

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects

Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2022

Project reference	IWT087
Project title	Combating Palawan pangolin trafficking: empowering community-based protection and pro-active enforcement
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Philippines
Lead partner	Zoological Society of London
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)
Project leader	Godofredo T. Villapando Jr.
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2
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 end September).

Output 1: creation of two Local Pangolin Conservation Areas (LPCAs) in Taytay (Site 1) and El Nido (Site 2).

The Philippines had its National and Local Elections in May 2022, with campaigning for locally elected positions starting in March 2022. Some activities had to be postponed during this period, especially those involving local legislative council (Sangguniang Bayan; SB) in El Nido. The elected government officials, and politicians, assumed their positions in June 2022. This means that the SBs of both Taytay and El Nido now include new members. The project team subsequently presented the project to the SBs, including the new members, at both sites to ensure their ongoing support for LPCA establishment.

The elections had also caused a delay in the progress of processing the general management plan and the proposed Municipal Ordinance revision for the LPCA in Taytay. Both documents have now been lodged again and the application is being sponsored by the Committee of the Environment. The new SB council members will conduct subsequent hearings.

Preliminary results were obtained from the camera trapping surveys in El Nido. Palawan pangolins were detected at 19 of the 32 sampling locations over the 4-month sampling period (April– Aug 2022). The camera traps will be retrieved in the first week of October. With this

potential high rate of capture in the research area, the project team has started conducting the spatial/mapping of the proposed LPCA coordinates in four sitios (hamlets) out of six in Barangay (village) Teneguiban, El Nido. The delineation team was composed of staff from the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) and the Municipal Planning Development Office, local community guides and some of the project team members.

14 of the 15 (6 females and 9 males) volunteer Bantay Gubat (BG; forest guards) from the local community and eight staff of the Taytay MENRO who were trained in Y1 were deputised by the DENR Region 4B (Annex 1). The other volunteer from the community is beyond the maximum age (60), but is still active and serves as a BG consultant because of his personal experience in patrolling Lake Manguao. The newly deputised BGs also participated in a law enforcement clinic session run by our partner ELAC (Annex 2). The BGs subsequently conducted the first foot patrol using the SMART system in Lake Manguao, covering 9.7km in September.

Meanwhile, 15 (3 females and 12 males) local community members and five (5 males) El Nido MENRO staff attended basic forest protection and wildlife enforcement training. The El Nido Municipal Environmental Law Enforcement Team (MELET) formed two weeks after. It comprises the 15 community volunteers and five El Nido MENRO staff plus eight (1 female and 7 males) staff from the different law enforcement agencies in the municipality.

A formal Grievance/Feedback Redress Mechanism (GRM) framework was developed and is now being implemented at both sites as part of the project's Environmental and Social Management System. The project team received 5 days training on GRM as part of this (Annex 3).

Output 2: Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLAs) and sustainable livelihoods piloted.

The project team conducted the people's organization (PO) reorganisation and strengthening activities in both sites, except for developing the 3-year strategic planning which is now scheduled in Q3Y2. We are happy to report that the Dagmay Farmers Association (DFA), our partner PO in El Nido, with project's assistance, is now officially registered at the Department of Labor and Employment (Annex 4). This is a huge step for the DFA as registering with DOLE is essential for every establishment of a PO and the DFA can now legally apply for other government financial aids to support their organization's income-generating activities.

The business plans for both POs (DFA and Lake Manguao Community Indigenous Peoples Agriculture Cooperative [LMCIPAC] in Taytay) are now in their final stages of development. However, the fish processing centre construction of LMCIPAC was put on hold due to the concerns on the lot location as the initial site proposed was owned by the local government unit (LGU) of Taytay. Processing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the LGU of Taytay and LMCIPAC regarding land tenurial was delayed for months due to the national and local elections. With the assistance of the project team, the LMCIPAC has decided to move the fish processing site location to an area owned by one of its officers/members. The MoA between the LMCIPAC and the lot owner is now being processed and construction is targeted to start in Q3Y2. Meanwhile, the DFA's chosen livelihood option based on the identification and feasibility assessment workshop is a PO agricultural supplies store. The MoA between the DFA and the lot owner is also being processed and construction is also scheduled to start in Q3Y2. In addition, the officers, especially the treasurer/bookkeeper, of DFA and LMCIPAC also attended the 3-day Basic Accounting for Non-Accountants (BANA) training.

Two new VSLA groups, one per site, were formed with a total of 41 members (38 females and 3 males). Our partner community in El Nido is highly interested in VSLAs as they heard about the positive experiences of those who are currently members of VSLAs in their village. Another group convened 25 individuals and requested ZSL to train them with the technology. Since this is a community-driven VSLA formation and beyond the project's target delivery for Y2, the project team offered to cover the 2-day training expenses and requested the group to purchase their own box and passbook. The third VSLA group was thus formed during this project period and comprises 25 members (21 females and 4 males).

Output 3: positive engagement in pangolin stewardship by LPCA communities.

The Social Marketing Team for Lake Manguao in Taytay was already formed (7 females and 4 males). This comprises representatives from the different government agencies/offices including the Taytay Municipal Tourism Development and Management Office, MENRO, DENR-CENRO

and the Barangay Council of Poblacion, and volunteers from our partner community. The team conducted sessions and developed the campaign strategies and communication plan (Annex 5). Formal launching of the campaign will be held in Q3Y2 in Taytay, and El Nido social marketing team formation, development and launching activities will follow.

Meanwhile, we virtually presented the project at the High-Level Political Forum 2022 on Sustainable Development Goals in July. This was co-hosted by Wildlife Justice Commission and our partner GI-TOC. The theme was about developments and responses on illicit wildlife trade. Our presentation was focused on empowering community-based protection.

Output 4: building evidence base and capacity to address pangolin trafficking in Palawan.

The draft report (Annex 6; please do not share) of the research conducted by our partner GI-TOC on understanding the drivers, routes and methods of pangolin trafficking from site-level through to ports and exit, markets in Metro Manila, and monitoring illicit online trade in pangolins is in copyediting phase and will be published in November 2022. Meanwhile, the provision of training on intelligence direction to customs agents in Palawan and the advanced law enforcement to El Nido and Taytay MELETs will be held in October 2022 and trainers will be led by ZSL UK law enforcement advisor.

On the advocacy and networking with local prosecutors and judges in two project municipalities, the first round-table discussion (RTD) will be held in November 2022. The RTD will focus on the impact of IWT and relevant legal frameworks and creation of impact statements and sentencing guidelines. This is co-organized with our partner ELAC.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The national and local elections in May 2022 have slightly impacted the timetable of some of the project activities, since the campaign for locally elected positions started in March 2022. However, the project team strategically conducted other activities that were not directly affected by the elections schedule and compressed some activities in Q2Y2.

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

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

4a. 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: £

4b. 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.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

None.

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

We have included a revised project implementation plan (Annex 7), as requested in our Annual Report Review.

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

Please send your **completed report by email** to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**