Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2017)

Project reference	23-001
Project title	Strengthening Cameroon's capacity for implementing CITES
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cameroon
Lead organisation	**Zoological Society of London**
Partner(s)	TRAFFIC, Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF), Cameroon, University College London, ExCiteS
Project leader	Paul De Ornellas
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	October 31, 2017 - HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	http://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/africa/dja-conservation-complex

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1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Output 1. Monitoring systems in place and information used to track and characterise the nature of trade and use of species affected by trafficking in Cameroon with focus on pangolins:

TRAFFIC has reviewed the current national CITES protocols and information systems, with the input of the national CITES authorities and are updating the draft database and national documentation on Cameroon's revised responsibilities and reporting protocols to CITES that take into account new, required annual illegal trade reporting (Activity 1.1). They are evaluating ongoing problems with the reporting of legal trade to the CITES Secretariat. Information is being provided on the AFRICA–TWIX programme, which aims at increasing the cooperation between different law enforcement agencies dealing with CITES issues (Activity 1.2). Training on database use will be delivered to the key stakeholder groups in upcoming months (Activity 1.2; 1.3). Data collection by the Secretariat is underway but reports are not yet available (Activity 1.4). Bushmeat market survey data for five major bushmeat markets were analysed, and based on this data, it appears that the three species of pangolin are commonly observed for sale in each location. Most are white-bellied and black-bellied pangolin, although 31 whole giant pangolin and 142 kg (mainly scales) were observed. CITES-protected elephant and gorilla meat were observed. As the period for this first survey was the dry season and corresponds to the low period for hunting, a decision has been taken to repeat the study in 2017 in the same localities during the peak hunting period (October, November), which corresponds to the rainy season, in order to ensure that a more representative picture is obtained (Activity 1.5, 1.6). The survey data will be incorporated into the final database, when available, and reported on (Activity 1.6). Pangolin consumer use data is being collected in the market surveys and will be incorporated into the database and reported on (Activity 1.6). Pangolin trafficking and use patterns will be characterized in an annual report after the database Is populated and the second survey data analysed (Activity 1.6). To date, 8 communities have agreed to participate in the ExiCiteS program with 6 in the southern Dja and 2 in eastern Dja (Activity 1.7, 1-8). Five of these are actively reporting through the ExCiteS software with the other 3 due to commence in October. In this reporting period communities have submitted 293 reports, with 218 photos and 277 audio recording (Activity 1.9). These reports provide direct evidence of wildlife crime, including reports of poacher's camps, killed animals, and weapons. Whilst effective law enforcement response remains a challenge, empowerment (helping to alleviate poverty) of community members to become involved in conservation initiatives is being strengthened (Activity 1.9).

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Output 2. Adaptive management for site-based protection using the SMART approach being implemented in at least two key sites:

ZSL and MINFOF conducted two Dja Biosphere Reserve (DBR) SMART implementation evaluations (Activity 2.1). We carried out an evaluation of patrol deployment effectiveness to respond to intelligence or immediate threats and the results suggested that patrol teams need to be based closer to the Reserve for a quick and targeted response to an identified threat, but also as a deterrent (Activity 2.1). A patrol platform with basic patrol facilities to improve response is now being built along the Dja River in the southern sector of the DBR and will allow the ecoguard teams to carry out more river patrols and be close to the park (not a day trip away at the nearest town of Djoum) for effective anti-poaching response (Activity 2.1). Following the ZSL-DBR SMART evaluation meetings, 12 additional

PDA and 6 powerbanks were sourced and delivered to DBR to ensure teams continue to collect data even during very poor weather conditions. This will ensure each patrol team has 2 PDAs to ensure there are always replacements available (Activity 2.2). During this reporting period, there was an internal redeployment of staff within the DBR which has mean that we have had to deliver additional training to new personnel on SMART to make sure the data collection, cleaning and sharing protocol are respected for effective adaptive patrol management (Activity 2.2). An incentive scheme to motivate patrol effectiveness in the DBR is being trialled. This scheme will be under review and included in the DBR patrol strategy that we plan to develop jointly with the DBR Conservation Service in the DBR during the next quarter (Activity 2.3). For Deng Deng NP, the development and rollout of a successful SMART-based LEM system is being carried out with a first phase reviewing the current LEM situation to support the second phase SMART rollout. An exchange visit to share knowledge and experience was organised between ecoguards of the DBR and DDNP ecoguards focused on SMART patrols (Activity 2.3). A patrol tactical training was delivered in May 2017 by a UK-based expert to strengthen DBR selected rangers capacity in wildlife patrol skills, improve operational field security, and enhance skills in intelligence gathering and arrest operations (Activity 2.3). Patrols continued in the DBR and, after the implementation of the incentive scheme, ecoguards seized 11 firearms, 162 live ammunitions, arrested 15 poachers and extended the park patrol coverage to 87% (patrol coverage is based on the proportion of 5 km^2 grid cells through which a patrol passed at least once) with 177 cells out of 203. For DDNP, a field test and experience sharing mission was conducted by ZSL, DBR Conservation Service, the consultation Firm Brl, and the DDNP Conservation Service at the DDNP Southern Sector in April 2017. The field test involved four ecoguards from DBR and six from DDNP, including the Head of the Protection Unit. Following an initial SMART system configuration and a review of current park patrol coverage status, a gridded approach to ensure full SMART patrol coverage and repeatability was suggested and agreed upon. Another aspect of this exchange visit was for the teams (DBR and DDNP) to be able to do armed patrols to the Southern Sector of the park using map and navigation tools and using SMART configured PDA for data collection following the protocol. A patrol debriefing and PDA Data downloading was also carried out during this mission with both teams (Activity 2.3). Following the initial SMART setup at both manager and field levels in both parks (DBR and DDNP), refresher training and remote support have been ongoing to ensure that all the staff are capable of effectively patrolling according to agreed protocols. ZSL is providing patrol mobilisation funds and ensures patrols are carried out based on the initial agreed plan (targets, areas to cover, number of days, etc.). We have organized two evaluation meetings (April 2017; September 2017) to discuss patrol performance and approaches and to adapt patrol strategy accordingly (Activity 2.3). The five communities actively reporting through the ExCiteS software since late May 2017 have successfully submitted 293 reports, incorporating 218 photos and 277 audio recording (Activities 2.5).

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Output 3. Build capacity of enforcement agents, prosecutors, courthouse staff and customs agents to effectively apply wildlife laws and reporting relating to pangolins and other trafficked species.

ZSL works with and consults MINFOF and other law enforcement agencies in order to create bespoke training input to frontline law enforcement officials, which is subject to pre-training assessment with the relevant agencies or units by ZSL Law Enforcement Advisor. Often, this reveals lack of understanding and knowledge in very basic tenets of law enforcement skills. Thus, any support, guidance or training is adapted and made bespoke to address the needs, especially around essential policing and evidence gathering attributes (Activity 3.1). In May 2017, as part of this commitment, we delivered a tactical patrolling and arrest course for 14 MINFOF agents operating in the Dja, covering essential bushcraft and patrolling skills (Activity 3.2). Additionally, in May, 2017 we provided complementary training to 23 customs agents from Yaounde's counter-smuggling unit at the international airport. The training was conducted in partnership with the Police Nationale and Gendarmerie Nationale and covered essential border law enforcement techniques specifically focusing on the illegal wildlife trade (Activity 3.2). ZSL delivered Basic Law Enforcement Training in October 2017 to 12 frontline MINFOF agents comprising essential policing skills human rights and evidence gathering and maintenance. (Activity 3.2). All training conducted by ZSL requires students to compile feedback (which is stored centrally for perusal) which is then used to modify or update training processes and materials as necessary (Activity 3.3). Already, the capacity to swiftly assess training needs has led to the planning of the training of a further 24 MINFOF staff in the first half of 2018 in Basic Law Enforcement techniques (Activity 3.4). Court cases and processes in Cameroon are beset with incompetence, interminable bureaucracy and overt corruption, which makes ongoing support and follow up extremely difficult. In addition, there is no centralised database of court records or proceedings. In order to mitigate against this, ZSL have streamlined their support process for ongoing prosecutions, enabling much more transparency to be adhered to in a smaller number of select cases, deemed to be of institutional importance. These cases are: 1) a firearms seizure where 2 individuals were arrested and are currently appearing before courts; 2) an intelligence–led operation (initiated by ZSL) where a trafficker dealing in live chimps and pangolin scales was arrested and is currently going through the courts; 3) violence and attempted murder of MINFOF agents, where several individuals have been arrested and are going through the court process relating to shots being fired at MINFOF agents conducting seizures and patrols in the Dja area (Activity 3.5).

2a. 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.
Development of the database: A decision about whether to include a framework to house seizures data within the database is still outstanding. Therefore, the database has not yet been completed as extensive discussions are ongoing between ZSL and TRAFFIC to clarify the best reporting mechanisms to be used for seizures data, and potentially how training in this mechanism could be built into the training courses provided to law enforcement through this project. **Community Engagement:** Corruption and lack of capacity results in inaction on information from ExCiteS from MINFOF or other relevant partners. **Site-based Protection:** There has been massive turnover of staff in the landscape with 49 ecoguards fully trained in SMART and functional transferred out of the Dja and 51 newly appointed ones transferred into the area. This means we will need to retrain people as soon as possible to keep the momentum going. **Law Enforcement:** Corrupt officials often hamper IWT investigations in Cameroon. This leads to officials (including front-line agents/officers) becoming quickly demoralised and disheartened. A somewhat nonchalant and lackadaisical attitude often pervades the agencies of law and order which is difficult to counter. The activities of the CAAT team in Yaoundé, where they were becoming more proactive, became the focus of unwanted attention, and the team were suspended – ostensibly as a result of an alleged theft, although anecdotal information from reliable external law enforcement sources suggest that it was because they were hampering the illegal trafficking activities of well-connected politicians and other individuals. None of these issues will have a conceivable impact on timeline or budget.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?
Discussed with LTS: No
Formal change request submitted: No
Received confirmation of change acceptance   No
3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year? **Yes** ☐ **No** X   Estimated underspend: £
3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year. none
4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?
no

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. Additionally, if you were funded under R23 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate document. Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**