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UNDP Management Response
[Combatting Illegal Wildlife Trade, focusing on Ivory, Rhino Horn, Tiger and Pangolins in Thailand] Mid Term Review
Date: 04 October 2021

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Overall comments: This is the summary of the MTR

Evaluation Recommendation 1: Revise the project's monitoring framework.

1.1 Results framework. The project results framework, as is, lacks project baseline data for a subset of project indicators. Also, part of the indicators does not fulfill the SMART criteria in their current form, and they could be made more SMART compliant. The revision of the results framework is important to ensure a valid end of project evaluation. (*Within three months of MTR*)

- **Objective indicator 0.1:** *Thailand WEN functioning, but lacks operational task forces, engagement of all key national stakeholders, and sustainable financing; Forest Protection Operation Centre formed April 2017*;   there seems to be a mismatch between the indicator itself and then the identified midterm and end of project targets, where the midterm and end of project targets do not mirror each other (nor the baseline) making it difficult to monitor. Also, it should be noted that the baseline, midterm, and end of the project all have 3 listed as their base figure which seems to indicate that there will be no change during the project duration. Thus, there would be a cause to revisit the indicator as part of a results framework revision

- **Objective indicator 0.3:** It is not possible to make judgement as to the "SMARTness" of the indicator the baseline, midterm and end. Because of the project targets should have been determined during year 1 these have not been included in the project results framework by the time of the project midterm. This even though the project has identified the two relevant indicators as follows 1) Wildlife crime is thoroughly investigated using an intelligence-led approach and 2) Specialized investigation techniques are used to combat wildlife crimes as required. But although identified, the indicator for the midterm and end of project targets have not been specified to the knowledge of the MTR team. Even in case that the already identified ICCWC scores for the indicators are used for the baseline, the targets for midterm and end of project are still to be identified. This issue should be addressed during the proposed revision of the results framework.

- **Component 1 indicator 1.1:** By and large meets the SMART criteria and the end of project target of Baseline + 25% seems valid (i.e. 20), but with the midterm target being baseline + 10% project targets presents a calculation issue which makes the targets less useful as one cannot have 17.6 joint IWT enforcement operations per year. **In this regard, it would be better to provide actual numbers as indicator targets**. There is however an underlying issue which is whether this indicator is trying to capture joint IWT enforcement operations which are a direct result of the project engagement and Thailand WEN task forces or whether it will gauge increased cooperation in general. As baseline data has been provided it should be the latter in which the Thailand WEN taskforces would provide important input.

- **Component 1 indicator 1.2 c):** The indicator is a statement rather than and actual indicator such as for instance *reporting mechanism against strategy/action plans established* and used for *performance evaluation* by (somebody)

- **Component 2 Indicator 2.1:** As the timespan between seizure to arrest and prosecution (and conviction) can be prolonged one should not look at the data on an annual basis but rather on a case-by-case basis. The midterm and end of project targets presents a calculation issue, which makes the targets less meaningful. For the sub-targets i), ii) and iv) they all state that there should be an increase of >10% and >25% at midterm and end of project respectively. Particularly the data for iv) illustrates this, as it is not possible to increase the value of zero with 10 or 25%, and 25% of 1 (the baseline of i)) for instance would be 0.25. As for Component 1 indicator 1.1 it would be beneficial to provide actual (whole) numbers as indicator targets.

- **Outcome indicators (3.1, 3.2, 3.3):** The project baselines, midterm targets and end of project targets have not been established as they should have been (as per the ProDoc) during the first year of the project. And even though suggestions to use data from work done by, among other, UWA in 2018 as the baseline for the three indicators, midterm assessments using UWA methodologies and target groups have, at the time of the MTR, not been performed. While the use of baselined data not developed by the project is to be encouraged (to avoid overlap and provide for cost-savings), care has to be taken in ensuring that the surveys to be used are in line with the project's established indicators and can in actual fact provide the needed data which fulfill the intend of the indicators.

- **Component 3 indicator 3.1** To address the indicator 3.1 which is related to key target groups responses to Thai laws and penalties imposed for IWT. For this indicator it might be more relevant to use identified trends from the online monitoring undertaking under activity 1.2.4 "In collaboration with DNP and UWA, support an assessment of market availability (physical and online) for five selected CITES-listed species traded in Thailand and system for monitoring of market response before and after the revised WARPA legislation"

- **Component 3 indicator 3.2 and 3.3:** The project indicators under the outcome clearly points towards that the effects of the SBCC campaigns need to measure throughout the project (2023) The MTR team therefore suggests that such a strategy is developed in the near future and is aimed at DNP instead of being tied to the project per se. A DNP focused strategy could provide DNP for a long-term vision (and directions for implementing this vision) for how it in the coming years could pinpoints its efforts towards high-impact target groups to ensure maximum change in a cost-effective manner.

- **Gender Mainstreaming**: Project is still to develop its gender mainstreaming strategy under its activity 4.2.5. This even though Gender was to be factored into project implementation through a gender mainstreaming strategy and monitored as part of the M&E framework. A gender mainstreaming strategy could provide more detailed directions for the project including how to include gender equality into the hiring processes, the project management processes, training and workshop setups (such as potential all women's trainings) particularly in connection with the project's

- engagement with local communities in the project's two demonstration sites in Pengjan Village, Rattanawapi District, Nongkhai Province and Sadao Checkpoint, Sadao District, Songkhla Province

1.2 Risk table including the SESP. The project should review and reassess its risk table, including the SESP, and re-evaluate the risk levels in accordance. For one, risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic needs to feature stronger within said risk monitoring set-up. (Within three months of MTR)

1.3 GEF Core Indicators. As the project is to migrate into the GEF Core Indicator system, it needs to evaluate which indicators is relevant for the project and ensure that these are included into the UNDP and GEF reporting systems. (Within three months of MTR)

Management Response[1]:

- **Objective indicator 0.1: Partially accept**: PMU will revise the project result framework as indicated for Project objective **baseline a)** Since we have foreseen that the number of the joint operation partnership for Thailand WEN at the national and provincial level may not necessary to equal. It should depend on the type of operation and the number of the institution be involved in each joint operation partnership (need at least 2 institutions to be involved) however we also **fully accept** to break down baseline a) indicators into a sub-set of options 1) establish Thailand WEN 2) operational task forces 3) Forest protection operations center to address the issue of sustainable financing.

- **Objective indicator 0.3: Fully accept:** PMU will address the two relevant ICCWC indicators as follows 1) Wildlife crime is thoroughly investigated using an intelligence-led approach and 2) Specialized investigation techniques are used to combat wildlife crimes as required and identified indicators for the midterm, and completion target into the result framework.

- **Component 1 indicator 1.1: Fully accept** PMU will revise the midterm and the completion target from percentage (%) to the actual numbers of the Annual number of joint IWT Thailand WEN enforcement operations informed by intelligence and information exchange.

- **Component 1 indicator 1.2 c): Fully accept** PMU will revise the text of this indicator as per suggested *reporting mechanism against strategy/action plans established* and used for *performance evaluation* by (somebody)

- **Component 2 Indicator 2.1: Fully accept** PMU will revise the midterm and the completion indicators target of sub-targets i), ii) and iv) from percentage (%) to actual (whole) numbers as indicator targets.

- **Outcome indicator (3.1,3.2 and 3.3) Fully accept:** PMU will address the outcome project baselines, midterm targets, and end of project targets baseline in consultation with Responsible party (TRAFFIC) UNDP and DNP to ensure that the effects of the SBCC campaigns need to measure throughout the project (2023) including the SBCC a strategy is developed in the near future and is aimed at DNP instead of being tied to the project.

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[1] Select one: Fully Accept, Partially Accept, Reject

> **Component 3 indicators 3.1: Fully accept** PMU will address the indicator 3.1 to be more relevant to Identified cases for further investigations and law enforcement actions of DNP through the WARPA framework by assessing through a systematic online wildlife trade monitoring using a standardized methodology
>
> - **Component 3 indicator 3.2 and 3.3: Fully accept**: PMU will address the indicator 3.2 and 3.3 in consultation with Responsible party (TRAFFIC) UNDP and DNP to ensure that the effects of the SBCC campaigns need to measure throughout the project (2023) including the SBCC strategy that will be developed in the next few months of 2021 and is aimed at DNP instead of being tied to the project.
>
> - **GEF Core Indicators**. **Reject:** There is only one GEF Core Indicators that applies namely Core Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment.

Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking[2]	
			Status[3]	Comments
1.1 PMU to organize the consultation meeting with DNP IWT project implementation team and each Responsible party (TRAFFIC, TRACE, and IUCN) to identify the mentioned targets and address the unclear or pending baseline, midterm, and completion indicators target within the project result framework	25 August 2021	PMU-DNP	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
1.2 Project manager will share the revised project monitoring indicators with CO and RTA to obtain technical clearance from UNDP on the validity of the indicators (and their targets)	10 October 2021	PMU , CO UNDP , RTA	Initiated	Will be finalized by RTA and Project Board
1.3 PMU to conduct the Project board meeting to present and obtain approval of the revised indicators in the project results framework	30 October 2021	PMU-DNP	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
1.4 Project manager revises the SESP and reassess its risk table and re-evaluate the risk levels in accordance with any emerging SE risks. In related to the COVID-19 pandemic needs to feature stronger within said risk monitoring set-up. (Within three months of MTR)	September -December 2021	Project manager / DNP / Responsible Parties	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
Evaluation Recommendation 2: Establish stronger ownership and leadership				

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[2] Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC).

[3] Select one: Not initiated, Initiated, Completed, Completed, No longer applicable

For the reasons discussed in this MTR report, where there were delays in a subset of its activities and deliverables, there is a need to expedite and consolidate the project implementation. To ensure this, strong coordination and a stronger focus by senior management is needed. This, particularly to ensure the coordination between different departments within DNP but also in the coordination with the project's Responsible Parties. Also, for the project to be ultimately successful it needs to establish itself as a key-stone project with high visibility not least within government. This requires strong ownership and leadership within DNP, so as to champion the IWT enforcement (and the project) more broadly

Management Response: Fully accept: PMU will develop the project road map and milestones to expedite and consolidate the project implementation in close consultation with senior management of DNP , Responsible Parties and UNDP

Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	**Comments**
2.1 PMU to identify key task person of DNP both management and implementation team and Responsible parties to layout project road map and milestones from the Midterm stage to the completion stage	October 2021	PMU – DNP, Responsible Parties	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
2.2 PMU submit the project road map action plan to obtain approval from DNP high-level management	November 2021	PMU-DNP	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
2.3 PMU monitor the implementation of activities under the project road map and milestones	December 2021	PMU-DNP	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
Evaluation Recommendation 3: Prepare an adaptive management plan to ensure that project targets and deliverables are met.				
Management Response: Fully accept: PMU will develop a proper exit strategy and sustainability plan to ensure that all project outcomes and outputs are sustainable over time after project closure.				
Key Action(s)	**Timeframe**	**Responsible Unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Status	**Comments**
3.1 PMU conducts the consultation meeting with all implementation team, DNP , Responsible party to revisit the adaptive management plan under the scenario of a prolonged COVID-19 pandemic with exploring the realistic solution to use available virtual solutions/alternatives.	September – October 2021	PMU /DNP/ Responsible parties	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager

3.2 Revision of some project activities with possibility to switch to virtual or alternative platform and address in the project work plan.	September – December 2021	PMU /DNP/ Responsible parties	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
3.3 Develop a proper exit strategy and sustainability plan adaptive management plan to ensure that project targets and deliverables are met	March 2022	PMU /DNP/ Responsible parties	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager

Evaluation Recommendation 4: Align and determine "task managers" for the project outputs for the project duration

The Responsible Parties agreement with UNDP are for 36 months there is a question as to whether all ongoing and future planned activities are having assigned "task managers" Thus, in order to "bring the project home" it will be important for the project to have a clear vision for who will be in charge of what, for the remaining part of the project. This could include no-cost extensions of the current Responsible Parties agreement, and it could include DNP taking over certain parts (or all) of the outstanding activities

Management Response: Fully accept PMU will develop a proper exit strategy and sustainability plan to ensure that all project outcomes and outputs are sustainable over time after project closure.

Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	**Comments**
4.1 PMU will conduct the consultation meeting with all Responsible Parties, DNP, and UNDP to identify options and seek recommendations on how best to come up with a clear vision for the transition period and develop an action plan as a way forward.	November 2021	Project Manager / TRAFFIC / UNDP CO/ RTA / DNP	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
4.2 Develop a proper exit strategy and sustainability plan including mutual agreement on project transition action plan with the task manager.	March 2022	Project Manager / TRAFFIC / UNDP CO/ RTA / DNP	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager

Evaluation Recommendation: 5 Engage in realistic budget discussions

To ensure long-term sustainability of the project, established structures for long-term financing needs to be secured and active discussions and agreements for this need to be reached. As part of this, alternative financing models and budget, reallocations should be reviewed. Part of these discussions could/should include the findings of project's TSA work as well as other work the project is still to initiate.

Management Response: Partially accept : PMU will develop a proper exit strategy and sustainability plan to ensure that all project outcomes and outputs are sustainable over time after project closure**.** In order to accomplish this task PMU agree to conduct a deep discussion with DNP and all institutional agencies for the outstanding of the exiting financing to IWT situation at this stage using the findings from MTR as the evidence. However, we believe that this would take a long period of series of discussions before reaching an agreement on the realistic budget. Using the findings from the TSA study on the impact of IWT on the national economy will be an appropriate key message to bring those IWT agencies concerned with the sustainable financing issue which will be explained in recommendation 6.

Evaluation Recommendation 6: Prepare documentation supporting decision-makers

To facilitate the discussions and subsequent agreement on the financing of the long-term operations of the project established structures, the project should as a priority 1) build upon the economic assessment of the losses attributable to IWT affecting the national economy, and discuss realistic suggestions for how IWT enforcement can be sustainably financed through government channels and cost-recovery; and 2) prepare **"Operational Requirements"** documents for the project established structures (i.e. Thailand WEN including its sub-groups, taskforces, and the Provincial WENs etc. as well as the established coordination modalities DRSG and TAC).

Management Response: Fully accept: PMU will undertake series of consultations with several government agencies using the result of TSA finding to prepare the operational requirements on sustainable financing and cost recovery for better combating IWT as the documentation supporting policy to endorse this long term financing plan.

Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
6.1 PMU to review the TSA final report including the recommendation of sustainable financing for IWT	October 2021	PMU -UNDP	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
6.2 PMU present the sustainable financing model to IWT project board and the Thailand WEN committee to seek recommendation and management response since Project board members and Thailand WEN committee are the keys national institutions with the mandate to deal with the IWT.	March 2022	PMU -UNDP	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager

Evaluation Recommendation 7: Expedite the development and implementation of the project's capacity building efforts.

The project should consider options for how training could become more accessible and systematic for instance, in making training materials and videos etc. available online (potential via a secure system). The project should also tap into already established training (and materials) including those within the GWP "ecosystem", as well as those within the overall UNDP system

Management Response: Fully accept: PMU will facilitate the DNP capacity building unit to develop IWT capacity building training course to make it more accessible and systematic including online through an already established training (and materials) and those with the GWP and other IWT partners.

Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
7.1 PMU to facilitate the braining storming discussion among the DNP capacity building unit and other IWT agencies on how to improve the existing DNP IWT training course to be more accessible and systematic including those trainings that have already been identified and implemented under the project so far.	January 2022	PMU – DNP , WCS, US Wildlife Asia , GWP , UNDP	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
7.2 Develop an additional online platform training course	January 2022	PMU -DNP ,	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager

Evaluation Recommendation 8: Ensure accreditation of WIFOS.

While an ISO 17025 accreditation, due to its prolonged accreditation process and cost, might not be a realistic avenue for the project, it should as a minimum pursue the SWFS auditing/assessments which is to be renewed every second year. Further, an "Operational Requirements" document should be developed outlining the operational setup of WIFOS and the associated cost etc. for running said operational of the laboratory long-term.

Management Response: Fully accept: PMU and UNDP will coordinate with TRACE to develop an action plan for the DNP-WIFOS and the milestones to pursue ISO 17025 accreditation. Further using the SWSF auditing assessment process including developing the operational requirement associated cost for the WIFOS-DNP laboratory in the long-term.

Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
8.1 PMU-DNP coordinate meeting with TRACE (virtual meeting) to update the status of the WIFOS ISO 17025 and develop an action plan to move forward.	November 2021	PMU-DNP , UNDP	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
8.2 PMU facilitate the internal discussion among the WIFOS-DNP team to identify the operational requirement associated cost for the WIFOS-DNP laboratory in the long term.	November 2021	PMU-DNP / WIFOS team	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager

Evaluation Recommendation 9: Enhance IWT enforcement in the project's border provinces

While the project's focus on the provincial efforts for an effective engagement at the border crossings and the surrounding areas, including active involvement of local communities, the project should also look into how the project's local activities could support (or benefit from) the ongoing SDG localization efforts. The

project should thus, together with UNDP look at, whether and/or how the two project provinces could become targets for expanded interventions now or in the future.

Management Response: Fully accept: PMU-DNP needs to expedite the official approval of both the Provincial WEN committee from the provincial governors and identify the potential type of joint partnership activities among the law enforcement agencies and local communities which already have been planned so far using the SDG localization effort to monitor the impact and the overall achievement.

Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
9.1 PMU-DNP follow up meeting with both demo-sites to accelerate the approval of establishing Provincial WEN committee	September 2021	PMU-DNP / Both Demo site project office	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
9.2 PMU revisit the joint collaboration project activities among the law enforcement agencies and the local communities selected which has been planned so far to implement and regularly monitor	October-December 2021	PMU-DNP / Both Demo site project office	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager

Evaluation Recommendation 10: Develop a fit for purpose communication strategy
Linked with other recommendations, the project needs to develop a communication strategy, which can help DNP in bringing the message on the importance of IWT enforcement to light. This strategy should provide guidance on how to "sell" the need for increased efforts to support the long-term IWT work in Thailand. The strategy should also outline how the project will make the best use of the available platforms such as Exposure and Panorama, as well as how to promote the project and Thailand's IWT enforcement work internationally.

Management Response: Fully accept: PMU in consultation with UNDP will consider hiring the communication specialist consultant to develop a communication strategy for the project.

Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
10.1 Develop the TOR for the Communication specialist	October 2021	PMU / UNDP	Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
10.2 Recruitment process	November-December 2021	PMU / UNDP	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager

10.3 Develop project communication strategy	January-February 2022	PMU / UNDP	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager
10.4 Final project communication strategy be endorsed and approved from the project board	February 2022	PMU / UNDP	Not Initiated	Will be finalized by Project Manager

(Add tables, as needed)

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