

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	IWT-113
Project title	LICIT-II: Legal Intelligence and Community Governance for Cheetah Illicit Trade
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Ethiopia, Somalia (Somaliland)
Lead partner	Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF)
Partner(s)	TRAFFIC, Legal Atlas
Project leader	Dr. Laurie Marker, Executive Director, CCF
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR 1
Project website/blog/social media	www.cheetah.org

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).

I. This project started in July 2022; thus, this report covers a three-month period from 1 July - 30 September 2022. During this period:

-- Partners engaged a consultant to develop a governance structure model for Somaliland (Indicator 1.1/Activity 1.1.1). This model will be used as the blueprint for establishing community conservancies in selected pilot communities (Output 1). The consultant made an initial visit to Somaliland to begin gathering information for his analysis (Activity 1.1.2). The consultant's CV is attached as Annex A and his initial report as Annex B. As promised, this activity is conducted through matching funds offered to CCF through the IUCN Save Our Species grant (2022-4).

-- CCF held discussions with several NGOs active in Somaliland and identified several as potential collaborators in conducting conservation and community development work in the Awdal region of Somaliland (Indicator 1.4/Activity 1.4.1). Organizations expressing an interest in working with CCF include the Candlelight Foundation (a Somaliland-based NGO), the Halo Trust, the UN FAO, and World Hunger Help (*Welthungerhilfe*). The latter has already agreed to cooperate with CCF on an EU-funded proposal (see below). A concept note prepared by CCF for these discussions is attached at Annex C. The effort to identify potential collaborators is ongoing.

-- Partners have engaged a Somaliland legal adviser (Activity 4.1.1) who will work with the legislative drafting group to be appointed by the government of Somaliland to update Somaliland's Forestry and Wildlife Conservation Law (Output 4). Although work under Output 4 is not scheduled to begin until Year 2 of the project, this adviser has already consulted for CCF on the LICIT project (IWT-066) and other matters related to CCF's work in Somaliland. Engaging her at this early stage will help promote continuity between IWT-066 and the current project, and integration of the current project with other CCF activities. See Annex D.

II. During these initial months CCF has also confirmed opportunities to leverage additional support for the LICIT II project:

-- CCF renewed its cooperation with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat, continuing a collaboration that began under the earlier LICIT project (IWT-066). As before, "CMS II" will fund an expansion of legal research and analysis by LICIT II partner Legal Atlas to include development of legal frameworks for establishing Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs). Once again, IGAD will provide institutional support. This work will directly benefit the LICIT II project by helping strengthen national legal frameworks and regional anti-trafficking cooperation, in particular cross-border cooperation and legal harmonization between neighbouring countries to protect cheetahs and other wildlife resources and combat trafficking (LICIT II Output 3). See Annex E.

-- CCF's discussions with NGOs in Somaliland (above) have already resulted in a collaboration that will benefit the LICIT II project. With funding support from the EU, CCF and WHH will partner on community initiatives that integrate CCF's wildlife conservation activities with other development measures such as nutrition and ecosystem-based livelihoods in target communities in Somaliland, including LICIT II pilot communities. This integrated approach should facilitate community buy-in to wildlife conservation goals and help build a stronger economic and social framework for LICIT II community conservation governance structures (LICIT II Output 1). See Annex F and G.

-- With support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), CCF will be able to conduct intensive surveys to increase understanding of the cheetah population in the LICIT II project area (the Awdal Region of Somaliland), by collecting data on cheetahs, their prey, and competitors to: 1) estimate cheetah population density and density-occupancy relationships; 2) derive genetic data on the cheetah population to assess genetic structure, and; 3) identify sources of cheetahs for the illegal trade. Surveys will also use a new cheetah diet identification tool to gather data to help understand drivers of human-wildlife conflict by quantifying actual conflict. This collaboration with USFWS will benefit the LICIT II project by providing more comprehensive baseline data to inform the selection of pilot communities and areas of focus for community conservation programs. The results of this research will be shared with project country governments to assist development and implementation of national cheetah conservation plans. See Annex H.

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.

Because our project expenditures are mainly in U.S. dollars, one challenge we have encountered in our initial three months has been the increase in value of the dollar relative to the UK pound. On the date we submitted our budget (22 March 2022) the dollar/pound ratio was 1.33. As of the date of this report, it is 1.13. This is a larger-than-usual change that represents a loss of about 15 percent in the dollar value of our budget. If the current exchange rate trend persists over time, it could have an impact on our ability to fund project activities or to complete them in a timely manner.

In addition, the project manager Dr. Shira Yashphe, had to undergo surgery which necessitated delegating activities to other CCF staff members in the beginning of the project and updating her upon her return.

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:	N/A

<p>4a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?</p> <p>Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £ 0</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</p>
<p>None</p>

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**