised as a distinct project with a clear identity.

The Philippine government agencies (PCSDS, LGUs of El Nido and Taytay, DENR-CENRO, and DENR-BMB) and other partners (ELAC, GI-TOC), the British Embassy-Manila, and local communities were made aware at project inception and presentations that funding for the Palawan pangolin project would be primarily form the IWT Challenge Fund. We continue to fully



recognise the UK Government/UK Aid as the funder of this project in all current and future presentations, trainings, workshops, and publications that will be disseminated to all stakeholders. Planned events over the Year 2 include the presentation of the LPCA proposal to the Sangguniang Bayan in Site 2, SMART training, community-based social marketing campaign implementation, and advocacy and networking with local prosecutors and judges in both sites.

**14. Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery**

The project started in September 2021, while majority of the team members started fully working on the project in October 2021. COVID-19 travel restrictions throughout 2021 have restricted our ability to undertake key project activities (i.e., community assemblies, socio-economic/attitudinal surveys, etc.). Fieldwork activities were further disrupted in November 2021 when one field staff member unfortunately contracted COVID-19 and had to go through government-mandated self-isolation for two weeks. COVID-19 precautionary protocols are being implemented in the office and during field visits, and all field staff are fully vaccinated which the majority have booster shots already. This protocol in place may have had controlled the transmission of the virus among team members as they were tested negative, but still had to home quarantine for a week.

With all the delays, including the Super Typhoon Rai that hit the Philippines in December 2021, the project team had to conduct majority of the Q3Y1 fieldwork activities in Q4Y1. We adjusted our workplan by working on weekends and maximised the capacity of the project team’s workforce by conducting different activities simultaneously in both sites. We are fortunate to have efficient and high calibre team members who were able to organise major events such as the MELET Formation, Paralegal trainings, etc. in a limited time.

We also maximised the use of virtual meetings with our partners and other stakeholders who have the access to the internet (i.e., inception meetings, training design development with ELAC, etc.). As the extent of COVID-19 is still uncertain, we continue to develop options for remote-based strategies to implement the project.

**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](mailto:ODA.safeguarding@defra.gov.uk) as indicated in the T&Cs.

ZSL has invested heavily in its safeguarding policies and procedures both in the UK and globally. The Council of Trustees and Executive Management Committee have formally recognised safeguarding as a key area of responsibility and are fully committed to strengthening and rolling out ZSL’s safeguarding approach. Where necessary, these efforts are applicable to staff, partners and other stakeholders with whom ZSL works. Relevant policies have been updated and new policies and procedures implemented. Policies to align to this commitment include: global safeguarding policy; safeguarding policy for UK staff; global whistleblowing policy and procedures; global code of conduct; DBS and criminal record check policy; employing younger worker policy; disciplinary policy and procedures; reference request policy; violence and aggressive behaviour policy; the 4 R’s safeguarding policy; and the ZSL staff handbook.

ZSL has also implemented measures to ensure the effective delivery of these policies by:

- designating a named ‘a Safeguarding Lead (DSL; Head of Legal, Governance and Risk Management, Simon Lee).
- a few Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) and Deputies (DSD).
- DSL meets DSOs and DSDs quarterly & with the Director General monthly to consider the rollout of safeguarding and to provide direction. Our Safeguarding Trustee, Designated Safeguarding Lead, along with a wider working group to help lead implementation.

- receiving updated global safeguarding training from independent experts including ‘train the trainer’ sessions to allow safeguarding leads to provide this training in-house in ZSL; and
- raising awareness of the updated Global Whistleblowing Policy by creating posters in different languages to be distributed amongst ZSL staff; and
- rolling out more formal feedback mechanisms to report any safeguarding issues as part of international programming.

These policies are easily accessible on ZSL’s internal intranet and have been translated into languages relevant to our work. Existing and newly joined staff, consultants and partners are made aware of the requirements of these policies and ZSL standards. They participate in an induction into the policies, related procedures and implications irrespective of the length of time they will be working/collaborating with ZSL.

In addition to these safeguarding efforts, ZSL is looking to develop and transition its environment and social management system to align to the IUCN ESMS standards – as a minimum standard of operating. A number of projects, including this Palawan pangolin project, are currently trialling to inform the transition plan. The IUCN standards include undertaking a project-level Social and Environment Impact Assessment, which will include the recently developed Security and Human Rights Screening. A Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process may be triggered at this point to safeguard indigenous people’s rights to give or withhold consent to a project that may impact them and/or their way of living or their land. In accordance with legal guidelines they will have the right to withdraw consent at any given stage of a project. The ZSL process will align to FAO guidelines to meet FPIC requirements through the whole project cycle – including monitoring and evaluation, to be participatory and accommodate indigenous group’s needs.

The results of the review and recommendation of the assessment will be captured and managed through an Environmental and Social management plan (ESMP) with a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and Grievance Mechanism adapted to be appropriate for the context of each project. All will be developed in an inclusive and participatory manner in collaboration with partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Other additional requirements may include Access Restriction Mitigation Process. Framework, Indigenous Peoples Plan, Pest Management Plan, and Resettlement Management Plan and livelihood related assurances (including Child labour). ZSL is also committed to enabling Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) throughout project implementation with targeted activities to provide entry points to marginalised groups within different recognised groups e.g., women and those with disabilities. ZSL is developing an institutional indicator framework to ensure projects are delivering impact in this area.

Progress to date, the project staff have access to the ZSL online learning laboratory training, processed FPICs (Annex 5.7) during socio-economic/attitudinal surveys and the community mapping activities. We also completed the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 6.2) and the Key Environmental & Social Safeguarding Project Risks and Mitigation document (Annex 6.1). The Supervising Community Organiser of the project has already an experience in conducting grievance mechanism, but the rest of the project team members will be trained in Grievance Redress Mechanism in Q1Y2.

## 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	██████	██████	██	Partner, GI-TOC, at the time of setting up the budget, had allocated for consultancy support as a large part of the 'personnel' contributions to the project. However, as their Asia team expanded, they allocated internal staff time instead.
Overhead Costs	██████	██████	██	Less than budgeted in line with lower overall expenditure.
Travel and subsistence	██████	██████	██	Covid-19 travel restrictions meant that some international travel could not happen as planned.
Operating Costs	██████	██████	██	Variance due primarily to underspend on safeguarding training, which had to be postponed to Y2 due to difficulties identifying an appropriate in-country trainer.
Capital items (see below)	██████	██████	█	
Others (see below)	██████	██████	█	
<b>TOTAL</b>	██████	██████	██	

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

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

## 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 <b>correct template</b> (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and <b>deleted the blue guidance text</b> before submission?	X
<b>Is the report less than 10MB?</b> If so, please email to <a href="mailto:IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk">IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk</a> putting the project number in the subject line.	X
<b>Is your report more than 10MB?</b> If so, please discuss with <a href="mailto:IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk">IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk</a> about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the subject line.	
<b>Have you included means of verification?</b> You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	X
<b>Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report?</b> 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.	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	X
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	X
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