



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)

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IWT Challenge Fund Project Information

Project reference	IWT089
Project title	Building effective responses to illegal wildlife trade across Central Asia
Country/ies	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan
Lead Partner	Fauna and Flora (FFI)
Project partner(s)	TRAFFIC International, Institute of Zoology (National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity Kazakhstan (ACBK)
IWTCF grant value	£ 556,999
Start/end dates of project	01/10/2021 – 30/09/2024 (extended for 6 months)
Reporting period (e.g. April 2023-Mar 2024) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2023 – March 2024 Annual Report 3
Project Leader name	Matthew [REDACTED]
Project website/blog/social media	
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1. Project summary

This project is implemented in the Central Asian region (figure 1): Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan - countries with extensive international borders where both legal and illegal trade in wildlife takes place.

Often, these four countries can simultaneously act as source, transit and consumer countries for trade in a range of native and non-native species. The native species that are commonly traded in the region are endangered and vulnerable species such as steppe tortoise (*Testudo horsfieldii*), saiga (*Saiga tatarica*), saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*), snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*). Among the non-native species traded in the region are live animals such as lions, Nile crocodiles, and different species of parrots, along with parts and derivatives such as ivory and rhino horns.

Due to a lack of resources, trained personnel and general knowledge of national law enforcement agencies around wildlife trade and how to respond effectively, IWT in the region remains understudied and unaddressed. Therefore, this project aims to support law enforcement agencies in strengthening their capacity to identify the illegality of the traded species and intercept wildlife products, promote systematic collection and analysis of IWT data and thus, contribute to evidence-based, efficient and coordinated responses to address IWT nationally and regionally.



Figure 1. Four countries in Central Asia covered by the project: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan

2. Project stakeholders/ partners

Within the project period, FFI as the leading organization have managed to build trusting and fruitful relationships with formal project partners: TRAFFIC, the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Science of Uzbekistan, and the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan through regular and effective communication. FFI organize monthly meetings for all partners and occasionally separate meetings for planning events or discussing project activities. Understanding the strengths, expertise and skills of each partner helped us to improve the delivery of the activities and ensure the impact of the project.

FFI and project partners also maintain good rapport with the national stakeholders, such as the Customs Committee in Uzbekistan, the Academy of Law Enforcement under the General Prosecutors Office in Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervisions in Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change in Uzbekistan and other governmental agencies by including them in the activities and national and regional meetings under the project.

One piece of evidence of this successful collaboration with the governmental agencies is their increased interest and engagement in addressing IWT. For instance, in Uzbekistan, after the successful training conducted by the project partner- IOZ, the Customs Committee regularly contact the IOZ staff (at least once a week) for consultation and assistance in the identification of species seized on the border by the Customs, which was not a case before. While in Kazakhstan, the Law Enforcement Academy saw the usefulness and value of the training on CITES and national laws on IWT developed by project partner ACBK and initiated signing an MoU to continue delivering such training further for other law enforcement officers and to assess the possibility of including these training modules within the national training curricula. In Tajikistan, FFI supported the Cynology Centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs by significantly improving the infrastructure and welfare standards of their cynology centre and ensured their participation in the regional sniffer dog training in Kazakhstan, which motivated them to assign a few sniffer dogs that they have begun to train on CITES species.

The representatives of the UK embassy, the embassy of USA, and regional programmes such as BOMCA (Border Management Programme in Central Asia) were also among the attendees of the regional workshop that took place in July in Bishkek and got project updates during occasional meetings with FFI. FFI also maintains contact with representatives within the UK embassy throughout the project meeting in person when possible in Bishkek and Dushanbe to provide updates on the projects progress.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

In Y3 we find that the project is in a good position with only two remaining activities, which were partially completed: 3.3. Training the LEOs in Tajikistan and 3.6. Procurement of sniffer dogs in Uzbekistan. Both activities are planned to be completed within the six-month extension period. The information on activities delivered in Y3 is below:

1.2. Host one regional training workshop for 20 law enforcement officers (LEOs) from all four countries on IWT data collection, management and analysis (complete)

The Regional Workshop on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade was held on 4-6 July 2023 for the governmental agencies. This workshop brought together relevant governmental stakeholders from the project countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan to present some of the project's results, raise awareness of the relevance of combatting wildlife trafficking in the region and support the efforts through technical training and practical tools. Over the three days, alongside presentations on current information and discussing challenges in combating illegal wildlife trade, the 66 participants (20 women, and 46 men, of which 4 participated online) received technical knowledge and practical tools to counter illegal trade effectively. Participants included key governmental organisations from Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, as well as from neighbouring China, the UK, the USA, the European Union, CITES, and conservation NGOs. TRAFFIC organized key speakers for the workshop, including UK Border Services, China Customs Services, CITES Secretariat, Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA), and Ibirs Foundation. The involvement of these experts was planned under another regional IWT meeting under activity 2.4., however, after discussion with the project partners it was seen as more beneficial and appropriate to invite experts from China and the CITES Secretariat to the regional meeting in July. Embassies and International organizations were also invited for the first day of the event and governmental organizations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan with local partners were invited for the entire workshop.

This regional workshop was the largest international workshop on wildlife trade ever hosted in Central Asia and served as a great platform for participants to share their experiences, best practices, and challenges, enabling them to gain valuable insights from each other. The practical work conducted on the third day of the workshop focused on improving communication between state agencies and Central Asian countries and resulted in valuable recommendations and strategies to overcome obstacles in combating illegal wildlife trade effectively. The workshop was conducted in Kyrgyz, Russian, and English, with translation services available. The feedback received from participants was overall positive (Annex 4.1;4.2). As a direct result of this workshop, and following further consultation and engagement, illegal wildlife trade reports were submitted by respective CITES MAs in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

1.3. Collect preliminary baseline IWT data and produce a report on key hotspots and trade routes across the region (complete)

Based on the IWT data that was previously collected by partners (more details in the AR 2023) TRAFFIC published one analytical report based on the information gathered over previous reporting periods, with support and feedback from the partner organizations. This report was published in both Russian and English languages. The report, *An Assessment of Wildlife Trade in Central Asia*, sets out to establish a benchmark assessment of the levels and dynamics of wildlife trade—both legal and illegal trade—within the target Central Asian countries. (Annex 4.3).

In addition, the collected data informed two reports on the trafficking of vertebrates and invertebrates prepared by IOZ: *Analysis of illegal import/export of vertebrate animals* by Timur Abduraupov, and *Analysis of illegal import/export of invertebrate animals* by Askar Akhmedov (reports are available in Russian and could be shared upon the request). The reports present a list of specimens confiscated in Uzbekistan during export or import from 2004-2022 in Uzbekistan, and an analysis of the data. Moreover, the reports include recommendations on priority species in the country, which then was used to inform law enforcement officers during the

training in Uzbekistan (activity 3.3). FFI is also in the process of producing a scientific peer reviewed publication on the trade in Steppe Tortoise which will be a comprehensive analysis of the illegal trade in Steppe tortoise across the region and of the impact this has had on the species range and population. In Kazakhstan, ACBK continues collecting data on online reports of IWT incidences. They collated 208 media news on poaching cases for the period 2019-2024, detected 78 cases of rare animal species derivatives being sold on OLX a local internet platform, and sent 22 appeals to the Police.

1.4. Mentor three national focal points to analyse IWT data, and support them to update and submit annual IWT reports to CITES (complete)

TRAFFIC invited the CITES Secretariat to the Regional Workshop on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade which was held between 4-6 July 2023. During the regional meeting, an Enforcement Support Officer, CITES Secretariat, provided two presentations during the meeting, one on an introduction and an overview of CITES, and the second on CITES Reporting and Requirements, Annual Reports and Illegal Wildlife Trade Report and Using the CITES Trade Database. These presentations and the attendance of the CITES Secretariat provided the participants, particularly the national government agency representatives, with the opportunity to discuss CITES reporting requirements and any challenges authorities faced with the Enforcement Support Officer.

After several meetings and discussions with CITES administrative focal points, we learned that LEAs in each country had different levels of needs and interest around CWT. Therefore, TRAFFIC and ACBK provided support tailored to the needs, which resulted in the submission of the missing annual CITES legal and illegal trade reports by all three countries.

1.5. Support LEAs (including prosecutors) to implement existing inter-agency agreements in place in Kyrgyzstan (with Panthera) and in Kazakhstan (with ACBK) (complete)

On September 19-20, in Astana, Kazakhstan, ACBK, FFI, and Law Enforcement Academy conducted a regional prosecutorial workshop, co-funded through the concurrent and complimentary INL project, with 52 (15 women, 37 men) participants from the environment prosecutors and representatives of environmental agencies and Academies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and representative from the ENPE - European Network of Environmental Prosecutors (participated online).

The participants of the round table exchanged experiences on the implementation of CITES in the countries of Central Asia and discussed gaps in national legislative acts and the importance of inter-agency and transboundary cooperation to address IWT issues in the region more effectively. The co-organisers - Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan expressed their interest in continuing to deliver the training on wildlife trade and crimes for LEOs on a systematic basis and suggested signing an MoU with ACBK and FFI for future collaborations. ACBK and FFI have also received numerous positive feedback and requests to organize a follow up workshop from the participants (Annex 4.4; 4.5.).

1.6. Facilitate bilateral IWT data sharing between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (in collaboration with Panthera) throughout three meetings/workshops. (complete)

The importance of data sharing between countries for more effective responses was raised at every national and regional meeting during the project period. However, the exchange of IWT data is complicated by the fact that there is no systematic data collection neither in Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan. Therefore, the discussions around the national database with the governmental agencies took place in both countries. In Kyrgyzstan, these discussions resulted in the development of a wildlife trade database on the base of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision with access to other relevant agencies such as Customs and Border Services, Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Prosecutors Office. This work is now being supported under the extended INL project. TRAFFIC is leading the work with the MNRETS to develop a ToR and find an IT company with experience in designing databases for governmental agencies.

2.2. Promote IWT reports and calls-to-action to >30 high-level officials at national IWT meetings in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and through national media.

The preliminary findings from the reports were shared by TRAFFIC during the regional meeting on July, 4-6. It was covered by media in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

In February, TRAFFIC prepared a press release and announced the launch of the reports through the website.

Project partners participated in the 14th Conference of the Parties of the UN Convention on Migratory Species (CMS COP14) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan between February 12-16, 2024. More than 1,700 expert delegates, including 92 CMS Government Parties, UN Agencies and over 240 participants from non-conservation organizations joined to address the conservation needs of terrestrial, aquatic, and avian migratory species and their habitats around the world. During the Conference, TRAFFIC disseminated the report targeted to experts, policy makers and governmental agencies who focus on Central Asia. Specifically, TRAFFIC displayed the reports in both languages at the IUCN Pavilion at COP as well as at a USFWS funded Saiga Networking Event.

The reports were also presented to the media and governmental agencies of Uzbekistan during the regional wrap-up meeting that took place on March 4th in Tashkent (activity 2.4.). The workshop was covered by media in news reports and articles with interviews of project partners and an overview of the project (Annex 4.6).

2.3. Promote the incorporation of IWT within regional LEA initiatives (e.g. CARICC) (complete)

Between 11-12 September 2023, TRAFFIC was invited to present the outcomes of the report *An Assessment of Wildlife Trade in Central Asia* at the BOMCA training workshop in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, for investigators of cross-border crimes such as trafficking of firearms, explosives, ammunition, currency and other goods. TRAFFIC presented the main findings of the report and also the importance of combatting illegal wildlife trade in the Central Asian region. The workshop was attended by the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the State Security Service; the Border Guard Forces of the State Security Service; the Customs Committee under the Ministry of Economy and Finance; and the General Prosecutor's Office. The reports were also shared directly with Salome Flores Sierra, Head of UNODC Information Centre for researching and analysing transnational threats related to drugs and crime, based in Tashkent to inform current planning on regional projects.

2.4. Host regional IWT meetings (with high-level LEA/CITES/CMS/ Chinese officials) to share project outputs and develop a roadmap for improved regional action and coordination post-project (complete)

The wrap-up meeting aimed to gather only formal project partners and held in a format where everybody would have space and feel comfortable sharing their experience, challenges, and lessons learnt and discussing the next steps necessary to better respond to the IWT issues in the region in collaboration with the governmental bodies from all four countries. Therefore, the regional meeting took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on March 4-5, 2024. The morning of the first day was dedicated to the presentation of the project overview and outputs, including the reports produced under 1.2. It was attended by representatives of mass media as mentioned in activity 2.2. and State Customs Committee, Higher Military Customs Institute, National Cynological Centre, and Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of Uzbekistan. The remaining one and a half days were focused on working with the core project partners and included work in groups and reflections on the project. Annex 4.7. The results of the project have informed existing and future work in the region by FFI and project partners, in partnership with government partners, with activities and identified national and regional priorities now being expanded upon under other grants, including the recently obtain INL extension.

3.1. Create IWT training modules and refine following delivery and participant feedback (complete)

On July 7-8, 2023, Dr. Gohar Petrossian who developed four modules on wildlife crime and its prevention conducted a two-day demo-training for project partners and potential trainers. After the training and receiving the feedback from the participants, the changes were made to the modules, which were then reviewed, translated into Russian, Kyrgyz and Tajik languages and designed. Annex 4.8.

In Kazakhstan, ACBK together with a group of experts (Institute of Zoology, Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutor's Office), developed a training course on CITES implementation for law enforcement officers and border guards. The course consists of a syllabus, four modules, testing and recommended reading: 1. CITES Convention. Basic concepts. 2. Implementation of CITES in the Republic of Kazakhstan. 3. CITES objects, and their identification. 4. Features of working with CITES objects.

In Uzbekistan, IoZ prepared modules on species identification, a total of 11 presentations and 4 practical sessions for training LEOs.

3.2. Creation of a facility in Uzbekistan dedicated to the storage of CITES specimens and IWT-specific training for LEOs (complete)

IoZ refurbished a room in the building of the Academy of Science of Uzbekistan to create a facility for the secure storage of CITES specimens. It is planned to use this facility as a training class for law enforcement officers and other stakeholders to teach how to identify the traded animal species, parts, and derivatives. IoZ procured the necessary furniture, equipment and containers to store specimens and conduct training. Annex 4.9

3.3. Train 100 frontline officers (50/country in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to detect traded species and enforce CITES legislation; distribute IWT messaging to 75 checkpoints (ongoing))

On October 24-25, in Bishkek, FFI conducted training for 44 frontline officers (8 women and 36 men) from the Customs and Border Services of Kyrgyzstan. The training aimed to enhance their knowledge about CITES and identification of species commonly traded in the country.

The course addressed the objectives, tasks, mechanisms, and operating principles of CITES, along with the practical application of CITES and national legislation on wildlife trade in the routine work of LEOs. The questions around safety measures when handling CITES specimens and storage of confiscated objects were also addressed during the first day. On the following day, two experts from IoZ delivered four presentations on the identification of native and exotic species of invertebrates, reptiles, birds, and mammals. The presentations also highlighted the commonly used methods and means of illegal animal trafficking worldwide, including real-life cases from Central Asia. The training was reinforced by practical exercises and quizzes (activity 3.7.). Annex 4.10

A similar training for LEOs in Tajikistan is planned for April 23-24, 2024.

In Kazakhstan on August 17-18 in Almaty, ACBK conducted training for 28 trainers (13 women, 15 men) from the Law Enforcement Academy and Border Service based on modules on CITES developed earlier (activity 3.1.). It is expected that based on the results of the training the participants will conduct similar training events in the future and that these modules will be incorporated into national training curricula.

In Uzbekistan, on the 19th of July for 56 participants (50 men and 6 women) from the Customs Committee, Custom Institute, the Custom office of Tashkent city and Tashkent-AERO, the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, and 13 Regional customs offices received training on the species identification of commonly trafficked species, CITES and crime scripting. The training was very well received with further training requested and the inclusion of the training in the curriculum of the Customs Service is being considered. Annex 4.11

3.4. Train the same 100 officers to use protocols for handling IWT evidence (including transferring animals to rehabilitation centres) and prepare cases for prosecution (Y2-3) (complete)

After meetings with LEAs and internal discussions, FFI decided to expand the impact of training, given the relative low awareness of IWT as a regional issue by provide training to other relevant LEAs such as eco-police, rangers, and prosecutors, rather than training the same 50 Customs and Border officers. Although all these agencies encounter wildlife crime (trade or poaching), however, they have different functionalities and specific training needs. The protocols for handling evidence and preparation of cases for prosecution are within the responsibilities and interests of MNRETS, prosecutors, eco-police and rangers. Thus, on February 8-9, in Karakol, Issyk-Kul, FFI in collaboration with a local NGO Ilbirs Fund, organized another training for 34 people from Sarychat-Eertash, Han-Tengri, Naryn State Reserves, the General Prosecutor's Office, regional prosecutor's offices, ecological police of Issyk-Kul, and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology, and Technical Supervision.

They received training on relevant legislative acts, court proceedings, crime scene inspection and collection of evidence related to wildlife crimes. The training allowed participants to discuss the legal framework, and its practical application, identify existing gaps and difficulties, and explore ways to address them. The participants also received training on the basics of wildlife crime and practical exercises on crime prevention tools based on the modules under activity 3.1. 78% of participants rated the training with the highest score of 5 out of 5, indicating exceptional satisfaction. Annex 4.12; 4.19

3.6. Support training in IWT detection of 6 sniffer dog teams based at strategic checkpoints across the region (ongoing)

The experience that the Cynology Department of Tajikistan received from participation in last year's regional sniffer dog workshop in Kazakhstan (AR2) increased their interest in training the sniffer dogs on CITES-listed species and motivated them to explore the ways to obtain the scent imitators and samples. In October 2023 the director of the Cynology Department and the Deputy Director of the Forestry Agency agreed that the Forestry Agency would provide the Cynology Department with the animal parts and derivatives confiscated by rangers. Thus, dog -handlers from the Cynology Department started training their dogs on a bear paw provided by the Forestry Agency with intentions to supply further species specimens for training.

FFI also conducted the needs assessment to understand how to better support the training of sniffer dogs in Tajikistan. According to that assessment, the Cynology Department had a sufficient number of working dogs (33 dogs), however none of them were trained for wildlife. Among the most essential needs were good quality dog food for puppies and pregnant dogs, equipment for training, and kennels. Last year FFI supported the building of seven new kennels for dogs and, the procurement of training equipment, 80% of which was delivered and the rest is expected in May 2024. In May 2023, FFI also provided the Cynology Department with good quality dog food. Additionally, FFI received a survey conducted by an expert from the Forestry Agency, which highlighted the population of wild boars in Tajikistan had grown tremendously and led to wild boars being killed by farmers in retaliation. Due to religious reasons, the demand for the meat of wild boar in Tajikistan is very low and most of it is thrown out in a forest. Based on this report, in March 2024, FFI signed an agreement with the hunting concessions and Forestry Agencies on the provision of 300 kg of wild boar meat for the Cynology Department for the pilot four months. After four months, the Cynology Department will be signing a bilateral agreement with the Forestry Agency to continue this work. FFI also supported the building of a refrigerator for storage of provided food. Annex 4.13

In Uzbekistan, IoZ is negotiating and planning to support the procurement of sniffer dogs for the Cynology Centre of the Customs Committee within the project extension period. FFI offered their ongoing support to the Government of Kyrgyzstan to support their Cynology Centre of Specialized Customs.

3.7. Review the performance of trained officers and recognise the outstanding achievement of four through awards presented at 2.4 (complete)

At the training for LEOs mentioned in 3.3. the team conducted practical exercises and a quiz on the subjects presented by trainers, and based on the results, two groups of seven people with the best results received prizes. All participants were also awarded certificates. Annex 4.14

3.8. Establish contact lists of IWT experts and share them with LEOs to enable mentorship post-project (complete)

A list of expert organizations has been completed and sent to prosecutors and other stakeholders. As a result, FFI were contacted by the representative of the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of Uzbekistan, who attended the Prosecutors Workshop in September, to consult regarding the export of 1640 songbirds from Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan. One of the birds was included in the Red Book of Kyrgyzstan and its extraction would be illegal. After consultations with the local ornithologists, we advised not to issue any permits as it could have been used to smuggle other rare species of song birds from Uzbekistan.

3.9. Hand over training materials to law enforcement academies for integration into curricula post-project (Y3) (complete)

All modules 3.1. were shared with the law enforcement agencies in each country who participated in the training. Moreover, in Kyrgyzstan, the staff of Naryn Reserve requested the modules on crime prevention to be used during their internal training for rangers, and were provided the modules too.

In addition to the modules, an updated CITES guideline, and three posters on native species, exotic species and derivatives for Uzbekistan was developed. For the training in Uzbekistan, 200 copies were printed (100 copies in Russian and 100 copies in Uzbek languages); 30 copies of posters in Russian and 600 in Uzbek (200 copies of each type of poster). After multiple requests from the Customs and other LEAs, IoZ additionally printed 2000 copies (1000 copies in each two languages) of the CITES guidelines for further distribution among the LEAs upon their request and during the training.

The CITES guidelines and posters were adapted for local species in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In Kyrgyzstan, 300 copies (100 of each type) and 100 copies of CITES guidelines were printed and distributed during the training and meetings with LEAs. In Tajikistan, the materials will be distributed during their training planned for April 23-24th, 2024. (Annex 4.15)

4.1 In four hotspots, research potential application of crime prevention (e.g. wildlife guardians, informal sanctions) (Y2-3) (complete)

Through the feedback received from LEOs, in-person meetings, observations and questionnaires there was clear interest in crime prevention strategies in three countries of four. However, when we introduced the modules on crime prevention, we could see that the understanding of crime prevention strategies was limited and received two requests from the LEAs in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (Naryn State Reserve and eco-police) to share the available sources and materials on crime prevention. Due to limitations on data to identify specific hotspots and the limited awareness of crime prevention theory and practice for LEAs mandated to tackle IWT crime prevention methods and theory were incorporated into all training events for LEAs under the project using the developed IWT modules.

4.2 Introduce crime prevention approaches to 20 individuals who influence IWT projects in a regional seminar (Y3) (complete)

8th and 9th of July 2023 Gohar Petrossian, an expert from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, conducted a comprehensive introduction to the modules developed on IWT and Crime Prevention. Two-day training sessions were organized by FFI for the project partners. These trainings were held with the active participation of 18 individuals representing various partner organizations, including FFI, IOZ, ACBK, Ekomaktab, and TRAFFIC. Gohar Petrossian facilitated the delivery of the 1st Module "General Introduction to Illegal Wildlife Trade" and the 3rd Module on Crime Prevention during these training sessions. The participants had the opportunity to delve deeper into the modules' content, building upon the knowledge acquired during the workshop.

The training sessions included practical exercises, case studies, and discussions, fostering a dynamic and enriching learning environment.

Later IOZ and FFI used the acquired knowledge to train LEOs from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on the second day of species identification training that included theory and practical sessions on situational crime prevention. (Annex 4.16).

3.2 Progress towards Project Outputs

Output 1: Law enforcement response to IWT in Central Asia is informed by data, analyses and knowledge shared between agencies both in the country and between range states.

Indicator 1.1: Preliminary analysis of key regional IWT hotspots and routes identified by the end of Y1, further developed in Y2 and Y3 through trained focal points.

1 report generated. The analysis of the IWT situation in the region has been completed and informed the report described under activity 1.3. and shared with law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders in four countries.

Indicator 1.2: 3 or more law enforcement agencies across 3 countries, report higher national capacity to produce and submit IWT reports to CITES by the end of Y3.

Supported submission of 3 CITES IWT reports in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. After learning that LEAs in each country had different levels of needs and interest around IWT and CITES, the project team provided tailored support resulted in the submission of the missing annual CITES legal and illegal trade reports by Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

Indicator 1.3: Existing inter-agency data-sharing agreements in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are actively used by the end of Y2.

After identifying that the existing inter-agency data-sharing agreements were outdated and not enforced, the team supported the creation and signature of new data-sharing agreement which now serve as the foundation for inter-agency work (activity 1.6).

Indicator 1.4: LEAs in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan agree in principle to promote inter-agency collaboration on IWT by the end of Y3.

The collaboration between LEAs and governmental bodies has been promoted through technical working groups, meetings, workshops and training on both national and international levels, facilitating the previously absent inter-agency collaboration.

1.5. Bi-lateral cooperation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan demonstrated through at least two bilateral meetings/workshops and ongoing communication by the end of Y3.

Governmental bodies, from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, including LEAs participated in five regional workshops (two workshops on SMART, sniffer dog training, a July regional workshop, and a prosecutors' workshop) organized between 2022 and 2024, giving the LEAs opportunity to meet each other and facilitate collaboration

Output 2. Greater priority is given to addressing IWT at a national and regional level.

Indicator 2.1: One or more LEAs in each country commit to staff training on wildlife trade and mitigation of illegal wildlife trade by the end of Y3.

6 LEAs committed to staff training on wildlife trade. Among the most engaged in training staff on IWT LEAs in each were:

Kazakhstan: Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutors Office plan on delivering more training for other LEAs in the country on CITES;

Kyrgyzstan: MNRETS, Naryn State Reserve, General Prosecutors Office. Border Service is considering the opportunities to sign an agreement with FFI for organizing ToT on IWT and further inclusion of modules on IWT in their curricula.

Uzbekistan: The Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, and the Customs Committee are interested in including the modules on species ID and CITES in the curriculum or making these training more regular.

Tajikistan: Forestry Agency and Cynology Department motivated to train the sniffer dogs on CITES-listed species.

Indicator 2.2: At least twelve or more recorded mentions of IWT in national media sources, from across the region than the average across the previous 3 years by Y3 end.

269 recorded mentions of IWT in national media sources. In addition to regular media coverage of the activities under the project (Annex 4.6), FFI conducted desk based research to assess the number of IWT cases mentioned in national media sources in each country (Annex 4.17). According to this report, during 2019-2021 – three years before the project there were a total of 261 mentions of IWT in national media in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan and 269 mentions from 2022- 2024. Considering that 2024 has just begun and there are already 8 mentions more, it can be said with certainty that media coverage of IWT issues has increased since the beginning of the project.

Indicator 2.3: Feasibility to incorporate IWT into relevant regional law enforcement initiatives, including CARICC, UNODC, and BOMCA evaluated by the end of Y3.

FFI, ACBK, and TRAFFIC had separate meetings with CARRIC, UNODC and BOMCA. From these meetings, we learned that CARRIC's activity in the region has slowed down due to reduced funding and they do not consider incorporating IWT. UNODC has already a wildlife aspect in their regional work and expressed their interest in future collaborations with conservation organisations on IWT. BOMCA is in close communication with TRAFFIC, inviting them to their workshops (activity 2.3).

Indicator 2.4: One or more commitments made by Law Enforcement training academies across the 4 countries to adopt IWT training modules within national curricula by Y3.

Two agencies (Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutors Office in Kazakhstan and the Customs Committee in Uzbekistan) made commitments to adopt the training modules on CITES and species ID developed under the project within their curricula. The Border Service of Kyrgyzstan has also asked for additional training of the superintendents of border checkpoints, who would then train other frontline officers.

Output 3. 100 LEOs at critical trade routes in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have improved capacity to detect and respond to IWT.

Indicator 3.1: IWT training modules developed and available in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan by the end of Y3.

The training modules on IWT, crime prevention, CITES and species ID were developed, translated, designed and available in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Indicator 3.2: Documented increase in knowledge of LEOs to detect and respond to IWT, as assessed by pre- (Y2) and post-training testing (Y3).

The team collected formal and informal reports on how the LEOs found the training useful for their work. 38% of respondents unanimously agreed and 62% strongly agreed that they gained a deeper understanding of CITES and improved their ability to identify species of most traded wild animals. In addition, this is confirmed by an indicator 3.4 (Annex 4.18; 4.19).

Indicator 3.3: The number of IWT-trained sniffer dogs in service in strategic checkpoints across Central Asia increase from 25 to 31 by the end of Y3, with commitments made in 3 countries to increase deployment post-project.

8 dogs trained on commonly illegally traded species. 3 new dogs deployed in Kazakhstan.

In addition to three dogs, whose training was supported by ACBK in Kazakhstan and three dogs from Kyrgyzstan which were introduced to smells of saiga horn and bear paw last year, in Tajikistan two dogs were trained for a bear paw (activity 3.6) and in Uzbekistan, within the project extensions, IoZ is looking into the possibility of procuring four dogs for the Cynology Centre of the Customs Committee.

Indicator 3.4: One or more incidences of IWT items intercepted and investigated by trained officers at the end of Y2 and Y3.

12 seizure incidences reported from LEOs who received training under the project. These included:

FFI was informed of the seizure of 825 kg of the root of the plant Arnebia (included in the national Kyrgyz Red Book) by the Border Service officers on the border as a result of a training organized in October 2023 in Kyrgyzstan (activity 3.3) (Annex 4.20). After the second training in Kyrgyzstan, the General Prosecutor's Office and regional prosecutors sent three cases of poaching back for a review and successfully settled 2 cases. In one case a perpetrator paid 500 000 soms (approximately 5600 USD) for poaching an ibex that he avoided paying for four years. In the second case, the perpetrator paid 1mln soms (~ 11000 USD) for illegal shooting of an argali.

After LEOs training in Uzbekistan, Customs officers seized three seizures of saiga horns, bear skin, butterflies and butterfly chrysalis in October; two seizures of argali horns and bear bile, and seven saker falcons on the checkpoint "Bekabad" in November; one seizure of 180 antlers and one ivory tusk, the first ever recorded instance in Uzbekistan, on the checkpoint "Gishtuprik" in December. Also, in December, the Customs officers of the checkpoint "Fergana" independently identified steppe tortoises and seized 83 illegally trafficked steppe tortoises.

In Kazakhstan, on 25 June 2023, in the Zhetysu region on the Kazakhstan-China border, eight derivatives of bear and wolf (4 CITES objects each) were detected by a service dog trained under the project in 2022.

Indicator 3.5: 2> Protected areas report improved patrolling effort after receiving SMART training by Y3 and 20> Government law enforcement personnel report improved understanding of the requirements for SMART rollout as based on Likert questionnaires pre/post training by Y3.

In Y2, 62 people received training on SMART regionally in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, this was cofounded by INL funding. 42 people participated in the Likert questionnaire post-training, among which 39 respondents (9 agreed and 30 strongly agreed) to have a better understanding of the requirements of SMART rollout, and how SMART is a useful tool for patrolling in their protected areas. NGO Ilbirs who supported the implementation of SMART in Khan-Tengri National Park and Sarychat-Eertash State Reserve in Kyrgyzstan, informed FFI that patrolling and performance of rangers of these PAs have improved after they participated in the SMART regional workshop in Almaty organized under this project.

Output 4. Crime prevention strategies are understood and valued as an additional approach to tackling IWT by relevant stakeholders across all four countries.

Indicator 4.1: Local knowledge and attitudes on IWT, law enforcement and wildlife guardianship are available to inform the application of crime prevention approaches.

The development of modules on crime prevention was based on the available local information, to make them relevant to the LEOs. In addition, they were tailored to the needs expressed by stakeholders and ecopolice, such as the importance of prevention and the use of crime prevention tools.

Indicator 4.2: 20 decision-makers, NGO staff and PA managers have better knowledge and positive attitudes towards the use of crime prevention strategies by Y3.

In addition to 18 people from project partners who received two-day demo training on crime prevention, 142 representatives of LEAs, PAs, and NGOs from the region were familiarised with the crime prevention approach and available tools.

3.3 Progress towards the Project Outcome

Outcome: Law enforcement agencies from four countries across Central Asia are demonstrating improved capacity to detect, respond to and prevent IWT and are collaborating to counter IWT on a regional scale.

Since the beginning of the project, we have observed a significant change in the understanding, attitudes and response of law enforcement agencies in all four countries to IWT issues. After workshops and training conducted on national and regional levels, the communication between LEAs and other stakeholders working on IWT in the country and regionally has improved. For instance, the Customs officers in Uzbekistan contact experts from IoZ at least once a week for the identification of seizure species, some officers successfully apply the identification skills acquired in training independently. The use of sniffer dogs to tackle IWT is getting more attention from cynology centres in the region after seeing great results of sniffer dog training in Kazakhstan. In Kyrgyzstan, the MNRETS initiated the regular monitoring of local markets and seized illegally traded steppe tortoises and various plants. These are in addition to the examples outlined under Indicator 3.4 which show increased awareness of LEAs in the detection of illegally traded species and in their communication efforts with project partners and relevant LEAs to pursue correct judicial pathways once a seizure has been conducted.

0.1 Annual records of IWT data and outcomes are more comprehensive and systematically collated across all four countries by the end of Y3 compared to baselines collected in Y1.

In Y1 it was ascertained that IWT data is not systematically collected in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, while in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan access to such information is restricted and the data is not analyzed. Furthermore, all four countries failed to submit the annual reports on IWT to the CITES Secretariat for the last several years. After the presentation of the representative of the CITES Secretariat on the regional workshop in July, and consultation received from TRAFFIC and ACBK, the administrative CITES focal points in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have submitted the missing reports. MNRETS in Kyrgyzstan also initiated and asked FFI to support the development of a database where the data on legal and illegal trade in wildlife would be centrally stored and shared with other relevant LEAs such as Customs.

0.2 At least 20 law enforcement agencies (LEAs) across all four countries are increasingly collaborating on IWT by the end of Y3.

In Y1, 18 organizations collaborated in providing the IWT data for further analysis and producing reports. For the last year, FFI and project partners organized two regional meetings that covered 118 representatives from 29 LEAs, other governmental bodies, and NGOs working on IWT in the region. During the prosecutors' workshop, ACBK also shared the list of regional experts on wildlife trade who could be contacted for consultancy.

0.3 Learning from Kazakhstan on collecting IWT data is shared with Kyrgyzstan and leads to regular transboundary collaboration by the end of Y3.

The different training and meeting opportunities gave Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan the opportunity to discuss data collection. Though the creation of comprehensive databases to collect information on IWT is ongoing, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are already networking and ready to collaborate on transboundary operations should the occasion arise.

0.4 At least 100 law enforcement officers (LEOs) (>10% women) at critical trade routes/hotspots across all four countries routinely search and record. Instances of IWT by the end of Y3.

The training of 162 law enforcement officers from (including 27 women) Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan resulted in at least 12 successful seizures of steppe tortoise, saker falcon, ivory, bear paws and bile, saiga horns and plants since the project started

0.5 Profile of IWT and novel strategies (i.e. crime prevention) increases among decision-makers across all four countries by the end of Y3.

The increased interest in crime prevention strategies can be observed among the agencies that are directly involved in an investigation of wildlife crime such as rangers, eco-police and prosecutors. FFI have shared the modules and other available tools with the eco-police and prosecutors in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Furthermore, staff of the Naryn Reserve in Kyrgyzstan are conducting training for other rangers based on the modules on wildlife crime and crime prevention developed under this project. We were also contacted by the Chief of checkpoints of the Border Service of Kyrgyzstan with a request for more training for officers on CITES permits and species identification.

3.4 Monitoring of Assumptions

Outcome Assumptions:

Assumption 1: IWT continues to become a higher priority for governments in general and LEAs in particular in Central Asia.

Comment: This assumption remains true. Government Ministries, agencies and bodies have continued to engage in trainings, meetings and other project activities. Some agencies (State Committee of Ecology and Environmental Protection in Uzbekistan; Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision) have signed MoUs with FFI. In addition to this agencies across the 4 countries have expressed their interest directly with Fauna & Flora for more training, namely the Customs Agency in Uzbekistan and the Law Enforcement Academy and General Prosecutors Office in Kazakhstan. Post training events training materials have been requested and FFI are in the process of helping incorporate IWT training modules within national curricula, which is being supported in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Assumption 2: Political will for collaboration on IWT issues does not diminish.

Comment: True. By the Y3 it can be observed that each year the interest of LEAs for collaboration and their understanding of the IWT issue is increasing. LEAs in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan contact project partners more often requesting consultation or training on IWT.

Assumption 3: Corruption does not undermine the ability of LEOs to make and report IWT seizures.

Comment: The assumption holds true. Corruption is still an issue for governments of Central Asian countries, FFI and project partners monitor the situation in the country to avoid being affiliated with the institutions or individuals involved in corruption cases and to provide mitigation measures if identified corruption can undermine the efforts against IWT in the region.

Assumption 4: Funding for LEAs does not significantly decrease as a result of COVID-19-related economic downturns.

Comment: The assumption holds true.

Assumption 5: Application of capacity building and training leads to a measurable increase in IWT detection, and LEAs are able and willing to share information on detection success post-training

Comment: The assumption holds true. The training in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan led to at least 12 seizures of different species on the borders which we have been made aware of.

Output assumptions:

Assumption 6: LEAs are willing to allocate focal points to dedicate time to IWT data management and analysis.

Comment: This assumption holds true. In Kyrgyzstan, MNRETS is working with TRAFFIC and FFI on the development of a unified database, and with Ilbirs on creating a department that would lead the SMART connect system which allows storing all data collected during patrols through the SMART platform in one place and further analyze it. In Uzbekistan interest has also been expressed by the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change on the development of a national database with a workshop planned in Tashkent to help facilitate this planned in 2025.

Assumption 7: LEAs maintain interest in improved data sharing.

Comment: This assumption holds true. The unified database in Kyrgyzstan will facilitate and systematise the data sharing between MNRETS, Customs, Border Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Prosecutors Office. The discussion of developing a similar database is taking place in Uzbekistan. There is also an increased will to comply with CITES with the submission of CITES reports for Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan supported by the project.

Assumption 8: Interest in bilateral collaboration between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is maintained.

Comment: The assumption holds true. Representatives from LEAs and other governmental agencies from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan regularly meet during regional meetings and workshops where FFI and project partners promote the importance of bilateral cooperation.

Assumption 9: IWT continues to increase as a priority for LEAs in Central Asia.

Comment: The assumption holds true.

Assumption 10: Funding for LEAs does not significantly decrease as a result of COVID-19-related economic downturns.

Comment: The assumption holds true.

Assumption 11: LEAs make this number of officers (and the target number of women officers) available for training.

Comment: The assumption holds true. The Customs Committee in Uzbekistan, Customs and Border Services, PAs, Prosecutors, and MNRETS were collaborative and responsive to participate in training with a number of agencies and ministries expressing interest in further training, as previously highlighted.

Assumption 12: Improved detection rate is sustained throughout the project.

Comment: The assumption holds true. The rate of IWT detection has significantly improved after the training.

Assumption 13: Corruption does not undermine the ability of LEA officers to make and report IWT seizures.

Comment: The assumption holds true.

Assumption 14: Staff turnover of LEA officers is limited.

Comment: This assumption is partially true. Although, FFI and project partners seek to work closely with the middle management to avoid the detriment of the reappointment of high-level officials, however, sometimes contact persons from governmental agencies are replaced or transferred. This causes us to have to rebuild the relationships and delays in planned activities.

Assumption 15: National governments maintain interest in the rollout of SMART.

Comment: This assumption is true. There is a growing interest in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in SMART rollout in the protected areas. FFI, ACBK and Ilbirs are introducing SMART to four protected areas in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change is supporting SMART roll out nationally with SMART now being implemented in Saigachiy State Nature Reserve and within South Ustyurt National Park.

Assumption 16: Community members maintain the willingness to discuss sensitive topics with researchers.

Comment: The assumption holds true.

Assumption 17: Interest in learning and developing alternative approaches to traditional law enforcement remains high among decision-makers.

Comment: The assumption holds true.

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

Prior to this project awareness of IWT in Central Asia amongst LEAs and government ministries was low with limited priority and resources provided to address this crime type nationally and regionally across the 4 countries covered by this project. This project set out to increase awareness and political will to tackle IWT and strengthen capacity with relevant LEA's to detect, disrupt and prevent IWT incidences, which this project has broadly achieved. It is however still too early to confidently report measurable and attributable progress towards a significant positive impact on the scope and scale of illegal wildlife trade within the region.

As previously stated the project has contributed to increase political attention on the issue with continued and growing engagement from government agencies and ministries with some proactively seeking further collaboration to deliver training, The Customs Committee in Uzbekistan and the Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutors Office in Kazakhstan, whilst MNRETs in Kyrgyzstan has shown keen interest and support to develop a national database to help record wildlife crime incidences. Similarly the training provided to 162 law enforcement officers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan has had a notable impact with at least 12 known seizure incidences occurring from individuals who have received training under this project and the reopening and settling of 3 poaching cases in Kyrgyzstan. Whilst these achievements are notable it is difficult to say with any confidence what the wider impact on IWT in region has been with any increased seizures potentially only more accurately reflecting the scale of IWT across the region with not enough time to assess whether seizures and illegal offtake are going down. The report "An Assessment of Wildlife Trade in Central Asia" produced as part of this project is the first comprehensive attempt to understand the current state of wildlife trade, legal and illegal, within the region furthering the awareness and understanding of IWT regionally and enabling informed and proactive responses. Through the implementation of policy and procedures to better understand and prevent existing illegal trade in wildlife it enables governments to assess current levels of illegal trade and to address an imperative pre-condition to facilitate any future sustainable use, which should benefit local and rural communities.

As a capacity building and awareness raising project, this project does not have direct impacts on human development and well-being. Nevertheless, in the long term, by supporting proactive and strengthened responses to the protection of protected areas and heavily poached and illegal traded species this will contribute to the increased resilience and sustainability of fragile ecosystems that are at the forefront of the climate crisis across Central Asia. Damaged and increased vulnerability of ecosystems reduces their capacity to provide essential ecological services and support nature-based livelihoods in rural and local communities further exacerbating socioeconomic inequality. We contributed to preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services through training and equipment to rangers in key protected areas and familiarising officials with the approach of crime prevention to ensure species targeted by trade are not taken from their habitat in the first place.

4. Thematic focus

The project directly contributes to the IWTCF theme of "Strengthening Law Enforcement", which involves enhancing the capacity of LEOs to combat IWT. In pursuit of this objective, Fauna & Flora and its partners have conducted training on CITES, species identification, situational crime prevention and the global and regional scope and impact of illegal wildlife trade more broadly.

The project has also support directly cynology departments in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan through the provision of dogs and equipment to cynology centres and has supported protected area management through the advancement of SMART patrolling across the region. Data on illegal and legal wildlife trade incidences from all four countries; Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, has been collected from law enforcement agencies, collated, analysed and disseminated within the report “An Assessment of Wildlife Trade in Central Asia” with findings and recommendations to inform policy makers and law enforcement responses. Technical working groups have been established to address priority issues in each country and introducing new tools such as crime prevention and SMART. Fauna & Flora is also focused on creating a platform that promotes efficient communication and collaboration among LEAs.

This project is contributing to strengthened capacity of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to protect populations of threatened species by providing training to law enforcement officers (LEOs) at priority trade hotspots and routes and through setting up mechanisms to continue capacity building post-project, through for example adoption of IWT training modules with training academy curricula and the collation and dissemination of a contact list of regional IWT experts for LEOs.

Law enforcement responses and awareness is being supported through enhanced collaboration and information sharing between LEAs beyond the wildlife sector across the countries covered by the project, with for example inclusion and engagement with prosecutors, environmental ministries and training academies within national and regional workshops and training events. Cross-border and regional cooperation is strengthened through the delivery of regional and national workshops attended by representatives from countries connected through IWT and through efforts to promote formal bi-lateral collaboration and uniformed regional responses to wildlife trade. International experts have been included in regional events, including the CITES Secretariat, UK Border Force and Chinese CITES MA, to provide learning exchange and examples of best practice to inform and guide national and regional responses in Central Asia. Representatives from all countries have consistently been brought together throughout the project to foster increased collective sense of responsibility and to provide formal and informal communication channels to encourage increased cross border collaboration. The project has also, through training, introduced the concept of situational crime prevention methods to LEAs and trainers in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan highlighting the utility of novel approaches to tackle wildlife crime. One of the big achievements of this project is the impact of training for LEOs conducted in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. In addition to the successful seizures described in indicator 3.4. made by the customs and border officers in all three countries, FFI facilitated the fruitful collaboration between the Senior Prosecutor of the Department for Supervision of the Observance of Entrepreneurs' Rights and Laws in the Field of Ecology from the General Prosecutor's Office in Kyrgyzstan - Ramazan Ibraimov and NGO Ilbirs. The result of this collaboration was the settlement of 3 out of 5 poaching cases, which were pending for a few years. Also, due to increased attention to wildlife crime from prosecutors after close collaboration with FFI and Ilbirs, two cases were quickly resolved and 1500000 soms (around 17 000 USD) was paid by perpetrators.

5. Impact on species in focus

The scope of this project, of only three years, is too short to expect a meaningful impact on the population of the target species, which even after the poaching for the illegal trade gets reduced, will need years to recover.

However, we can assert that this project was part of the long-term efforts to protect saiga antelopes in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and which led to an increase in their population from 35,000 individuals in 2005 to nearly 2 million individuals in 2023. This increase in population, and the mitigation of the threats posed to this species, namely poaching activities to illegally trade their horns and meat, unfolded in the downlisting of this species from Critically Endangered to Near Threatened during the recent update of the IUCN Red List.

The project actively collected baseline information about the populations of steppe tortoise snow leopards, either through the project, or by working with partner organisations, and

expects to have the opportunity to obtain baseline data about wild populations of saker falcon in the near future (funding dependent). The team is committed to keep monitoring the impact of the effects of better Counter Wildlife Crime in their wild populations in the long-term.

6. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

The project continues to concentrate on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, which are low-income countries with underfunded initiatives and institutes devoted to biodiversity issues. Hence, support from local and international NGOs and donors is critical for wildlife conservation in these areas. Wildlife trafficking undermines and delays any potential future legal and sustainable use and trade of species with actual or perceived commercial value, for instance the trade in Steppe Tortoises in Uzbekistan or the trade in Ferula species in Tajikistan. This has ramifications for local and rural communities across the region who could and should, where feasible, be able to benefit from the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Through the implementation of policy and procedures to better understand and prevent existing illegal trade in wildlife it enables governments to assess current levels of illegal trade and to address an imperative pre-condition to facilitate any future sustainable use, which should benefit local and rural communities. This project contributed to this through building increased political awareness of illegal wildlife trade and will to combat this crime type and improve protection of new and existing protected areas. The project has also offered relevant government agents such as eco-police, border service, prosecutors and customs officers training to strengthen their ability to detect, interdict and sanction illegal wildlife trade. At the same time, the project supported the different country governments to understand and implement the CITES regulations better, in order to maximise the legal and regulated use of species, against the illegal, deprecating hunting and trade.

Furthermore, training and equipment that leads to better protection and security of protected areas and species retains the inherent value of biodiversity benefits for local communities. Strengthened protection of protected areas also contributes to increased resilience and sustainability of already fragile mountain, steppe, and desert ecosystems that are at the forefront of the climate crisis across Central Asia where the impact of climate change are increasingly felt. Damaged and increased vulnerability of ecosystems reduces their capacity to provide essential ecological services and support nature-based livelihoods in rural and local communities further exacerbating socioeconomic inequality. We contributed to preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services through training and equipment to rangers in key protected areas and familiarising officials with the approach of crime prevention to ensure species targeted by trade are not taken from their habitat in the first place.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board ¹ .	75% in the Project Board are women: 3 women (FFI Senior Programme Manager, Project Manager and Programme Assistant) 1 man (FFI Programme Manager in IWT)
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women ² .	75% (3 out of 4) project partners are women led organisations. ACBK, IOZ, TRAFFIC are managed by women. FFI Tajikistan is led by a man.

¹ A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

² Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	x
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	x
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

In Central Asia, law enforcement officers (LEOs) and government ministers are predominantly male. However, FFI is committed to promoting gender diversity and makes every effort to involve more female participants from relevant LEAs and government ministries wherever possible. Within every workshop, training and national and regional meetings we endeavour to secure the equitable participation of women. The project itself has likely had limited impact on the broader equity issues within the region for women and marginalised groups which face significant cultural as well as legislative hurdles within countries across Central Asia, especially within Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. As an inclusive organisation we consistently taken the GESI context in consideration and enacted upon it whenever possible and have been supportive for the inclusion of all individuals within project activities and have, where possible, concentrated efforts to build relationships with women within law enforcement agencies to ensure maintained engagement within the project, building capacity of these individuals for hopefully longer term impact within the respective agencies. In this regard notable individuals from LEAs under the project who have been instrumental in participation and ensuring wider project engagement have been Kutkujinova Aislu and Alisherova Moldir from Kazakhstan, Shirokova Elena from Kyrgyzstan and Muratova Shohista from Uzbekistan.

Throughout the implementation of the project assumptions have been confirmed that the number of women working within law enforcement agencies (LEA's) is limited. Where the project has ensured the participation of women they have broadly shown greater and more proactive interest and engagement with project activities than other attendees often becoming focal points within LEA's for continued outreach to ensure further participation of LEO's from those agencies in subsequent training and workshops.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Taking into account previous feedback, After internal consultation and review FFI submitted a change request to SMARTen indicators 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 to be able to more effectively monitor impact of activities and outputs.

For all project activities the effectiveness has been assessed through the collection of data criteria aligned with logframe indicators. This has included, but not exclusively, number of attendees,

proportion of male to female, agencies represented, seizure incidence, species seized, production and dissemination of species ID guides, reports and other materials. This has allowed the project to constantly monitor and evaluate quantitatively against logframe indicators to assess progress towards outputs and objectives. Concurrently any training or workshop event is evaluated through examination of pre and post-training questionnaire outcomes, as well as anecdotal evidence. Additionally, the number of agreements, memoranda of understanding, and work produced by the technical working group is employed to gauge the prioritization and engagement of LEAs at a national and regional level.

Efforts have been made to systemise data recording and collection with the production of project partner tailored excel reporting sheets. Partners collect data pertinent to their activities and submit this biannually which FFI then collates, stores and analyses centrally. In February 2023, FFI's Monitoring and Evaluation team conducted two sets of two-hour training sessions for FFI staff and project partners to assess the advancement of the project, deliberate on encountered difficulties, and explore prospective solutions. This was then repeated in March 2024 through an after action review workshop to identify strengths and weaknesses of the project and to identify what are future priorities for project partners and the region in relation to tackling IWT. The results will be used to inform ongoing and future work in the region. The overall response from project partners was a very high level of satisfaction not only with how the project had been managed but also with the impact of the project on national and regional engagement and responses to IWT.

Achievements that attest to the this and are indicators of achievement include, but not solely, the number of LEOs trained, the number of seizures that have occurred involving attendees to training events, the increased communication with project partners of LEAs and government ministries in relation to IWT and seizure incidences, the reopening and successful prosecution of 3 individuals in Kyrgyzstan for outstanding poaching offences, the submission of IWT reports to CITES from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the proactive engagement from agencies and ministries to continue training beyond the timeline of the project and ongoing discussion to incorporate the develop training modules into national training curricula.

Measuring direct impact of project activities on improved conservation, and population, status of species can be challenging with results inherently requiring long term investment and engagement, not only with enforcement but also with the monitoring of trafficked species abundance and population range changes. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) have been central to the project design with engagement ongoing through frequent consultation with an FFI M&E specialist maintained throughout the project. Likert questionnaires have been developed and customised for utilisation with attendees for workshops and training events to help evaluate impact of these events on participants understanding, confidence and experience of working on IWT. These have been repeated, where possible, for all training and workshop events.

Positive changes in the number and frequency of IWT incidences from the baseline created under 1.3 has enable cautious causational attribution to activities delivered to strengthen national capacity to detect, deter and interdict IWT.

Monitoring and evaluation has depended on a degree of self-reporting from participating LEOs and has relied on the project team maintaining good relationships and communications with participating LEOs to ensure that data on capacity and practice is maintained throughout the project.

Production of reports, species ID guides and the IWT specific modules for law enforcement academies and their subsequent embedding within the standardised training curricula is measurable against the output. More challenging is being able to measure how these directly deliver outcome 3 in the lifetime of the project depending on where an individual is deployed and how long an individual takes to be fully trained before placement. Likewise measuring the number of LEOs, 100, at critical trade routes in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to have received training requires a level of assumption that this training will directly improve capacity to detect and respond to IWT.

To support the collection of data needed to measure progress against each indicator, the project works closely with the FFI Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning team to deliver the M&E plan, detailing, and adapting, the quantitative and qualitative information needed to establish baselines, the frequency of data collection and developing frameworks to verify progress against indicators and outputs.

8. Lessons learnt

Throughout the project the sheer scope and scale of the project has proved a challenge working across 4 countries in Central Asia, with Kazakhstan alone the size of western Europe, each with varying degrees of capacity to tackle IWT and significant differences in patterns and trends of illegal trade, both in relation to species and methods. This has meant the project has taken an adaptive management approach to tailor certain deliverables, such as the IWT modules and support for cynology centres, which were originally written with a "one size fits all" approach. This has required very close working relationships with all project stakeholders, especially partners, and careful attention and response to the specific needs and priorities as highlighted by LEAs and government ministries. Whilst this has increased workload significantly it has also strengthened project impact and confirmed commitment to national governments which has been reciprocated.

The project would have benefited from a fully formed M&E framework from the outset. Efforts to provide guidance and a framework during the project was difficult with competing demands of this and other projects. Where templates were provided to partners whilst the excel sheets themselves were not used it did help provide consistent criteria for partners who were able to record relevant data and supply this within tables and narrative form to FFI.

Another lesson learned has been to factor in enough time. This project was ambitious with the indicator targets for the number of meetings, workshops and trainings proposed, which the project has largely managed to achieve and in some instances surpass. However, the consistent lengthy bureaucratic and administrative burden placed on FFI and project partners to ensure government participation and support for training and workshop attendance has had a significant impact on workload. During the project length this has gotten smoother and faster but is still a formal process that must be done with each new activity. Even when positive and constructive relationships have been formed there have been some insurmountable hurdles, such as with the Kyrgyzstan Cynology Centre of Specialised Customs whose terms with an MoU developed over 2 years became too onerous.

The project has taken a highly adaptive approach, providing time monthly for all partners to raise any issues and share knowledge to inform and guide implementation of project activities and as such the project has incorporated a constant applied learning approach through each new and subsequent experience and implemented activity. FFI and project partners have also taken the time to have 3 separate workshops, 2 in February 2023 and 1 in March 2024, to assess what has been working, what hasn't and where improvements going forward can be implemented.

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

Issues raised within both annual report reviews have been taken seriously and enacted upon. Change requests made in October and December 2023 addressed the recommendation to request the reinstatement of 6 months which were lost due to the late notice of the award due to the impact of Covid. A financial request change was made to ensure budget was available for the reinstated 6 months of the project.

With regard to the highlighted need to SMARTen indicators these were also addressed and changed within the change request submitted in October 2023 and are reflected within the logframe.

The issue raised with regard to the absence of steering committee meeting minutes we believe stems from a misunderstanding. Within the initial proposal the mention of a steering committee meeting biannually is referenced. During project implementation this was deemed inadequate and since the inception of the project FFI and all project partners meet every month to discuss the project, running over activities conducted since previous meeting, upcoming priorities and activities and the roles and responsibilities for all partners to ensure delivery of activities and outputs. These meetings also serve as an environment to raise any issues or concerns enabling the project to take an adaptive management approach to enable effective delivery of project activities and outputs. These monthly meetings are in addition to weekly meetings conducted with partners on specific issues related to deliverables or to discuss new and emerging issues that may impact the project. With regard to meeting minutes not all but most of the monthly meetings are recorded, these can be provided upon request.

Whilst we understand the desire for there to be a specific landing page within FFI's branding and strategy has placed more immediate priorities for the organisation as wholesale changes have been made to the site. There has been significant media attention to the project in Uzbekistan and media attention also given in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. With all materials we have been careful to ensure correct attribution to highlight IWT Challenge Fund Identity. Simultaneously we have ensured communication internally of the project's impact and of any materials generated beneath the project.

The annual review was shared with partners and those who responded were rather dismayed with the lack of understanding of impact the reviewer had inferred from the annual report. It is possible due to evidence of impact being within the narrative of the text whereas the reviewer was seeking quantitative data against direct indicators within a tabulated format. This has been taken on board for subsequent reports and this will hopefully be reflected within this report with greater emphasis given to evidence of impact. It is worth stating that the project partners do see the impact the project is having and the significant progress being made towards indicators and outputs.

Within the previous review it was also highlighted that there are no logframe indicators to measure the impact on species the project is focussing on. Given the 3 year time frame for the project and the multifaceted nature of threats to this species, we can only assure that this project will contribute (and is already contributing) to larger efforts to conserve the species on the ground, such as the recovery of wild populations of Saiga antelopes.

10. Risk Management

The situation within Central Asia for civil society has worryingly continued to decline. This is particularly the case in Kyrgyzstan which has just introduced a Foreign Agents bill. Although the relationships with the governmental agencies are on a good level there is a chance that the recently enacted law, which potentially restricts the activity of all NGOs in the country, may make it even more bureaucratically difficult to co-operate with certain authorities. More information on this law can be found in the Risk Management. FFI is now working on becoming up to date with all the new requirements for foreign organisations in Kyrgyzstan, to secure the correct continuity of this project and follow up projects in this country.

The recent reported terrorist attacks Russia alleged to have been carried out by Tajik citizens has impacted relations between the two countries. With a significant proportion of Tajikistan's GDP reliant on remittances from migrant labourers in Russia and subsequent increased controls on who can work in Russia and for how long, from Tajikistan, this is likely to have significant socioeconomic impacts. Whilst these may not directly impact the project itself it is something FFI is monitoring closely and proactively identifying any potential fallout.

Central Asia remains at the forefront to the impacts of climate change with current historic flooding in Kazakhstan impacting project partner ACBK creating immediate priorities away from project activities as they deal with the loss of reintroduction centres in West Kazakhstan. Growing water shortages in the region are also causing heightened border and socio-political tensions, as was seen in 2023 between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, which has knock on impacts to food and energy security. Whilst these have no direct impacts to the project energy shortages can limit working days and border tensions have impacted the ability, at times, for

personnel and goods to cross borders, as was the case on the Kazakh – Kyrgyz border in the summer of 2023.

11. Sustainability and legacy

Historically there has been limited engagement and work on IWT and wildlife trade and crime issues in the region. This project has been instrumental in galvanising interest in and will to tackle IWT across the 4 countries from LEA's and government ministries engaged through the project. This has led to FFI, ACBK, IOZ, and TRAFFIC emerging as key players, often being contacted and invited to share their expertise in IWT in Central Asia, as exemplified by the Uzbek Customs Committee now contacting IOZ weekly to consult in the identification of seized specimens at the border.

Continuation of project activities, especially those relating to training of LEOs and state prosecutors, has been proactively sort out by the Customs Committee in Uzbekistan and the Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutors Office in Kazakhstan, with FFI in the process of working with them to incorporate IWT training modules into the national training curricula which will hopefully have long term impact for efforts in the region to combat IWT. In Kyrgyzstan the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision is working with FFI and project partner TRAFFIC to develop a national database to help record wildlife crime incidences. Technical support to cynology departments across the region, through training, provision of dogs and equipment, will also have a long term impact on regional efforts to detect and prevent IWT, as will the specifically developed training room and storage facility in Tashkent within the Institute of Zoology to provide ongoing training to LEOs to detect and ID commonly trafficked species. Training already provided is showing to have an impact with seizures conducted by personnel who have undertaken training under the project, it is hoped the positive results from the training and response from senior officials to improved detection rates further encourage prioritisation of IWT by relevant LEAs.

The project has been instrumental in convening regional actors and stakeholders and has enabled learning exchanges with globally recognised experts. This has helped facilitate an informal network of NGO, IGO and government ministries engaged on IWT issues helping to coordinate activities and highlight ongoing and future priorities. The project has also contributed to wider regional efforts to protect species threatened by the trade, such as Saiga and Saker falcon, species which are incorporated within the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative ongoing strategy and activities and results of the current project are being advanced under other funding streams by FFI.

Under the project FFI has been keen to also develop national capacity within country offices in the region to build long term sustainability ensuring newly hired personnel have been given roles and responsibilities under the project to lead on activities and contribute technically to materials. Consequently a project assistant has been promoted to programme officer and an intern has been hired as a programme assistant. Exploiting opportunities under other funding FFI has further invested in their capacity ensuring their participation at the recent CMS CoP in Samarkand.

This project has equipped governments and local conservationists with tools to ensure long term actions against wildlife crime

12. IWT Challenge Fund identity

The project has at every opportunity highlighted the role of IWT Challenge Fund in the enabling of project activities and development and dissemination of materials. All reports, species ID guides and training modules funded by IWTCF and disseminated to LEAs have been accompanied by project logos and concise details about IWT Challenge fund. Likewise throughout presentations and meetings, the crucial role played by IWTCF is consistently emphasized and duly recognized by participants to all events funded by IWTCF. Where there has been opportunity FFI has tried to secure UK Government representation at regional events to highlight the role the UK is playing to combat IWT globally and regionally. For example at the regional meeting in Bishkek held in July 2023 we worked with Ann Herrigan at the UK Embassy in Bishkek and were incredibly thankful to have Sarah Cooper, the Development Director for

Central Asia, open the 3 day meeting further highlighting to the 60+ participants the commitment of the UK to the region, not only to tackle IWT but across a gamut of pressing regional priorities.

The IWTCF funding had some very distinct activities, especially with the work in Tajikistan and the efforts to sensitise LEOs to situational crime prevention methods, but was also complimented by a concurrent INL funded project “Strengthening Capacity & Fostering the Will to Combat Wildlife Crime in Central Asia”

13. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	No
Have any concerns been reported in the past 12 months	No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes Timur J [REDACTED], Technical Specialist, Social Equity and Rights, People and Nature Team, [REDACTED] Programme lead -Matthew [REDACTED]
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	Yes FFI has an internal Learning Management System, which enables online training in policies and procedures and all FFI staff are required to attend compulsory safeguarding training, including: Safeguarding essentials; FFI's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 100% 11 Planned: 0% 0
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? No Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.	
Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify. FFI has an internal Learning Management System, which enables online training in policies and procedures and all FFI staff are required to attend compulsory safeguarding training, including: Safeguarding essentials; FFI's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy	
Please describe any community sensitisation that has taken place over the past 12 months; include topics covered and number of participants.	

Have there been any concerns around Health, Safety and Security of your project over the past year? If yes, please outline how this was resolved. N/A

14. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (April 2023-March 2024)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total actual IWT Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Others (see below)				This difference is attributed to consumable food costs for sniffer dogs. This is partly due to difficulties in formalising through an MoU work with the cynology department in Kyrgyzstan resulting in delays and postponement of support. It is also due to cheaper costs for food when purchased and the facilitation of ostensibly free food from culled wild boar in Tajikistan.
TOTAL	£200,54	£200,54		

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources

Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)	N/A	N/A	
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			<p>INL Costed Extension to INL project: Strengthening Capacity & Fostering the Will to Combat Wildlife Crime in Central Asia</p> <p>USFWS funded project: Strengthening local capacity to lead evidence-based conservation of saiga in their native habitats in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan</p>

15. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

16. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2023-2024

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Impact</p> <p>Populations of species threatened by illegal trade across Central Asia recover in response to reduced poaching and trafficking brought about by effective and coordinated law enforcement responses.</p>		
<p>Outcome Law enforcement agencies from four countries across Central Asia are demonstrating improved capacity to detect, respond to and prevent IWT and are collaborating to counter IWT on a regional scale.</p>		
<p>Outcome indicator 0.1 Annual records of IWT data and outcomes are more comprehensive and systematically collated across all four countries by end of Y3 compared to baselines collected in Y1.</p>	<p>With the support received from CITES Secretariat, TRAFFIC, and ACBK the administrative CITES focal points in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have submitted the missing reports. FFI and TRAFFIC is working with the MNRETS in Kyrgyzstan on development of unified database on WT. (more in 3.3.)</p>	<p>Under the INL funded project, TRAFFIC and FFI is going to hire an IT company that can develop a database</p>
<p>Outcome indicator 0.2 At least 20 law enforcement agencies (LEAs) across all four countries are increasingly collaborating on IWT by end of Y3.</p>	<p>In Y1, 18 organizations collaborated to provide IWT data. 118 representatives from 29 LEAs, other governmental bodies, NGOs came together in two regional workshops to network and discuss the opportunities to collaborate on IWT. They were also shared a list of regional experts for further communication.</p>	<p>It is planned to continue collaborating with the key agencies under other IWT projects.</p>
<p>Outcome indicator 0.3 Learning from Kazakhstan on collecting IWT data is shared with Kyrgyzstan and leads to regular transboundary collaboration by end of Y3.</p>	<p>LEOs from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are actively involved in all national and regional meetings, Law Enforcement Academy of Kazakhstan suggested to co-organize more transboundary training on CITES.</p>	<p>ACBK is signing an MoU to continue training on CITES</p>
<p>Outcome indicator 0.4 At least 100 law enforcement officers (LEOs) (>10% women) at critical trade routes / hotspots across all four countries routinely search and record instances of IWT by end of Y3.</p>	<p>The training of 162 LEOs resulted in at least 12 successful seizures of wildlife.</p>	<p>Training of frontline LEOs in Tajikistan is taking place in April 23-24 and will cover more officers.</p>
<p>Outcome indicator 0.5 Profile of IWT and novel strategies (i.e. crime prevention) increases among decision-makers across all four countries by end of Y3.</p>	<p>FFI has shared with the modules and other available tools with the eco-police and prosecutors in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Furthermore, staff of the Naryn Reserve in Kyrgyzstan are conducting training for other rangers based on the modules on wildlife crime and crime prevention.</p>	<p>We will continue raising awareness of LEOs on crime prevention strategies and disseminating the available materials (modules and other online resources).</p>

Output 1 Law enforcement response to IWT in Central Asia is informed by data, analyses and knowledge shared between agencies both in country and between range states.		
Output indicator 1.1 Preliminary analysis of key regional IWT hotspots and routes identified by mid-Y2, further developed in Y2 and Y3 through trained focal points.	The analysis of IWT situation in the region has been completed. A report was produced based on previously collected and analysed information (more in activity 1.3 and Annex 4.3)	Further dissemination of reports.
Output indicator 1.2 Provide guidance on CITES compliance, data gathering and data sharing with 3 or more law enforcement agencies across 3 countries, supporting national capacity to produce and submit IWT reports to CITES by end of Y3	TRAFFIC, ACBK and IoZ provided consultancy depending on the needs. It resulted in the submission of the missing annual CITES legal and illegal trade reports by Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan.	Completed. No actions planned for the extended period.
Output indicator 1.3 Existing inter-agency data sharing agreements in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are actively used by end of Y2.	In Kyrgyzstan, FFI and TRAFFIC continue facilitating signing of an inter-agency agreement between MNRETS, Custom and Border Services, General Prosecutors Office on wildlife trade data sharing within the development of unified database (activity1.6).	TRAFFIC and FFI is going to work with MNRETS and support with the development of an inter-agency agreement on IWT database.
Output indicator 1.4 LEAs in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan agree in principle to promote inter-agency collaboration on IWT by end of Y3.	The collaboration between LEAs and governmental bodies are promoted through the technical working groups, meetings, workshops and training on both national and international levels.	The promotion of inter-agency collaboration will continue under other IWT project.
Output indicator 1.5 Bi-lateral cooperation (in addition to data sharing in 1.3) between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan demonstrated through at least two bilateral meetings/workshops and ongoing communications by end of Y3.	From Y1 to Y3 governmental bodies from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, including LEAs participated in five regional workshops.	FFI and ACBK will continue facilitating cooperation on IWT between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
Output 2. Greater priority is given to addressing IWT at a national and regional level.		
Output indicator 2.1 One or more LEA's in each country commits to staff training on wildlife trade and mitigation of illegal wildlife trade by end of Y3	LEAs engaged in training their staff in IWT: <u>Kazakhstan:</u> Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutors Office plan on delivering more training for other LEAs in the country on CITES; <u>Kyrgyzstan:</u> MNRETS, Naryn State Reserve, General Prosecutors Office. Border Service is considering the opportunities to sign an agreement with FFI for organizing ToT on IWT and further inclusion of modules on IWT in their curricula. <u>Uzbekistan:</u> Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, the Customs Committee are interested in	Under INL funded project, we plan to support more training for LEOs. We will also continue our work on including the modules on CITES and species ID in the curriculum of the Customs Committee in Uzbekistan, and Law Enforcement Academy in Kazakhstan.

	including the modules on species ID and CITES in the curriculum or make these training more regular. <u>Tajikistan:</u> Forestry Agency, and Cynology Department motivated to train the sniffer dogs on CITES-listed species.	
Output indicator 2.2 At least twelve or more recorded mentions of IWT in national media sources, from across the region than the average across previous 3 years by Y3.	For the last year, there were 39 media coverages of workshops under the project (Annex 4.6). Comparing to years from 2019-2021, there were 8 more mentions of IWT in media during 2022-2024	Completed. No actions are planned for the extended period.
Output indicator 2.3 Feasibility to incorporate IWT into relevant regional law enforcement initiatives, including CARICC, UNODC and BOMCA evaluated by end of Y3	UNODC and BOMCA already consider IWT in their regional programme, while CARRIC's do not consider incorporating IWT.	We will maintain communication with UNODC and BOMCA for potential collaboration on IWT.
Output indicator 2.4 One or more commitments made by Law Enforcement training academies across the 4 countries to adopt IWT training modules within national curricula by Y3	Two agencies (Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutors Office in Kazakhstan and the Customs Committee in Uzbekistan) are interested in adopting the training modules on CITES and species ID developed under the project within their curricula.	The training on modules and work on inclusion of modules in the national curricula will continue under the INL funded project.
Output 3. 100 LEOs at critical trade routes in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have improved capacity to detect and respond to IWT.		
Output indicator 3.1 IWT training modules developed and available in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan by end of Y3.	The training modules on IWT, crime prevention, CITES and species ID were developed, translated, designed and available in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (act.3.1)	The further dissemination of the modules is underway.
Output indicator 3.2 Documented increase in knowledge of LEOs to detect and respond to IWT, as assessed by pre- (Y2) and post-training testing (Y3).	During the training in Kyrgyzstan, all participants (18 respondents) who attended the training confirmed that they gained a deeper understanding of CITES and improved their ability to identify species of wild animals. In Uzbekistan, the Customs officers provided informal feedback and confirmed the usefulness of training for their work (confirmed in indicator 3.4.)	Completed. No actions planned for the extended period
Output indicator 3.3 Number of IWT-trained sniffer dogs in service in strategic checkpoints across Central Asia increase from 25 to 31 by end of Y3, with commitments made in 3 countries to increase deployment post-project .	The training of three dogs was supported by ACBK in Kazakhstan and three dogs from Kyrgyzstan were introduced to smells of saiga horn and bear paw last year, in Tajikistan two dogs are trained for a bear paw (act.3.6)	Within the no-cost extension, loZ is planning to procure four dogs for the Cynology Centre of the Customs Committee in Uzbekistan.
Output indicator 3.4 One or more incidences of IWT items intercepted and investigated by trained officers at end of Y2 and Y3	825 kg of the root of the plant Arnebia (included in the national Red Book) by the Border Service officers on the border as a result of a training organized in October, 2023 (act.3.3 Annex 4.10). In Uzbekistan, Customs officers with assistance from loZ made seven seizures of saiga horns, bear skin, butterflies and butterfly chrysalis, argali horns, bear bile, seven saker falcons, 180 antlers and one ivory, and 83 steppe tortoises	The monitoring of the IWT incidences will be continued.

	from October to December 2023. In Kazakhstan, eight derivatives of bear and wolf were detected by a service dog trained under the project in 2022.	
Output indicator 3.5 2> protected areas report improved patrolling effort after receiving SMART training by Y3 and 20>_Government law enforcement personnel report improved understanding of the requirements for SMART rollout as based on Likert questionnaires pre/post training by Y3	62 people received training on SMART regionally in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. 42 people participated in the Likert questionnaire post-training, among which 39 respondents agreed that SMART is a useful tool for the patrolling in their protected areas, which was later confirmed by improved performance of rangers in two PAs in Kyrgyzstan.	Under INL funded project, FFI, ACBK and IoZ is rolling out SMART in four PAs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.
Output 4. Crime prevention strategies are understood and valued as an additional approach to tackling IWT by relevant stakeholders across all four countries.		
Output indicator 4.1 Local knowledge and attitudes on IWT, law enforcement and wildlife guardianship is available to inform application of crime prevention approaches.	National consultants provided available information for development of modules on crime prevention. Eco-police, prosecutors raised the importance of prevention of poaching and trade and expressed their interest in learning more about crime prevention tools.	We will continue monitoring interest and needs for crime prevention approach.
Output indicator 4.2 20 decision-makers, NGO staff and PA managers have better knowledge and positive attitudes towards use of crime prevention strategies by Y3.	In addition to 18 people from project partners who received two-day demo-training on crime prevention, 142 representatives of LEAs, PAs, NGOs from the region were familiarised with the crime prevention approach and available tools.	The dissemination of modules on crime prevention will continue.

Annex 2: Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Populations of species threatened by illegal trade across Central Asia recover in response to reduced poaching and trafficking brought about by effective and coordinated law enforcement responses.			
Outcome: Law enforcement agencies from four countries across Central Asia are demonstrating improved capacity to detect, respond to and prevent IWT and are collaborating to counter IWT on a regional scale.	<p>0.1 Annual records of IWT data and outcomes are more comprehensive and systematically collated across all four countries by end of Y3 compared to baselines collected in Y1.</p> <p>0.2 At least 20 law enforcement agencies (LEAs) across all four countries are increasingly collaborating on IWT by end of Y3.</p> <p>0.3 Learning from Kazakhstan on collecting IWT data is shared with Kyrgyzstan and leads to regular</p>	<p>0.1 Arrest records and databases.</p> <p>0.2 Copies of inter-agency agreements; inter-agency meetings reports; records of packages/data exchanged.</p> <p>0.3 Transboundary meeting reports, attendance records.</p>	<p>IWT continues to become a higher priority for governments in general and LEAs in particular in Central Asia.</p> <p>Political will for collaboration on IWT issues does not diminish.</p> <p>Corruption does not undermine ability of LEOs to make and report IWT seizures.</p> <p>Funding for LEAs does not significantly decrease as a result of COVID-19 related economic downturns.</p>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	<p>transboundary collaboration by end of Y3.</p> <p>0.4 At least 100 law enforcement officers (LEOs) (>10% women) at critical trade routes / hotspots across all four countries routinely search and record instances of IWT by end of Y3.</p> <p>0.5 Profile of IWT and novel strategies (i.e. crime prevention) increases among decision-makers across all four countries by end of Y3.</p>	<p>0.4 Reports from LEAs on application of skills following training.</p> <p>0.5 Attendance of high-level officials in national / regional project workshops; verbal / written commitments to increase IWT action.</p>	<p>Application of capacity building and training leads to a measurable increase in IWT detection, and LEAs are able and willing to share information on detection success post-training.</p>
<p>Output 1</p> <p>Law enforcement response to IWT in Central Asia is informed by data, analyses and knowledge shared between agencies both in country and between range states.</p>	<p>1.1 Preliminary analysis of key regional IWT hotspots and routes identified by mid-Y2, further developed in Y2 and Y3 through trained focal points.</p> <p>1.2 Provide guidance on CITES compliance, data gathering and data sharing with 3 or more law enforcement agencies across 3 countries, report higher national capacity to produce and submit IWT reports to CITES by end of Y3.</p> <p>1.3 Existing inter-agency data sharing agreements in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are actively used by end of Y2.</p> <p>1.4 LEAs in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan agree in principle to promote inter-agency collaboration on IWT by end of Y3.</p> <p>1.5 Bi-lateral cooperation (in addition to data sharing in 1.3) between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan demonstrated through at least two bilateral meetings/workshops and ongoing communications by end of Y3.</p>	<p>1.1 Copies of IWT reports and maps.</p> <p>1.2 Training workshop reports and self-reports from focal points.</p> <p>1.3-1.5 Workshop and working group meeting reports and minutes; inter-agency data sharing protocols and action plans.</p>	<p>LEAs are willing to allocate focal points to dedicate time on IWT data management and analysis.</p> <p>LEAs maintain interest in improved data sharing.</p> <p>Interest in bilateral collaboration between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is maintained.</p>
<p>Output 2</p> <p>Greater priority is given to addressing IWT at a national and regional level.</p>	<p>2.1 One or more LEA's in each country commits to staff training on wildlife trade and mitigation of illegal wildlife trade by end of Y3</p>	<p>2.1 National workshop reports and subsequent verbal/written reports from LEAs on deployment of staff and</p>	<p>IWT continues to increase as a priority for LEAs in Central Asia.</p>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	<p>2.2 At least twelve or more recorded mentions of IWT in national media sources, from across the region, than the average across previous 3 years by Y3 end</p> <p>2.3 Feasibility to incorporate IWT into relevant regional law enforcement initiatives, including CARICC, UNODC and BOMCA evaluated by end of Y3</p> <p>2.4 One or more commitments made by Law Enforcement training academies across the 4 countries to adopt IWT training modules within national curricula by Y3</p>	<p>resources on IWT detection and data sharing.</p> <p>2.2 Systematic news searches for IWT articles in each project year.</p> <p>2.3 Meeting minutes and an evaluation report of existing initiatives, including an analysis of gaps related to IWT.</p> <p>2.4 Workshop reports.</p>	<p>Funding for LEAs does not significantly decrease as a result of COVID-19 related economic downturns.</p>
<p>Output 3</p> <p>100 LEOs at critical trade routes in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have improved capacity to detect and respond to IWT.</p>	<p>3.1 IWT training modules developed and available in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan by end of Y3.</p> <p>3.2 Documented increase in knowledge of LEOs to detect and respond to IWT, as assessed by pre- (Y2) and post-training testing (Y3).</p> <p>3.3 Number of IWT-trained sniffer dogs in service in strategic checkpoints across Central Asia increase from 25 to 31 by end of Y3, with commitments made in 3 countries to increase deployment post-project.</p> <p>3.4 One or more incidences of IWT items intercepted and investigated by trained officers at end of Y2 and Y3</p> <p>3.5 2> protected areas report improved patrolling effort after receiving SMART training by Y3 and 20>_Government law enforcement personnel report improved understanding of the requirements for SMART rollout as based on Likert questionnaires pre/post training by Y3</p>	<p>3.1 Copies of modules.</p> <p>3.2 Training evaluation sheets.</p> <p>3.3 Sniffer dog workshop reports; LEA deployment data.</p> <p>3.4 Confiscation reports from LEAs.</p> <p>3.5 Interviews with supervisors of trained LEOs.</p> <p>3.6 SMART workshop reports and post-training surveys with trained officials.</p>	<p>LEAs make this number of officers (and the target number of women officers) available for training.</p> <p>Improved detection rate is sustained throughout project.</p> <p>Corruption does not undermine ability of LEA officers to make and report IWT seizures.</p> <p>Staff turnover of LEA officers is limited.</p> <p>National governments maintain interest in rollout of SMART.</p>
<p>Output 4</p>	<p>4.1 Local knowledge and attitudes on IWT, law enforcement and wildlife guardianship is available to inform</p>	<p>4.1 Copies of the report.</p>	<p>Community members maintain willingness to discuss sensitive topics with researchers.</p>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<p>Crime prevention strategies are understood and valued as an additional approach to tackling IWT by relevant stakeholders across all four countries.</p>	<p>application of crime prevention approaches. 4.2 20 decision-makers, NGO staff and PA managers have better knowledge and positive attitudes towards use of crime prevention strategies by Y3.</p>	<p>4.2 Workshop reports and evaluations by attendees, pre- and post-workshop surveys on knowledge of and attitudes towards crime prevention approaches.</p>	<p>Interest in learning and developing alternative approaches to traditional law enforcement remains high among decision makers.</p>
<p>Activities</p> <p>1.1 Host 4 national workshops for law enforcement officers (LEOs) to sensitise agencies to the project and support coordinated and collaborative responses to IWT nationally</p> <p>1.2 Host one regional training workshop for 20 law enforcement officers (LEOs) from all four countries on IWT data collection, management and analysis (Y2).</p> <p>1.3 Collect preliminary baseline IWT data and produce a report on key hotspots and trade routes across the region (Y1-2).</p> <p>1.4 Mentor three national focal points to analyse IWT data (Y1-3), and support them to update and submit annual IWT reports to CITES by Y3 .</p> <p>1.5 Support LEAs (including prosecutors) to implement existing inter-agency agreements in place in Kyrgyzstan (with Panthera) and in Kazakhstan (with ACBK) (Y1-2).</p> <p>1.6 Facilitate bilateral IWT data sharing between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (in collaboration with Panthera) over the course of three meetings/workshops (Y1-3).</p> <p>2.1 Establish and facilitate technical working groups in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to develop calls to action on IWT (Y2-3).</p> <p>2.2 Promote IWT reports (1.1) and calls-to-action (2.1) to >30 high-level officials at national IWT meetings in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and through national media (Y2).</p> <p>2.3 Promote incorporation of IWT within regional LEA initiatives (e.g. CARICC) (Y2-3).</p> <p>2.4 Host regional IWT meeting (with high-level LEA/CITES/CMS/ Chinese officials) to share project outputs and develop a roadmap for improved regional action and coordination post-project (Y3).</p> <p>3.1 Create IWT training modules and refine following delivery and participant feedback (Y2).</p> <p>3.2 Creation of a facility in Uzbekistan dedicated to the storage of CITES specimens and IWT specific training for LEO's</p> <p>3.3 Train 100 frontline officers (50/country in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to detect traded species and enforce CITES legislation; distribute IWT messaging to 75 checkpoints (Y1-2).</p> <p>3.4 Train the same 100 officers to use protocols for handling IWT evidence (including transferring animals to rehabilitation centres) and prepare cases for prosecution (Y2-3).</p> <p>3.5 Catalyse national SMART programmes in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan through a regional training workshop (Y2).</p> <p>3.6 Support training in IWT detection of 6sniffer dog teams based at strategic checkpoints across the region (Y2-3).</p> <p>3.7 Review performance of trained officers and recognise outstanding achievement of four through awards presented at 2.4 (Y3).</p> <p>3.8 Establish contact lists of IWT experts and share with LEOs to enable mentorship post-project (Y1-2).</p>			

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<p>3.9 Handover training materials to law enforcement academies for integration into curricula post-project (Y3).</p> <p>4.1 In four hotspots, research potential application of crime prevention (e.g. wildlife guardians, informal sanctions) (Y2-3).</p> <p>4.2 Introduce crime prevention approaches to 20 individuals who have influence over IWT projects in a regional seminar (Y3).</p>			

Annex 3 Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

IWTCF Indicator number	Name of indicator	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
IWTCF-B01	Number of people trained in law enforcement skills.	People	Men/women	43 (33 men/10 women)	186 (150/36)	438 (353/85)	438 (353/85)	100
IWTCF-B05	Number of best practice guides and knowledge products (i.e. product identification etc.) published and endorsed.	Number	Posters; CITES guide; Best practice guide; legal analysis, IWT report; Report on invertebrates and vertebrates in Uzbekistan	0	4	9	9	3
IWTCF-B07	Number of illegal wildlife products/shipments detected.	Number	Specimens: living animals, plants, parts and derivatives	0	0	350	350	0
IWTCF-B10	Number of arrests/fines (linked to wildlife crime) facilitated by the project	Number		0	0	12	12	0
IWTCF-B12	Number of wildlife crime cases submitted for prosecution	Number	Cases linked to the training of project	0	0	3	3	0
IWTCF-D01	Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project.	Number	Men/women	0	0	46 (26; 20)	46(26;20)	20
IWTCF-D03	Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of the project.	Number of organisations	LEAs, NGOs	5	10	16	16	0
IWTCF-D13	Number of other publications produced.	Number	Training modules	0	0	12	12	12
IWTCF-D22	Number of Media related activities.	Number	Internet/Radio/Television, subnational/national/international.	0	23	39	39	0

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, best practice manual, blog post, online videos, podcasts, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)
An assessment of Wildlife Trade in Central Asia	Report	Bakytbek Tokubek uulu Louisa Musing Amy Woolloff Kanaat Musuraliev Sanjar Kurmanov Stephanie von Meibom (February 2024)	3 men, 3 women	Kyrgyzstan UK	TRAFFIC International, Cambridge, UK	TRAFFIC Publications
Краткий определитель объектов экспорта/импорта животного и растительного мира. Республика Узбекистан. Brief identifier of objects of export/import of fauna and flora. Republic of Uzbekistan.	Guide	E.G. Abdullaeva T.V. Abduraupov (2023)	1 man, 1 woman	Uzbekistan	Baktria Press, Tashkent, Uzbekistan	

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	X
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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
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	