

## 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: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

<b>Project reference</b>	IWT 115
<b>Project title</b>	Demand reduction for threatened tortoises and freshwater turtles (TFTs) in Bangladesh.
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Bangladesh
<b>Lead partner</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society, Bangladesh
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Project leader</b>	Dr. Md. Zahangir Alom, Country Representative, WCS Bangladesh
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	April 1 - September 30, 2023, HYR2
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	None

**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).**

The project started on 1st July 2022. Progress on activities was made during this reporting period as outlined below against each activity and the timeline agreed in July 2022.

**Output 1: Behavioural change strategy developed for reducing the demand for TFTs based on improved understanding of market dynamics and consumer motivations.**

*Activity 1.1:* Media search and data analysis to identify TFT consumption and trade hotspots and continue monitoring of seizures.

Media data on the illegal trade of TFTs (Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles) was collected throughout the reporting period. Since July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, media reported the confiscation of 551 live TFTs from eight different incidents comprising five threatened species: Indian roofed turtle (307), Indian flapshell turtle (109), Indian star tortoise (74), Indian eyed turtle (11), and Indian peacock softshell turtle (10).

*Activity 1.2:* TFT market surveys.

The first round of market surveys was completed in Y1Q4. During this reporting period, a summary report (Annex 1) was prepared. This report is used internally to develop the baseline of TFT trade and will inform the selection of target areas for the demand reduction campaign.

*Activity 1.3:* Develop and finalise map of TFT consumption and trade hotspots and consult with key stakeholders.

Activity completed in Y1 and reported on previously. See Y1 Annual Report.

*Activity 1.4:* Develop pre and post KAP survey in consultation with the key stakeholders.

Activity completed in Y1 and reported on previously. See Y1 Annual Report.

*Activity 1.5:* Conduct pre-KAP survey in identified TFT consumption and trade hotspots.

Activity completed in Y1 and reported on previously. See Y1 Annual Report.

*Activity 1.6:* Meeting with the Forest Department to share pre-KAP survey results. This activity was initially due by Y2Q2 and has been slightly delayed, due to the additional time required for the data cleaning, as well as fixing issues related to the use of the tool 'Kobo toolbox'. The meeting with the Forest Department (FD) will be organised in Y2Q3.

*Activity 1.7:* Develop a draft TFT demand reduction behaviour change strategy in consultation with BFD and stakeholders.

This activity was initially due by Y2Q2 and has been slightly delayed because of the additional time required to address challenges related to chosen analytics tools. These have been solved and the analysis was completed, allowing to move to subsequent activities. A draft demand reduction behaviour change strategy is currently being developed, using the results of the summary reports of the KAP study (Activity 1.9) and shall be completed by Y2Q3.

*Activity 1.8:* Consultation workshop/meeting with Forest Department for approval of TFT demand reduction behaviour change strategy.

This activity was initially due to be completed by Y2Q2 but has been delayed because of challenges related to using Kobo toolbox. The workshops with the FD will be completed by Y2Q3.

*Activity 1.9:* Analyse the KAP survey data to identify socio-economic drivers of illegal trade and consumption and prepare summary report.

This activity is ongoing and will be completed by Y2Q3, with a slight delay. Initial analysis of the KAP survey results has been undertaken and we have identified the major drivers for the TFT consumption. A KAP Focused Group Discussion (FGD) report was written (Annex 2), while analysis is ongoing.

*Activity 1.10:* Repeat market surveys throughout project to monitor any drop in size of market to support indication of reduced demand.

This activity is ongoing as planned. Two refresher training sessions were organised for 26 surveyors in Dhaka and Khulna to ensure the surveyors were prepared for the second round of market surveys. These surveys were scheduled for early October to mid-November 2023 and are currently underway. They will collect data on the presence and absence of open TFT sales during two Hindu festivals (Durga puja and Kali puja).

**Output 2: Behaviour change strategy implemented resulting in measurable changes to knowledge, attitudes and practices of TFT consumers, and lessons learned to improve future campaigns.**

*Activity 2.1:* Develop awareness raising key messages and materials.

This activity was initially scheduled to be completed by Y2Q2 but has been delayed, as it depends on the completion of several activities under Output 1. While we have held internal discussions on potential messages, only when the drivers of TFT consumption are better understood (for example by validating outcomes of the KAP study with stakeholders), will we be able to prioritise and finalise targeted messages. This activity will be completed by Y2Q3.

*Activity 2.2:* Documentary film on reducing TFT consumption.

This activity was initially scheduled to be completed in Y2Q2. Terms of reference for the film have been further reviewed, resulting in an adjustment of the target audience – the TFTs consumers or traders. The KAP study findings have been used to define the audience. The film will focus on demand reduction messages. A film production house has been contracted.

*Activity 2.3:* Design TFT consumer demand reduction campaign.

This activity was initially scheduled to be completed in Y2Q2. Due to delay in preparing the pre-KAP survey data for analysis, and developing the demand reduction strategy, it is delayed as well and will be completed by Y2Q4.

*Activity 2.4:* Execute campaign in identified TFT consumption and trade *hotspots*.

This activity was scheduled to start just after this reporting period in Y2Q2, it is delayed due to delay in analysing the pre-KAP survey data and developing the demand reduction strategy to Y3 as pending completion of previous activities.

*Activity 2.5:* Organize and hold two journalist training workshops.

This activity was completed as per project timeline. Two training sessions for 70 journalists (68M, 2F) from 54 national media outlets participating from 11 districts, were conducted in two divisions, one in the Bagerhat district (Khulna division) on August 9, 2023, and in the Gopalganj district (Dhaka divisions) on September 5, 2023, on Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles (TFTs) and reporting illegal wildlife trade. These sessions aimed to enhance the journalists' capabilities in producing more accurate and comprehensive articles following a checklist (Annex 3) on wildlife trade.

*Activity 2.6:* Conduct post-KAP surveys in the areas where TFT demand reduction campaign took place.

This activity was initially scheduled to be completed by Y2Q4; however, we expect to complete it with some delay in Y3Q1.

**Output 3: Establish collaboration for behaviour change for TFTs through sharing of the approach between wildlife managers, law enforcement officials and development agencies in Bangladesh and India on successes and failures in demand reduction.**

*Activity 3.1:* Organise two virtual meetings between India and Bangladesh.

On July 14, 2023, WCS Bangladesh organized a virtual meeting with WCS India, to discuss our respective projects on TFT conservation. The action points agreed upon during this meeting were to explore invitation methods for planning a bilateral Governments meeting engaging with Governments partners, continue to share findings (meeting notes in Annex 4&5).

*Activity 3.2:* Organise an in-person meetings at Bana Bhaban in Bangladesh with participation by forest officials from Bangladesh and India.

This activity is progressing as planned. During the virtual meeting between WCS Bangladesh and WCS-India, it was agreed that Bangladesh Forest Department or WCS Bangladesh will send a formal invitation to Forest Department of India to send a few officers to discuss the cross border illegal TFT traffic issue and how best to address it. This meeting will be taking place in February 2024.

*Activity 3.3:* Organise an in-person meetings at Aranya Bhaban in India with participation by forest officials from Bangladesh and India.

This activity is not scheduled until Y3.

*Activity 3.4:* Distribute summary report on socio-economic drivers of involvement in illegal trade and consumption with stakeholders including development agencies.

This activity was initially scheduled for Y2Q2 but has been delayed, as it depends on completion of Activity 1.9. It will be completed by Y2Q3.

*Activity 3.5:* Share TFT consumer demand reduction campaign strategy and model with WCS India and other organisations.

This activity was initially scheduled for Y2Q2 but has been delayed, as it depends on completion of Activity 2.3. It will be completed by Y2Q4.

**Output 4: Bangladesh's national wildlife protection laws strengthened for TFT protection.**

*Activity 4.1:* Prepare background document and draft proposal for listing all the threatened TFT species under the Wildlife Act, 2012.

This activity was completed in Y1. We are following up with the BFD on the progress in reviewing this document and bringing it to the next step.

*Activity 4.2:* Prepare a proposal to clarify definitions of Schedule I and II protected species in the Wildlife Act, 2012.

This activity was completed in Y1. We are in touch with the BFD to follow up on any progress.

**Activity 4.3:** Follow-up meetings and engagement with BFD on proposals to list threatened FTT species and clarify definitions of Schedule I and II protected species in the Wildlife Act, 2012. This activity is making progress as planned. We are following up with the BFD over personal communications. BFD already have assigned a lawyer to support the process going forward.

**Activity 4.4:** Prepare a proposal to add regulatory directives from the Wildlife Act, 2012 to the Import Policy Order under the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, 1950 and submit it to Customs.

A proposal on regulatory directives for the Wildlife Act, 2012 to the Import Policy Order under the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, 1950 has been drafted and submitted to the BFD for forwarding it to the Customs Authority for official endorsement (Annex 6).

**Activity 4.5:** Follow-up with Customs Agency through meetings and engagement on the proposal.

This activity is making progress as planned. We are following up with the Customs Agency over personal communications managed by WCS Legal Advisor.

**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 implementing this project, we faced several challenges:

- After completing the preliminary Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) study data collection from a sample of key districts, exploratory market surveys at Chitalmari Fish depot in Bagerhat found one globally endangered (EN) peacock softshelled turtle *Nilssonina hurum* being sold. The trade of Indian flapshell turtles *Lissemis punctata* (VU), (n=14) was also spotted in Nalua Bazar in Bagerhat. Therefore, the team decided to expand the survey to Bagerhat district, to follow up on evidenced trade with additional household consumption surveys. This adjustment caused delays but expanded the study's scope to critical areas and demonstrated adaptive planning.
- Following this, the process of data cleaning and integrating multiple worksheets produced from by KOBO toolbox took longer than expected. Interpreting and preparing the survey data for analysis in IBM's SPSS also proved to be time-consuming, leading to delays in subsequent tasks. This delay, spanning over a quarter of our project timeline, had a cascading impact on dependent activities. The team has learnt that in the future, data submitted on mobile devices by enumerators must be more carefully checked, and/or that more simple mobile data collection forms should be designed to reduce the amount of cleaning and interpretation required.

Given these, implementation of some activities got delayed. We plan to submit a change request to shift the funds allocated to the post-KAP survey from Y2 to Y3. Some other major changes include reallocation of a portion of the demand reduction campaign budget, and reallocation of the balance of several lines (printing, domestic and international travel). The implementation timetable will be updated as well, to reflect adjustments made to address the delays.

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

Discussed with NIRAS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

**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?**

The National election in Bangladesh will take place in January 2024. The periods before and after elections are usually tense due to political instability. We plan to monitor the situation closely and will take necessary measures to ensure staff security while making progress. Between December 2023 and February 2024, all field activities will be limited, and we will focus on designing the behaviour change campaign and related materials.

**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](mailto: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**

## List of Annexes

Number	Title	Location
Annex 1	Report on TFT Market Survey	Attachment
Annex 2	KAP FGD Report	Attachment
Annex 3	Amendment-Import Policy Order (DRAFT)	Attachment
Annex 4	Meeting minutes-Introductory meeting with WCS India on TFT demand reduction project	Attachment
Annex 5	Meeting minutes- Progress update meeting with WCS India	Attachment
Annex 6	Checklist for media report on Wildlife Crime incidents	Attachment