

FACTSHEET

REGIONAL OVERVIEW








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REGIONAL OVERVIEW

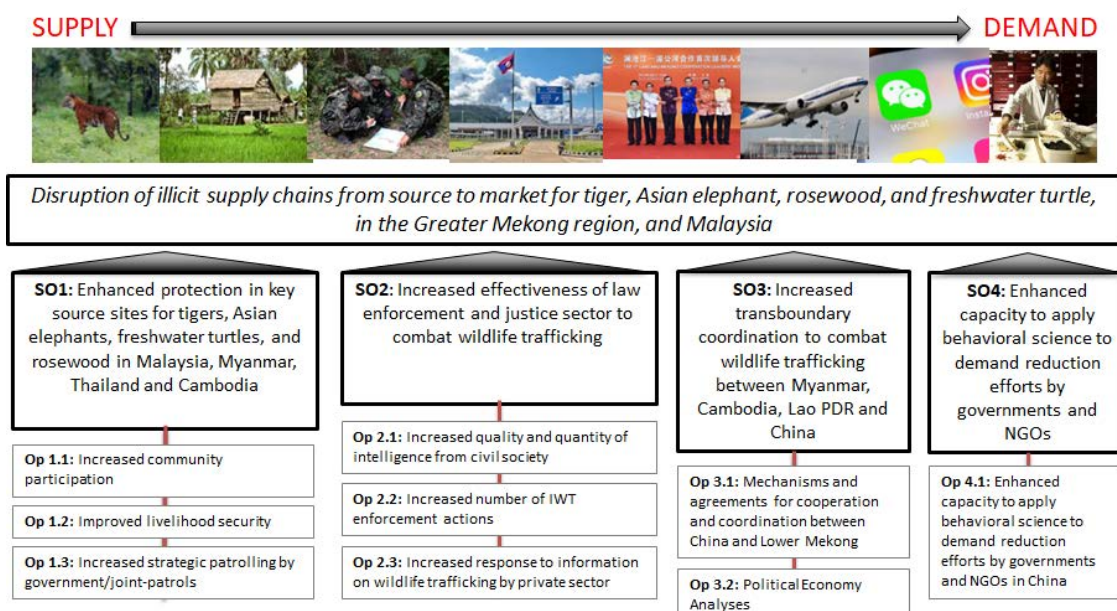
The "Partners Against Wildlife Crime" Project is a 10M€ Action implemented through a consortium of 12 international and national partner organizations. Its goal is to disrupt the illicit supply chains of tiger, Asian elephant, Siamese rosewood and freshwater turtles – from source to market. It represents the European Union (EU)-funded "Support to Civil Society in Combating Wildlife Trafficking and Forest Crime in the Greater Mekong Region, Malaysia and PR China".

Title:	Disrupting illicit supply chains of wildlife in Asia by leveraging civil society partnerships to increase the effectiveness of Government action
Lead:	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with 11 other implementing partners
Location:	Cambodia, PR China, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam
Duration:	4-year project: 1st Jan. 2019 – 31st Dec. 2022
Budget:	10M€, of which 8M€ from the European Union (EU)

Project Overview

The project's overall objective is to disrupt illicit supply chains from source to market for tiger, Asian elephant, Siamese rosewood, and freshwater turtles, in the Greater Mekong region, Malaysia and China by leveraging civil society partnerships to increase the effectiveness of Government action. The project coordinates a set of activities along clearly defined supply chains for high priority Asian taxa being trafficked in the Greater Mekong and Malaysia along trade routes between source sites to end markets. It works with six protected areas identified as high priority for tigers, Siamese rosewood or Asian elephant in Malaysia (Endau Rompin National Park), Thailand (Huai Kha Khaeng, Thung Yai East and Thung Yai West Wildlife Sanctuaries and Thap Lan National Park) and Myanmar (Rakhine-Yoma Elephant Range Protected Area), as well as two priority wetland KBAs for freshwater turtles in Cambodia along the Mekong and Sre Ambel Rivers. It focuses its anti-trafficking interventions in key localities in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao PDR and China. Finally, it seeks to reduce the consumption of these taxa in the main end markets in southern China.

In order to disrupt illicit supply chains trafficking wildlife, interventions are taken along the entire supply chain in a coordinated manner that together contribute to achieve the overall project goal.



REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Project Context

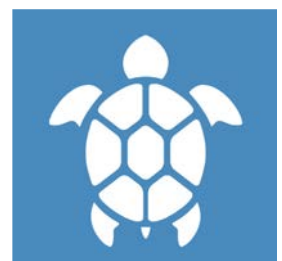
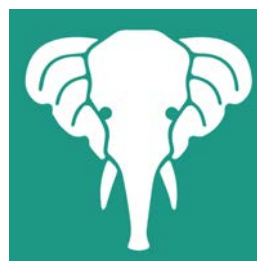
Wildlife trafficking is devastating populations of many species across the globe; the problem is at its most extreme in eastern Asia. A large number of species native to the Mekong region in particular are now threatened primarily by poaching due to an international demand for their specimens, parts and products, particularly from China.

Tiger: We have lost 93% of tiger rangeland across Asia, and over recent years, tigers have become extinct in Vietnam, Lao PDR and Cambodia. The low numbers of wild tigers increase the value of remaining individuals, with wild tigers always considered more “potent” than captive tigers, providing even greater incentives for poachers. Endau Rompin National Park in Malaysia and Huai Kha Khaeng, Thung Yai East and Thung Yai West Wildlife Sanctuaries in western Thailand are among the most important sites for tigers globally, also containing key habitats for other species including Asian elephant, gibbons, wild ungulates and pangolin. Demand for tigers and their products is greatest from Vietnamese and Chinese consumers, with Vietnamese tiger poaching and trafficking syndicates operating as far afield as Thailand and Malaysia.

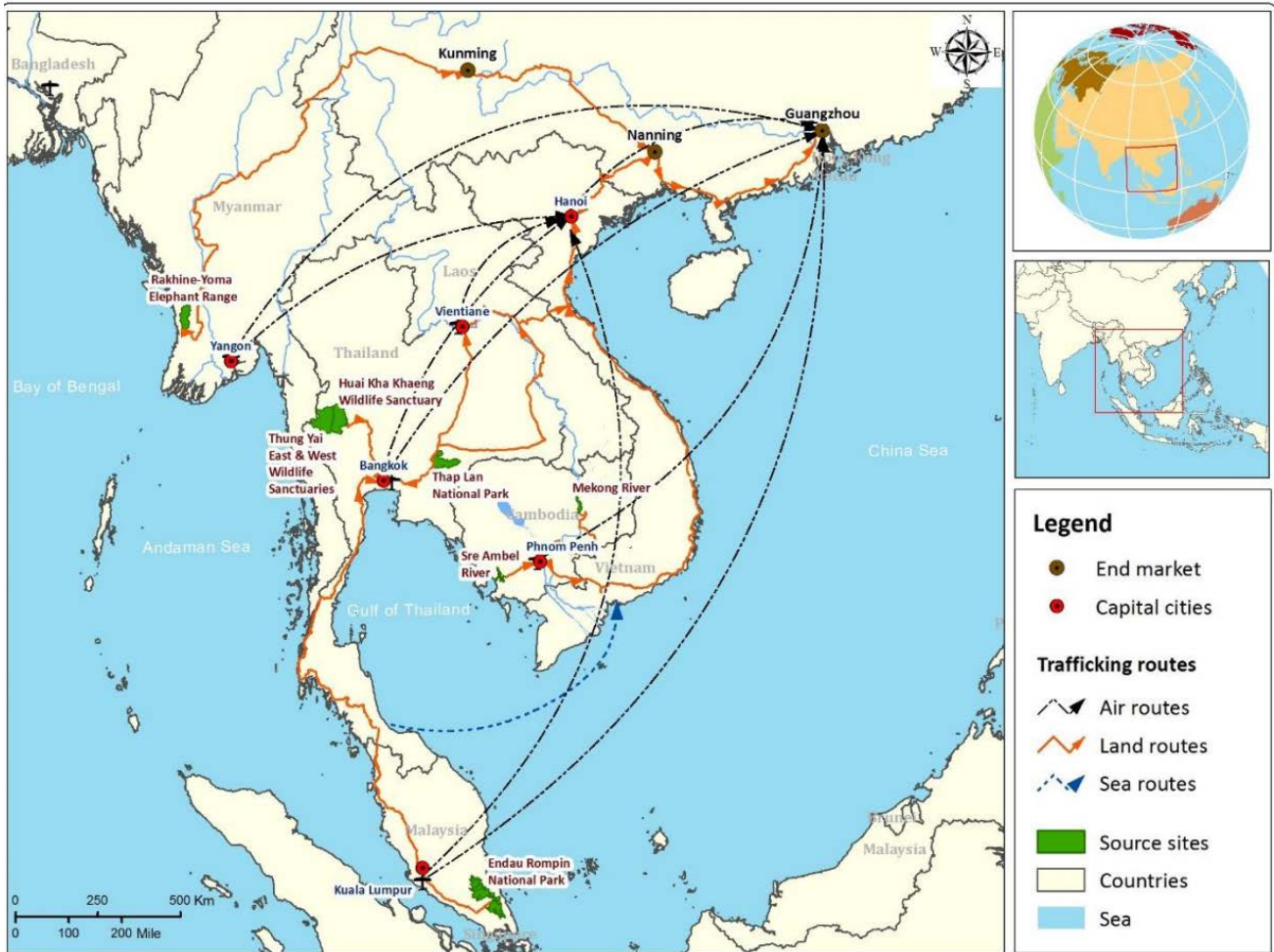
Siamese rosewood: The demand particularly in China for furniture and decorative items made from Siamese rosewood and the high prices these command have led to an epidemic of illegal logging and trafficking. Rosewood is the world’s most trafficked timber globally, accounting for a third of all seizures recorded by UNODC from 2005-2014. Thap Lan National Park in eastern Thailand is now the frontline for efforts to protect this species as it is facing significant pressure from logging groups from Cambodia organized by Thai and Chinese middlemen. Thap Lan National Park is critical not only for Siamese rosewood, but also for tiger, Asian elephant, pangolin and bears.

Asian elephant: In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in commercial poaching of Asian elephants in Myanmar to supply a growing market for their skin in China, with at least 59 elephants killed in 2017 alone and incidents continuing into 2018. Poaching is targeted and organized; whilst currently focused on Myanmar, it has started to expand to North-east India. The highest priority area to combat wildlife trafficking of the Asian elephant in the Greater Mekong is in the Rakhine-Yoma Elephant Range Protected Area in Myanmar, where at least half of recent elephant poaching events have occurred. The area also contains critical habitat for a range of other species including bear, wild cattle, and turtles.

Freshwater turtles: These are being driven to extinction by one of the most globalized and lucrative supply chains for any taxonomic group, with certain Asian species commanding a higher price per/kg than even rhino horn. These species are in demand primarily from China, as pets, for traditional Chinese medicine, for meat and increasingly now as a long-term financial investment. Many are also exported live to collectors in Europe and the US. To date, there have been minimal investments at a transnational scale to address freshwater turtle trafficking. Cambodia supports globally significant populations of a number of highly threatened turtles now largely restricted to intact wetlands in the Mekong and Sre Ambel river systems. Traders along the Mekong will pay up to \$10 per kilo for *Pelochelys cantorii*, and with adults reaching up to 50kg this creates a significant incentive for poaching. As a result, Cambodia has become both a source for the illegal trade of turtles and also a transit country with turtles trafficked from Thailand onto Vietnam and China.



REGIONAL OVERVIEW



Map of the major supply chains the project targets highlighting common land, sea and air routes used by traffickers from source sites in Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia to end markets in China via Vietnam and Lao PDR

Main Donor:



This project is funded by the European Union

Implementing partners:



CASE STUDIES

2019 HIGHLIGHTS



CAMBODIA

Endangered turtles and tortoises are saved and protected, while judiciary actions are taken against large-scale wildlife traders

Abstract:

The project aims to disrupt illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market by leveraging civil society partnership to increase the effectiveness of Government action. To achieve this objective, the work in Cambodia focusses on strengthening the protection of freshwater turtle source sites in Sre Ambel and Mekong rivers, enhancing enforcement against traffickers, increasing community participation in turtle protection and conservation, and improving the livelihood security of villagers in these two source areas.



Turtles hatchlings at Sre Ambel river site

Turtles release at Sre Ambel river site

Context:

Freshwater turtles and tortoises are being driven to extinction as a result of illegal trade, with certain Asian species commanding a higher price per/kg than even rhino horn. These species are in demand primarily in China as pets, for traditional Chinese medicine, for meat, and increasingly now as long-term financial investment.



Cambodia supports globally significant populations of a number of highly threatened turtles, now largely restricted to intact wetlands in the Mekong and Sre Ambel river systems. Logically, Cambodia has become a source for the illegal trade of turtles, but is also a transit country for turtle trafficked from Thailand and beyond on to Viet Nam and PR China.

Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection in key source sites for endangered species of Asian freshwater turtles
- 2** To increase effectiveness of law enforcement and justice sectors to combat wildlife and turtle trafficking
- 3** To increase transboundary coordination to combat wildlife trafficking especially with China
- 4** To reduce preference for illegally sourced products of turtle and tortoise species

Highlights:

53 TURTLE NESTS protected by community members from nearby villages as part of negotiated conservation agreements, and resulting in 1,035 successful hatchlings of endangered turtles

205 DAYS OF JOINT PATROLLING carried out at source sites, covering over 546 km largely on boat along the Sre Ambel and Mekong river systems. As a result of increased intensity of patrolling, the level of threat/per km has been reduced 10-fold compared to its level prior to project implementation

443 HOUSEHOLDS participating in and benefitting from livelihood development activities: incentive for nest protection, patrolling, aquaculture, vegetable gardening, etc.

2,259 INFORMATION REPORTS recorded or received through the wildlife crime hotline and other sources

69 RAID AND RESCUE OPERATIONS conducted against illegal turtle and tortoise traders, with 36% of those cases resulting in legal action against the perpetrators



Joint patrolling on boat along Sre Ambel river

Testimonial:

On 17th October, following a long investigation involving informants about a large-scale trader operating in Sihanoukville province, and in collaboration with local law enforcement agencies, a project team searched the house of a suspected trader. During the search, the Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) found and rescued 214 live turtles and tortoises (4 Asian Box Turtles, 128 Asian Leaf Turtles and 82 Elongated Tortoises), 16 live monitor lizards, and other live and dead wildlife items. The following day, the perpetrator was issued a transactional fine of 39,405,000 KHR, or nearly US\$10,000, which he refused to pay, therefore the case went to the court with prosecution ongoing.

Mr. Chann Sopheap, the Chief of Endangered Species of the Fisheries Administration, said of this case:

"It sent a strong signal to other wildlife traders in the area, as this was exemplary operated, and that scared them. All authorities congratulated us on this job, including the local ones. All turtles that were confiscated are on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, so I am happy about this rescue. I believe that our work is and will help to decrease the illegal trade of turtles and tortoises and therefore, that we will see an increase of their population in Cambodia."



MYANMAR

Community members join force with law enforcement officers at key source site to protect Asian elephants and mitigate human-elephant conflicts

Abstract:

The project aims to disrupt illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market by leveraging civil society partnership to increase the effectiveness of Government action. To achieve this objective, the work in Myanmar focusses on enhancing elephant protection in a regionally important site, the Rakhine-Yoma Elephant Range (RYER). Project partners are enhancing local awareness and participation in conservation, increasing strategic protection through community forest guardians, and coordinate closely with government elephant protection teams. Partners aim to reduce human-elephant conflict (HEC) and combat wildlife crime, whilst supporting improved livelihood security around RYER.



HEC mitigation in action in villager's field

Context:

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in commercial poaching of Asian elephants in Myanmar due to market demand for elephant skin and other parts in neighbouring countries, particularly China. At least 59 elephants were killed in 2017. Elephant poaching is organized by groups of hunters supported by international smugglers. Another threat is habitat degradation, which also leads to increased human-elephant conflict. The Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range (RYER), in the western coastal area of Myanmar, is a regionally important source site for elephants, and a strategic area for combating elephant trafficking. It has recently been proposed as a flagship site for 'Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE)' - the CITES-led site-based system designed to monitor trends in the illegal killing of elephants, build management capacity and provide information to help range states make appropriate management and enforcement decisions. A designation of RYER as 'MIKE site' would only strengthen further the elephant protection activities underway.

Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection activities in Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range Wildlife Sanctuary (RYER), a key site for Asian elephants in the region
- 2** To reduce Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) in the vicinity of RYER through the participation of local communities
- 3** To increase transboundary coordination to combat wildlife trafficking especially with China

Highlights:

0 ELEPHANT CARCASS inside RYER, a key source site for Asian elephants in Myanmar

269 DAYS OF JOINT PATROLLING by three specialist Elephant Protection Units inside RYER, covering over 3,000 km largely on foot in thick tropical forest. The EPU's are a combined team of RYER's patrol staff and community guardians who live around RYER

666 HOUSEHOLDS from 6 villages benefitting from the interest generated by a revolving fund jointly administered by community representatives and the project's partner RCA

13 VILLAGES affected by elephant incursions nearby RYER received support and made aware of the contingency plan on how best to reduce and mitigate conflict

22 VILLAGES participating in a local community network to combat illegal wildlife trade and forest crime through sharing of information



Joint patrolling using domesticated elephants inside RYER

Testimonial:

U Saw Win is a Park Warden of RYER where he patrols regularly jointly with members of nearby communities. Together they form the Elephant Protection Units (EPU's). During a monthly meeting to review patrol results and plan future operations, he said:

"The main threat to RYER is illegal poaching and our main challenge is to protect endangered species, including the Asian Elephant. I am very pleased with WCS and EU support for regular SMART patrolling for the protection of elephant and their habitat in RYER Wildlife Sanctuary. Without such long-term technical and logistical support, we would not be able to fulfil our main task - which is the protection of this sanctuary - due to limited numbers of patrol staff and resources."



MALAYSIA

2019

Partners
Against
Wildlife
Crime

Community members join force with law enforcement officers to protect tigers at key source site and combat illegal wildlife trade

Abstract:

The project aims to disrupt illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market by leveraging civil society partnership to increase the effectiveness of Government action. To achieve this objective, the work in Malaysia focusses on enhancing tiger protection in a regionally important site, the Endau-Rompin Landscape. Project partners support multi-agency patrolling in the protected area and pilot collaborative initiatives such as community-led patrolling and key informant networking in the landscape, which empower communities and help them to contribute to the protection of the biodiversity of their traditional lands. Partners also work on combatting the illegal wildlife trade online through the promotion of a secure wildlife crime hotline.

Context:

As its neighbors, Malaysia suffers from Asia's insatiable appetite for wildlife. In particular, the Endau-Rompin Landscape, one source site in Malaysia where tigers still have a good chance of survival, is under great threat from poaching and extraction. Law enforcement agencies often lack manpower, equipment and experience in conducting anti-poaching operations strategically and efficiently. Meanwhile, local communities are poorly engaged in anti-poaching effort, by lack of capacity, resource and trust with government entities. Nationwide, public awareness of illegal wildlife and exotic pet trade remains at a minimal level.



Tiger individual TMA07 photo-captured inside ERL

Wildlife Crime Hotline
Hotline Hidupan Liar

019 356 4194 | report@malayantiger.net

Report wildlife crimes such as

- Illegal hunting or trade
- Keeping wildlife without a licence
- *Laporkan jenayah-jenayah hidupan liar*
Pemburuan atau perdagangan hidupan liar secara haram
- *Menyimpan hidupan liar tanpa lesen*

Your identity will remain anonymous. *Mعلومات anda akan dirahsiakan.*

Info we need *Maklumat yang diperlukan*

- Location *Lokasi*
- Nature of incident *Jenis jenayah*
- Date & Time *Tarikh & Masa*
- Image *Gambar*

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WCS

Promotion of the Wildlife Crime Hotline

Objectives:

- 1 To increase patrol efforts and the impacts of the patrolling in the Endau-Rompin Landscape, a key source site for endangered tigers in the region
- 2 To improve information and intelligence sharing among relevant agencies, partners, and targeted community members
- 3 To promote public use of the wildlife crime outline to counter wildlife trafficking

Highlights:

152 PATROLS combining multi-agency and community patrols carried out at source site conducted mainly on foot and covering over 4,797 km. Enhanced patrolling operations resulted in a 5-fold increase in the number of teams deployed and the capture of 20 nationals and foreigners arrested for various wildlife and forest crimes

145 INTELLIGENCE/INFORMATION from community patrolling and local networks recorded in SMART module and database for further wildlife crime analysis

56 INFORMATION REPORTS received through the wildlife crime hotline; shared with law enforcement agencies, some resulted in enforcement actions including seizure, arrest and prosecution

1 NEW NETWORK formed between NGOs, the Pan-Peninsula Incursion Analyst Network (PIAN), to share information and jointly improve field operation protocols and analysis methods



Pictures from camouflaged poach cam set up at ERL entry points to capture incursion



Mr. Zul Sangka guiding his patrol team



Seizure following an OBK operation

Testimonial:

Mr. Zul Sangka is a villager from Kg. Peta, nearby ERL in Johor State. For over a decade he has observed increasing signs of poaching as he ventures in the forest to catch fish and frogs and collect other non-timber forest products: *"We have to avoid certain areas as there are so many poachers from Malaysia but also Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam in the forest; we are worried that they may attack us as we hear some of them have firearms. We did not report to the authorities because they seldom took action. When they tried, they could not find them as they do not know the area well".* In November 2019, he participated in the first operation of the revamped patrolling system OBK, after receiving training on how to conduct patrol and gather information on poachers. He continues: *"I was glad to share my knowledge of the area and guide the teams to where the poachers were. I feel safe because there were armed personnel in the team. The patrol that I joined arrested a poacher and I am proud that my knowledge and skills led to the arrest. I hope there will be more operations like this in the future so the people of my community can look for forest products without worrying about our safety. I am excited to be involved in the patrols around my village because I am confident that, with the help of OBK, we will be able to arrest more people. With less poaching activity, there will be more wildlife and I believe it will benefit ecotourism in my village and provide alternative income for my livelihood".*

THAILAND

Civil society rallies ethnic Karen communities in key conservation areas and mobilize women to support the Government's tiger protection system

Abstract:

The project aims to disrupt illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market by leveraging civil society partnership to increase the effectiveness of Government action. To achieve this objective, the work in Thailand focusses on maintaining a robust tiger protection system in three geographically connected wildlife sanctuaries of the Western Forest Complex. Moreover, the project engages with Karen ethnic communities located inside the complex, in particular women, providing them with marketing support in the production of local artisanal goods. The aim is, by creating a new level of trust and mutual understanding, to mobilize community support to tiger conservation. Elsewhere, the project also contributes to pilot intelligence-led approaches to identify, track and disrupt criminals seeking high value tree species such as Siamese rosewood inside Thap Lan National Park in eastern Thailand.



Tiger individual photo-captured inside Wefcom



Seized plank of Siamese rosewood



Joint SMART training for forestry students and rangers

Context:

93% of tiger rangeland across Asia have been lost, and over recent years, tigers have become extinct in some countries of the Mekong region, aided by poaching and trafficking syndicates that feed the insatiable demand for tigers and their products. The Western Forest Complex (Wefcom) in Thailand is among the most important sites globally; it also contains key habitats for many other endangered species. Protecting tigers in three wildlife sanctuaries at the core of Wefcom is thus critical to the health of the global tiger population. Similarly, the demand in China for furniture and decorative items made from Siamese rosewood and the high price they command have led to an epidemic of illegal logging and timber trafficking. Thap Lan National Park is now at the frontline for the protection of this precious timber tree species; it is facing significant pressure from logging groups from across the border in Cambodia, organized and aided by Thai and Chinese middlemen.

Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection in three wildlife sanctuaries of the Western Forest Complex, a key source site for endangered tigers in the region
- 2** To form and support the deployment of smart, joint patrol teams to detect and prevent threats to wildlife and habitats
- 3** To develop and use intelligent approaches to deter poaching and trafficking of Siamese rosewood
- 4** To rally Karen ethnic communities around tiger conservation by supporting local, sustainable production of traditional handicraft products and the expansion of market opportunities

Highlights:

OVER 39,000 KM covered by SMART patrolling in all four project sites combined, including by teams combining national rangers and members from Karen communities in WEFKOM. As a result, the level of threat encountered per km patrolled has been reduced to 25% of what it was in 2017, to a minimal level

26 SUSPECT TIMBER POACHERS arrested including five inside TLNP, through the use of near-real time anti-poaching trail cameras strategically placed at 143 locations along the park's edges. They could be stopped prior to engage in cutting valuable rosewood timber

OVER 2,500,000 THB INCOME generated for 102 Karen households through support to the production of handicraft and marketing of products

13 COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS with Karen communities in and around project sites revised and implemented participatively



At the SMART Patrol operations centre, monitoring anti-poaching trail camera used to detect incursion

Testimonial:

The “JoMPA Woven Community Enterprise in WEFKOM” initiative was established to support income generation for women from Karen ethnic communities living in the area. Initially, it targeted four families; currently with the support of the European Union, it has expanded to 44 families. Its aim is to support women in the design, development and marketing of locally-made natural and artisanal products with more variety and higher quality; at present, it focusses on the promotion of traditional hand-woven cloth and organic herbs. Ms. Muu Nor Wa, a leader in this initiative, facilitates her group’s discussions on how to expand the handicraft clothes production and improve access to new markets, including online. She sees it as an opportunity not only to empower her group members but also to build her community’s engagement to conserve both tigers and the local Karen culture. She also noted that the support provided to village-based income generation activities reduces her community’s exploitation of non-timber forest products extracted from the wild.



At a JoMPA weaving centre



“We would like to thank the support from SNF and the EU that helps my group to expand and my community to preserve the beautiful tradition of Karen-weaving in use in our families.”

Ms. Muu Nor Wa, JoMPA group leader

LAO PDR

Civil society supports Lao authorities with intelligence information on trafficking of wildlife, helping to rescue endangered species and enforce legal action against offenders

Abstract:

The project aims to disrupt illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market by leveraging civil society partnership to increase the effectiveness of Government action. To achieve this objective, the work in Lao PDR focusses on increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement and private sector responses to wildlife trafficking occurring in and through the country. The project seeks to increase public reporting of wildlife crimes through an accessible hotline and information reporting system, and enables the mandated law enforcement agencies to better respond to wildlife crime cases through technical guidance and support from civil society.

Context:

In recent years, and despite increased efforts by the Government of Lao PDR to implement its CITES obligations and commitments to address illegal wildlife trade, governmental responses to combat wildlife trafficking have been continuously hindered by insufficient capacity, lack of information and weak coordination among law enforcement agencies, and with those of neighboring countries. Lao PDR, as it shares borders with Thailand, Viet Nam and China, has been identified as an important source, transit and destination country for wildlife trafficking – with a growing ivory and wildlife market for transiting Chinese consumers and travelers, and increasing reports of tigers and other wildlife being trafficked to Viet Nam from and through Lao PDR.

Objectives:

- 1 To increase effectiveness of law enforcement responses to illegal wildlife trade through capacity building and intelligence analysis support
- 2 To promote transboundary cooperation in tackling wildlife trafficking between Lao PDR and neighboring countries, in particular Vietnam



Lao media coverage of the EU Action launch



"Princess", rescued endangered Red-shanked Douc Langur

Highlights:

- 127 INTELLIGENCE/INFORMATION reports coming from the wildlife crime hotline, key informants and investigation trips to wildlife trade ‘hotspots’
- 37 INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTS on trafficking networks of target species shared with law enforcement agencies at national and provincial levels
- 8 CRIMINAL CASES involving target species launched as a result of project partners interventions, with two legal prosecutions by judicial authorities completed successfully
- 2 COOPERATIVE ACTIONS to coordinate CWT enforcement between Lao PDR and Vietnam’s mandated agencies underway through a series of political dialogues and technical exchanges



The Law Enforcement Coordination Conference



Bilateral meeting btw. Lao’s Dpt. of Forest Inspection and Vietnam’s Forest Protection Dpt.

Testimonial:

Late October 2019, the project partner Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife (LCTW) received a tip-off on its Facebook hotline page about a Red-shanked Douc Langur, an endangered and legally protected species, being kept for trade in a village in Champassak province. The information was verified and corroborated by WCS through a Vietnamese key informant. In liaison with the Department of Forest Inspection at central level, the Provincial Office for Forest Inspection (POFI) got alerted. With technical assistance in handling the case from LCTW and WCS, provincial officers moved in and confiscated the langur, while a no-re-offense warning was issued to the offender. Upon completion of all paperwork, the young female individual, named “Princess” was handed over to LCTW and brought back to its Wildlife Rescue Centre in Ban Keun, Vientiane Province. She is now thriving there alongside a similarly aged Indochinese Grey Langur named “Frida”.

In the aftermath of this collaborative action, Mr Khamhu Mukdara, Head of Champassak Provincial Office of Forest Inspection (POFI), said:

“On behalf of the Provincial Forest Inspection, I wish to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to the European Union, WCS and LCTW for the support and assistance in the rescue of this infant langur in Paksong district. In the future, we hope that Champassak Forest Inspection will continue to receive technical assistance and implementation support to combat illegal wildlife trade in our province.”



VIETNAM

Law enforcement officers and journalists at illegal wildlife trade 'hotspots' upgrade their capacities and connections to dismantle wildlife trafficking networks

Abstract:

The project aims to disrupt illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market by leveraging civil society partnership to increase the effectiveness of Government action. To achieve this objective, the work in Vietnam focusses on increasing cooperation and joining forces between law enforcement agencies, NGOs and the media to dismantle wildlife crime networks. The project leverages intelligence support from civil society together with provision of capacity building activities and on-the-job support, to increase the effectiveness of law enforcement and justice sectors in charge of combatting wildlife trafficking.

Context:

Wildlife trafficking is devastating species populations across the globe, especially in Southeast Asia. As a consequence, Vietnam has lost several iconic species, including rhinos and tigers. Vietnam is also identified as both a transit and destination country in a number of major routes for illegal wildlife trade. Demand for tigers and their products is greatest from Vietnamese and Chinese consumers, with Vietnamese tiger poaching and trafficking syndicates operating as far afield as Thailand and Malaysia. Besides tigers, Vietnam is also a transit and destination country for illegal trade of fresh water turtles which is becoming one of the most globalized and lucrative supply chain, with certain Asian species commanding a higher price per/kg than even rhino horn.



Turtle for sale at a stall in Thanh Hoa market, Long An Province

While law enforcement is the most effective and strategic tool to handle wildlife trafficking, the enforcement officers mandated to combat poaching and trafficking often have insufficient resource and capacity to enforce laws and policies related to wildlife protection; in reality, they often benefit from the mobilization of resources from civil society, including local communities, NGOs and media, correlated with higher rates of arrest and conviction for wildlife trafficking cases.

Objectives:

- 1** To increase the quality and quantity of intelligence generated by local journalists and NGOs on poaching and trafficking of wildlife including tiger, Asian elephant and freshwater turtles
- 2** To increase the number of enforcement actions on illegal trade of the project's target species in and/or related to Vietnam through civil society, academia and media leverage
- 3** To collect field evidence for policy advocacy on wildlife protection and against illegal wildlife farming and trade

Highlights:

35 PROSECUTORS with working stations in provinces identified as 'hotspots' for illegal trade of turtle and tiger parts, trained with knowledge and skills to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate wildlife crime

1 NEW NETWORK of committed and vetted law enforcement officers formed to facilitate better exchange of information and experience in handling local wildlife-related violations

OVER 250 NEWS AND ARTICLES related to wildlife trade posted in the Wildlife Trade Column of the environmental website ThienNhiem.Net which attracts on average ~60,000 visits per month

11 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS produced based on information from key informants and a series of field and media investigation trips to wildlife trade 'hotspots' across the country

Testimonial:

Dr. Nguyen Duc Hanh is the Vice Rector of Hanoi Procuratorate University (HPU) and a prosecutor himself. He has engaged in a large number of international and national collaborations to strengthen law enforcement on wildlife crime in Vietnam that involves non-government organizations. A leader and an educator, Hanh understands the importance of timely and strategic capacity building for both in-service and pre-service prosecutors to ensure the constant learning and upgrading of knowledge and skills to handle the growing wildlife crimes.

"Wildlife-related crimes are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Vietnamese laws have recognized it as a serious crime and our enforcement agencies have identified wildlife-related criminal cases that are organized and transnational. This requires law enforcement officers to constantly improve their capacity and enhance information exchange to ensure that no violation is missed and roots of crime syndicate are identified and solved."



"The more I work to build capacity for law enforcement officers in Vietnam, not only prosecutors but also polices and judges, the better I realize that it is important to specifically design training for handling wildlife crimes. In these training, we have to engage multi-disciplinary stakeholders who involve in process of tackling the crimes, including non-government and international actors who are committed to the fight against wildlife crime and have their own well-developed methods to tackle it. That multi-disciplinary approach helps to enrich everyone's knowledge and understanding and in the end, it will increase the overall capacity of law enforcement agencies."

Dr. Nguyen Duc Hanh, Vice Rector of Hanoi Procuratorate University (HPU)



Prosecutors visiting the Carnivore & Pangolin Conservation Program (CPCP) in Cuc Phuong National Park



PR CHINA

Online search engines and e-commerce platforms join force in partnership with civil society to tackle the scourge of illegal wildlife trafficking and consumption

Abstract:

The project aims to disrupt illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market by leveraging civil society partnership to increase the effectiveness of Government action. To achieve this objective, the work in China focusses on the end market, aiming to reduce wildlife products offer and demand through a 3-fold strategy: (1) support to partnerships with private sectors to prevent and disrupt wildlife criminals using their services; (2) facilitation of international cooperation on wildlife and forest crimes between China and Mekong countries; and (3) reduction of intention to purchase products made from tiger, elephants and turtles using a behavioral science-based approach.

Context:

Research indicate that China is Asia's top market in wildlife trade. In recent years, with boom of e-commerce, online platforms have become the major market place for illegal wildlife products. While major Chinese internet companies openly attach great importance in tackling wildlife crime, their staff often lack of knowledge of wildlife law/s and policies, and are in need of further help to detect commonly traded endangered species in order to clean and better regulate their platforms. In addition to tackling online wildlife trafficking from the supply side by removing illegal information, there is also a pressing need to address the demand side, by increasing user's and consumer's awareness.

Objectives:

- 1 To increase effectiveness of government's law enforcers to combat wildlife trafficking by leveraging partnerships with targeted private sectors
- 2 To increase and improve responses by Chinese companies to information on wildlife crime facilitated by their services
- 3 To facilitate international cooperation on wildlife and forest crimes between China and countries of the Mekong region
- 4 To reduce intentions to purchase products made from tiger, elephants and turtles through a behavioral science-based approach

The screenshot shows a website interface with a search bar at the top, navigation tabs (首页, 关于我们, 项目介绍, 参与保护, 卫生行动, 新闻中心, 资料馆), and a main content area titled '欧盟项目 EU Project'. Below the title is the European Union flag and a green box with the project name in Chinese: '项目全称: "支持大湄公河区域、马来西亚及中国民间组织助力打击野生动物走私及森林犯罪" (Partners Against Wildlife Crime)'. A detailed description in Chinese and English follows, mentioning a total contribution of EUR 8 million from the EU to 12 international and national civil society organizations in 7 countries in the Greater Mekong region. At the bottom of the screenshot is a large advertisement for ifaw, featuring the text '搜狗搜索 x ifaw 国际爱护动物基金会' and '非洲象 Keep wildlife wild' with a quote: '其实我的一生可以和你一样长, 如果, 不是怀璧其罪。' and a button '更多故事>'.

Highlights:

120 PROVINCIAL LAW ENFORCERS from northwestern and southwestern China trained in enhanced techniques and smart approaches to tackle wildlife crime

8 NEW MEMBERS from private sectors (e-commerce, search engine, social media and art and collection platforms) joined the Coalition to End Wildlife Crime Online

26 MILLION USERS of Sogou's search engine exposed to a campaign to raise awareness on illegal wildlife trade and wildlife crime

2 BILATERAL MECHANISMS to share information and coordinate enforcement action against wildlife crime initiated between PR. China and Cambodia and Myanmar respectively



Testimonial:

Mr. Xinfa Wang is Information Security Manager at Sogou, the second largest search engine in China. He benefited from a training that introduced to him the newest trends in wildlife cybercrime and the methods to use to detect and delete illegal trade information. He was glad to realize that he could help to combat wildlife trafficking by blocking illicit postings and jargons used in illegal trade from the searching engine's results.

Following the training, he said *"Our team has experience in dealing with illegal information related to high-profile topics such as national security and gambling, but we never realized that our work might also be vital for the survival of endangered species. Thanks to the wildlife crime prevention training provided, we learned about the plight of endangered wildlife caused by trafficking, and our capacity to deal with this issue has been greatly enhanced."*

Furthermore, he promised to engage more colleagues to join force in wildlife conservation. He also persuaded Sogou's public relations department to collaborate with IFAW in initiating the "Keep Wildlife Wild" campaign. For six days, the launching page of Sogou Search Engine app turned into a page featuring a species endangered by trafficking; as users click the animal picture, they were redirected to a 'sharing page' that could be shared via social media. The campaign won a daily page view of more than four million users.



Mr. Xinfa Wang, Information Security Manager of Sogou



Mr. Xinfa Wang reaching out to Sogou staff on how they can contribute to combat wildlife cybercrime

CASE STUDIES

2020 HIGHLIGHTS



CAMBODIA

From poacher to nest protector: how a former collector of Asian Giant Softshell Turtle eggs now sees the value of the endangered species

Abstract:

In Cambodia, the project works closely with local communities, Community Fisheries, NGO partners and local and national government institutions, to conserve two endangered species of freshwater turtles: the Royal Turtle in the Sre Ambel river system in the Southwest, and the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle along the Mekong river in the Northeast. Enrolling a team of experienced local women is key to guarantee their protection.



Turtles release at Sre Ambel river site

Context:

Wildlife trafficking is devastating populations of many species across the globe; the problem is at its most extreme in Southeast Asia. A large number of species native to the region are now threatened primarily by poaching due to an international demand for their specimens, parts and products, particularly from China. Wildlife trafficking undermines local livelihoods, promotes the spread of zoonotic diseases, weakens the rule of law, exacerbates corruption, and funds violent armed groups and organized crime syndicates.

Unfortunately, Cambodia has become both a source for the illegal trade of turtles and also a transit country for turtles trafficked from Thailand and Malaysia onto Vietnam and China. Cambodia supports globally significant populations of a number of highly threatened turtle species, including the Royal Turtle *Batagur affinis*, the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle *Pelochelys cantorii* and the Yellow-headed Temple Turtle *Heosemys annandalii* - all largely restricted to intact wetlands in the Mekong and Sre Ambel river systems. The continued sand dredging, illegal fishing, overexploitation and loss of habitat from land grabbing and the clearance of riparian flooded forests, are major threats to the survival of these species, at great risk of extinction. Trafficking of turtles in Cambodia is a serious issue that needs to be further addressed by government agencies, with more awareness to be raised in the general public.

Objectives:

- 1 To enhance protection in key source sites for endangered species of Asian freshwater turtles
- 2 To increase effectiveness of law enforcement and justice sectors to combat wildlife and turtle trafficking
- 3 To increase transboundary coordination to combat wildlife trafficking especially with China
- 4 To reduce preference for illegally sourced products of turtle and tortoise species

Highlights:

52 TURTLE NESTS protected by community members from nearby villages as part of 10 negotiated conservation agreements, and resulting in 868 successful hatchlings of endangered turtles

744 DAYS OF JOINT PATROLLING carried out at source sites, covering over 10,000 km largely on boat along the Sre Ambel and Mekong river systems. As a result of increased intensity of patrolling, the level of threat/per km remains drastically reduced compared to its level prior to project implementation

1,407 HOUSEHOLDS participating in and benefitting from livelihood development activities: incentive for nest protection, patrolling, aquaculture, vegetable gardening, etc.

1,977 INFORMATION REPORTS recorded or received through the wildlife crime hotline and other sources, of which at least 383 were specific to freshwater turtle and tortoise species

98 RAID AND RESCUE OPERATIONS conducted against illegal turtle and tortoise traders, of which 25 resulted in legal action against the perpetrators



A rescued turtle ready to be released into the wild



Ms. Chan Nin, turtle nest protector

Testimonial:

Ms. Chan Nin, aged 62, is part of the project-supported Nest Protection Team. From dusk till dawn, she works along the Mekong River with her colleagues to search for Asian Giant Softshell Turtle nests, using her experience when she was a former collector of these turtle eggs for consumption. Every year, her team could find an average of ten nests at different nesting sandbanks and she could earn approximately US\$ 1,200 per season.

Ms. Chan Nin said, *"I am very happy to join the project and, especially to save this rarest turtle species from extinction. If we don't protect, young children will no longer know this species in the future."*

Ms. Chan Nin's living conditions have improved significantly since being part of the team. She said that with these seasonal incentives for her work as nest protector, plus some loan from a local bank, she could refurbish her house. In addition, she can cover her basic daily expenses to feed her family of four, support the education of her four grandchildren, as well as cover other expenses such as attending religious and wedding ceremonies.

MYANMAR

Community participation plays a major role to reduce human-elephant conflict around a key sanctuary for Asian elephants

Abstract:

The project's work in Myanmar focuses on reducing Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) in 22 villages which adjoin the project site, the Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range (RYER) - an important sanctuary for Asian elephants located in the southern corner of the Rakhine state.

The project enhances community participation and provides both technical assistance and material support to mitigate conflict, by reducing incursions from elephants in the fields around the target villages, in particular during the crop ripening season. These conflicts are significantly mitigated thanks to the active participation of the village conservation committees which were formed when the project started.



Delivering field equipment and materials to village committee for HEC mitigation



Wild elephant intrusion into banana plantation in Kyauk Chek village

Context:

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in commercial poaching of Asian elephants in Myanmar due to market demand for elephant skin and other parts in neighbouring countries, particularly China. At least 59 elephants were killed in 2017. Elephant poaching is organized by groups of hunters supported by international smugglers. Another threat is habitat degradation, which also leads to increased human-elephant conflict. The Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range (RYER), in the western coastal area of Myanmar, is a regionally important source site for elephants, and a strategic area for combating elephant trafficking. It has recently been proposed as a flagship site for 'Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE)' - the CITES-led site-based system designed to monitor trends in the illegal killing of elephants, build management capacity and provide information to help range states make appropriate management and enforcement decisions. A designation of RYER as 'MIKE site' would only strengthen further the elephant protection activities underway.

Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection activities in Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range Wildlife Sanctuary (RYER), a key site for Asian elephants in the region
- 2** To reduce Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) in the vicinity of RYER through the participation of local communities
- 3** To increase transboundary coordination to combat wildlife trafficking especially with China

Highlights:

0 ELEPHANT CARCASS inside RYER, as in 2019 ; sadly, one wild elephant died from an infected wound following a poaching incident in an area outside of RYER

809 DAYS OF JOINT PATROLLING by three specialist Elephant Protection Units inside RYER, covering over 5,500 km largely on foot in thick tropical forest. The EPU are a combined team of RYER's patrol staff and community guardians who live around RYER

1,066 HOUSEHOLDS benefitting from the interest generated by a revolving fund jointly administered by community representatives and the project's partner RCA

1,051 MEMBERS OF COMMUNITIES living around RYER and affected by elephant incursions made aware of the contingency plan on how best to reduce and mitigate conflict

22 VILLAGES participating in a local community network to combat illegal wildlife trade and forest crime through sharing of information

Testimonial:

The scene is a beautiful village named 'Kyauk Chek' located on the Sat Thwar stream flowing down from RYER; it is made of 65 households; some 270 people live there. People's livelihoods depend solely on seasonal crops and non-timber forest products. Villagers are seasonally threatened by marauding elephants which destroy their crops and houses. Originally, villagers tried to frighten the elephants with traditional means, but it has not been effective to reduce conflict. Since the project began in 2019, it has brought significant improvements. The project's field team, led by its coordinator Mr. Aung Myo Naing from Rakhine Coastal Conservation Association (RCA), explains. First, an ad hoc HEC committee was formed with the consent of villagers; it is facilitated by RCA. A rapid response plan has been designed and is activated when elephants approach the village. The project contributes with materials like torchlights, jungle boots, loudspeakers and a noise-making device to frighten the elephants. The village's HEC committee also links up with other villages to send or receive early warning notification on suspect elephant movements. As a result, only 6 elephant intrusions were recorded in 2019, and only 3 in 2020. In all instances, the villagers could frighten out the elephants before they destroyed crops or damaged houses, without fatalities on either side. Kyauk Chek villagers are very pleased to be part of the solution.

Mr. Aung Myo Naing said, "I am confident to say that the EU project implementation on HEC reduction is very successful thanks to the team work of villagers and the good collaboration among the village HEC committees. I would say that communication between villagers, RCA, WCS and staff from RYER has greatly improved since the project began. The villagers realize the positive impacts of the project and I am sure they will continue to work with us not only in reducing human-elephant conflicts, but also for the protection of RYER and the conservation of natural resources in our region."



MALAYSIA

Improved enforcement action through effective and strategic communication between partners of the operation Ops Bersepadu Khazanah (OBK)

Abstract:

The work in Malaysia focuses on enhancing tiger protection in a regionally important site, the Endau-Rompin Landscape (ERL). Trust, coordination, effective communication, sharing of information and sustained engagement between project partners ensure the success of the anti-poaching operations in several ways: improved patrol planning, enhanced detection of threats on site, better intelligence leading to an increased number of arrests of poachers around the landscape, etc.



OBK team in operation removing snares in Endau-Rompin landscape



Patrol team members practicing satellite phone use before the commencement of OBK operations

Context:

Since 2015, the Malayan Tiger *Panthera tigris jacksoni* is listed as Critically Endangered in IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species. From an already declining population estimated at 250–340 individuals in 2014, the wild tiger population is now estimated to be less than 200 individuals. The Endau-Rompin Landscape in the states of Johor and Pahang, southern Malaysia, is of critical importance - one of the few sites where tiger population remains stable. Multi-agency patrolling inside the protected area has been supported for a decade, however with limited success due to deficiencies in the operations cycle; anti-poaching patrols needed to be more effective. Alarmed by the prospect of a rapid decline of wild tigers on site, in 2018 a new approach involving the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) was recommended by WCS and its project partner the Malaysia Conservation Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT). Responding to this campaign, the Inspector-General of Police launched *Ops Bersepadu Khazanah* (OBK) in September 2019; two of RMP's General Operations Force battalions have been deployed to assist the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) to track and arrest poachers in the protected area. Since its commencement, the project supports the OBK operations in the southern sector of the park through strategic patrol planning, briefings on SMART patrol data management and analysis, and in logistics.

Objectives:

- 1** To increase patrol efforts and the impacts of the patrolling in the Endau-Rompin Landscape, a key source site for endangered tigers in the region
- 2** To improve information and intelligence sharing among relevant agencies, partners, and targeted community members
- 3** To promote public use of the wildlife crime outline to counter wildlife trafficking

Highlights:

STABLE TIGER DENSITY on site as calculated through the analysis of the camera trapping survey

SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF # THREAT encountered per km patrolled under the new OBK system compared to its level prior to the operational reform

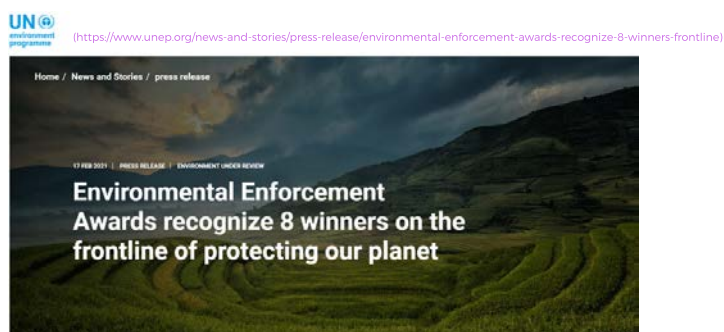
170 DAYS OF JOINT PATROLLING carried out at source site involving *Orang Asli* community members from the surrounding villages

164 INTELLIGENCE/INFORMATION from community patrolling and local networks recorded in SMART module and database for further wildlife crime analysis

118 INFORMATION REPORTS received through the wildlife crime hotline, doubling the number in 2019 following promotion and awareness campaigns

***Ops Bersepadu Khazanah (OBK)* selected as one of the 8 winners of the Fifth Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards under the United Nations' Environment Programme (UNEP)**

In addition to the increased patrol effort as one element of the OBK reform, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks initiated a number of high-profile anti-money laundering investigations targeting wildlife crime - thus, placing the authorities one step closer to stamping out syndicates operating along the poaching and trafficking chain. Also, in January 2020, aligned with the OBK mission, the Royal Malaysia Police announced the withdrawal of firearm licenses to 6,900 holders. The UNEP award is a recognition of the cooperative efforts undertaken by all stakeholders involved, including project partners, since the initiation of the OBK operations in 2019.



Testimonial:

"We have to be smart and innovative in our approaches and use all means to facilitate information sharing in a real-time and effective manner. We found that the best way to transmit poaching information and incursion evidence from MMS cameras to the DWNP is via instant messaging apps such as Whatsapp, Telegram, Signal etc. as the officers always carry their mobile phones around. In case mobile phone network is not available, we make sure to assign satellite phones to the patrol teams and the officers-in-charge, to guarantee real-time sharing of information during operations."

Ms. Norolhuda Jamaluddin, WC&S' focal person for OBK



THAILAND

Strengthening the law enforcement system to save Thap Lan National Park from illegal logging of Siamese rosewood and poaching

Abstract:

Thap Lan National Park (TLNP) in eastern Thailand, part of Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai World Heritage Site, is a critically important habitat for high commercial value tree species, especially Siamese rosewood *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* that conservationists fear may become extinct within 10 years. Working in close collaboration with the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP), the project supports site-based analysts at work; in doing so, it brings new intelligence-led approaches to integrate strategic planning in the operations cycle, and to spot, track and identify offenders in near real-time.



TLNP patrol team arresting Cambodian loggers with 1.5 m³ of rosewood timber potentially worth an estimated \$-38,000



Context:

In the previous decade, poaching of rosewood in Thailand severely increased, the highly prized timber being smuggled through neighboring countries eastward to finally reach China as end market. While in the last few years there has been a remarkable improvement in the geographic coverage of ranger patrols across TLNP, poachers are relentless in their pursue to illegally source the precious timber from the area. Because of the persistence of these threats, and because of the likelihood of a rapid escalation of these threats should the quality of patrolling drop, there is a constant need to keep up the effort.

One of the newest and important sources of information related to wildlife crime is via covert surveillance equipment (e.g., multi-media messaging service (MMS) poacher cams). This system, also known in Thailand as the Network Centric Anti-Poaching System (NCAPS), is a system that deploys, maintains and monitors cellular cameras that can detect poachers walking in and out of the park, and send real-time alerts through signals and photographs to rangers' cellular phones. Upon reception, the park authority can quickly act to intercept and try to arrest poachers before they could cut down invaluable trees. First introduced in 2015 in TLNP, it has become a model. The project supports NCAPS operations in the park; in addition, it contributes to improve the morale and capacity of rangers by providing them with high-quality training courses and materials, and patrol rations and field equipment.

Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection in three wildlife sanctuaries of the Western Forest Complex, a key source site for endangered tigers in the region
- 2** To form and support the deployment of smart, joint patrol teams to detect and prevent threats to wildlife and habitats
- 3** To develop and use intelligent approaches to deter poaching and trafficking of Siamese rosewood
- 4** To rally Karen ethnic communities around tiger conservation by supporting local, sustainable production of traditional handicraft products and the expansion of market opportunities

Highlights:

STABLE TIGER DENSITY overall in project sites, as calculated through the analysis of the camera trapping survey, with evidence of dispersal of individual tigers outside of the project target area

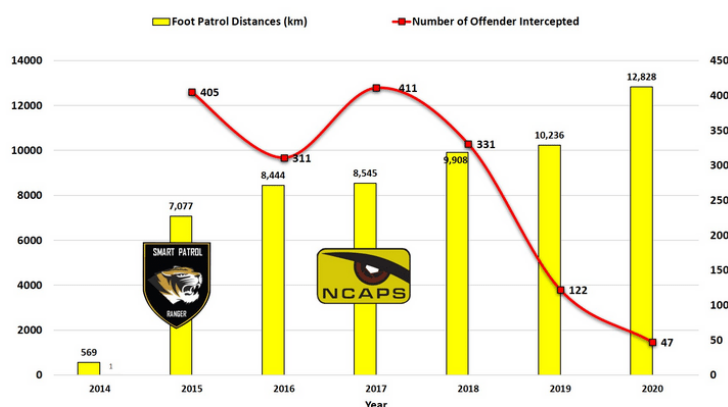
ABOUT 65,000 KM covered by SMART patrolling in all four project sites combined, including by teams combining national rangers and members from Karen communities in WEFKOM. As a result, the level of threat encountered per km patrolled has been reduced to a fraction of what it was in 2017 in particular in Thap Lan National Park (TLNP)

ONLY 10 NEW STUMPS of rosewood detected in 2020. 12 timber poachers arrested including eight inside TLNP, with dozens more suspect intruders identified through the use of near-real time anti-poaching trail cameras and stopped prior to engage in cutting valuable rosewood timber

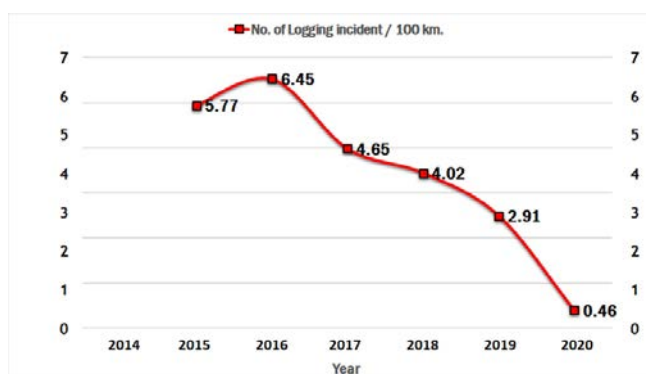
AN ESTIMATED 3,746,200 THB INCOME generated for 115 Karen households through the support to the production of handicraft and marketing of products

Testimonial:

An analysis of data from January 2015 till December 2020 indicates that the introduction of systematic SMART patrolling in TLNP, followed by the integration of the NCAPS system in the operations cycle, has had a remarkable effect in reducing the level of threat in the protected area. The number of suspect intruders is in steep decline, a vast majority of them being driven out of the park prior to committing any offense. To date, more than 80 rangers have been trained in SMART patrolling and are supported to fully function. As a result, in 2020 the patrolling effort covered over 80% of the area of the park, with the total distance walked by patrols well over 12,000 km.



This intensification of law enforcement together with the deployment of the cellular camera system against intruders allowing near real-time action, clearly result in a declining trend of rosewood poaching incidents inside the national park, saving precious standing trees.



"We are grateful to the European Union for providing us with adequate resources and capacities for our park rangers to patrol effectively. By doing so, we can continue and strengthen our daily work, and concentrate our effort on engaging further with local people, raising more awareness, and bringing additional support to conserve the rosewood trees of Thap Lan National Park."

Mr. Prawatsart Chanteap, Superintendent of TLNP, Department of National Parks (DNP)

LAO PDR

Investigative work leads to sting operation during which over twenty live animals are confiscated, including three individuals of the endangered Keeled Box Turtle species

Abstract:

In September, the project partner Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife (LCTW) received a tip-off via Facebook that a trader was selling a variety of animals including endangered turtles. LCTW was able to gather information about the seller; a report was shared with the Provincial Office of Forest Inspection in Khammouane, enabling the law enforcement agency to intervene and rescue endangered species.



Keeled Box Turtle *Cuora mouhotii*, a forest turtle species listed as Endangered in IUCN Red List

Context:

In recent years, and despite increased efforts by the Government of Lao PDR to implement its CITES obligations and commitments to address illegal wildlife trade, its responses to combat wildlife trafficking have been continuously hindered by insufficient capacity, lack of information and weak coordination among law enforcement agencies, and with those of neighboring countries. Lao PDR, bordering Thailand, Vietnam and China, has been identified as an important source, transit and destination country for wildlife parts. There is a growing number of ivory and wildlife markets catering for Chinese workers, transitters and travelers popping up across the country, with reports of tiger parts also being trafficked to Vietnam through Lao PDR.

Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises are also being increasingly traded, principally for food, pet, and traditional medicine; as a result, they are going through dramatic population declines.



Critically endangered Impressed Tortoise *Manouria impressa* released by LCTW in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area

Objectives:

- 1** To increase effectiveness of law enforcement responses to illegal wildlife trade through capacity building and intelligence analysis support
- 2** To promote transboundary cooperation in tackling wildlife trafficking between Lao PDR and neighboring countries, in particular Vietnam

Highlights:

A TRIPLING OF THE AUDIENCE AND OUTREACH of the national wildlife crime hotline, from ~5,000 to ~14,000 followers, as a result of an active promotional campaign

208 INTELLIGENCE/INFORMATION coming from the wildlife crime hotline, key informants and investigation trips to wildlife trade 'hotspots' - at least 124 of which were about the project's target species

45 INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTS on trafficking networks of target species shared with law enforcement agencies at national and provincial levels

6 CRIMINAL CASES involving target species launched as a result of project partners interventions, with two legal prosecutions by judicial authorities completed successfully

Testimonial:

In September 2020, the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife (LCTW), project partner in Lao PDR, received tip-off information on the sale of various prohibited and protected wildlife in the central province of Khammouane, including, but not limited to, a ferret badger, various turtles and tortoises, slow lorises, and python. Upon receiving the tip-off, the staff at LCTW could gather reliable information about the exact location of the animals, and reported it to the Provincial Office of Forestry Inspection (POFI).



Based on the intelligence information, POFI officials raided the suspected location, intercepted the seller, and made confiscation of live animals including 15 bamboo rats, one ferret badger, one reticulated python, one baby rhesus macaque, one baby pig-tailed macaque, three pygmy slow lorises, three keeled box turtles - an endangered species -, and one Oldham's leaf turtle - one of the top five turtle taxa sold in mainland China markets. The animals were sent to LCTW's rescue center to receive veterinary treatment against respiratory infections, malnutrition, and parasites. Most of these animals' health improved; following rehabilitation, a number of the rescued animals were released back into the wild.

Mr. Sonexai Phomluangsy, Head of Khammouane Provincial Office of Forest Inspection (POFI) said,

"This case has shown us that illegal wildlife trade in Laos exists in different types - from local markets, in social media, and as transnational crime. Solving this issue in the past was challenging because of the lack of coordination and sharing, and gaps in our technical capacity. The active cooperation between various inspection authorities in the government and the support from NGOs has assisted us in tracking the offenders and rescue the wildlife. On behalf of the Provincial Forest Inspection, I would like to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to the European Union, the "Partners Against Wildlife Crime" project, and Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife for the technical support in assisting, coordinating and sharing crucial information."



VIETNAM

How can local journalists and national media contribute to enforce laws that protect wildlife from trafficking?

Abstract:

Vietnam is identified as both a destination and a transit country in a number of major routes for illegal wildlife trade. While law enforcement agencies are critical in handling wildlife crime, local journalists can contribute by gathering and presenting accurate information from the field to the government, for action. To contribute to disrupt wildlife crime networks in and/or related to Vietnam, the project builds capacities of such journalists to gather information professionally and securely, playing an important role in the pursuit of enforcement responses.

Context:

Despite relatively good coverage of wildlife crime in Vietnamese media, there are a very limited number of high-quality investigations led by journalists. The project's Vietnamese partner People and Nature Reconciliation (PanNature) has developed an extensive experience working with Vietnamese media. Besides regular field training exercises and investigative trips offered to journalists, PanNature also facilitates 'Media-Bridge' workshops where these journalists are connected to key experts and authorities with expertise and mandate to combat wildlife trafficking. Journalists are encouraged to package and present to targeted audiences the information they have gathered using diverse approaches, and to follow up and report on enforcement actions afterwards.



Birds sold in Thanh Hoa market, Long An Province



Local Forest Rangers checking Thanh Hoa market



Journalists on the trail of the last elephant of northern Vietnam

Objectives:

- 1** To increase the quality and quantity of intelligence generated by local journalists and NGOs on poaching and trafficking of wildlife including tiger, Asian elephant and freshwater turtles
- 2** To increase the number of enforcement actions on illegal trade of the project's target species in and/or related to Vietnam through civil society, academia and media leverage
- 3** To collect field evidence for policy advocacy on wildlife protection and against illegal wildlife farming and trade

Highlights:

129 JOURNALISTS equipped with new knowledge and skills in wildlife crime investigation and presentation of appropriate information to local authorities and the general public

133 ARTICLES published as a result, providing through telling stories a vivid picture of the situation of illegal wildlife hunting and trade in Vietnam

6 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS on project's target species shared with government agencies, leading to the opening of 3 criminal cases

Testimonial:

In October 2019, PanNature staff led three journalists to conduct a first investigative trip to the infamous Thanh Hoa market in the southern province of Long An. They spotted various wildlife species openly sold without evidence of legal sourcing. Appropriate information was shared to the national and provincial Forest Protection Departments (FPD). In March 2020, the same journalists returned to monitor changes. They joined the national FPD Task Force, the FPD Zone III, and the Thach Hoa district police for an inspection of the market. Dozens of live animals were seized on the spot, including otters, civets, owls, and nearly 40 kg of snakes; one shop owner was sanctioned with an administrative fine of 10 million VND (approximately €370). In subsequent days, the three journalists continued to survey the market, reported progress on local media, and went to interview the Deputy Chairman of Long An province - all in order to attract attention from the public and pile up pressure on enforcement authorities. As a result, the provincial Chairman issued an Instruction Letter ordering all relevant agencies in the district to handle the situation decisively. In parallel, echoing the Covid-19 pandemic crisis unfolding, the journalist team conducted and broadcast interviews with conservation organizations' representatives to highlight the severe risks to humans such wildlife markets pose through the transmission of zoonotic diseases.

"Two months later, we published additional articles to report progress in Thanh Hoa market and organized new investigative trips to other wildlife trade locations in neighboring provinces to expose the overexploitation of wildlife at an alarming rate, and its consequences on nature and human's health" said one member of the journalist team, who wishes to remain anonymous.

"The key point is, we journalists should use our new knowledge, investigative skills, and media power to detect burning issues, dig deep in search of facts and evidences, in order to support but also to monitor progress on enforcement actions. And we should not stop until the job is done."



PanNature staff and three journalists conducting their inaugural trip to Thanh Hoa wildlife market



In January 2021, that very team of journalists received the first prize of the VIEWS Award 2020 (Vietnam Information on Environment-Wildlife-Sustainability) by CHANGE - a national organization promoting hands-on actions and networking for environment sustainability - in recognition of the quality of their work covering illegal tiger wildlife trading in Vietnam that was published in a series of articles by various media.

PR CHINA

Logistics delivery companies in outer province trained to counter shipping of illegal wildlife and wild products

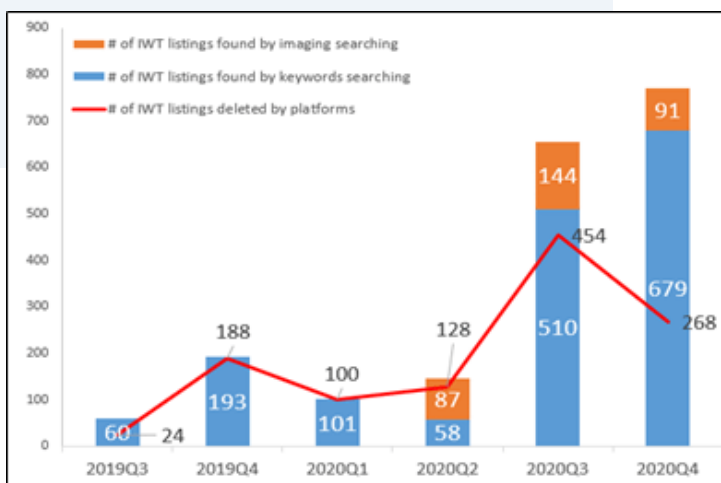
Abstract:

The project's work in China focuses on the end market; it aims to reduce both demand and offer of wildlife products using different strategies and approaches. That includes the development of partnerships with selected actors of the private sector to prevent and disrupt wildlife criminals using e-commerce and transportation services. Project partners and Chinese agencies co-hosted a training on "Preventing Smuggling of Wildlife and Wild Products" targeting key logistics and courier companies operating in southern China.

Context:

After a momentary drop in "wild meat" related postings and advertisements as observed by Chinese top search engines following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, it appears that traffickers are increasingly turning to online platforms for their transactions and use logistics delivery means to ship wild products.

From an analysis based on Chinese news collated from open-sources, in 2020 over 20% of IWT cases used postal and express packages in their transactions, indicating that logistics delivery industry has become a high risk industry in relation to illegal wildlife trade (IWT). Located in the Chinese-Vietnam border area, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is a major transit point in the wildlife trafficking route from Vietnam to China; a large proportion of illegal wildlife products entering China will be sent to end consumers through postal and express delivery in Guangxi. Staffs of logistics delivery companies often lack knowledge of IWT related laws and regulations; also, they have limited capacity to detect and identify illegal wildlife products during their inspection work, and little experience on how to report those. Thus, there is pressing need to mobilize postal administrations and logistics delivery companies to effectively crack down IWT routes, and to enhance their cooperation with law enforcement agencies.



Objectives:

- 1** To support partnerships with private sectors to prevent and disrupt wildlife criminals using e-commerce and transport/courier services
- 2** To facilitate international cooperation on wildlife and forest crimes between China and countries of the Mekong region
- 3** To reduce intentions to purchase products made from tiger, elephants and turtles through a behavioral science-based approach

Highlights:

1,670 IWT INFRINGING LISTINGS detected online and reported to the supporting e-commerce platforms, of which 950 were subsequently taken down - a 5-fold increase compared to 2019

OVER 560 STAFF from ByteDance, the developer of the video-sharing social networking apps TikTok and Douyin, trained on methods and best practices to detect and disrupt illegal wildlife trade online

6 PRE-BASELINE STUDIES around Chinese consumers' preference for project's target species parts completed - a key background research ahead of demand reduction initiatives

1 BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS UNIT established and functioning in Sun-Yat-Sen University, project partner

Testimonial:

A Training on "Preventing Smuggling of Wildlife and Wild Products" was held in Nanning City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, co-hosted by Guangxi Anti-Smuggling Management Office, China CITES Management Authority's Guangzhou office, and project partners. Over 70 participants participated, from enforcement agencies, transportation and post administrations, and 29 major logistics and courier delivery companies. Experts from the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China CITES Science Commission, WCS and IFAW gave technical lectures on CITES implementation and wildlife species management in China, on the endangered species most involved in IWT, on how to identify wildlife products, on the latest trends in wildlife cybercrime, and on the key role of logistics delivery companies in countering wildlife trafficking. During the training, SF Express (Guangxi) committed to implement new standards in the manual inspection of parcels, in addition to an all-round, systematic use of X-ray for inspection.



Mr. Xu Chengwei, official from Guangxi's Postal Administration, giving a lecture on policies and laws pertinent to transportation of wildlife and wild products



Front line staff of SF Express Guangxi learning relevant laws and regulations and how to identify commonly shipped wild products

"SF Express in Guangxi has good ties with law enforcement agencies in the province. For wildlife products found but difficult to identify by front-line couriers, we will immediately report them to our headquarters and relevant agencies", said Mr. Pan Guoqing, Deputy General Manager.

"We are willing to cooperate with government authorities and non-governmental organizations to strengthen our detection of illegal wildlife products. We will transfer the knowledge we gained from this training to front-line staff through internal trainings, in order to build up an effective net to intercept such products."



Mr. Pan Guoqing, Deputy General Manager of SF Express in Guangxi, shares his experience preventing the transportation of illegal wildlife in the operations of his company

CASE STUDIES

2021 HIGHLIGHTS



CAMBODIA

Support to small-scale aquaculture provides an alternative to illegal fishing activities, contributing to conservation of fisheries

Abstract:

In Cambodia, the project works with model farmers living along the Sre Ambel and Mekong rivers. They receive both technical training and financial support to establish a home-based, small-scale, integrated agriculture and aquaculture system. Through this support, these farmers harvest vegetable and farmed fish for family consumption, with surplus sold at local markets, generating an additional income and reducing fishing burden.



Checking on the family fish pond in the Mekong river project site

Context:

Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises are going through dramatic population declines. Cambodia supports globally significant populations of a number of highly threatened turtle species, including the Royal Turtle *Batagur affinis* and the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle *Pelochelys cantorii* - both species largely restricted to intact wetlands in the Mekong and Sre Ambel river systems. Unfortunately, Cambodia has become both a source for the illegal trade of turtles and also a transit country for turtles trafficked from Thailand and Malaysia onto Vietnam and China. The continued sand dredging, illegal fishing, overexploitation and loss of habitat from land grabbing and the clearance of riparian flooded forests, are major threats to the survival of these species, at great risk of extinction. A core focus of the project is to address threats to populations of these two critically endangered species, which include accidental capture by fisherfolk and hunting or poaching for local consumption or commercial trade, in both river systems. To address these issues, project partners engage with local communities in freshwater turtle protection and conservation, in collaboration with the Fisheries Administration and selected Community Fisheries. It also supports the development of home-based, family-owned aquaculture systems that generate incomes and improve livelihoods.



Pelochelys cantorii

Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection in key source sites for endangered species of Asian freshwater turtles
- 2** To increase effectiveness of law enforcement and justice sectors to combat wildlife and turtle trafficking
- 3** To increase transboundary coordination to combat wildlife trafficking especially with China
- 4** To reduce preference for illegally sourced products of turtle and tortoise species

Highlights:

76 TURTLE NESTS protected by community members from nearby villages as part of negotiated conservation agreements, and resulting in 1,300 successful hatchlings of endangered turtles

775 DAYS OF JOINT PATROLLING carried out at source sites, covering over 18,000 km largely on boat along the Sre Ambel and Mekong river systems

1,140 HOUSEHOLDS participating in and benefitting from livelihood development activities: incentive for nest protection, patrolling, aquaculture, vegetable gardening, etc.

1,860 INFORMATION REPORTS recorded or received through the wildlife crime hotline and other sources, of which at least 591 were specific to freshwater turtle and tortoise species

105 RAID AND RESCUE OPERATIONS conducted against illegal turtle and tortoise traders, of which 15 resulted in legal action against the perpetrators

Testimonial:



Ms. Nuth Vanna, model farmer in Sre Ambel river site



Mr. Prum Chantha, model farmer in Mekong river site

Ms. Nuth Vanna joined the project-supported Community Livelihood Improvement Programme in 2019. Before that, she was raising poultry at home, while her husband went fishing in the Sre Ambel river or worked in local farms to make a living. Ms. Vanna said,

"I am interested to join the project because, beyond my contribution to protecting and conserving the Royal turtles, I learn new skills on how to raise fish, which I can use to increase our family income."

Ms. Vanna's living conditions have improved since being part of the programme. She said that now, her family has not only enough food to eat, but can sell fish at the market and to her neighbours, making an income that covers basic daily expenses of her family and supports the education of her two godsons. Ms. Vanna shared her successful experience with other residents in the village; three other families have since joined the programme and started to raise fish at home too.

Also a model farmer, Mr. Prum Chantha has completed two cycles of catfish cultures; he could sell 137 kg of fish, earning approximately US\$287. He also harvested up to 25 kg of farmed fish for his family consumption, thus reducing the burden to go fishing in the river. Mr. Chantha said,

"I am very happy to be part of this programme because I can earn additional incomes that reduce my family burden. And now I have a lot of time with my family looking after my children because I don't have to go out fishing. I am also happy that I could transfer my knowledge to others in my village."

MYANMAR

Community-led conservation approaches are vital for long-term conservation of Asian elephants in the Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range (RYER)

Abstract:

The project aims to disrupt illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market by leveraging civil society partnership to increase the effectiveness of conservation actions. To achieve this objective, the work in Myanmar focusses on enhancing elephant protection at a regionally important site, the Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range (RYER).

The project partners are working together to enhance local awareness and participation in conservation, increasing strategic protection through community rangers and community guardians, and coordinating closely with local conservation partners. Partners aim to combat wildlife crime and reduce human–elephant conflict (HEC), whilst supporting livelihood security for communities around RYER.



Community guardians standing by an elephant watch-tower used for HEC mitigation



Discussions among community rangers for patrol planning

Context:

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in commercial poaching of Asian elephants in Myanmar due to market demand for elephant skin and other parts in neighbouring countries, particularly China. At least 59 elephants were killed in 2017. Elephant poaching is organized by groups of hunters supported by international smugglers. Another threat is habitat degradation, which also leads to increased human-elephant conflict. The Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range (RYER), in the western coastal area of Myanmar, is a regionally important source site for elephants, and a strategic area for combating elephant trafficking. It has been proposed as a flagship site for 'Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE)' - the CITES-led site-based system designed to monitor trends in the illegal killing of elephants, build management capacity and provide information to help range states make appropriate management and enforcement decisions.

Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection activities in and around Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range Wildlife Sanctuary (RYER), a key site for Asian elephants in the region
- 2** To reduce Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) in the vicinity of RYER through the participation of local communities
- 3** To increase transboundary coordination to combat wildlife trafficking especially with China

Highlights:

0 ELEPHANT CARCASS detected or reported inside RYER, as in 2019 and 2020

181 DAYS OF PATROLLING by community-only Elephant Protection Units (EPUs) covering over 1,500 km inside RYER then in the Community Forest Areas adjacent to the protected area. The community EPUs are made up of community rangers and community guardians who live in villages around RYER

26 VILLAGES affected by elephant incursions nearby RYER received support and developed contingency plans on how best to reduce and mitigate human-elephant conflict (HEC)

1,040 MEMBERS OF COMMUNITIES living around RYER attended community meetings on reducing human-elephant conflict and countering wildlife trafficking

26 VILLAGES participated in a local community network to combat illegal wildlife trade and forest crime through sharing of information

ANOTHER 9 VILLAGES formed or reorganized conservation/HEC committees in charge of elephant conservation measures

Testimonial:

In November 2021, community-only monitoring resumed in Rakhine's Community Forest Area, a human-elephant conflict (HEC) hotspot along the southwestern boundary of RYER, with the collaboration of interested communities from affected villages. The community-led patrol teams are comprised of former community rangers of RYER and newly recruited and trained community members. They conduct patrol in pre-identified areas to monitor the movements of wild elephants, as a measure to mitigate HEC and combat elephant poaching.

U Myint Soe, 37-yr old, is a local community leader with more than four years of experience in elephant conservation and HEC mitigation. While leading his community patrol team, he said,

"Our effort on elephant conservation means not only protecting wild elephants, but also their habitats that are being threatened by human interference. Human-elephant conflict increases when they don't have enough safe habitat. We, our villagers, are being affected by this conflict since my childhood days. I am very proud to work on elephant conservation in our region together with my colleagues to reduce human-elephant conflict, as well as to protect valuable wildlife species and their habitats. I feel happy that we can reduce serious damage from elephant intrusion and also we see less poaching of elephants since the EU project activities are being implemented in our areas.

I, as a local community member, commit all my efforts to protect our forests and our wildlife."



MALAYSIA

Nationwide step-up in patrolling efforts through hiring of indigenous communities under the BP3 Programme supported by law enforcement agencies

Abstract:

The work in Malaysia focuses on the Endau-Rompin Landscape (ERL), one of three priority areas for tigers and elephants in the country. The recent government initiative 'BP3' has enabled dozens of new patrol teams to be deployed nationwide, made up of indigenous people supported by veteran armed forces personnel. This program is one of the most significant initiatives for on-the-ground protection of wildlife in the country, sorely needed to curb the threat of poaching, especially by Indochinese syndicates.



Group photo with newly recruited BP3 patrollers in Johor State



Two Cambodian agarwood poachers arrested following BP3 patrol report

Context:

Within Peninsular Malaysia, historically there has always been limited resource allocated towards hiring rangers, even in protected areas. Outside protected areas, which form more than 80% of wildlife habitat, there is minimal patrolling presence. Recognizing this gap and the subsequent nationwide decline of tigers, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks established in 2020 a major initiative called the Biodiversity Patrolling and Protection Programme (BP3). This programme aims to mobilize indigenous villagers and army veterans to patrol wildlife habitats. In June 2020, an initial 100 military veterans and 50 indigenous people were appointed after completing a 10-day basic training course. In 2021, the initiative underwent a rapid expansion, to 600 patrollers. This initiative also associates conservation NGOs working on tiger conservation. NGOs play a role in managing a number of BP3 personnel which remain under the payroll of the Federal Government. The NGOs were selected on the basis that they have existing patrolling programmes, hence they already have expertise and coordination capabilities within the landscapes that they work in. In April 2021, project partners officially took on eighteen BP3 patrollers to patrol the Endau-Rompin landscape. They are responsible to carry out the protection work in this landscape, including removing snares, deploying camera traps for surveillance purposes, conducting deep forest counter-poaching patrols and tracking of offenders when required..

Objectives:

- 1** To increase patrol efforts and the impacts of the patrolling in the Endau-Rompin Landscape, a key source site for endangered tigers in the region
- 2** To improve information and intelligence sharing among relevant agencies, partners, and targeted community members
- 3** To promote public use of the wildlife crime outline to counter wildlife trafficking

Highlights:

A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN PATROL EFFORT from previous years, at 12,180 km patrolled, more than twice the level of 2020

A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF # THREAT encountered per km, about half of 2020 rate

210 DAYS OF PATROLLING carried out at source site by 322 patrols, comprising the indigenous community BP3 patrolling, the multi-agency *Ops Bersepadu Khazanah* (OBK) patrolling, and the monitoring work by project partner

360 INTELLIGENCE/INFORMATION from foot patrolling, online monitoring and local networks recorded in SMART module and database for further wildlife crime analysis

87 INFORMATION REPORTS received through the wildlife crime hotline

Testimonial:

Following the recruitment of indigenous *Orang Asli* community members from the villages surrounding Endau-Rompin National Park, all new recruits were introduced to the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 and trained on basic patrol skills and equipment including GPS-based navigation, identification and recording of wildlife signs and “snare signatures”. BP3 patrolling under the project started operating mid-2021 and conducted 77 patrols covering 3,960 km in the landscape. The project's BP3 teams received credit for noted success within weeks of operations, as patrollers discovered and removed 24 illegal Indochinese campsites. One of these camps was still in active use by two Cambodians poaching agarwood, the world's rarest and most expensive variety of wood to be sold. The information was channeled to the relevant authorities for enforcement; the two offenders were arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to a combined 18-month jail term under the National Forestry Act 1984. Mr. Loo Main Leang, an indigenous villager recruited as Endau-Rompin patroller under the BP3 initiative, was part of the team that discovered the camp.

“I am so grateful to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks and WC&S Malaysia for giving me the opportunity to participate in the BP3 initiative that is beneficial for both myself and my entire indigenous community. Through this programme, I became aware of the effects of snares on wildlife that can lead to the extinction of entire species, especially the Malayan tiger which is featured prominently on our national coat of arms. Once I saw for myself the threats posed by Indochinese poachers, I began to understand why the enforcement authorities are taking serious measures towards these people. By participating in this programme, I can see the collaborative efforts of various parties to conserve wildlife in our country. My hope is that the EU project will continue because apart from generating income, this programme is also able to change the way I think and convey a message to the community and my generation about the importance of caring for wildlife and their habitats.”



Mr. Loo Main Leang, member of BP3 patrol team in Endau-Rompin landscape

THAILAND

Increasing people's awareness and love for forest and wildlife through the Nature and Wildlife Education Programme

Abstract:

The Nature and Wildlife Education Programme implemented in the western forest complex (WEFCOM) supports the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) in carrying out various activities for children and teachers from schools in the area and for community youth outside of the education system. The programme's curriculum includes teaching on the importance of the forest complex and its wildlife for regional biodiversity, and on how communities can work with protected area authorities to conserve wildlife and habitats in mutually beneficial ways.

Context:

WCS-Thailand's Nature Education team, in coordination with officers from Huai Kha Khaeng and Thung Yai Naresuan protected areas in WEFCOM, has been organizing various nature education activities for students, teachers, and local CSOs since 2008. These activities support the increase in awareness of local communities on forest and wildlife crime issues, and encourage these communities to engage and contribute to increase the effectiveness of Government action. The programme offers a variety of training courses and workshops to educate youth and other volunteers on the importance to conserve ecosystems and wildlife resources; this includes a chapter on the negative impacts wildlife crime has at community, national and international levels.



Youth creating campaign posters against poaching and trade of tiger and gibbon in violation of the Wildlife Conservation Act. #1362 is DNP's Hotline number to report wildlife crime



Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection in three wildlife sanctuaries of the Western Forest Complex, a key source site for endangered tigers in the region
- 2** To form and support the deployment of smart, joint patrol teams to detect and prevent threats to wildlife and habitats
- 3** To develop and use intelligent approaches to deter poaching and trafficking of Siamese rosewood
- 4** To rally Karen ethnic communities around tiger conservation by supporting local, sustainable production of traditional handicraft products and the expansion of market opportunities

Highlights:

INCREASE IN TIGER DENSITY in all three protected area sites, with renewed evidence of dispersal of individual tigers outside of the project area

OVER 64,000 KM covered by SMART patrolling in all four project sites combined, including by teams combining forest rangers and members of Karen communities in WEFKOM

ANOTHER REDUCTION OF # THREAT encountered per km patrolled, standing at only 10% of what it was in 2017

31 NEW STUMPS of rosewood detected; a total of 40 poachers and loggers arrested, 66 poaching/logging sites destroyed, and over 600 sets of poaching gear removed

AN ESTIMATED 3,756,200 THB INCOME generated for 136 Karen households through support to the production of handicraft and marketing of products

Testimonial:

In 2015, WCS helped the DNP to set up and pilot a wildlife conservation volunteer system around Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary. As the system was being established, WCS used the strong network of nature education groups that it has been working with as part of its nature education programme since 2008, to recruit volunteers who were keen to participate in conservation. Ms. Angkana "Tao" Makvilai, Nature Education & Community-based Conservation Manager, is leading this initiative. She said,

"We started with training to educate and provide volunteers with knowledge and understanding of the value and importance of natural resources and wildlife; we had them to participate in conservation research and education activities implemented with protected area staff; for example, volunteers were involved in the design and development of nature trails in a designated zone, and they were trained to become trainers on wildlife and habitat conservation for youth camps."



Ms. Angkana "Tao" Makvilai, Nature Education & Community-based Conservation Manager, WCS Thailand

As the project came in, it sought to expand the concept of volunteer work by adding a wildlife trafficking element to it. It is expected that, once trained, "wildlife watchdog" volunteers will be able to leverage actions of law enforcement agencies with the public and the media. Recently, the project organized an art workshop for 61 volunteers from a local environmental conservation youth club near Thung Yai West. In the workshop, students learned how to design and produce conservation advocacy materials in the form of campaign posters. While doing so, they demonstrated increased awareness of wildlife trafficking issues threatening charismatic species surrounding them, and their willingness to be part of the solution.

"Following the workshop, it was so rewarding to see more participants joining the private LINE application group of the independent conservation watchdog "สายข่าวทุ่งใหญ่"!"

LAO PDR

Intelligence information supports multi-agency enforcement, leading to a successful prosecution against prohibited elephant ivory possession and trade

Abstract:

In April 2021, enforcement agencies in Savannakhet province arrested one suspect and confiscated elephant ivory, based on intelligence information from open-source social media research. The case resulted in a successful prosecution and court decision.



Consultation meeting with Lao's CWT enforcement agencies DCNEC and DOFI

Context:

In recent years, and despite increased efforts by the Government of Lao PDR to implement its CITES obligations and commitments to address illegal wildlife trade, its responses to combat wildlife trafficking have been continuously hindered by insufficient capacity, lack of information and weak coordination among law enforcement agencies, and with those of neighboring countries. Lao PDR, bordering Thailand, Vietnam and China, has been identified as an important source, transit and destination country for wildlife parts. There is a growing number of ivory and wildlife markets catering for Chinese workers, transients and travelers popping up across the country, with reports of tiger parts also being trafficked to Vietnam through Lao PDR. Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises are also increasingly traded, principally for food, pet, and traditional medicine; as a result, they are going through dramatic population declines.



Objectives:

- 1** To increase effectiveness of law enforcement responses to illegal wildlife trade through capacity building and intelligence analysis support
- 2** To promote transboundary cooperation in tackling wildlife trafficking between Lao PDR and neighboring countries, in particular Vietnam

Highlights:

THE FIRST WILDLIFE CRIME HOTLINE RESPONSE AND RESCUE TRAINING for wildlife law enforcement officers from DOFI, POFI, National Police, Interpol, Customs, Environmental Police, and prosecutors

262 INTELLIGENCE/INFORMATION coming from the wildlife crime hotline, key informants and investigation trips to wildlife trade 'hotspots' - 121 of them were about the project's target species

37 INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTS on trafficking networks of target species shared with law enforcement agencies at national and provincial levels

6 CRIMINAL CASES involving target species launched as a result of project partners interventions, with 4 cases leading to arrests and two legal prosecution by judicial authorities completed successfully

Testimonial:

In December 2020, the Police Department of Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (DCNEC) organized an online research and information analysis training with technical support from the project. Through exercises on open-source research and social media monitoring, participants were able to collect and analyze information on suspected elephant ivory advertisements in Savannakhet province through Facebook. Further research and information support exchanged between project partner WCS and DCNEC led to organizing an intelligence briefing with the Savannakhet Provincial Environment Police Division and the Savannakhet Forest Inspection Office in March 2021. In April 2021, a joint effort of the Savannakhet Forest Inspection Office and the Police resulted in the arrest of one Lao national and the confiscation of elephant ivory items weighing 2.14 kilograms. In May 2021, the Office of the Prosecutor received the case summary from the Forestry Inspection Office, leading to a successful prosecution with the Court decision sentencing the suspect to two years imprisonment and a 3,000,000 Lao Kip fine.

Mr. Mouknivong Chanthavong, Deputy Director of Savannakhet's Provincial Environmental Police (EP), said,

"The technical support and information assistance provided by the European Union project and our partner WCS have assisted us in better monitoring and investigating wildlife-related prohibited activities in social media.

We can continue supporting the Forest Inspection Office in investigating wildlife crime in Lao PDR."



Mr. Keoudone Nousyhalath, Deputy Director of Savannakhet's Provincial Forest Inspection (POFI), said,

"Successful investigations and prosecutions to combat illegal wildlife trade can be achieved through strong cooperation and coordination on information, capacity and resources with our P-WEN partner agencies such as the Forest Authority, Customs, and Police. We are grateful for information and support received from local authorities and local people, and especially from our partner organizations."



VIETNAM

How would you know if your CWT (counter wildlife trafficking) training was a success?

Abstract:

The work in Vietnam includes providing training and on-the-job technical support to national and provincial law enforcement and judiciary officers as they process suspected cases of wildlife poaching and trafficking.

During 2020, the project supported and facilitated a series of training courses to strengthen the investigation and prosecution capacity of police, prosecutors and judges.

In 2021, the project proceeded with a post-training evaluation, seeking to assess behaviour change and measure direct results, if any. The evaluation gathered, for a majority of participants, expressions of positive and significant change in Confidence, Attitude, Knowledge, Skills and Practice. Most respondents were applying what they had learned during the course.



The representative of EUDEL Vietnam delivering the opening speech



Group exercise during the first training course

Context:

In recent decades, Vietnam has been considered as an important transit point, hotspot and destination in the illegal wildlife trade chain. To tackle this increasing and alarming trend, the central government has made efforts to address the legal framework directed at illicit wildlife trade, and to improve the national law system. Police and prosecutors are key actors in investigating and prosecuting crimes. To catalyze effective and timely enforcement actions, it is crucial to have regular briefing with these agencies, to receive updates on changes to the legal framework, and to share information on individual illegal wildlife trade cases in key hotspots where wildlife criminals are operating.

During June to October 2020, four training courses were organized under the project, targeting 65 police officers and 63 prosecutors and judges from 17 provinces and cities across Vietnam. The objectives of the training were to raise trainees' awareness and interest in CWT, and to provide knowledge and improve skills in investigating and prosecuting wildlife cases. The training also served as a vetting process to identify trustworthy and active individuals in these agencies.

Objectives:

- 1** To increase the quality and quantity of intelligence generated by local journalists and NGOs on poaching and trafficking of wildlife including tiger, Asian elephant and freshwater turtles
- 2** To increase the number of enforcement actions on illegal trade of the project's target species in and/or related to Vietnam through civil society, academia and media leverage
- 3** To collect field evidence for policy advocacy on wildlife protection and against illegal wildlife farming and trade

Highlights:

731 JOURNALISTS members of a local network facilitated and supported to present appropriate information on illegal wildlife trade to local authorities and the general public

2 MEDIA CAMPAIGNS, 220 ORIGINAL ARTICLES published by project partners, reaching x00,000s people

5 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS on project's target species shared with government agencies

13 CRIMINAL CASES involving target species opened with project partner involvement

Testimonial:

During 2021, WCS-Vietnam collaborated with the Foreign Relations Department (VO2) and Hanoi Procuratorate University (HPU) to evaluate the effectiveness of four training courses delivered jointly in 2020, for 128 frontline environmental and economic police officers, and prosecutors and judges; 113 of them responded to the post-training questionnaire, accounting for 88%. This survey was conducted to identify how participants applied the new knowledge/skills they gained in their enforcement actions against wildlife trafficking, and the challenges that they were still facing in handling wildlife cases.

o 66 trainees (~58% of respondents) indicated that they had applied the learned knowledge and practice in their work with a frequency of “weekly” (18 trainees) and “monthly” (48 trainees) [Fig.1];

o 98 trainees (~87% of respondents) certified that they had shared the learned knowledge with colleagues. Transfer of new knowledge occurred through sharing of copies of training materials, and direct talks on key contents of the relevant legal framework while handling a specific case;

o 7 trainees (~6% of respondents) revealed their involvement in handling nine IWT-related violations. One case was under prosecution; another case successfully ended with a conviction and 5-yr imprisonment. The remaining violations were still under investigation or resulted in administrative penalties.

Figure 1. Frequency applying acquired knowledge in daily work

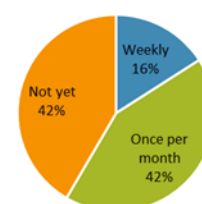
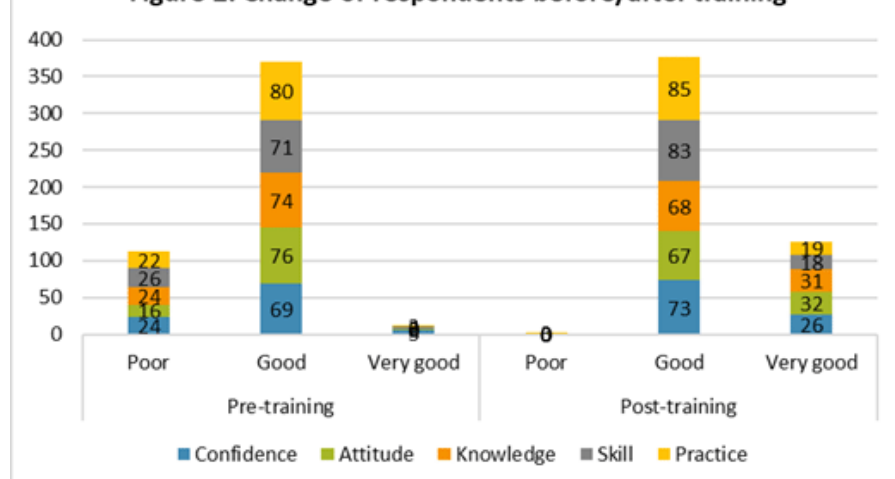


Figure 2. Change of respondents before/after training



Most respondents reported a positive and significant change in Confidence, Attitude, Knowledge, Skills and Practice following participation in the training. Only three respondents indicated no change nor results [Fig.2].

When responding to the questionnaire, some participants provided concrete examples of how they applied the new knowledge learned at the training in their work handling specific wildlife violation cases.

For example, a trainee of Ninh Binh's provincial economic police division used new knowledge in wildlife identification when engaged in the seizure of a serow individual transported by two offenders. Other trainees from Tay Ninh's provincial environmental police division used the new network and contacts they created during the training to conduct a forensic examination and prepare a prosecution case for illegal storage of 39 dried bodies of Hawksbill sea turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*, an endangered species with prioritized protection.

PR CHINA

Researchers from academia trained on the use of behavioural science to undermine demand for wildlife parts

Abstract:

The project's work in China focuses on the end market; it aims to reduce both demand and offer of wildlife products using different strategies, including working on reducing intentions to purchase products made from tiger, elephant and freshwater turtles through a behavioral science-based approach. A series of online "Behavioural Insights Practitioner Masterclasses" was delivered to Behavioural Insights Unit (BIU) members who have since applied their new knowledge to conduct targeted surveys and trial experiments.



Context:

The Chinese government is paying increased attention to illegal trade and consumption of wildlife products. More effective enforcement and growing public awareness on wildlife trafficking issues appear to drive positive change in nationwide attitudes towards less consumption of wildlife. However, wildlife populations remain threatened as illegal and poorly regulated legal trade persists. This demonstrates a pressing need for practitioners to identify pivotal drivers amongst persisting consumers, uncovering missing links that may close the intention-action gap and hopefully lead towards achieving observable, attainable and sustained changes in wildlife consumption.

As the conservation expertise in China is predominantly centered around biological sciences, there is growing interest amongst practitioners to explore interdisciplinary practices and apply mixed methods in human-subject research, and revisit intervention strategies to optimize impacts on pro-environmental behaviours. In this context, the project facilitated the establishment of an interdisciplinary Behavioural Insights Unit hosted by Sun-Yat-Sen University (SYSU) in Guangzhou. The BIU counts 40 members from academic institutions, research institutes and NGOs. To improve members' knowledge and capacity to apply behavioural science in interventions to reduce illegal consumption of wildlife, project partners collaborate with a frontrunning expert team that provides training and mentorship to BIU members on the use of behavioural insights in IWT-relevant research.

Objectives:

- 1** To support partnerships with private sectors to prevent and disrupt wildlife criminals using e-commerce and transport/courier services
- 2** To facilitate international cooperation on wildlife and forest crimes between China and countries of the Mekong region
- 3** To reduce intentions to purchase products made from tiger (bones), elephants (skin) and turtles (as pets) through a behavioural science-based approach

Highlights:

1,314 IWT INFRINGING LISTINGS detected online and reported to the responsible e-commerce platforms, of which 763 were subsequently taken down, in addition to the removal of 1,019 posts from previous years

1 BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS UNIT (BIU) functioning in Sun-Yat-Sen University (SYSU), project partner, with 40 standing members, from different academic schools within SYSU, other Chinese academic institutions, conservation NGOs, and undergraduate and graduate students and research associates

33 BIU members (19 females) extensively trained in applying behavioural insights in interventions to reduce illegal consumption of target wildlife products; of which 17 have already applied new knowledge and skills for the national baseline survey, the target baseline study, and in trial experiment design

Testimonial:

Co-hosted by project partners, the Behavioural Insights Practitioner Masterclass was held for BIU members during 2020-2021. Across three semesters, participants were introduced to theories in behavioural science; best practices in research to measure explicit/implicit preferences and sensitive behaviours in the context of IWT; and demonstration on how behavioural insights can be used to develop evidence-based intervention designs and evaluation to elicit behavioural change effectively. The masterclass placed an emphasis on communicating technical jargon in accessible terms; conceptualizing theory in practice via interactive exercises and sharing lessons learned from relevant case studies from other disciplines; and presenting achievable solutions with replicable and adaptable frameworks in the context of reducing consumption of illegal wildlife products.

"I really liked this masterclass seminar series as it systematically introduced behavioural sciences customized to the context of wildlife products consumption. Like many other BIU members in our group, I learned about mechanisms behind decision-making and behaviors, and the context that behaviors may change or not," said Ms Beilu Duan, project researcher with SYSU. *"This knowledge has helped us in designing interventions for reducing wildlife demand in our project. Moreover, we have learned many scientific methods to measure sensitive behaviors and evaluate behavior change which we usually find challenging in applied research. I find them very helpful and useful in inspiring the design of interventions on reducing illegal consumption of wildlife products in China."*

I'm now going to show you one comic. After you have looked at this information, We will ask you some questions about it. And also your opinions. Your answers are anonymous.

下面我们会给您看一幅漫画，看完以后，我们会问一些有关漫画的问题和您的看法。您的回答都是匿名的。



Design of one of the series of trial intervention posters to be used to evaluate influence of messaging in elephant skin consumption



Ms. Beilu Duan in her group practicing theories via interactive exercises and reflective sessions



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