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

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

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2022

Project reference	IWT095
Project title	Mongolia's New Ecological Police: Global Standards and Community Engagement
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Mongolia
Lead partner	Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
Partner(s)	Ecological Police Department of National Police Administration of Mongolia, University of Law Enforcement of Mongolia, local NGO – Professional Union of Detector Dogs (PUDD), UK Border Force (UKBF) Customs agency, City of London Police, Forensics Science Services (CoLP) and Veterans for Wildlife capacity building charity.
Project leader	Monica Wrobel
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	30 April 2022 – 30 September 2022 HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	www.zsl.org/mongolia

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

Output 1. The newly established Ecological Police Department (EPD) staff are well-equipped and highly trained, and utilizing global best practices in forensic intelligence gathering, SMART and intelligence sharing to enable long-term effective inter-agency efforts to reduce and prosecute IWT crime in Mongolia.

Activity 1.3: Between 29th June to 1st July 2022, Grant Miller (Law Enforcement advisor, ZSL), Tracy Alexander (Head of Forensics Service, City of London Police), and Marc Granville (Senior environmental investigator from National Crime Agency) delivered training on crime scene forensics and wildlife crime scene investigation to 34 Mongolian officers from the National Institute of Forensic Sciences, National University of Mongolia and the University of Internal Affairs with 100% of the participants providing positive feedback.

Activity 1.5: On 27th- 28th June 2022, Grant Miller, Tracy Alexander and Marc Granville delivered training on CITES convention implementation to 98 law enforcement officers, including 94 police officers from the Ecological Police Department and regional city district police, and four lecturers from the University of Internal Affairs. The practical exercise session introduced a forensic kit while explaining the latest methods and equipment for evidence collection.

Activity 1.6: The ZSL Mongolia team are collaborating with ARTIO conservation to deliver advanced SMART training and obtain technical support for the ZSL Mongolia team. ARTIO conservation have conducted training of trainers for ZSL Mongolia staff and other key SMART implementers in Mongolia virtually between 24th – 28th October 2022. The project is planning to deliver follow-up training to ecological police officers in early 2023.

Output 2. Reduction of poaching at key identified peri-urban source sites and of IWT products at urban hotspots (markets, transport hubs) is achieved through highly trained, up-scaled EPD detector dog units (DDU), working in partnership with the Professional Union of Detector Dogs (PUDD) to promote DDU standards that increase efficiency in tackling environmental and IWT-related crimes.

Activity 2.1: Jointly with Fondation Segre through co-funding arrangements, the project handed over a detector dog transportation vehicle with an installed portable dog kennel to the National Emergency Agency's Rescue Brigade's detector dog team and a special laboratory table to the Customs General Administration's Detector Dog training center's Scent lab.

Activity 2.3.1: Between the 13th -24th June 2022, the trainer from the UK, Emma Salvoni delivered Detector dog training to 17 canine law enforcement officers from 7 government organizations and one NGO. The purpose of the training was to develop knowledge of scientific approaches to canine training in an operational setting; to introduce the Kong indication/target odour technique including the use of training and progression plans, to discuss puppy development relevant to the breeding programme and develop teaching and instruction approaches – lesson plans and reflective cycles.

Activity 2.3.2: Following Emma Salvoni's ToT, ZSL Mongolia organized a national detector dog training for 42 dog handlers from 7 government organizations between 22nd-26th August 2022 in Ulaanbaatar city. There were 21 handlers summoned from the border checkpoint areas of Mongolia. Over 81% of the participants stated that the training was very useful and 12.5% - useful. 6% did not respond.

Activity 2.4: The project supported a third detector dog patrol between 14th-23rd September 2022 at five city entry points and the Bogd Khan Mountain strictly protected area in the south of Ulaanbaatar city. The patrol's purpose was preventing and intercepting IWT and awareness raising amongst the public. During the patrolling, the police officers checked 1475 transport vehicles and conducted a search in packages of 1514 citizens and detected four infringements, confiscated 12 marmots, detected one incident of transporting a firearm without a permit, $10m^3$ of illegally logged wood being transported, 131,540 tonnes of quartz mineral, 280 kg of pine nut, and intoxicated driving cases. The National Emergency Agency's 6 detector dogs and their handlers checked 8,000 vehicles and 9,200 loads and intercepted 16 raw marmots, seven cooked marmots and four rabbits.

Activity 2.5: The draft standards for detector dog handlers and detector dog instructors are complete and were planned to be approved by the Ministry of Labor and Welfare in September of 2022 but the head of the council who approves the standards resigned in late September thus the submission had to be postponed to November. The project organized the first National Detector Dog Forum on 19th October 2022 bringing 44 representatives from 12 government and 3 non-government organizations. The purpose of the event was to 1) introduce draft standards of detector dog handlers and instructors to K9 stakeholders 2) report on the results of the canine capacity building by the project, 3) enable exchanges among K9 organizations on the issues and capacity development needs for improved participation in tackling IWT and environmental conservation.

Output 3. A scalable model of effective integrated law enforcement demonstrated through an Ecological Police Department and Community partnership supporting community natural resource governance institutions in pilot Arkhangai communities.

Activity 3.2: The Bulgan soum authorities recently extended the Khoid Mogoin Gol-Teel Local Protected Area (KHMT-LPA) to 242,886.4 ha of forest and mountain steppe, and wetland areas. Between 4th-16th August, the project conducted a bird survey and monitoring of the Mongolian marmot (Marmota sibirica) in the LPA. Volunteer rangers from each community-based organization (CBO) in the KHMT-LPA participated in the monitoring and helped to find the bird nests. A total of 98 bird species belonging to 67 genus, 36 families and 16 orders were recorded. The ZSL Mongolia biologist jointly with Volunteer rangers conducted marmot surveys across 23 different vantage points in the territories of 10 CBOs. The surveys observed 469 individuals in total. 170 (36%) individuals were adults, 26 (6%) were two years old, 163 (35%) were juveniles, and 137 (29%) were unknown (due to being observed from a distance). Most individuals were evaluated as healthy. This study showed a stable marmot population in KMGT-LPA.

Activity 3.3: In August, the project organized a meeting with leaders and volunteer rangers of 17 CBOs and the governor of Bulgan soum. Participants discussed and agreed the SMART patrol schedule and exchanged opinions on field measures and inspections to prevent the illegal collection of cedar nuts. A total of 29 people participated in the event, including two women and 27 men. In early September, the Community Stewardship Support Group (CSSG) organized the joint SMART patrol in KMGT-LPA covering approx.. 100,000 ha. A total of 19 volunteer rangers led by two ecological police officers from the Ecological Police Division of Arkhangai province participated. The patrol stopped over 500 people who had entered the forest to harvest cedar nuts before the permitted period, and informed them about the regulations and issues of forest degradation, and removed them from the forest. CSSG have met twice in May and in September and discussed the workplan.

Activity 3.4: During the bird survey in August, 37 volunteer rangers of the community groups of the KMGT-LPA were trained, introducing the role of birds of prey in ecosystems. Volunteer rangers had practical sessions during the fieldwork on how to identify common birds e.g. target species such as Saker falcon, Steppe eagle, and Golden eagle as well as how to use equipment for bird monitoring surveys. The project

prepared 3 stories on the legal responsibilities for IWT and CITES convention raising awareness of the ecosystem roles of wild animals, and broadcasted 7 times weekly.

Activity 3.5: On 22nd May 2022, the Union of Conservation Communities (UCC) of KMGT-LPA and ZSL project team organized a Community event on the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity and the project handed over SMART monitoring devices (22 cellphones) to local rangers and government officers. The project and Bulgan soum government provided 34 volunteer rangers with certificates and field uniforms following the Bulgan soum Governor Office's decision to appoint 34 CBO members as volunteer rangers and signed an agreement with them to handle illegal environmental activities.

The project purchased items for hay cutting and forage making for CBOs. On 17th-18th August 2022, a local livestock expert conducted training on preparing livestock forage involving 76 herders (29 women and 47 men). This training was useful for effective use of summer biomass growth for pasture protection and will help the herders to prepare for winter.

The UCC in Bulgan soum has 483 members of 17 CBOs, from which 450 members or 93.16% joined VSLAs. VSLAs have two funds; loan and social funds. As of October 2022, VSLAs have £⬛⬛⬛ in the loan fund and £⬛⬛⬛ in the social fund totalling £⬛⬛⬛

Output 4. Mongolian public recognise EPD as the leading IWT-focal agency, with public generated intelligence on IWT activity being reported directly to the EPD, stimulated through a national awareness campaign leveraging ZSL's successful IWT awareness raising campaigns and partnerships in Mongolia.

Activity 4.1 The project has financially supported the production of four tree planting awareness raising videos in cooperation with the Coordination Council of Crimes Prevention (CCCP) under the Ministry of Justice and Internal Affairs. These videos encourage people to plant trees and were shared on social media platforms of the CCCP and totalled 67,600 views.

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

No notable problems to report.

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

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS:	No
Formal Change Request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	No
Change request reference if known:	

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

Yes ☐ **No** ☒ Estimated underspend: £

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

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

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

No issues to raise.

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

First Annual report feedback requested to clarify who is responsible for collecting data on indicator 3.2 and 3.3. The social baseline survey in Bulgan soum community was collected by ZSL team and the project will commission consultant to analyze the data.

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

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