

## 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 2022**

<b>Project reference</b>	IWT119
<b>Project title</b>	Reduced illegal wildlife trade and strengthened rural communities
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Cambodia, Laos
<b>Lead partner</b>	Rising Phoenix Co. Ltd.
<b>Partner(s)</b>	1. Stung Treng Provincial Authority (STPA), Ad-hoc Committee for IBIS Rice and Siem Pang PATROL. 2. Siem Pang District Administration (SPDA), Siem Pang PATROL Operational Working Group. 3. Border Liaison Office 4. Stung Treng Department of Environment
<b>Project leader</b>	James R.A. Lyon
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	HYR1
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	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).**

**Output 1: Expansion of IBIS Rice Programme at villages surrounding Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary, increasing household income.**

**1.1 Expand the IBIS Rice scheme and sell the IBIS Rice at a minimum 10% premium price**

At the start of July 2022, 812 households from eleven villages were registered in the scheme. After conducting the Internal Control System (ICS), by the end of September, we have 685 households who are growing IBIS Rice.

**Table 1:** IBIS Rice member in 2022 at SPWS

No	Village Name	Registered member in Jun				After ICS in Sep
		Old member	New member	Re-join member	Total members	Total member approved
1	Khes Svay	105	25	10	140	119
2	Khes Kraom	142	19	2	163	131
3	Pong Kriel	104	4	8	116	110
4	Nhang Sum	108	32	6	146	123
5	Kham Phouk	53	10	-	63	53
6	Lakay	17	4	-	21	18
7	Phabang	35	7	-	42	40
8	Peam Khes	45	6	-	51	36
9	Srae Russie	52	-	-	52	44
10	Lun	13	-	-	13	9
11	Kanchanh Kouk	-	5	-	5	2
<b>Total</b>		674	112	26	<b>812</b>	<b>685</b>

In 2022, there were 82 new households or 410 rural people joined the scheme, but 79 old households did not grow the rice this year due to several reasons, including shortage of labour, lack of material, migration to find job in other provinces, and some of them becoming old. So, the total of 685 households or 3,425 rural people are joining the scheme during this reporting period.

**1.3 Rice field mapping and registration for 300 households with the Department of Land Management**

By the end of July 2022, there were 82 additional land parcels belonging to 78 households (303 hectares) were mapped and the registration of the 200 parcels from 2021 belonging to 183 households (606 hectares) in ten villages were completed. In total, we mapped 282 land parcels covering 909 hectares for 261 households.

**Output 2: A diverse and gender inclusive village scout teams are established and operational.**

**2.1 Notification - conduct planning and notification of Scout Team Recruitment and desired pre-qualifications in collaboration with the Siem Pang District Authority and Stung Treng Provincial Department of Environment, determine a short list of up to 60 possible recruits.**

From the 21st of August to the 13th of September 2022, Rising Phoenix Co., Ltd proceeded with the recruitment phase of Output 2. Meetings were held with the District Governor, Siem Pang District Administration, the Provincial Department of Environment and the Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary management to discuss the recruitment process and involvement of these agencies. From the meeting with these agencies, there was agreement and strong support to recruit local community and minority groups to be become Rising Phoenix Scouts.

Recruitment announcements were made by visiting the villagers around the protected area while also holding awareness raising programs to villagers. From the announcement, there were two hundred and twelve job applications received, most of these applicants came to the office to fill out the forms, those that could not were handed the application forms by our

Community Development Unit (CDU) and assisted the remote villagers in filling out the forms and returning them to the office. Detailed explanation of the job requirements of a Rising Phoenix Scout was outlined to all applicants so that they were fully aware and willing to applying, as well as understand that they would have to attend a one-day competitive selection process. Rising Phoenix staff short listed 60 of the applications that best suited the roles required as per the terms of reference (30 female and 30 male). These 60 people were then notified of the capacity assessment dates.

## **2.2 Selection Course - conduct a recruitment selection course process, including drug testing, ensuring a fair and transparent recruitment of 20 scouts from 60 applicants.**

The capacity assessment process was designed to assess individual's skills, attitude, physical and mental attributes for placement in position of a Rising Phoenix Scout. The assessment feeds into the development and implementation of training, through determining the average level of skills, attitude, physical and mental attributes of future trainees.

The capacity assessment occurred on the 13th September. It started at 05.30 hrs and testing activities continued until 19:00 hrs. The capacity assessment was held for 52 candidates (24 males, 28 Females) out of 60 shorts listed. 6 males and 2 female candidates failed to arrive to the assessment or were late, therefore were excluded from the capacity assessment. Out of the 52 candidates Rising Phoenix selected 13 males (3 reserves) and 13 females (3 reserves). Ethnicity breakdown: Kavet males 5, Lao minority males: 5, Reserves 3 Khmer males, Kavet females 3, Lao minority females: 3, Khmer females 4, Reserves 1 Lao, 2 Khmer females.

Therefore 50% females selected, 54% female ethnic minority, 77% male ethnic minority.

## **2.3 Equipment - Source and procure required equipment in accordance with policy and procedure.**

Over the reporting period equipment was sourced and procured for the scout team in accordance with Rising Phoenix policies and procedures. Equipment purchased included t-shirts, boots, rucksacks, uniforms, water bottles, gloves, belts, hammocks, fly sheets, radios helmets and motorbike fixing tools.

Additional equipment and cloud storage to support management of the scout's operation in SPWS was also purchased.

## **Output 3: Siem Pang PATROL Programme fully operational with multi-agency, patrols and investigations, transboundary dialog and ad-hoc investigations with Lao PDR occurring along the border.**

Rising Phoenix updated and extended the Siem Pang PATROL letter of Agreement between Rising Phoenix Co., Ltd. and the Stung Treng Provincial Authority to cover the period of the Grant from 2022 to 2025.

The Provincial Governor also issued a notice to all law enforcement agencies with the new agreement informing all to give full cooperation to the Siem Pang PATROL.

## **3.6 Patrolling & Investigation Monitoring and Reporting – Through the Siem Pang PATROL Coordination Centre, the Border Liaison Meetings, and the Siem Pang PATROL Operational Group meetings, feed information into agencies for investigation and monitor and report on successes, utilising operational meetings minutes and data provided.**

10 July 2022 - Meeting occurred with the Border Liaison Office, Rising Phoenix Co., Ltd and Deputy District Governor to discuss future requirements and supporting monthly Border Liaison Office meeting. A summary list of activities was given to the Cambodian Border Liaison Office for them to share and discuss with the Lao Border Liaison Office.

Monthly Siem Pang PATROL Reports – During the reporting period of April to September 2022, there was regular encounters of poachers with illegal weapons firing within the protected-area. Aggressively armed poachers of groups of 15 to 20, we identified entering the protected-area suspected to have crossed the border from Lao PDR, poaching within the southwest and west of the Core Zone and leaving behind sign (food and cigarette packets) indicating they were Laotian villagers. Also, to the southeast and east of the Core Zone small non-aggressive armed

poachers in groups of 2-3 were also hunting with illegal weapons, these poachers were suspected Khmer villagers.

Over the next few months with joint agency operations with the Border Police and Military conducting night patrolling and the limited ranger force being deployed to fixed security locations and bolstered by another 40-border army establishing extra check points and observation posts along the border were initiated to deter the poachers. Strick rules of engagement were issued to the law enforcement and military personnel, not to engage but to deter the poachers entering the protected-area.

At the same time Rising Phoenix supported an anti-illegal weapon operation being led by the Provincial Police in charge of illegal weapons. The 7-person police team (including 1-female police officer) conducted two 7-day education and information gathering operations (Operation Fire Stick, followed by Operation Burnt Stick), in the villages on the southern boundary and in the western village of Kampouk. Through this operation the villagers were informed of the laws. Ten illegal weapons were voluntarily handed over to the police team during Operation Burnt Stick.

During the month of September 2022, not one shooting incident was reported within the protected-area and the law enforcement agencies informants stated that the Wildlife Market in Lao PDR had closed down. This success can be directly related to this multi-agency operation of patrolling, education and information gathering by the law enforcement agencies. (\*Note: Rising Phoenix does not pay for or handle any informants).

Patrol results and effort is summarised below in table 2 & 3.

**Table 2:** Patrol results from April to September 2022.

No	Types	Number	Comments
1	Bushmeat	6	6 cases count of monitor lizard and wildpig destroyed
2	Fishing tools	3	3 gillnets confiscated
3	Hand tractors	4	Confiscated and fined
4	Homemade gun	12	2 Confiscated, 10 Voluntarily handed in.
5	Land encroachment	17	17 cases recorded
6	Hunting camp	1	Destroyed
7	Alive animals	12	Confiscated and released
8	Motorbike	1	Warning contract
9	Timber confiscated	52	Planks
10	Illegal Logging	5	5 cases - Observe of already cut logs only

**Table 3:** Patrolling Effort - April to September 2022.

Patrol Types	# Patrols	# Days	# Nights	Distance (KM)
Vehicle Patrol	24	65	41	1,034
Foot Patrol	25	96	71	530
Mixed Patrol	1	4	3	10
Boat Patrol	1	3	2	26
Motorbike Patrol	28	133	105	1,759
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>3,359</b>

**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.**

No notable problems occurred over the reporting period (first 3 months of the project)

<b>3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS-LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</b>	
Discussed with NIRAS-LTS:	No
Formal Change Request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	No
Change request reference if known:	

<b>4a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?</b>	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £
<p><b>4b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.</b> Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.</p> <p><b>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.</b></p>	
<b>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</b>	
No.	

**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](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**