

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: 30th November 2023

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	Glenn R. Labrado (Acting Country Director)
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR3
Project website/blog/social media	www.zsl.org

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).

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

Output 1: Strengthening the existing Local Pangolin Conservation Areas (LPCAs) in Taytay (Site 1) and El Nido (Site 2).

Twenty individuals (2 females and 18 males) were made members of the technical working group (TWG) through the executive order signed by the Municipal Mayor of El Nido (Annex 1). Subsequently, a management planning workshop was organized, during which both the TWG members and community representatives collaborated to develop indicative plans. These plans will serve as the foundation for drafting the LPCA management plan for the proposed Teneguiban Pangolin Conservation Area in El Nido site. Lake Manguao in Taytay was designated as a LMMCAEZ in the 2015 ordinance by the Local Government Unit (LGU). Following an extensive lobbying campaign by the project team, in collaboration with the Municipal Tourism and Development Management Office, this ordinance was amended in 2023 to include the different management zones including the LPCA as the core zone, thereby legalising the LPCA in the

Taytay site (Annex 2). These activities strengthen the existing LPCA in Taytay (Site 1) by providing the necessary legal framework for effective area management and laying a solid foundation for the establishment of the LPCA in El Nido (Site 2).

ZSL Philippines is implementing a ZSL initiative called FAIRER (fair, accountable, inclusive, respectful, ethical and reflective), a mechanism by which ZSL can ensure that diverse voices, perspectives and knowledge systems are included in project design and implementation. This project team is one of the first to implement the initiative and an initial workshop was conducted and attended by 6 pangolin project staff (4 male and 2 female) and country director and HR manager. In Y2, a formal Grievance/Feedback Redress Mechanism (GRM) framework was developed, and this FAIRER workshop is helping develop this further. Specifically, the pangolin project team has incorporated these FAIRER principles in our most recent project proposal submitted to IWTCF R10.

Two ZSL/RVC MSc students played a pivotal role in tagging and analysing images collected at the El Nido site. The results revealed that 16 species were detected in the random deployments, whereas only 15 were identified in targeted deployments. The Palawan pangolin exhibited a higher relative abundance index (RAI) in the random camera traps, although the difference from targeted cameras was not substantial. RAIs provide valuable insights into the mammal population composition in Barangay Teneguiban. These data served as the basis for the proposed sites of the LPCA.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 4B (Annex 3) deputised 13 (3 females and 10 males) volunteer Bantay Gubat (BG; forest guards) from local community and four staff members from El Nido Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO). This dedicated group was formed in Y2 and has undergone a series of capacity-building training sessions facilitated by ELAC and ZSL's Counter Trafficking and Law Enforcement Advisor's team since then. Each member has been officially issued an identification card by DENR. Currently, they are in the planning stages for commencing their SMART/LAWIN patrol activities. The newly deputised forest wardens also recently participated in a law enforcement clinic session conducted by ELAC (Annex 4). During the session, they visited the court to observe actual court hearings of environmental cases. There are now 27 community members and 12 MENRO personnel deputised forest wardens in both LPCAs helping to protect pangolins and reduce poaching.

The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) assessment for the Lake Manguao Municipal Conservation Area and Eco-Tourism Zone (LMMCAEZ) was carried out with the facilitation of ZSL. The findings underwent validation by representatives from the Provincial Environmental and Natural Resources Office, led by Ms. Rhodora Ubani, while the Secretariat was responsible for consolidating the results. The Baseline METT carried out in Taytay for the LMMCAEZ resulted in an indicative qualitative rating of 56%. This rating falls within the medium range of the overall assessment, suggesting that the management body is performing well in managing its LPCA (Annex 5).

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

The General Assembly of the VSLAs for Taytay and El Nido Savings Group, took place on September 29, 2023. The event was hosted at the Barangay Teneguiban Covered Court in El Nido, Palawan, and was organized to promote unity among VSLA members and inter-VSLA groups. The assembly aimed to highlight VSLA as an emerging force in social, economic, and environmental initiatives within Taytay and El Nido. It also served as a platform to recognize outstanding VSLA groups based on the two criteria: 1. Following VSLA standards and 2. Proper implementation of their constitutional by laws, fostering a sense of camaraderie and commitment among all VSLA members. The gathering drew a total of 190 participants, comprising 23 males and 167 females. These attendees represented 10 VSLA groups, with 4 coming from Taytay and 6 from El Nido (Annex 6).

Three new VSLA groups were established in the El Nido site. The first group was established as a part of the project plan for Y3, while the formation of the other two groups were driven by community interest. These additional groups were established due to the positive impact and feedback generated by our VSLA activities in El Nido. The community itself contributed by

providing the necessary boxes and passbooks, while ZSL covered the training expenses. A total of 68 new members, consisting of 59 females and 9 males, actively participate in these newly formed VSLAs. The three groups have already saved a total of PhP444,550 (6,350GBP). Based on the monitoring of the project team, their environmental fund was used for coastal clean-up and most of the social fund were availed for medical expenses.

The project team handed over the agricultural supplies store to Dagmay Farmers Association on May 25, 2023 as part of the project's livelihood support in Site 2. The initiative included the provision of start-up capital, enabling the association to acquire their initial products. The association members agreed to build and manage an agricultural supply store. During the building process, association members actively contributed their manpower and materials, such as gravel and sand, to complete the construction of the building, symbolizing their shared ownership. Key figures from the municipal agriculture office of El Nido and local government officials from the barangay actively participated in the event, further emphasizing the collaborative nature of the project (Annex 7).

In linking the people organizations (POs) to other entities, the project team together with the Palawan State University, College of Business and Accountancy (PSU-CBA) facilitated a marketing strategy workshop to the members of Dagmay Farmers Association. This was based on the result of their conducted assessment to Dagmay Farmers Association in Y2. A similar assessment was conducted by PSU-CBA at the Taytay site with the members of LMCIPAC. This assessment identified and recommended five crucial capacity-building needs, namely: 1. Marketing Management, 2. Financial Management, 3. Human Resource Management, 4. Entrepreneurship, and 5. Accountancy/Management Accounting (Annex 8).

Output 3: continuous promotion of awareness and active involvement in pangolin stewardship within LPCA communities.

The collaborative efforts of the project team and student interns from Mindanao State University resulted in the execution of a Social Marketing Activity through Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) initiatives in four schools situated in Barangay Teneguiban, El Nido. The outreach successfully engaged a total of 251 participants, comprising 113 males and 138 females (Annexes 10-13). The breakdown of participants across the schools is as follows: Teneguiban Elementary School, with 85 participants (M=37, F=48); Dagmay Elementary School, with 58 participants (M=34, F=24); Diapila Elementary School, with 60 participants (M=27, F=33); and Diapila High School, with 48 participants (M=15, F=33). This initiative aimed to promote social awareness and understanding among the youth in the community through informative and educational activities.

The socio-economic and Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) endline surveys in Taytay were successfully completed in July 2023, with all gathered data duly uploaded. A similar survey is scheduled to take place in El Nido in October 2023. Following the comprehensive data collection process, the project team will enlist the expertise of a statistician to conduct a thorough analysis of the results. The findings of this analysis will be included in the final report, to provide the evidence of the success of our initiatives in both Taytay and El Nido site.

Output 4: developing partnership and enhancing capacity to address pangolin trafficking in Palawan.

The ZSL team was invited by the judiciary champion from RTC Branch 164 in Roxas, accompanied by the Provincial and City PNP, a Prosecutor from northern Palawan, PCSD EZMED, and legal office. They visited the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) warehouse. The goal was to discuss the proper disposal of completed evidence to assist other government agencies and maximize its functionality. The chief of the PCSD Legal Section and the judiciary champion urged all stakeholders to collaborate in enhancing the collection, custody, and disposal of evidence. This invitation was a result of the round table discussions in Y2 where the pillars of judiciary in our project sites appreciates the importance of with all stakeholders in combatting IWT.

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 shift between the previous and current project managers has notably impacted the project's momentum, introducing a period of adjustment and potential re-evaluation of priorities. The change request stated that even if there is now a new PM, the previous PM (Charity Apale) will serve as a consultant in the remaining months of the project implementation to minimize the effects of the transition. Additionally, amid this transitional phase, the project team has shown commendable resilience and collaborative efforts aimed at meeting the project's deliverables, without affecting the budget and timelines. Some major activities need to be moved to the later part of the year as requested by some partners due to their availability, these adjustments also provided time and resources to work on proposal development for the next stage of the Balik Balikon project.

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

Discussed with NIRAS: Yes

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

Change request reference if known: Not known, but the change request was approved in August 2023

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2024)?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

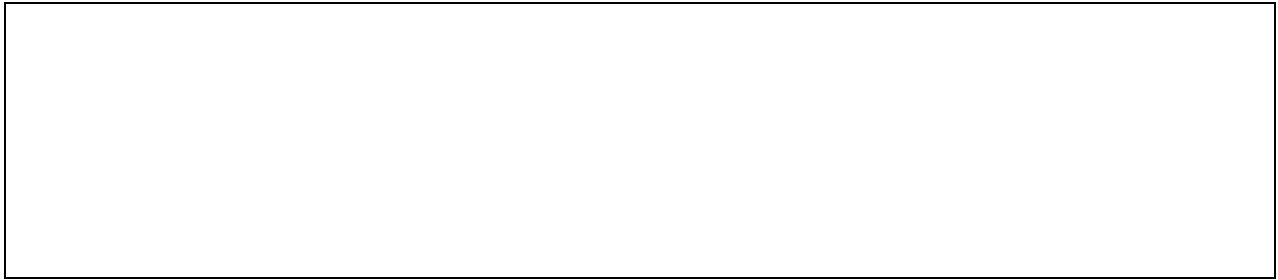
4c. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget 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.

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend 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?

We will be submitting a budget change request in due course



If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, 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.

One of the comments in AR2 that needs to be addressed in the upcoming half-year report pertains to the inclusion of the Risk Register, which is provided in the Annex 13.

All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS 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**