

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	IWT108
Project title	Demand reduction and behaviour change along China's parrot supply chains
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	China, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
Lead partner	TRAFFIC International
Partner(s)	ReCTrad (the Network of Traditional Rulers for the Sustainable Management of Ecosystems in Central Africa) Wildlife Conservation Department (China CITES Management Authority, CITES MA) China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) China Timber & Wood Products Distribution Association (CTWPDA)
Project leader	Ling XU (Ling.xu@traffic.org)
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	30 October 2023 (HYR1)
Project website/blog/social media	N/A

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).

During this reporting period, the Project Team focused on the delivery of qualitative and quantitative consumption research on African Grey parrot (AGP) and other endangered African parrots, analysis of value chain interview results, and monthly monitoring of target parrot species in China's online platforms. The monthly catch-up of this project has been held on the third Thursday of each month.

The progress under each Output is reported as below.

Output 1. By June 2023, profiles, motivations and behaviour of African Grey Parrot (AGP) and other endangered African parrot owners in China and actors along value chain of illegal AGP trade in Cameroon and DRC are understood.

A1.1 Three members of the established AGP SBC Expert Group provided valuable insights and recommendations to help optimize the questionnaire used for the quantitative research around consumption of African Grey Parrot (AGP) and other endangered African parrots in China.

A1.2 & 1.3 Based on baseline research results of A1.7 and in-depth discussion with TRAFFIC and AGP SBC Expert Group members, the questionnaire (Annex 1) for qualitative studies was designed by GlobeScan. Three focus groups were then conducted with six individuals in Beijing, Chengdu and Guangzhou on 28th April 2023. The findings of the qualitative research report (Annex 2) indicate 1) parrot owners are typically pet lovers; 2) the main motivation for owners to keep parrots is their attraction to the social and intelligent nature of parrots; 3) legal regulations regarding parrot ownership serve as an incentive for behavioural change, with participants concerned about the legality of parrot species; 4) many participants do not perceive the pet trade as a conservation risk, as they believed that pet parrot breeding does not involve any wild animals. The quantitative research questionnaire (Annex 3) was developed in June 2023 based on qualitative research findings, available data and information obtained from A1.7 and 1.8, and SBC experts' comments. The quantitative questionnaire online survey was conducted in July and August 2023 with 1,000 equivalent valid responses. The first draft report was available for TRAFFIC's internal review in September 2023, and is expected to be finalised in the next quarter.

A1.4 As part of the intervention strategy alongside the value chain study, the project has identified targeted communities in Cameroon with whom to engage with in terms of SBC discussion in AGP trafficking. 10 communities were identified around Lobeke National (Mambele, Ndongo, Mikel, Koumela, Lokomo, Libongo, Ngolla 120, Momboué, Bela, Tembe piste). The area is not only a transboundary landscape between Cameroon, Central Africa Republic and Congo but is also one of the biggest AGP trafficking hotspots in Central Africa with Chinese companies around the buffer zone of the Lobeke National Park. The discussions were initiated through the Lobeke National Park conservator and the ReCTrad coordinator together with the communities' leaders about the period of field mission of the TRAFFIC team aiming to discuss their needs and aspirations in contributing to the fight against AGP trafficking. The said field mission will take place early December 2023 which coincides with the dry season and therefore easy to access challenging remote places.

A1.5 Based on the value chain interview, the first draft report was developed in July 2023 and under the internal review. The primary findings indicate that 1) most respondents (85%) in the supply chain survey were aware of the rare bird trade, with 12% mentioning AGP involvement. 2) respondents with no prior experience in exotic animal trade still demonstrated knowledge of fraudulent activities in Cameroon and Democratic Republic of the Congo, indicating the widespread presence of bribery, weak enforcement, and in particular lenient punishment for illegal wildlife trade; 3) the AGP trade is highly uncertain because of difficulties in keeping parrots alive during transportation, leading to a high risk of death; 4) respondents noted that AGP prices have increased over time, likely due to the growing scarcity of AGP in the wild. Prices tend to be lower during the breeding season, dry season and early stages of life. The value chain survey report seeks to contribute to developing effective intervention strategies aimed at curbing the illegal wildlife trade and protecting the endangered AGP populations.

A1.6 To be conducted in the next quarter based on the results of A1.2-1.5

A1.7 The historical data briefing paper in English (Annex 4) has helped non-Chinese project members better understand China's parrot trade and trends, and also contributes to designing the quantitative research questionnaire.

A1.8 During the reporting period, the monthly survey recorded eight major e-commerce websites and social media platforms for the sale or advertising of AGP in China, including JD, Taobao, Douyin, Xiaohongshu, Xianyu, WeChat, Kwai and Baidu Post Bar. Over 130 sale/purchase advertisements were recorded, with an average monthly record of over 20. It is worth noting that, given the current popular trend of short videos, short video apps such as Douyin are directly targeting Chinese users around the world due to their high content push function and social attributes, unlike Baidu Post Bar, which is only limited to buyers and sellers in China. As the Douyin APP has a live broadcast function, it has attracted a large number of relevant information about AGPs. Although this type of information is only simple knowledge sharing, such as evaluating the high intelligence of AGP and training their speaking abilities, it can attract many

video viewers, thereby affecting them as potential consumers.

Output 2. By December 2024, demand reduction on APG and other endangered African parrots have been achieved by behaviour change campaign

No activity during this period. But the consumer survey and value chain survey have been completed and relevant reports are about to be finalized, which will provide a solid foundation for the design of a well-targeted, evidence-based, species-specific campaign.

Output 3. By end of 2024, a corporate engagement and behaviour change campaign is in place targeting Chinese nationals likely to be involved in poaching and trafficking AGP and other endangered parrots in Cameroon and DRC

A3.1 The structure of the CSR guide for Chinese companies in Cameroon and DRC has been drafted and discussed with the China Timber & Wood Product Distribution Association (CTWPDA) in the next reporting period. The CTWPDA has a large number of members in target countries, so their deep engagement with this CSR Guide development will not only help them increase their awareness of combating illegal wildlife trade but also promote the use of the guide among their members. As a positive follow-up to the discussion, at the 2023 World Hardwood Conference on 25 September, TRAFFIC signed an MOU with CTWPDA to promote the sustainable development of the hardwood industry and prevent poaching and trafficking of endangered species, including AGP. The MOU also emphasizes that TRAFFIC will deliver training in complying with the Code of Conduct and adopting CSR guide for CTWPDA members. In December 2023, TRAFFIC and CWTPDA will have a joint visit in Cameroon to meet the local timber companies, so the discussions between the Chinese companies and local community representatives on the implementation of the CSR (IWT prevention incorporated) Guide and creation of sustainable timber supply chain.

Output 4. By December 2025, disseminate campaign outcome and lessons learned from the project to relevant stakeholders nationally, regionally and globally

A4.1 No activity planned in this reporting period.

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.

In general, there are no notable problems during this reporting period. The quantitative research report is a little behind schedule due to the additional AGP data mining, but it is still within a controllable range and will not affect the implementation of the next campaign design temporarily. TRAFFIC will continue to urge GlobeScan to further revise and submit a high-quality report.

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/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

Change request reference if known:

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

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

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

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

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

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

No.

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**