

Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Main & Extra: Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":
(<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/resources/information-notes/>)

It is expected that this report will be a maximum of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes)

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2025

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IWT Challenge Fund Project Information

Scheme (Main or Extra)	Main
Project reference	IWT-126
Project title	Strengthening measures to combat IWT in the W-Arly-Pendjari landscape.
Country/ies	Benin
Lead Organisation	Zoological Society of London
Project partner(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Forensic Science Service for the City of London Police.2. Kings Forensics, Kings College London3. Ministry of Living Environment and Transport, in charge of Sustainable Development of Benin - General Directorate of Water, Forests and Hunting4. Initiative pour la Préservation de la Vie (IPV-ONG)
IWTCTF grant value	£599,425.00
Start/end dates of project	2024, July 1st to 2027, March 31st
Reporting period (e.g. April 2024-Mar 2025) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	July 2024 – March 2025, Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Alain Lushimba [REDACTED]
Project website/blog/social media	
Report author(s) and date	Alain Lushimba, Yekini CHABI N'diaye and Grant Miller April 29 th , 2025

1. Project summary

The W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP) complex covers ~35,000km² in Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger, encompassing five protected areas, hunting concessions and community lands. It is globally recognised as a conservation priority, home to the last significant populations of the endangered savannah elephant in West Africa¹ (~77% of the region's 11,489 individuals), the critically endangered West African Lion² (~350 of the remaining 400 individuals), and also one of the last sites with Northwest African cheetahs.

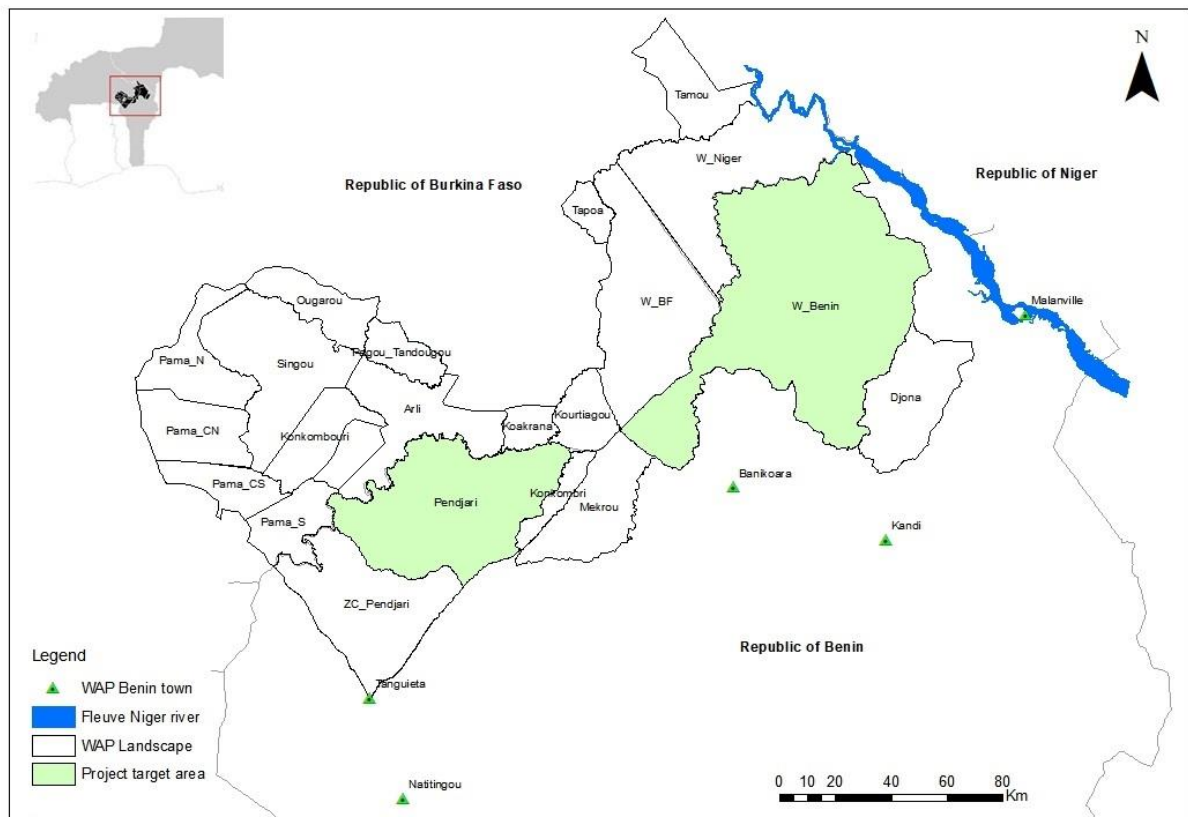
The WAP is under immense pressure from IWT, compounded by a low capacity to respond. Poaching levels are high, especially of elephants and large carnivores (including African lion and cheetah). CITES MIKE highlighted Pendjari as a site of global concern. Benin is the main hub for WAP-related trafficking, and ZSL market surveys from 2017, 2019 and 2021 found big cat, pangolin and elephant products openly on sale, with clear links identified to international organised crime groups.

In addition, IWT and insecurity in the WAP, compounded by limited and poorly resourced law enforcement capacity, are direct threats to tourism related livelihoods. Over three hundred families depend on employment from lodges providing tourist services, with many more families indirectly supported by the sector. As poaching and insurgent activity increased, tourist numbers continued to fall dropping by 40% to fewer than 5,000 in 2015, until completely stopping from 2021. Local communities' wellbeing has been largely neglected by Government and donors, driving their engagement in unsustainable resource use including IWT as well as disincentivising their engagement in combatting IWT, which is critical to the long-term future of the landscape and its biodiversity.

Funding from the IWT Challenge Fund R9 is instrumental and integral in the establishment of a wider ongoing programme of work within the WAP landscape. Many of the deliverables funded by IWT R9 are based on the achievements of previous projects, developed with financing from IWT Challenge Fund R5 and of the project 'Combatting Wildlife Trafficking in the countries of the WAP Complex' from the US Government's Department of State's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau (INL).

This ZSL-led project in the W-Arly-Pendjari landscape aims to combine 1) work to build the capacity of law enforcement agents and the judiciary with 2) innovative methods to test for the legality of meat found during IWT operations, thus facilitating locals' legal trade, 3) new regional techniques to recover trace evidence from animals/animal parts, to improve case outcomes, and 4) support for local communities affected by the IWT and the regional security crisis, which will help build support for combating IWT.

In year 1, despite challenging security conditions, this project successfully engaged the Beninese government (Directorate General of Water, Forests and Hunting (DGEFC) and improved local capacity, particularly in combating illegal wildlife trade. We worked to gain support from communities surrounding the WAP complex affected by the IWT and helped secure livelihoods, demonstrating the benefits of proximity to the WAP through awareness-raising and education campaigns. The project responded to specific requests from Beninese authorities for assistance in strengthening the capacity of law enforcement officers and improving the efficiency of the justice system and will continue to lay the foundations on which future interventions can build.



Map: Project location

2. Project stakeholders/ partners

The project is being implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Living Environment and Transport in charge of Sustainable Development of Benin (through the General Directorate of Water, Forests and Hunting - DGEFC), the City of London Police Scientific Service, Kings Forensics, Kings College London (KCL), and the local NGO Initiative for the Preservation of Life (IPV NGO).

All project activities were planned and implemented with the express cooperation of government authorities and directly addressed the specific needs identified by them.

Good relationships with partners were maintained throughout the project, through formal and informal contacts between ZSL Benin staff and at the regional level, as well as through memoranda of understanding and formal agreements. The DGEFC, as Benin's natural resource conservation and anti-wildlife trafficking management authority, provides institutional support for the project's implementation. Along with other Benin government agencies, such as the Republican Police and Customs, they are beneficiaries and responsible for implementing the skills developed by the project.

The City of London Police's Forensic Science Service has long supported ZSL's law enforcement training, working on projects in West Africa, Mongolia, and the Philippines. It provides pro bono training in crime scene investigation and forensic analysis, delivered by its accredited staff. The service will provide ongoing case-specific guidance through an online mentoring group, where real-time advice can be provided to investigators. It will also train local trainers, police, customs, and forestry officers who respond to crime scenes, by providing crime scene management training in accordance with the UK College of Policing standards.

KCL will conduct scientific research to improve the detection and differentiation of legal and illegal meat products in the field, through master's-level research programs in the fields of forensic biochemistry and genetics. Training support, if required, will be provided pro bono to achieve the project objectives.

APN is responsible for the management of several important protected areas in Benin, including the Pendjari and W National Parks. It provides weekly security updates to relevant ZSL staff in Benin, regionally, and in London.

Strong relationships have been established with U.S. embassy staff in Cotonou, including security personnel and USAID and INL country representatives. Unfortunately, there is no UK commission or embassy in either country. The nearest representation is in Lagos, Nigeria, and no official involvement has taken place. However, ZSL Benin national and regional staff based in Cameroon liaise with relevant regional and FCDO staff as needed.

Frequent meetings between key partners and the DGEFC senior management have enabled all stakeholders to review work plans and progress reports.

Implementing partners have provided activity reports, which were used in the preparation of this report.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1. A field-based presumptive (exclusion) test to distinguish legal domestic non-controlled meat products from illegal wild meat products, using covid style lateral flow kits, developed allowing prioritisation of suspected illegal bushmeat for confirmatory testing, while facilitating local people's legal trade.

A technical collaboration between the Forensic Science Branch (City of London Police - CLP) and King's College London (KCL) is being established to develop a covid style lateral flow presumptive test for excluding common legal meat products (which are used in region to conceal illegal meat products) during law enforcement searches.

This laboratory work requires additional funding for its implementation. Implementation of the activities for this outcome will be effective once this funding is secured.

Activity 1.1. Development of presumptive DNA tests for field use to eliminate non controlled meat products from investigation

This work has begun, but is restricted to proof-of-concept laboratory work. The next stage of moving to an operational model we anticipate it taking place on the indicated timeline when funding becomes available.

Activity 1.2. Distribution of presumptive time-based tests to agents working at crime scenes (Police, customs, forestry) in Benin.

This work has not yet begun, but we anticipate it taking place on the indicated timeline when funding is available.

Activity 1.3. Provision of training to law enforcement agents participating in Basic law enforcement training and Law enforcement advanced practitioner training including the use of presumptive test and the use of results in court documents.

This work has commenced with a foundation course in basic law enforcement being conducted. This will allow the next stage of training delivering the use of the presumptive test. We anticipate the next stage taking place on the indicated timeline when funding is available.

Output 2. Expansion of community-based income generation within WAP- border villages linked to awareness raising about the effects of IWT, improvements in community -park relations and shifts towards sustainable livelihoods.

In November 2024, ZSL signed a back-to-back contract with a local NGO established in Benin, the Initiative for the Preservation of Life (IPV-NGO) with the aim of developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people directly affected by IWT: Expansion of community-based Income Generation within Benin WAP-border villages, linked to awareness raising about the effects of IWT, improvements in community-park relations and shifts towards sustainable livelihood.

Activity 2.1. Identification of potential partner communities in WAP prioritizing the communities most affected by IWT and obtaining their willingness to engage with the project as part of free, prior, and informed consent processes.

In December 2024, the consultant responsible for the IPV communities held discussions with the local authorities of the municipalities of Kandi, Banikoara, Malanville, Karimama, Kerou, Tanguiéta and Matéri. During this stage, the consultant received support from local authorities and exploited the collaboration system already in place between IPV-NGOs and certain local partners. These discussions made it possible to present the project and obtain the support of community partners for its implementation. For transparency in the implementation of activities, IPV-ONG wanted to involve not only the municipal authorities, in particular the mayors and village chiefs, but also the municipal sections of Water and Forests department, and the Union of Village Associations for the Management of Wildlife Reserves (U-AVIGREF), which is an association closer to the local populations and which works for the preservation of wildlife, whose role was decisive in identifying the beneficiary groups.

Activity 2.3. Verification of the selection of the 10 target villages through follow-up dialogues by community facilitators with villages previously engaged in sustainable development activities in WAP.

In 2020, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), with support from DEFRA under the IWT Challenge Fund Round 5 project, conducted a socio-economic survey in the municipalities of Banikoara and Kandi to gather information on community attitudes and perceptions, their dependence on the resources of the WAP landscape, and to better understand the socio-economic situation of households.

In December 2024, the IPV-NGO used the data from the 2020 surveys, involving local actors (Water, Forests and Hunting department and U-AVIGREF sections), to select target villages and groups that could benefit from project support. The selection of groups or associations was based on key criteria such as:

- The group's membership in a village close to the WAP-Benin complex.
- The socio-economic situation of the group's members.
- Non-membership of a poaching network or terrorist group (this information was verified with the support of park managers and the Water and Forestry Departments of each municipality).
- Participation of group members in awareness-raising sessions on the issues of protecting and conserving protected species organized by the U-AVIGREF office, the ZSL, or the municipal Water, Forestry, and Hunting departments.

For this first phase, six village groups from the six villages surrounding the W park were selected. Each group is composed of 20 people from 20 households.

The table below shows the names of the villages and the composition of the groups aggregated by sex.

Table 1: List of associations/groups having benefited from AGR support

Name of group	Municipality	Village	Selected IGA	Number of beneficiaries
Su Tii Sua	Banikoara	Nipouni	Machine to grind condiments and cereals	10 Women 10 Men
Imatè Ìbonssè	Malanville	Boïffo	Onion production and marketing	20 Men
Soukatì yinan	Banikoara	Banikoara	Soybean processing into different value chains (cheese, small stone, improved flour)	20 Women
Iri Binsè	Karimama	Birni-Lafia	Production and marketing of onions, peppers and tomatoes	5 Women 10 Men
Zamman Bani	Karimama	Karimama centre	Peanut processing in different value chains	20 Women
Émergence	Kandi	Pèdè	Machine to grind condiments and cereals	10 Women 10 Men
TOTAL				75 Women 45 Men

Activity 2.4. Organization and facilitation of a one-day workshop in each village - to include interviews/open discussions with the communities to agree to participate in the program as part of ongoing FPIC process.

In December 2024, under the facilitation of local partner U-AVRIGREF and the water, forestry, and hunting department, consultation and discussion meetings between IPV-NGOs and the beneficiary communities were organized to encourage participation in the project through a Free, Prior, and Informed Consent process.

These community consultations resulted in the signing of the Reciprocal Environmental Agreement (REA) for the fight against wildlife crime [REDACTED]

Activity 2.5. Implementation of an information, education and communication program (previously developed by ZSL) on poaching, bushmeat and wildlife trafficking in communities and schools around the WAP.

As part of the implementation of ZSL's environmental information, education and communication strategy, ZSL, in collaboration with the General Directorate of Water, Forests and Hunting (DGEFC), and the Cheetah Conservation Initiative (CCI) project, organized awareness campaigns in 4 schools and communities in WAP-Benin during March 2025. The objective of this awareness campaign was to support the popularization of legal and regulatory texts applicable to fauna and flora in the Republic of Benin. Specifically, the aim was to share with the beneficiaries:

- The importance of wildlife conservation,
- The conditions for keeping and transporting wildlife,
- Wildlife species and by-products that are strictly prohibited from transport and the legal penalties for violators,
- Efforts to protect large carnivores,
- The screening of a report on the pilot phase of the "Cheetah or Leopard" educational project carried out in the schools of Thya A, Thya B, Korogoné Igari, and Nipouni.

Emphasis was placed on protected wildlife species, including cheetahs, elephants, and leopards. The proximity of the villages to W National Park as a wildlife refuge was discussed. A public speaking exercise in French and the national language (Mokolé, Fulfulde, Bariba) was organized by the team to allow students to rehearse what they will say to parents to continue raising awareness in the communities. Another question-and-answer exercise was conducted in French and the national languages Mokolé, Bariba and Fulfulde to assess student comprehension.



333 students, 14 parents, 17 teachers and 20 women benefiting from ZSL income-generating activities, benefited from this awareness-raising session ([Annex 4, Photo 4.3](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.4](#) and [Annex 4, Photo 4.5](#)).

To raise student awareness and gain their support for efforts to combat IWT, two schools of Thya village (EPP Thya A and B) in the WAP benefited from a drinking water borehole ([Annex 4, Photo 4.6](#)) and two vegetable gardens ([Annex 4, Photo 4.7a](#) & [Annex 4, Photo 4.7b](#)) and one school of Nipouni village (EPP Nipuni) benefited from a vegetable garden.

This borehole meets the essential need for access to drinking water for schoolchildren and the entire community and supplies the vegetable gardens that supply the school canteens set up by the Beninese government. The vegetable gardens (cabbage, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, okra, amaranth, onions, peppers, etc.) ([Annex 4, Photo 4.8](#)) contribute to supporting local initiatives to preserve natural resources by supplying the school canteens.

Activity 2.6. Consultations on potential incentive schemes, empowerment initiatives, etc. using participatory methods (e.g., livelihood identification workshops and focus groups disaggregated using GESI principles) to short-list income-generating activities and evaluate their feasibility.

On the sidelines of the consultations held in December 2024 with the target communities, focus groups were organized to allow each beneficiary, in a participatory approach, to identify 3 types of income-generating activities benefiting the communities in order of priority and feasibility. For each group/village, a choice was validated ([Table 1](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.9](#)). This selection process was facilitated by using the socio-economic surveys carried out in 2020 by ZSL.

Activity 2.7. Participatory agreements defined, written up and consented to for individuals and village associations registering for livelihood diversification schemes.

To demonstrate their commitment to the project, Reciprocal Environmental Agreements (REA) were signed between ZSL and the beneficiary communities. These agreements aim to establish constructive and respectful collaboration between ZSL and local communities in the fight against illegal wildlife trade in the WAP landscape.

For this first phase, six WAP village associations have signed this agreement.



Activity 2.8. Pilot and/or support income-generating activities identified for each village group (e.g., market gardening, production of shea butter/honey, etc.)

Following the selection of IGAs by the village associations, the distribution phase of processing equipment

and agricultural inputs took place during February and March 2025.

It should be noted that no money was provided to the village associations. Equipment purchases were carried out by IPV-ONG teams with the involving of two members from each group to ensure that the equipment purchased was indeed the one requested by the beneficiaries. ZSL, through its Field Manager, and members of the U-AVIGREF office were also involved in the various purchases to ensure transparency and traceability in the execution of the tasks entrusted to IPV-ONG.

Each of the six groups/associations selected for the first phase received equipment support for the implementation of the selected income-generating activity ([Annex 4, Photo 4.10a](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.10b](#) & [Annex 4, Photo 4.10c](#))



Activity 2.9. Technical support at all stages as part of ongoing livelihood diversification.

A technical support plan has been established between the beneficiary village associations and the IPV.

This plan consists of technical support for the implementation of IGAs for each group, as well as training for association members on bookkeeping and profit sharing. The first technical support mission is scheduled for the first quarter of year 2.

Activity 2.10. Regular monitoring (3 months) to assess livelihood diversification progress (including level of technical knowledge, uptake, maintenance etc).

Regular monitoring to assess progress in implementing IGAs is planned starting in May 2025. This monitoring will consist of assessing the level of technical knowledge, adoption by beneficiaries, and equipment maintenance to ensure sustainability.

Output 3. Improved law enforcement capacity to detect, investigate, and build successful prosecutions for wildlife crime offences.

Activity 3.1. Provision of a Basic Law enforcement training (BLET) to Law Enforcement Agents in Benin (Police, Customs, Water and Forest agents) and

Activity 3.2. Provision of a Law enforcement training advanced practitioner (LEAP) to Law Enforcement Agents in Benin (Police, Customs, Water and Forest agents)

Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) and Advanced Law Enforcement Training (LEAP) were delivered from October 22nd to 25th and from October 28th to 31st, 2024, to members of the police (criminal brigade), forensic science, customs, and the Water and Forestry Service in Cotonou, Benin, for 42 students enrolled in the event ([Annex 4, Photo 4.11a](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.11b](#) & [Annex 4, Photo 4.11c](#)). A four-person team, comprised of investigators, forensic scientists, emergency first aid responders, and members of the ZSL London and local teams, delivered the eight-day training ([Annex 4, Photo 4.12a](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.12b](#) & [Annex 4, Photo 4.12c](#)).

The training covered first aid, human rights, intelligence, search techniques, personal safety, conflict de-escalation, documentation, and crime scene investigation as a first responder.

Group exercises were also used to demonstrate skills. First, participants had to control and manage crime scenes, document actions, properly recover evidence, and finally process forensic evidence (DNA and fingerprints) collected from the scene. The training concluded with a final one-day practical assessment exercise during which students had to manage a multi-victim road accident scenario, followed by the management of six crime scenes where they had to demonstrate the skills they had acquired ([Annex 4, Photo 4.13a](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.13b](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.13c](#)). All students performed admirably.

A pre- and post-training assessment of fifty questions covering the knowledge acquired for each training (BLET and LEAP) revealed significant improvement and a better understanding of the issues. There was an average 58% increase in knowledge across the students.

Promising candidates have been identified for future training of trainers. They will be from the three participating departments.

Connections have been established with the forensic police, which gives us hope for a lasting working relationship. The forensic crime scene investigators have not attended previous environmental training and to date have not been called to crime scenes. The connections made on the course with other agencies is likely to lead to their greater involvement in environmental crimes.

Meetings were held during the training with officials from the Directorate of Water, Forests, and Hunting to identify the next steps for training by 2025 ([Annex 4, Photo 4.14](#)). A training of trainers' program is planned, as well as customized training for each unit. This training should provide access to the curriculum of the schools and agency training programs. The colonels representing each agency were enthusiastic about this initiative.



WAP_Year1BLET&LEAP_TrainingReport,

Activity 3.3. Provision of training to prosecutors and judiciary in the application of forensic techniques in wildlife crime cases, including establishing case review procedures.

This activity will take place during Q1 of project Year 2

Output 4. Changes in the regional bush meat market trade over the course of the project have been analysed and the knowledge used to help assess the impact of the other components of the project and guide further work.

Activity 4.1. Provision of training in covert market survey techniques and identification of IWT products.

In October 2024, an expert consultant specializing in biodiversity conservation and protected area management was hired to conduct wildlife market surveys in Benin. Having already participated in market surveys several times, no specific training was required.

The investigator was then deployed to the field to collect data on the sale of wildlife products in the northern Benin market.

Activity 4.2. Conduct surveys in local markets in Benin to better understand changes affecting and impacting the supply of illegal meat products in communities.

From November to December 2024, a researcher investigator was deployed to Northern Benin to conduct surveys in local markets around the WAP and other target markets to improve understanding of the illegal wildlife trade linked to the WAP complex. The targeted markets were in the departments

of Alibori, Borgou, Donga, and Atacora. The investigator conducted individual, semi-structured interviews with 64 vendors in 15 wildlife markets. The markets investigated were: Parakou (slaughterhouse, depot market, Rose Croix, Geema, Tourou); Djougou (Grand marché/djougou, Somba Yobou, Zongo); Kandi; Natitingou; N'dali, Banikoara, Bétérou Sinagourou, and Tanguéta. The interviewees were all adult male animal carcass vendors, randomly selected without regard to the size of their stalls or their level of education. The objectives of this study were: (i) to identify and inventory the species available in Benin's target markets; and (ii) to analyse the results and extract the most targeted species and provide information on the origin of the products.

A total of 37,929 specimens belonging to 34 orders, 91 families, and 211 species were counted in the wildlife markets of northern Benin, including 17 threatened species on the IUCN Red List (including elephants and large carnivores) ([Annex 4, Photo 4.15a](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.15b](#) & [Annex 4, Photo 4.15c](#)) and 33 threatened species on the Benin Red List.



Overall, the sale of wildlife products was observed in all the markets visited.

Activity 4.3. Analysis of information from market survey data to assess trends in the supply of illegal wildlife products in communities. Aligning significant seizure activity, jihadist activity and general security with the data collected.

Preliminary analysis of data from market surveys in northern Benin shows that the WAP remains the main source of supply for wildlife product markets in Benin, although a few rare specimens also come from Nigeria, Togo, and Niger, according to respondents. However, it has been shown that the Bohicon market (Avogbannan) is the main source of Beninese distribution of wildlife products from the WAP. We can hypothesize that the Bohicon market is the hub of the illegal wildlife trade, a supply centre for markets in the south, as evidenced by similar surveys conducted as part of the traditional medicine project.

The clientele is divided between Benin, Togo, Nigeria, and Ghana, and to a lesser extent, Niger. The trade is regional, as evidenced by the countries involved in supplying specimens to the northern markets, but also by the presence of species absent from Benin's natural ecosystems ([Annex 4, Photo 4.16](#)).

From the analysis of the collected data, it was not clear whether a direct link between wildlife trafficking and jihadist activities in the WAP was established. However, we can hypothesize that jihadist activities in the WAP fuel the wildlife trade. This hypothesis could be verified and demonstrated during the next surveys in year 3.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1. A field-based presumptive (exclusion) test to distinguish legal domestic non-controlled meat products from illegal wild meat products, using covid style lateral flow kits, developed allowing prioritisation of suspected illegal bushmeat for confirmatory testing, while facilitating local people's legal trade.

This activities in this output have not yet begun, but we anticipate it taking place on the indicated timeline when funding is available.

Output 2. Expansion of community-based income generation within WAP- border villages linked to awareness raising about the effects of IWT, improvements in community -park relations and shifts towards sustainable livelihoods.

The project's target beneficiaries are 200 households from 10 villages in WAP Benin. In the project year 1, 120 households received IGA support, representing 60% of beneficiaries aggregated by gender (including 62.5% women), which respected the principle of Gender, Equality, and Social Inclusivity (GESI).

All households targeted for participation in the project are living in precarious situations. They are therefore vulnerable to illegal resource activities. Improving their living conditions through participation in the project could help reduce involvement in illegal resource use. A Basic Necessities Survey (BNS) will assess the improvement in the well-being of target households. Regular monitoring of agreements (REA) with associations will help assess the decline in involvement in illegal activities.

In Year 1, two WAP schools benefited from a drinking water borehole, and three schools each benefited from a vegetable garden. This borehole addresses the essential need for access to drinking water for schoolchildren and the entire community ([Annex 4, Video 4.1.mp4](#)), and waters the vegetable gardens that supply the school canteens established by the Beninese government. The vegetable gardens help support local natural resource conservation initiatives by supplying the school canteens. More than 575 students have access to drinking water, in addition to 2,273 people in the beneficiary community, and 749 students will be able to consume vegetables from the vegetable gardens.

A training and awareness campaign on the illegal wildlife trade was conducted in four schools in each of the two villages and among communities in two groups, benefiting 333 students (186 girls), 14 parents, 17 teachers and 20 women benefiting from project support for IGAs).

The awareness campaigns carried out in favour of the communities, which will be accompanied by a mid-term survey to be carried out in year 2, will make it possible to assess the change in perception, the level of knowledge, attitudes and practices compared to the level before the project.

Output 3. Improved law enforcement capacity to detect, investigate, and build successful prosecutions for wildlife crime offences.

Basic and advanced law enforcement training was provided to members of the police, forensic services, customs, and water and forestry services in Cotonou, Benin.

Thirty-two students registered for the event, but it was so successful that the sessions attracted over forty participants (42 students in total).

A pre- and post-assessment of knowledge, consisting of fifty questions, revealed a significant improvement and better understanding of the issues, crime scene management, documentation of actions, and forensic evidence recovery (DNA and fingerprints). Group exercises were also used to develop skills in forensic evidence and first aid. 90% percent of participants performed both tasks perfectly, including evidence processing and first aid administration. Only 10% did not perform well, as is often the case during training sessions.

Promising candidates were identified for future training of trainers. They would come from the three departments present. Connections were established with the services present (technical and scientific police, customs, and forestry), which allowed us to build a lasting working relationship and an exchange of information that could help assess the practical application of the acquired skills.

Meetings held with the authorities helped identify the next steps in the training for 2025. A train-the-trainer program is planned, as well as customized training for each unit. This training should provide access to the schools' curriculum and agency training programs.

Output 4. Changes in the regional bush meat market trade over the course of the project have been analysed and the knowledge used to help assess the impact of the other components of the project and guide further work.

15 wildlife markets in towns near the WAP landscape were surveyed during project Year 1. Survey data identified 211 wildlife species sold in local markets, including 17 and 33 species protected on the IUCN Red List and the Benin Red List respectively. Also, 40 species fully protected by Beninese legislation are openly sold in these markets. These markets source their products both from Benin (largely) and from countries in the West African region, with their diverse clientele including Nigeria and Togo as the two most represented countries. The trade in specimens is very profitable for sellers in local traditional medicine markets, who make profits estimated at between 2 and 10 times the purchase price.

The analysis of the surveys that will be carried out in year 3 in the markets serving and located in the communities that have benefited from project support and awareness-raising actions should demonstrate a decrease in the diversity of species and the scale of available products compared to the markets serving the communities not supported at the end of year 3. This decrease is estimated at 30% of the decline.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

The project built on the progress made by ZSL during the first nine months of Year 1 of the project.

The project laid the foundations to contribute to combating the illegal wildlife trade in the WAP landscape and promoting the well-being of communities living on the periphery of the WAP landscape in Benin.

Specific key results include:

- Support for six local community-based initiatives benefiting 120 households and improving their level of involvement in the fight against poaching and the illegal wildlife trade ([Annex 4, Photo 4.10a](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.10b](#) & [Annex 4, Photo 4.10c](#)).
- Construction of a borehole providing access to drinking water for 575 students and over 2,273 community members ([Annex 4, Photo 4.6](#)).
- Establishment of three vegetable gardens, contributing to the improvement of school meals for over 749 students ([Annex 4, Photo 4.7a](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.7b](#)).
- Awareness campaigns were held in four schools and two village groups, benefiting 333 students, 14 parents, 17 teachers and 20 women benefiting from IGAs, to improve their understanding of efforts to combat the illegal wildlife trade ([Annex 4, Photo 4.3](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.4](#) & [Annex 4, Photo 4.5](#)).
- Training of 42 law enforcement officers (republican police, customs, forestry) to practice their skills in monitoring, protecting, and combating the illegal wildlife trade ([Annex 4, Photo 4.11a](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.11b](#) & [Annex 4, Photo 4.11c](#)).

Outcome: Enhanced effective IWT investigations and law enforcement, combined with strong community awareness raising, leads to an equitable reduction in IWT within the vital WAP landscape.

We can attest that the activities aimed at achieving the stated outcome have been implemented. The results achieved in Year 1 constitute a baseline situation that will allow us to assess specific progress in project Years 2 and 3.

- A rapid BNS survey in Year 3 with the project's beneficiary communities will allow us to assess their standard of living achieved with the project's support.
- An assessment of students' knowledge levels during upcoming awareness campaigns (Year 2) will allow us to assess the level of knowledge acquired through project involvement and the change in attitudes.
- Although accurate reporting on law enforcement activities carried out by law enforcement agents in Benin is rare and we do not have precise baseline data to measure progress, as no data has

been collected previously, we have established, through this project, the basis for good collaboration with the services involved to facilitate ZSL, access to arrest and confiscation data in order to assess progress in judicial cases.

This IWT-funded project has established a solid foundation from which to continue building the capacity and long-term effectiveness of law enforcement agents, which will enhance overall security in the region.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

The assumptions made during the project design were primarily based on consolidating and maintaining the progress made in strengthening law enforcement capacities under grants IWT055 and INL SINLEC18GR2081, while facilitating the introduction of innovative tools.

Ministries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the region (Born Free, IFAW, UNEP, UNODC, INL) will be open to adopting the effective forensic tools that will be developed. This has continued to be the case even though many organizations are struggling to secure funding to implement their programs following the suspension of U.S. government funding.

The Beninese government's continued commitment and efforts to combat an ongoing insurgency have remained robust, enabling the implementation of community-based projects and law enforcement training in secure locations. The Government of Benin continued to support ZSL in implementing training activities for law enforcement agents and magistrates, implementing local initiatives for disadvantaged households, and conducting awareness campaigns in schools and communities.

Partners in the region, primarily the APN, remain committed to securing and managing the WAP landscape. Despite the challenging operational context resulting from the deteriorating security situation, the APN continues to manage several protected areas in the WAP landscape, including the W Benin and Pendjari National Parks, as planned during the project design.

Assumptions regarding the successful development of a field presumption kit, deliverable in a cost-effective manner, using a Covid-type testing methodology (lateral flow) during the project duration (starting in year 2), cannot be verified given the lack of additional funding from other sources. However, this assumption remains valid given the use of these techniques in recent high-profile investigations into counterfeit buffalo mozzarella and the sale of horse meat as beef in the UK but cannot be confirmed.

3.5 Impact achievement of positive impact on illegal wildlife trade and multidimensional poverty reduction: W-Arly-Pendjari complex is secured for people and wildlife, with effective law enforcement supported by communities, reduced poverty, and increasing populations of species targeted for IWT.

Any assessment of the long-term impact of the project and efforts to strengthen measures to combat the illegal wildlife trade in the WAP landscape must be placed in the context in which all actors operate. The WAP countries are extremely poor and face extreme and ongoing dangers related to insecurity on multiple fronts, including criminal gangs that profit from and contribute to this instability, and terrorist groups affiliated with the Islamic State engaged in an active insurgency.

In project Year 1, ZSL and Benin government partners continue to make concerted and effective efforts to raise the profile of the IWT. IWT-related work is seen as an important means of strengthening the overall security situation. Law enforcement agents such as foresters, police, and customs are often in front-line at land borders and play an important role in maintaining order, supported by the military and other law enforcement agencies. This is recognized by the Benin government authorities.

The activities carried out under this project, aimed at supporting local communities and strengthening the law enforcement agencies capacities to combat illegal activities, may make a modest but valuable

contribution to the region's long-term objectives. However, they cannot be expected to have a direct and measurable impact on the socioeconomic status of communities or wildlife populations. Even without the additional constraints of the security situation, this is difficult to demonstrate. However, we remain optimistic that the cumulative effect of this project and other past activities point the way to maintaining and strengthening this impact over the decade.

4. Thematic focus

Our project initially focused on 1. strengthening law enforcement, aiming to build the capacity of law enforcement to combat the illegal wildlife trade through training and improved coordination; and 2. developing sustainable livelihoods for those directly affected by the illegal wildlife trade by creating alternative and sustainable sources of income for communities involved in or affected by the illegal wildlife trade, thereby reducing their dependence on these activities, and improving communities' knowledge of the challenges of combating IWT.

The implementation of the project in Project Year 1 contributes to achieving the objectives of these themes. The significant achievements of this project during the year include:

- a. Supporting six local community initiatives benefiting 120 households and increasing their involvement in the fight against poaching and the illegal wildlife trade.
- b. The construction of a borehole providing access to drinking water for 575 students and over 2,273 community members.
- c. Creation of three vegetable gardens, contributing to the improvement of school meals for over 749 students.
- d. Awareness campaigns were conducted in two schools and two village groups, benefiting 333 students, 14 parents, 17 teachers, and 20 women benefiting from project support, to better understand measures to combat the illegal wildlife trade.
- e. Training of 42 law enforcement officers (republican police, customs, forestry) to enable them to put into practice their skills in monitoring, protecting, and combating the illegal wildlife trade.
- f. Conduct of surveys in local markets in Benin to better understand the changes affecting and impacting the supply of illegal meat products in communities.

The results obtained during the first year of the project constitute a baseline situation that will allow us to assess specific progress made, particularly regarding:

- a. An increase in the number of wildlife crime investigations compared to baseline levels.
- b. A decrease in the presence of wildlife products in the markets studied around the wildlife intervention zone in Benin.
- c. Increased support from community members in target villages within the wildlife intervention zone in Benin for efforts to combat illegal wildlife trafficking.
- d. An improvement in the standard of living (community well-being) of the populations involved in the project.
- e. A reduction in the levels of illegal resource use by communities participating in IGAs.

5. Impact on species in focus

The project focused on four species included on the IUCN Red List: the African elephant, the West African lion, the Northwest African cheetah, and the leopard.

The exploitation and illegal trade in these species constitute the main threat to their survival in the region. With project support, effective measures are being put in place to help local stakeholders address the main threats: 1. Improving law enforcement capacity to effectively detect, investigate, and prosecute wildlife crimes, which will increase deterrence and improve arrest and prosecution rates for wildlife crimes from current low levels; and 2. the expansion of community-based income-generating activities in Benin WAP

villages, linked to raising awareness of the effects of IWT, improving community-park relations, and moving toward sustainable livelihoods.

We hope that these changes can contribute to a reduction in poaching of target species throughout the project and will lead to long-term changes that will further reduce the impact of the illegal wildlife trade.

The last large mammal inventories in WAP were conducted in 2021, and surveys of WAP wildlife markets were conducted in 2024 (as baseline). Future inventories will provide a clearer picture of whether populations of focal species have stabilized or are increasing, and whether the occurrence of target species in wildlife markets has declined because of the project's efforts.

6. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

With financial support from DEFRA's IWT Challenge Fund, ZSL is supporting communities in 10 villages living in periphery of W National Park and Pendjari National Park in Benin, including those in the municipalities of Kandi, Banikoara, Malanville, Karimama, Matéri, Tanguiéta, and Kèrou, in implementing community-based income-generating initiatives (IGIs) aimed at reducing poverty and reducing dependence on WAP's natural resources. Community activities were selected using a participatory approach with project support (see Output 2).

IGIs support will benefit 200 households, of which 120 were reached in year 1. Support for the 80 households will continue in year 2.

A BNS survey will be conducted in year 3 among beneficiary communities to assess the project's impact on the well-being of target households.

7. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	x
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

All project activities, primarily community support activities, took GESI into account. ZSL ensured appropriate methodologies were used to collect information that reflected the diversity of the community, including organizing focus groups composed of women for education, awareness-raising, and communication campaigns on wildlife and environmental protection, ensuring equitable sharing of men's knowledge. ZSL also considered the gender dimension of women's empowerment by supporting income-

generating activities in the peripheral villages of WAP Benin. Of the 120 people in village associations benefiting from IGAs in year 1, 75 are women.

In all training courses for law enforcement officers in Benin, efforts are made to promote gender balance among participants, although it should be noted that women constitute a small minority within these agencies. Significant efforts have also been made to discourage any distinction between the expectations of male and female participants; for example, in practical exercises on first aid or during question-and-answer games, speaking time is given equal opportunity. The active participation of women in all activities has been encouraged.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensure that the project is on track to achieve its objectives and contribute to its impact. ZSL uses several internal monitoring and evaluation tools to track and adapt the project as needed.

During the project implementation, weekly meetings are held between the ZSL country team and the WAP program manager, and between the WAP program manager, the Regional Director, and the Project Director at ZSL headquarters in London, to discuss progress towards monthly milestones. The achievement of these milestones is tracked through the project's work plan and logical framework, and monthly reports are submitted, including activity, indicator, and financial tracking.

External monitoring and evaluation will be conducted by project partners through the collection of their own institutional performance data and national statistics. ZSL staff maintain regular contact with official project partners and facilitate meetings and other collaborative activities at the request of partners. The DEFRA IWTBCF semi-annual and annual reports constitute an important monitoring and evaluation benchmarking process.

9. Lessons learnt

The IWT BCF project's intervention helped strengthen the existing partnership framework with law enforcement services and agencies in Benin (customs, border police, and magistrates) through capacity-building activities. The project also enabled ZSL to maintain good relationships with existing partners involved in implementing project activities (DGEFC), which was useful in revitalizing the Memorandum of Understanding. Law enforcement officials committed to regularly sharing information with the ZSL field manager via the WhatsApp messaging group on the successful completion of wildlife crime control operations.

The project's intervention helped strengthen ZSL's presence among WAP communities affected by the insecurity situation and the effects of IWT, thus improving their perception of conservation, thanks to the benefits they will derive from the creation of IGAs.

The project was designed to meet the specific needs expressed by Benin's government law enforcement agencies, which were extremely responsive and receptive to the project, thus strengthening an already excellent relationship between the government and conservation NGO partners.

The engagement of law enforcement in training and capacity building is a very positive outcome of the project, and we expect this area to be strengthened during future training of trainers and exchange visits to be organized in each agency. This would involve providing advanced law enforcement techniques specific to each unit, building on the training provided to date. The training team now knows the personnel and can assess candidates' suitability for advanced training in the mentoring program. Similarly, the Government of Benin, through the DGEFC, has expressed its commitment to increasing the effectiveness of monitoring seized illegal wildlife trade products and raising awareness among the public.

Future efforts should also include training and support to improve the standards of care and treatment of seized live animals, and to include the use of detector dogs in IWT control efforts.

These activities are a logical next step, given the successful relationship established between ZSL and government LA agencies and respond to the needs expressed by them. Future grant proposals should focus on these activities, where active participation is possible and likely to be fruitful.

The deteriorating security situation continues to make it difficult to access a part of the population living around the WAP, who are in dire need of project support, and to strengthen human intelligence sources due to travel risks and the background checks required for the effective and safe implementation of these activities. This situation could make it difficult to measure some outcome indicators. The situation has not improved by the end of Year 1 of the project, and it is unlikely that ZSL staff will be able to travel to remote project areas soon.

However, given the progress made in project implementation in Year 1, we do not intend to submit a change request to the implementation plan for the project Year 2.

10. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

NA

11. Risk Management

During the project design, the team identified six categories of risks that could arise during project implementation, namely:

- Fiduciary (financial)
- Safeguarding
- Delivery chain:
- Regional security
- Strategic impact delivery
- People

The project team assesses the evolution of these risks during monthly meetings and proposes adaptation measures. Since the project began, no new risks have been identified. The last update of the risk register was completed in March 2025 (see attached risk register).

12. Scalability and durability

ZSL participated in and organized large-scale events to promote the project before and since its launch, including:

From March 12 to 15, 2024, ZSL Benin participated in a workshop organized by the Cheetah Conservation Initiative on the revision of the regional conservation strategy for cheetahs and wild dogs in North, West, and Central Africa. This important workshop, which brought together several WAP stakeholders, technical and financial partners, as well as communities, provided the ZSL team with an opportunity to present the IWT CF project to stakeholders.

From October 15 to 16, 2024, during another workshop organized by the Cheetah Conservation Initiative on the development of the national action plan for the conservation of cheetahs and wild dogs in the Republic of Benin, the IWT CF project activities were presented to WAP stakeholders and integrated into the five-year action plan.

The project's work plan, objectives, and milestones were also presented by the ZSL WAP Landscape Manager to the Directors and Forestry Inspectors of the General Directorate of Water, Forests, and Hunting of Benin during the Committee of Directors (CODI) meeting held on November 25, 2024 ([Annex 4, Photo 4.17](#)). This important meeting provided an opportunity for the project to be adopted by ZSL's main partner in Benin. This project addresses the capacity building needs of Benin's law enforcement officers. This testimony from the Director General of Water and Forests, given during the project launch speech, demonstrates the importance attached to this project by the key stakeholders ([Annex 4, Photo 4.18](#)). This is especially true since the project enables Benin to achieve Targets 3 (conservation of protected areas) and 20 (capacity building, technology transfer, and scientific and technological cooperation) of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Through awareness-raising and educational activities, it is anticipated that this project will influence the evolution of social norms, resulting in increased participation of the WAP community in efforts to combat IWT in Benin and a reduction in their involvement in illegal activities.

In the coming year, we will include a training of trainers for law enforcement officers from various government agencies in Benin to ensure that skills are transferred after the project ends. This exit plan also includes training local stakeholders in community initiative development and environmental education.

Progress achieved through this project will be demonstrated by:

- An increase in the number of wildlife crime investigations compared to baseline levels.

- A decrease in the presence of wildlife products in the markets studied around the wildlife intervention zone in Benin. - Increased support from communities in targeted villages within the wildlife intervention zone in Benin for efforts to combat illegal wildlife trafficking.
- Improved living standards (community well-being) for populations involved in the project.
- Reduced illegal resource use by communities participating in IGAs.

ZSL, as part of its WAP conservation program, has developed an Information, Education, and Communication strategy on WAP conservation issues. As part of this approach, ZSL is developing additional measures, including the formation of partnerships with local organizations such as IPV, Nature Tropicale, and U-AVRIGREF, which could ensure the continuity of environmental education and conservation efforts in WAP.

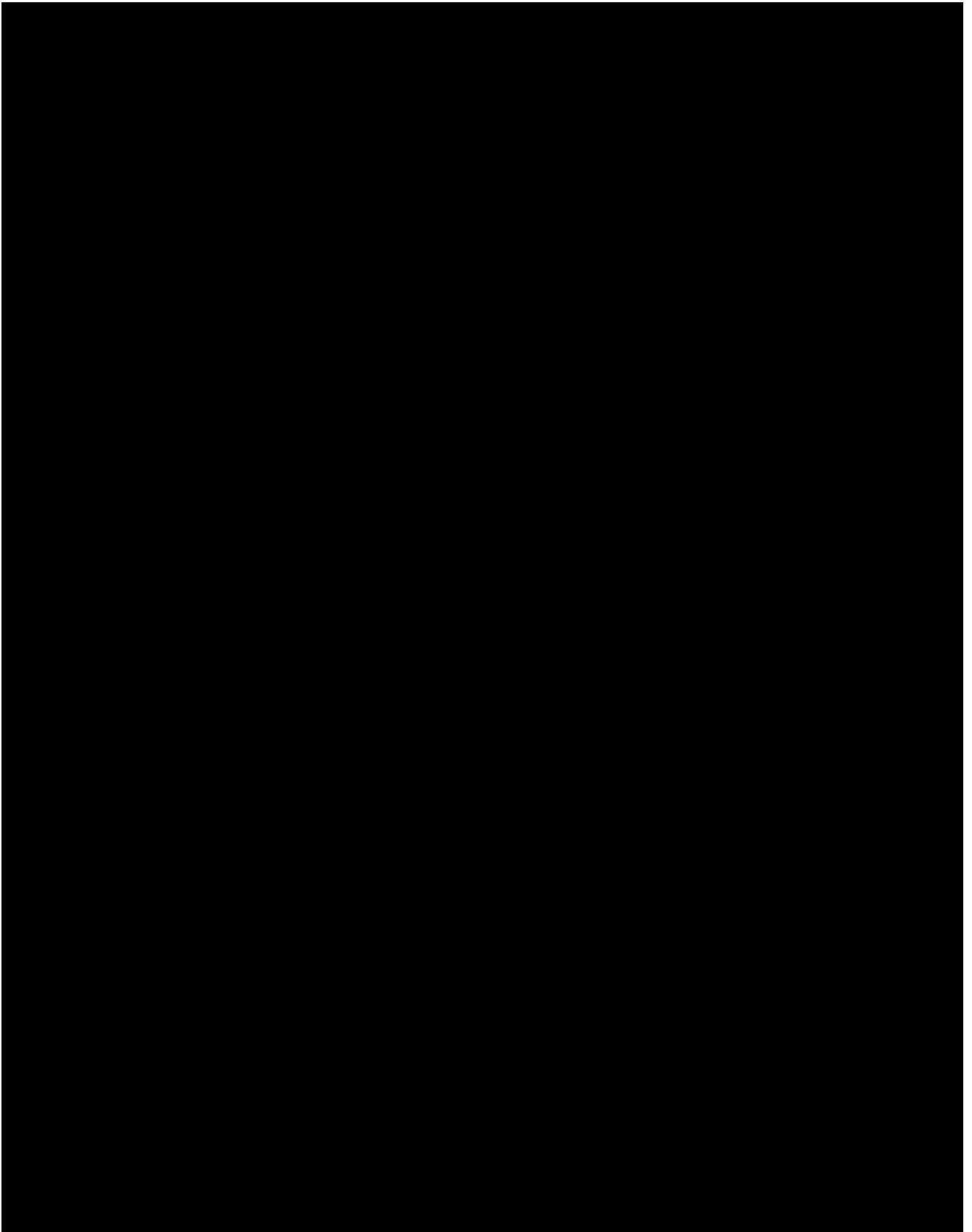
13. IWT Challenge Fund identity

The UK Government and the IWT Challenge Fund were widely acknowledged as funders of this project throughout its activities and in all forms of public outreach. The UK Aid and IWT Challenge Fund logos were incorporated into all project materials, such as training materials, including presentations and handouts for law enforcement, notepads ([Annex 4, Photo 4.19a](#), [Annex 4, Photo 4.19b](#) & [Annex 4, Photo 4.19c](#)), discussions and interventions at various meetings, and on community support signs ([Annex 4, Photo 4.20](#)). Notable publications for which the project funder is recognized include: The ZSL Benin team organized an official handover ceremony for the drinking water borehole for WAP schools, during which the students expressed their gratitude to the UK Government through the school principal ([Annex 4, Video 4.1.mp4](#)).

ZSL Benin also actively participated in meetings organized by various organizations to discuss IWT-related topics, including the review of the workshop for the development of the National Action Plan for the Conservation of Cheetahs and African Wild Dogs in the Republic of Benin, providing an ideal opportunity to promote our project donor and the IWT CF funding stream.

Further publications related to this project are planned for Year 2.

14. Safeguarding



15. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (April 2024-March 2025)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2024/25 Grant (£)	2024/25 Total actual IWT Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	£180,720.15	£180,720.14	0	

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			ZSL City of London Police Cheetah Conservation Initiative
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			

16. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

17. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2024-2025

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact W-Arly-Pendjari complex is secured for people and wildlife, with effective law enforcement supported by communities, reduced poverty, and increasing populations of species targeted for IWT.	(Report on any contribution towards positive impact on illegal wildlife trade or positive changes in the conditions of human communities impacted by illegal trade e.g. steps towards alternative and sustainable livelihoods)	
Outcome Enhanced effective IWT investigations and law enforcement, combined with strong community awareness raising, leads to an equitable reduction in IWT within the vital WAP landscape.		
Outcome indicator 0.1: The number of wildlife crime cases investigated increase relative to baseline levels (established over first 6-month period) in Benin Increase by at least 20% by end of year 2.5	To be assessed from Year 2.5	A training workshop with prosecutors and magistrates on the application of forensic techniques in wildlife crime cases, including the establishment of case review procedures, is planned for Q2-Year 2. This training will establish collaboration with the judicial system and a baseline on the number of wildlife crime cases investigated. A quarterly evaluation will assess the increase compared to baseline levels (to be established in Q2-Year 2) in Benin.
Outcome indicator 0.2: Increased number of wildlife crime cases brought to court, with a projected 30% increase by the end of the project (end of Y2.5) compared to baseline levels (2022 assessment)	To be assessed from Year 2.5	
Outcome indicator 0.3: Decrease in the occurrence of wildlife products in the markets surveyed around WAP in Benin from trained	To be assessed from Year 3	A second survey will be conducted during in project Year 3 to assess the decrease in the occurrence of wildlife products in

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected decrease of 20% by the end of the project period (end of Y3). 		the market surveyed around WAP Benin/
Outcome indicator 0.4: Community members in Benin WAP target villages provide increased support to efforts to address IWT (baseline established by end of month 12) with at least a 50% increase in documented incidents of support by the end of year 2.5	0.4. 6 agreements (REAs) have been signed with six WAP village associations, beneficiaries of the IGAs, to support efforts to combat illegal fish trafficking. An evaluation of their contribution will be conducted quarterly starting in Q2-Year 2.	An information exchange mechanism on the IWT has been set up involving local partners: DGEFC, ZSL, U-AVRIGREF and IPV.
Output 1 : A field-based presumptive (exclusion) test to distinguish legal domestic non-controlled meat products from illegal wild meat products, using covid style lateral flow kits, developed allowing prioritisation of suspected illegal bushmeat for confirmatory testing, while facilitating local people's legal trade.		
Output indicator 1.1 A minimum of 100 presumptive field-based tests developed and distributed to crime scene first responders by end of project period. With initial delivery at end of year 2		
Output indicator 1.2: 100 rangers attending Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET), or Law Enforcement Advanced Practitioner (LEAP) courses will be trained in the use of the presumptive test and use of the results in court documents by project end.		(Highlight key actions relevant to this indicator planned for next period)
Output indicator 1.3 A minimum of 25% trained wildlife crime scene first responders will utilize the presumptive test during a suspected bushmeat intervention by the end of the project period.		
Output 2. Expansion of community-based income generation within Benin WAP- border villages linked to awareness raising about the effects of IWT, improvements in community -park relations and shifts towards sustainable livelihoods.		
Output indicator 2.1.: a) 200 households in 10 Benin WAP target villages will participate in IGAs resulting with least 70% of improved Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) compared to the level before the project by the end of project period (end of Y2.5)	a) Initial baseline survey was conducted in 2020 among WAP communities to assess the socioeconomic situation of households, their knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding the effects of IWT, as well as the adoption of IGAs. In Year 1 of this project, 120 people (75 women and 45 men) representing 120 households from the six WAP villages received project support for the implementation of IGAs. See Section 3.2 of this report and technical report	In Q1-Y2, 80 households will be supported in IGAs. Y2 Regular monitoring (3 months) to assess progress in livelihood diversification (including level of technical

b) Levels of illegal resource use are reduced compared to baseline levels through conditionality agreements that specify to participate in IGAs communities will refrain from illegal wildlife activities	b) NA	knowledge, adoption, maintenance, etc.).
Output indicator 2.2. At least 5 schools with 1 vegetable garden in each developed by the project, with the gardens providing at least 25% of the school canteens' needs by the end of Y2.5	Two schools in the village of Thia ((EPP Thia A and B) in the WAP have benefited from a drinking water borehole and two vegetable gardens and a school in the village of Nimpouni (EPP Nimpouni) has benefited from a vegetable garden. These vegetable gardens (cabbage, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, okra, amaranth, onions, peppers, etc.) contribute to more than 30% of the needs of school canteens and benefit more than 749. Section 3.1	Q2-Y2: Installation of a water borehole for the benefit of two schools in Atabenou village (EPP Korogone Igari A and B) Q3-Y2: Implementation of two vegetable gardens for the benefit of two schools in Atabenou village (EPP EPP Korogone Igari A and B)
Output indicator 2.3: At least 2 training and IWT awareness campaigns were conducted in 2 schools in each of 10 villages by the end of Y2.5	Four schools from two WAP villages - Kandi (Thya A, Thya B) and Banikoara (EPP Korogoné igari and EPP Nipouni) benefited from an awareness and training session on the issues of IWT. Section 3.1 of this report	Q3-Y2 Awareness raising in 4 WAP villages.
Output 3. Improved law enforcement capacity to detect, investigate, and build successful prosecutions for wildlife crime offences.		
Output indicator 3.1: 36 law enforcement agents trained to Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) standard in Benin in Year 1 and 2. All delegates on completing training, join the established and successful WhatsApp supported mentoring network	42 law enforcement agents (forestry, customs, and police) were trained in the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) in Benin in the first year. All participants were integrated into the existing WhatsApp group. Section 3.1	
Output indicator 3.2. 36 law enforcement agents trained to Law Enforcement Advanced Practitioner (LEAP) level in each country, Benin and Niger, in Year 1 and 2	42 law enforcement agents ((forestry, customs, and police) were trained at the Law Enforcement Advanced Practitioner (LEAP) level in Benin. Section 3.1	Specific training for each unit is planned as part of mentoring from year 2.
Output indicator 3.3. 100% of trainees have at least 70% knowledge of scenes of crime first responder role including DNA and finger-mark forensic investigation techniques after 18 months of the project and reach 90% knowledge after 24 months of the project. Assessed through pre and post event tests and practical assessments	Practical assessment of candidates and pre- and post-training tests showed that 90% of participants acquired 80% of the knowledge. Section 3.1	The best from each department were selected to participate in a trainer training course scheduled for Q2-Y2

Output indicator 3.4. 100% of attending delegates from the judges and magistrate's cohort have retained 80% knowledge on the use of forensic evidence and new techniques deployed in the region to rule upon wildlife crimes, post-delivery of the training in year 2, evidenced through course feedback questionnaires and assessments		
Output indicator 3. 5. Baseline established year 1, with a 25% increase in the number of criminal case files using forensic evidence to support the prosecution's case in the first 12 to 18 months of the project, 35% by the completion of the project period (end of Y2.5)		
Output 4: Changes in the regional bush meat market trade over the course of the project have been analyzed and the knowledge used to help assess the impact of the other components of the project and guide further work.		
<p>Output indicator 4.1. At least 15 markets in Benin selling wildlife products surveyed twice over the project period. (Y1 and Y2.5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The occurrence of wildlife products, including species present and the scale of trade, identified for each market surveyed and published at the end of year 1 and year 2.5. in a threat assessment report covering the region's bush meat trade. Markets serving and located in communities that have benefited from project support and awareness raising outreach work show a fall of at least 30% in both range of species and the scale of products available in comparison to markets serving unsupported communities by completion of Year 2.5.(Also see Outcome Indicator 0.3.) 	<p>A survey was conducted in 15 wildlife markets in Benin during project Year 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37,929 specimens belonging 211 species were recorded in the 15 wildlife markets in northern Benin (see technical report), including 17 threatened species on the IUCN Red List (including elephants and large carnivores) and 33 threatened species on the Benin Red List. In addition, 40 species fully protected by Beninese legislation are openly sold in these markets. Section 3.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis report will be published after validation and with the approval of the Beninese Water, Forestry, and Hunting Directorate. A second survey will be conducted during project Yr3 to assess the decline in species diversity and product availability in the markets serving and located in the communities that benefited from project support and awareness-raising activities.

Annex 2: Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: (Max 30 words) W-Arly-Pendjari complex is secured for people and wildlife, with effective law enforcement supported by communities, reduced poverty, and increasing populations of species targeted for IWT.			
Outcome: (Max 30 words) Enhanced effective IWT investigations and law enforcement, combined with strong community awareness raising, leads to an equitable reduction in IWT within the vital WAP landscape.	0.1. The number of wildlife crime cases investigated increase relative to baseline levels (established over first 6-month period) in Benin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase by at least 20% by end of year 2.5; 	0.1 Court Wildlife crime offence records.	Previous progress to strengthen enforcement capacity under IWT055 and INL SINLEC18GR2081 grants will be maintained and will facilitate the introduction of these innovative tools for enforcement.
	0.2. Increased number of wildlife crime cases brought to court, with a projected 30% increase by the end of the project (end of Y2.5) compared to baseline levels (2022 assessment)	0.2 Judicial court records.	Government Departments, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) working in the region (USFWS, Born Free, IFAW, UNEP UNoDC, INL) will be open to the adoption of the effective forensic tools that are developed.
	0.3. Decrease in the occurrence of wildlife products in the markets surveyed around WAP in Benin from trained	0.3.a Wildlife market survey reports from trained investigators. With a weekly review on external factors (security, insurgent activity, significant seizures, or other factors disrupting illegal supply chains) that	Strengthening enforcement in the landscape will not simply displace activity because i) the package of
	0.4. investigators		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected decrease of 20% by the end of the project period (end of Y3). <p>0.4 Community members in Benin WAP target villages provide increased support to efforts to address IWT (baseline established by end of month 12) with at least a 50% increase in documented incidents of support by the end of year 2.5.</p>	<p>may impact on the formal survey results.</p> <p>0.3.b Database (TRAFFIC model) on illicit wildlife products established to support analyses and to track trends in the survey results.</p> <p>0.4 Records of community information, supporting the disruption of the Illegal wildlife trade – all info retained in compliance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and professional intelligence handling protocols.</p>	<p>tools are designed to be replicable in the medium term and ii) the disruption and investigation will make the organized crime groups more vulnerable.</p> <p>International and domestic government efforts to combat an ongoing insurgency will remain robust, allowing community projects and law enforcement training to be delivered in secure locations.</p> <p>Partners in the region, principally APN and WAC, remain committed to partnership working, securing, and managing the WAP landscape.</p>
<p>Outputs:</p> <p>1. A field-based presumptive (exclusion) test to distinguish legal domestic non-controlled meat products from illegal wild meat products, using covid style lateral flow kits, developed allowing prioritisation of suspected illegal bushmeat for confirmatory testing, while facilitating local people's legal trade.</p>	<p>1.1 1 A minimum of 100 presumptive field-based tests developed and distributed to crime scene first responders by end of project period. With initial delivery at end of year 2.</p> <p>1.2 100 rangers attending Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET), or Law Enforcement Advanced Practitioner (LEAP) courses will be trained in the</p>	<p>1.1. Production and distribution (with receipts) of presumptive field-based tests.</p> <p>1.2.a Course feedback questionnaires.</p>	<p>Project assumes successful development of a field presumptive kit, that can be delivered in a cost-effective manner, using covid style (lateral flow) testing methodology within the project period. This assumption is judged valid given use of such techniques in recent high-profile investigations involving counterfeit buffalo mozzarella and</p>

	<p>use of the presumptive test and use of the results in court documents by project end.</p> <p>1.3 A minimum of 25% trained wildlife crime scene first responders will utilize the presumptive test during a suspected bushmeat intervention by the end of the project period.</p>	<p>1.2.b End of project period questionnaires to gather feedback on responders' experiences of using the tests.</p> <p>1.3.a Government wildlife crime offence records.</p> <p>1.3.b Report on field test usage, including numbers and types of products identified or eliminated from enquiries</p>	<p>selling of horse meat as beef in the UK.</p> <p>Target countries have existing infrastructure or agreements in place for the analysis of finger marks and human DNA evidence.</p> <p>All trained wildlife crime scene first responders will be involved in a suspected bushmeat stop.</p>
<p>2. Expansion of community-based income generation within Benin WAP- border villages linked to awareness raising about the effects of IWT, improvements in community -park relations and shifts towards sustainable livelihoods.</p>	<p>2.1.a) 200 households in 10 Benin WAP target villages will participate in IGAs resulting with least 70% of improved Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) compared to the level before the project by the end of project period (end of Y2.5). Participatory workshops to identify IGAs will follow GESI principles.</p>	<p>2.1a. a) Baseline and Endline Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) surveys with all 200 participating HH. This will include uptake of IGAs, awareness/ knowledge/beliefs of IWT and changes to wellbeing (food security, savings etc). Results will be disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity and wellbeing.</p> <p>2.1a. b) General monitoring of IGAs effectiveness will be done by quarterly reports from field visits.</p>	<p>Access to the communities surrounding Parc W remains possible.</p> <p>Communities remain supportive of the initiatives.</p> <p>Developing IGAs for the communities living around the WAP can help reduce their dependence on the resources of the WAP parks and decrease willingness to purchase illegal products thus contributing to efforts to combat the IWT.</p>

	<p>2.1 b) Levels of illegal resource use are reduced compared to baseline levels through conditionality agreements that specify to participate in IGAs communities will refrain from illegal wildlife activities.</p> <p>2.2 At least 5 schools with 1 vegetable garden in each developed by the project, with the gardens providing at least 25% of the school canteens' needs by the end of Y2.5</p> <p>2.3 At least 2 training and IWT awareness campaigns were conducted in 2 schools in each of 10 villages by the end of Y2.5.</p>	<p>2.1.a. c) Video recording of community beneficiary testimonies.</p> <p>2.1.a. d) GESI disaggregated attendance lists.</p> <p>2.1 b) Bean count method will be used to track engagement in illegal activities as part of baseline and end line surveys.</p> <p>2.2. . Activity reports, pictures, and video recordings.</p> <p>2.3. Training and awareness campaigns reports, pictures, and video recording.</p>	
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<p>3. Improved law enforcement capacity to detect, investigate, and build successful prosecutions for wildlife crime offences.</p>	<p>3.1. 36 law enforcement agents trained to Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) standard in Benin in Year 1 and 2. All delegates on completing training, join the established and successful WhatsApp supported mentoring network.</p> <p>3.2 36 law enforcement agents trained to Law Enforcement Advanced Practitioner (LEAP) level in each country, Benin and Niger, in Year 1 and 2.</p> <p>3.3.100% of trainees have at least 70% knowledge of scenes of crime first responder role including DNA and fingerprint forensic investigation techniques after 18 months of the project and reach 90% knowledge after 24 months of the project. Assessed through pre and post event tests and practical assessments.</p>	<p>3.1. Pre-and-post learning assessments.</p> <p>3.1. Record of engagement across the existing WhatsApp mentoring network. Including questions asked, solutions found and documented and celebrated successes.</p> <p>3.2. Pre and post learning assessments.</p> <p>3.3 Court and local enforcement agency records of successful prosecutions attributed to those units/officers in receipt of training.</p>	<p>Government support for cross-agency training and operational deployment continues in Benin.</p> <p>Venues remain secure and available to deliver the training in line with FCDO guidance</p>
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	<p>3.4 100% of attending delegates from the judges and magistrate's cohort have retained 80% knowledge on the use of forensic evidence and new techniques deployed in the region to rule upon wildlife crimes, post-delivery of the training in year 2, evidenced through course feedback questionnaires and assessments.</p> <p>3. 5. Baseline established year 1, with a 25% increase in the number of criminal case files using forensic evidence to support the prosecution's case in the first 12 to 18 months of the project, 35% by the completion of the project period (end of Y2.5).</p>	<p>3.4.a Feedback regarding crime scene management and retrieval of forensic evidence from prosecution authorities and forensic partners.</p> <p>3.4b Pre and post learning evaluation.</p> <p>3.5 Court wildlife crime offence records.</p>	
4. Changes in the regional bush meat market trade over the course of the project have been analyzed and the knowledge used to help assess the impact of the other	4.1 At least 15 markets in Benin selling wildlife products surveyed twice over the project period. (Y1 and Y2.5)	4.1.a Market survey reports.	Market surveys remain feasible given security concerns

<p>components of the project and guide further work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The occurrence of wildlife products, including species present and the scale of trade, identified for each market surveyed and published at the end of year 1 and year 2.5. in a threat assessment report covering the region's bush meat trade. • Markets serving and located in communities that have benefited from project support and awareness raising outreach work show a fall of at least 30% in both range of species and the scale of products available in comparison to markets serving unsupported communities by completion of Year 2.5. (Also see Outcome Indicator 0.3.) 	<p>4.1.b Data collected during the market surveys are recorded in the TRAFFIC database model, which makes it possible to track changes over time</p>	
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Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for examples 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to

Output 1. Each activity should start on a new line and be no more than approximately 25 words.)

1.1. Development of presumptive DNA tests for field use to eliminate non controlled meat products from investigation

1.2. Distribution of presumptive time-based tests to agents working at crime scenes (Police, customs, forestry) in Benin.

1.3. Provision of training to law enforcement agents participating in Basic law enforcement training and Law enforcement advanced practitioner training including the use of presumptive test and the use of results in court documents.

2.1. . Identification of potential partner communities in WAP Benin prioritizing the communities most affected by IWT and obtaining their willingness to engage with the project as part of free, prior, and informed consent processes.

2.2. Verification of the selection of the 10 target villages through follow-up dialogues by community facilitators with villages previously engaged in sustainable development activities in WAP.

2.3. Organization and facilitation of a one-day workshop in each village - to include interviews/open discussions with the communities to agree to participate in the program as part of ongoing FPIC process.

2.4 Implementation of an information, education and communication program (previously developed by ZSL) on poaching, bushmeat and wildlife trafficking in communities and schools around the WAP Benin.

2.5. Consultations on potential incentive schemes, empowerment initiatives, etc. using participatory methods (e.g., livelihood identification workshops and focus groups disaggregated using GESI principles) to short-list income-generating activities and evaluate their feasibility.

2.6. Participatory agreements defined, written up and consented to for individuals and village associations registering for livelihood diversification schemes.

2.7. Pilot and/or support income-generating activities identified for each village group (e.g., market gardening, production of shea butter/honey, etc.)

2.8. Technical support at all stages as part of ongoing livelihood diversification.

Regular monitoring (3 months) to assess livelihood diversification progress (including level of technical knowledge, uptake, maintenance etc.).

3.1. Provision of a Basic Law enforcement training (BLET) to Law Enforcement Agents in Benin (Police, Customs, Water and Forest agents)

3.2. Provision of a Law enforcement training advanced practitioner (LEAP) to Law Enforcement Agents in Benin (Police, Customs, Water and Forest agents)

3.3. Provision of training to prosecutors and judiciary in the application of forensic techniques in wildlife crime cases, including establishing case review procedures.

4.1. Provision of training in covert market survey techniques and identification of IWT products.

4.2. Conduct surveys in local markets in Benin to better understand changes affecting and impacting the supply of illegal meat products in communities.

4.3. Analysis of information from market survey data to assess trends in the supply of illegal wildlife products in communities. Aligning significant seizure activity, jihadist activity and general security with the data collected.

ANNEX 3 - Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

Please see the Standard Indicator guidance for more information on how to report in this section, including appropriate disaggregation.

IWTCF Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
IWTCF-A01a	Number of people who have benefited from support to develop IGRs	2.1. a	Households	75 Women 45 Men	120			120	200
IWTCF-A01b	Number of people with improved income		Households	Women Men	0			0	200
IWTCF-A04	Number of people reporting a decrease in unsustainable practices as a result of project activities	2.1. b	Number	Women Men	0			0	200
IWTCF-B02	Number of illegal wildlife products/shipments detected		Number of products		0				
IWTCF-B09	Number of people successfully prosecuted for wildlife crimes files using forensic evidence to support the prosecution's case	3.5	Number	Women Men	0			0	
IWTCF-C02	Number of communication channels carrying campaign message	2.3	Number of channels		4			4	10
IWTCF-DO1a	Number of people from eligible countries who have received structured and relevant training: law enforcement agents trained to Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) standard	3.1	Number	Women Men	42			42	72
IWTCF-DO1a	Number of people from eligible countries who have received structured and relevant training: law enforcement agents trained to Law Enforcement Advanced Practitioner (LEAP)	3.2	Number	6 Women 36 Men	42			42	72
IWTCF-D02	Number of people reporting they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training	3.1 & 3.2	Number	Women Men	0				72

IWTCF Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
IWTCF-D03	Number of trainers trained under the project reporting to have delivered further training		Number	Women Men	0				
IWTCF-D012	Number of new or improved approaches and tools developed for addressing IWT; field-based presumptive (exclusion) test to distinguish legal domestic non-controlled meat products from illegal wild meat products, using covid style lateral flow kits	1.1	Number						100

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, scheme, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	Yes
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the subject line.	No
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please consider the best way to submit. One zipped file, or a download option is recommended. We can work with most online options and will be in touch if we have a problem accessing material. If unsure, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the subject line.	Yes
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	Yes
Have you provided an updated risk register? If you have an existing risk register you should provide an updated version alongside your report. If your project was funded prior to this being a requirement, you are encourage to develop a risk register.	Yes
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 17)?	No
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Yes
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Yes
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	