

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	IWT105
Project title	Enabling collaborative crime prevention targeting IWT of Vietnam's unique biodiversity
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Vietnam
Lead partner	Re:wild
Partner(s)	Fauna & Flora International, University of Maryland
Project leader	James Slade
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 st October 2022 HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	n/a

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).

In May and June of 2022, the first country visit to Vietnam was conducted by project staff. The first objective was to meet with the Pu Mat National Park administration, Forest Protection Department (FPD) and Border Army to review the initial stages of the project. Two field trips to Khe Bu and Co Phat villages, allowed us to meet with community leaders, women's union representatives, a youth union representative, FDP rangers and the Community Conservation Teams. Project efforts to date are highlighted below.

Output 1: Park rangers, police, and CCTs implementing crime prevention strategies and evaluating impact on IWT (Y1-3)

Activity 1.1 At least 60% of protection activities are focused on preventative measures, such as targeting crime hotspots and place networks, by the end of Year 2.

Following the successes in March, the CCT's in collaboration with 12 rangers from 5 ranger stations (Khe Choang, Khe Bu, Co Phat, Tam Dinh, and Khe Thoi) conducted 6 intensive snare removal campaigns and forest patrol in key compartments (considered hotspots of wildlife crime) of core zone. In June 2022, a second mass survey of 7 snare removal patrols was carried out across 7 ranger stations compartments in the core zone. The patrol effort is summarised as: A total of 86 snares, and 9 hunting camps were detected (7 active, 2 inactive) and destroyed across the areas surveyed. The patrols also detected 1 active fishing camp and 3 illegal fishers.

Targeting the newly identified 'hotspots' for hunting and snaring has already had some impact on preventing further illegal activity.

Activity 1.2 70% of trained rangers from FPD report improved capacity in crime prevention by end of Year 2 with systematic information exchange between all agencies (Police, FPD, CCTs) by end of Year 3.

FFI-UK wildlife trade expert Laure Joanny worked with FFI Vietnam staff in Hanoi, to familiarise project personnel on an introduction to crime prevention in June, followed by a second visit and workshop on law enforcement procedures in Sept. The first PMNP training is planned for early 2023 with local project staff helping to conduct the training as a Train the Trainer approach.

Activity 1.3 25% of protection efforts are investigating/targeting crime network places of IWT intermediaries by end of Year 2, from a baseline of 0% now.

The baseline surveys to assess illegal wildlife trade and develop crime scripts have been conducted in 5 villages inside and around PMNP since May. The project will use the illegal wildlife trade report, the Knowledge, Attitude and Behaviour (KAB) reports, SMART data and crime scripts to complete the Situational Crime Prevention Strategy.

Activity 1.4 All available patrol, investigative and wildlife observations are recorded for monitoring and evaluation, and all department heads and team leaders are supported to interpret data for IWT impact monitoring and adaptive management by end of Year 2.

All patrol data continues to be recorded in SMART. The crime scripts are undergoing analysis and should be complete follow the University of Maryland trip to Vietnam in Dec./Jan. 2022/2023.

Output 2: Embed community engagement into protection efforts by advancing existing CCT-supported patrols (Y1-3)

Activity 2.1 50% increase in CCT area coverage within the two intensive protection zones, by end of Year 2.

Since April 2022, the project has re-established the CCTs in Co Phat. The first few months included joint intensive forest patrols with FPD rangers for the snare removal campaigns. We expect to evaluate the status of threats and threat reduction after three months of piloting. In July 2022, the Co Phat CCT applied the systematic grid-cell survey for snaring. The CCTs in both Intensive Protection Zones are now operational.

Activity 2.2 100% of CCT patrols recorded in SMART.

Monthly SMART reports were produced and discussed at every CCT monthly meeting to review efforts and plan upcoming patrols.

Activity 2.3 One Park Protection Officer is embedded within the PMNP administration, by end of Year 2.

A full-time staff member is now based in PMNP since April. His primary objective is to support and coordinate the operations of the CCTs with all park protection efforts.

Activity 2.4 All CCT patrols have at least 60% knowledge base of individuals competent in Ranger-based data collection by the end of Year 1 and maintained through the end of the project.

The project continues to support CCT members and PMNP technical staff through the Project Coordinator, based in PMNP, and remotely through the FFI-Vietnam SMART Coordinator. PMNP staff are now confident to manage the database to ensure the patrol data is synchronized between FFI and Pu Mat National Park. Both FFI and the PMNP are now using SMART connect to remotely store data on the cloud.

Output 3: Community-level responses in five communities contributing to IWT reduction through local guardianship and improved wellbeing (Y1-3)

Activity 3.1 All five communities aware of wildlife crime and at least 3 of 5 of communities have adopted hunting prohibitions by project completion date.

The Knowledge, Attitude and Behaviour (KAB) survey was conducted in June 2022 in 7 villages in the core and buffer zones of PMNP. The KAB's questionnaire informs the poverty reduction index of the project area (the level of livelihood diversity of each household) and the wildlife crime index, which focuses on people's perception of wildlife crime (opinion/definition, solution and punishment, awareness). The results play important role in project activity planning as well as monitoring the progress and effectiveness of the project to communities.

A total of 320 households were selected randomly in 7 villages (Bu, Na, Nong, Co Phat, Bung, Tung Huong, Tan Huong). At least 40% of interviewees were women, and 50% were households in poverty, and belong to 4 ethnic groups (Kinh, Thai, Dan Lai, Poong). Some key survey findings include:

- Most households have averaged income below 2.7 million VNĐ/ month (US\$116);
- Main income sources are farming, grazing and forest protection allowance;
- 17% households receive their main income from labour work;
- Nearly 50% interviewees declared a "no-change in income" due to unemployment;
- Covid-19 is the main constraint in making stable income for most families;
- Food security is a problem for most households - nearly 84% interviewees worry about access to food daily.
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In terms of wildlife protection:

- Nearly 80% agreed that the amount of wildlife in general in Pu Mat has increased in the last 10 years (from 2012 – 2022);
- Main threat to wildlife survival is hunting (guns and snares);
- Most local people believe that hunting, snaring and illegal wildlife bans are compulsory to protect wildlife – a critical point to our project
- All interviewees agreed to protect (Northern White-cheeked) Gibbon;
- However, 23% do not agree to protect monkeys and 32% do not agree to protect wild pig (as these species are deemed common, with fast growing populations and a tendency to destroy crops).

Project staff from the University of Maryland will travel to Vietnam in Dec. & Jan. 2022/2023 to begin this the other activities outlined in Output 3.

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.

Overall, the project has been going well during last six months towards to achieve its objectives. The Covid-19 pandemic was still a small issue that delayed some activities, but it did not impact our ability to achieve objectives. With project contributions, the Park was able to complete its Sustainable Forest Management Plan (SFMP) and IUCN Green List applications (both documents are being finalised and will be submitted shortly). The delay of the Friends of Pu Mat meeting has created an opportunity to individually engage more relevant stakeholders, particularly local police, and border army representatives. The biggest hurdle seems to be in organising large meetings, and we have learned that we need much more time in advance and coordination than we have in previous years. In general, however, we do not see this affecting the budget or timetable moving forward.

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	N/A
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?

After the Project Coordinator Dao Cong Anh left FFI-Vietnam to join a master's degree study in India, it took two months (July – August) to recruit a new Project Manager. The project now has two full-time staff based in Pu Mat National Park, with regular support from all other project staff. This slowed some progress during the two months of gap in personnel, but it did not create any major impacts. We will submit a non-re-budget Change Request to reflect all personnel and programmatic changes before the December 31st deadline.

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.

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

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