

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 2023

Project reference	IWT096
Project title	Case closed? Using historic cases to enable new financial investigations
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Uganda, Malawi, Zambia and Namibia
Lead partner	Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI)
Partner(s)	Wildlife Crime Prevention (WCP), Rooikat Trust, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Royal Foundation's United for Wildlife (UfW) Financial and Transport Taskforces
Project leader	Cathy Haenlein, Director, Organised Crime and Policing
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	<i>Using Closed Illegal Wildlife Trade Cases to Generate New Financial Intelligence Royal United Services Institute (rusi.org)</i>

Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept 2023) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

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

During the reporting period, RUSI undertook the following activities in accordance with the project's Logframe and timeline:

Output 1: IWT cases (at least n=2 per country, <7 years old) are selected using defined criteria co-created with partner NGOs and government agency partners and expert analysis conducted, in preparation for the 'train-the-trainer' workshops in Output 2.

1.5: RUSI supported the delivery of a government-led effort (stemming from the project's earlier workshop) to financially investigate high-value closed wildlife cases in Zambia. As communicated in change request four (CR4), the success of the first capacity building workshop in Zambia directly led to a follow-up opportunity with members of the 'Framework for Inter-Agency Coordination in Zambia to Enhance Investigation and Prosecution for Asset Recovery' (the Inter-Agency Framework) to conduct a financial case review of historic IWT cases featuring mid-tier or above offenders. Members of the Inter-Agency Framework include the National Prosecutions Authority, Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Anti-Money Laundering Investigation Unit, Financial Intelligence Centre, Ministry of Justice, Drug Enforcement Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, Zambia Police, Zambia Revenue Authority, Department of Immigration, National Anti-Terrorism Centre and the Bank of Zambia. Following close liaison with Zambian government partners between April and June, the project's financial investigations expert, Neil Bennett, travelled to Zambia in July to support this activity using funds reallocated from the Other Costs category of the budget (CR4).

The review comprised 10 (rising to 14) closed cases, selected from a long-list of 100, which were then evaluated by the Inter-Agency Framework to identify missed opportunities to gather financial intelligence. This process culminated in the production of: a financial profile template; two spreadsheets containing the assessed closed cases and a series of active cases to be reviewed; a concrete list of actions for government members of the Inter-Agency Framework to advance the active cases; and a commitment to collaborate with WULEU to build more accurate financial profiles of at-large offenders. Lessons from the successful exercise were captured in formal minutes and email/verbal debriefing sessions, which were subsequently integrated by RUSI into the best practice report analysis and drafting (Output 3) and project dissemination activity planning (Output 4) later in this period.

This activity is now complete, but RUSI continues to monitor progress of the Inter-Agency Framework on follow-up actions through liaison with the Chair of the Inter-Agency Framework.

Output 2: 'Train-the-trainer' workshops are delivered to selected officers from key government agencies in Malawi, Namibia, Uganda and Zambia.

2.4 RUSI commenced development of four (4) red flag intelligence briefings for further dissemination in Q4 of 2023 and beyond the lifecycle of the project. These include information on emerging criminal modalities including (i) The use of casinos and gambling loans in laundering proceeds of crime in Malawi; (ii) the growth in succulent trade in Namibia; (iii) Abuses of legal procedures and functions ('shadow' lawyers, swift payments of fines and abuse of plea bargaining process) in Zambia, Uganda and elsewhere; and (iv) new concealment techniques in Uganda including chilli peppers, coffins and ambulances. In September, RUSI met with the Intelligence Analyst for United for Wildlife's (UfW) Taskforce Alerts platform, to discuss the dissemination of these red flags. It was agreed that these typologies would be released in detail, following their initial dissemination via the virtual workshops and webinars. During this reporting period, RUSI also engaged with local partners on the ground to verify the validity of the written typologies.

Output 3: Best-practice in using closed case reviews to create new financial intelligence and build capacity in the financial investigation of IWT is produced and published.

3.1 The date for completion of the best practice report was moved to November 2023 (see CR5). However, during this reporting period, various steps were taken by RUSI to plan the publishing process, agree the concept, format, editing process and peer review schedule with

the RUSI publications team. It was agreed that this would take the format of a Whitehall Report, which are research reports that aim to share findings and results from research conducted as part of a research project. Whitehall Reports are descriptive papers describing research activities rather than an analytical paper, and therefore suited to best practice reports of workshop methods. The key authors of the report also reviewed workshop reports, notes and monitoring and evaluation, re-engaged with local partners to capture up-dated feedback on progress following the workshop and review activities, and collaborated on the first draft of the Whitehall Report. This first draft was subsequently completed by mid-October in advance of the first round of editorial comments and the peer review process.

3.4 RUSI completed the drafting of a 1,100 word analytical piece on gender roles, offender profiles, and gendered IWT impacts (based on findings from the gendered case review under Output 1, as well as a literature review). The final edit of the blog post was submitted for publication on rusi.org's Strategic Hub for Organised Crime 'Nature, Guns and Money' site in early July. The over-arching message of the article was that understanding gender norms of how women interact with wildlife and wildlife crime can help inform enforcement policy, but gender stereotypes can make enforcement blind to the role of some women in high-level wildlife offending including transnational organised crime and money laundering. The piece also included multiple examples of both subsistence and organised crime female wildlife offending. The post was published on 6 September 2023 and has been further disseminated during this period on LinkedIn and other social media channels, achieving 3,840 impressions with 72 reactions, 6 comments and 11 reposts (LinkedIn). Fuller analytics will be provided with the final report, but notable qualitative feedback from key IWT stakeholders includes:

'Really interesting and not something I'd given much thought to before'.

'An excellent piece re gender norms and assumptions as related to wildlife poaching'.

'Now that I've read it ... I wish I'd read it earlier. Really excellent article!'

Output 4:

4.1 During this period, RUSI conducted planning activities for the dissemination events planned for the next quarter (Oct-Dec 2023), including a regional public sector workshop and a public-private webinar. The two events and associated dissemination strategies were conceptualised with roles identified for project partners, including national agencies who had participated in the case review workshops. Suitable speakers were identified and – in many cases – written or verbal commitments to their participation obtained. Targeting for the invitation strategy was also discussed and carefully planned in light of the very specific geographic targets on proposed indicators, with key target audiences finalised as public sector (for the workshop) or public-private-civil society actors (for the webinar) in the (i) four project focal countries of Namibia, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia; (ii) the wider East and Southern African region; and (iii) Nigeria. The latter was included due to displacement trends in IWT product flows from Africa to Asia during the product period, but East and Southern Africa jurisdictions remained the priority targets. Finally, methods for collecting key monitoring and evaluation data were discussed and planned, in the form of registration surveys and exit polls. Planning and preparation for, and delivery of, these dissemination events will continue in the next quarter.

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.

There were two notable project developments/lessons learned during the reporting period:

Unexpected delays: RUSI has submitted six (6) change requests in total on the project. During the reporting period, RUSI submitted change request five (5) (in June, 2023) requesting a three-month no-cost extension to the project's end date due to several internal delays caused by a shortage of resources due to the clash between unexpected (a baby) and expected (a dissertation) personal priorities for key personnel. Without this change request, RUSI would be

unable to complete the project's final deliverables by the end of the year. This change was accepted within the reporting period, allowing RUSI to alter the timeline accordingly and move the project's end date to December 2023. The RUSI team is grateful for the understanding shown and are pleased to report the successful delivery of both personal projects (a healthy, happy baby boy, and a distinction!).

Safeguarding beneficiaries and partners: During this period, RUSI decided that formally identifying and nominating a national champion from each workshop (in line with Measurable Indicator 2.3) was unnecessarily risky and may be counter-productive. This followed feedback from key partners on the project in one focal country and – outside the scope of this project – completion of research interviews on corruption threats in IWT and the implications for the personal security of 'honest brokers' in IWT enforcement in another. Local advice and anecdotal examples suggested that nominees may become targets for malicious actors, therefore MI 2.3 could result in harmful unintended consequences. RUSI requested an amendment to this MI in change request five (5) which was promptly accepted.

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

Discussed with NIRAS: Yes

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

Change request reference if known: Unknown

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

Actual spend: ██████████

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £0

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

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

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

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

N/A

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

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

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

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