



CITES NATIONAL IVORY ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Prepared for the 78th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee

Party: LAO PDR

Reporting period: NOVEMBER 2023 – OCTOBER 2024

A: Synopsis of NIAP implementation

At the 77th Standing Committee Meeting of CITES (SC77) in November 2023, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) received a request from the Committee to submit its National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) progress report within 60 days post-SC77, due to a delay in previous submissions. On 17 January 2024, Lao PDR submitted a comprehensive NIAP Progress Report covering the period from November 2021 to October 2023. With the upcoming SC78 meeting scheduled from 3 to 8 February 2025, Lao PDR is committed to presenting a thorough progress update for the period from November 2023 to October 2024 by the stipulated deadline of 5 November 2024.

The key areas of progress in NIAP implementation for this reporting period are summarized as follows:

1. Legislation and Regulations:

Significant advancements have been made, with achievements classified as both *achieved* and *substantially achieved*. Key updates include:

- The approval of Government Decree No. 299, which enforces CITES protocols for regulating international trade in endangered species of wild flora and fauna, effective from 5 June 2024.
- Completion and ratification of the Law on Wild Animals, as per approval No. 42/SNP in 2023, alongside the amendment of the Wild Animal List categorized under three classes: Prohibited Category (List I), Management Category (List II), and General Category (List III), through Ministerial Decision No. 1874, enacted on 5 April 2024.
- Clear delineation of institutional roles and responsibilities, formalized through key policy documents and agreements among enforcement agencies, appointing forest inspection officers as primary contacts for CITES enforcement at both regional and international levels.
- Enhanced collaboration with the Police Department for Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (DCNEC), based on a 2022 agreement with the Department of Forestry Inspection (DOFI), whereby the DCNEC supports wildlife and forest crime cases, particularly those requiring complex investigation.
- Reinforcement of wildlife criminal case coordination through the Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor (OSPP), which oversees prosecution efforts per an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

2. National-Level Enforcement and Inter-Agency Collaboration:

Lao PDR has made substantial progress in national enforcement initiatives and cross-agency collaboration, with actions classified as *achieved*, *substantially achieved*, and *on track*. Efforts include:

- Capacity-building programs tailored to enhance wildlife enforcement capabilities among officers.
- Development of enforcement tools such as the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Wildlife Seizure Evidence Management, with additional resources, including a Wildlife Crime Prosecution Manual, in development.

- Reporting of multiple wildlife seizures, arrests, and prosecutions as part of Lao PDR's contribution to the CITES Annual Illegal Trade Report.
- Targeted awareness activities for prosecutors and judiciary to strengthen wildlife crime enforcement and the ongoing training of scientific and technical officers to support law enforcement objectives.

3. International and Regional Enforcement Cooperation:

Lao PDR remains an active participant in international and regional CITES-related initiatives, sharing valuable information and experiences to bolster collaborative enforcement efforts.

4. Public Awareness and Education:

The Lao PDR has successfully implemented awareness programs at strategic locations and with various stakeholders, including:

- Collaborative initiatives with the National University of Laos – Faculty of Law and Political Science, aimed at advancing wildlife crime research and studies.
- Partnerships with the Department of Cybersecurity to work with telecommunications companies on enhancing public awareness of wildlife crimes.
- Planned outreach activities with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and Lao-China Railway to further expand awareness on wildlife crime prevention.

5. Reporting and Continuous Progress Evaluation:

The Lao PDR continues to commit to regular reporting and evaluation of NIAP-related actions, maintaining substantial progress and resource-dependent implementation efforts. This approach ensures a sustainable and transparent reporting process aligned with the goals of the CITES framework.

Lao PDR reaffirms its dedication to upholding its responsibilities under CITES, with ongoing efforts to strengthen wildlife protection, prevent illegal trade, and foster international cooperation for sustainable environmental stewardship.

B: Summary evaluation of actions (assigned progress ratings)

PILLAR	PROGRESS RATING					
	Achieved	Substantially achieved	On track	Partial progress	Pending completion of another action	Not commenced
1. Legislation and regulations	<p>1.1 Develop and adopt regulations for the implementation of CITES Decree</p> <p>1.2 Review institutional mandates to improve enforcement to address illegal ivory trade within and transiting through Lao PDR, identifying barriers for prosecution and punishment and make recommendations on required revisions</p>	<p>1.3 Develop strategic action plan to improve the institutional roles of the Department of Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (DCNEC), General Police and the Supreme Prosecution in the investigation and prosecution of ivory-related crime.</p>				
2. National level enforcement action and inter-agency collaboration	<p>2.4 Increase awareness of the seriousness of wildlife crime amongst prosecutors and judiciary</p>	<p>2.1 Improve capacity of multi-agency (Lao-WEN) enforcement officers through training courses in the following areas: a) conducting inspection and detection regarding smuggled wildlife including species identification (e.g. genuine ivory from fake); b) CITES requirements and examination of [CITES] documents, including detection of documentation misuse and fraud; c) relevant laws and regulations on wildlife crime, including: Penal Code, CITES, Wildlife List, Wildlife and Aquatic Law, Criminal</p>	<p>2.2 Strengthen capacity of enforcement and border officers to detect illegal wildlife specimens, including illegal ivory specimens, through the provision of necessary tools, guides, manuals and technology, to assist in: clarifying CITES species, determining genuine from fake documentation, species identification guides and kits, mobile phone technology for reporting, scanner</p>			

		<p>Procedure Law; d) wildlife crime investigation including crime scene management, forensic awareness, controlled deliveries, questioning use of technology, information management, intelligence analysis, judicial procedures, prosecution referrals, and case presentation in courts; e) inter-agency cooperation</p> <p>2.3 Strengthen implementation of the Penal Code, Wildlife and Aquatic Law, Prime Minister Order No. 05 (2018), and other relevant laws and regulations, in controlling, enforcing, investigating and prosecuting against illegal ivory trade in markets, and at ports and checkpoints</p> <p>2.5 Improve the prosecution of ivory-related and other wildlife crime offenses, in line with the enforcement of the Penal Code, Wildlife and Aquatic Law, Prime Minister Order No. 05 (2018), and other relevant laws and regulations</p>	<p>equipment, and other relevant materials;</p> <p>2.6 Develop the capacity and equipment of scientific officers to provide technical support to law enforcement and prosecution efforts against ivory-related and other wildlife crime cases, such as on: scientific identification of species; scientific/expert advice and testimony in case consideration and prosecution; forensic sampling and identification.</p>			
3. International and regional enforcement collaboration	3.2 Continue to cooperate with other Asian and African countries (e.g. China, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, South Africa) in	3.1 Continue participating in relevant international and regional law enforcement seminars, trainings, meetings and operations that increase enforcement capacity	3.3 Increase the use of international tools to exchange information and intelligence on transnational wildlife crime (e.g. INTERPOL Ecomessage,			

	combating ivory trafficking and other wildlife crime by facilitating information exchange and sharing of best practices;	and cooperation against ivory trafficking	INTERPOL Notices, WCO-RILO). 3.4 Increase networking by the Scientific Authority laboratory unit to build capacity, exchange information and best practices on wildlife forensics with other established laboratories in other countries.			
4. Outreach, public awareness and education	4.1 Continue raising awareness and conducting wildlife crime prevention at key airports, border checkpoints, and market areas 4.2 Work with the public and education programs in secondary schools and universities on awareness raising on wildlife crime prevention, including prevention of illegal ivory trade, through production of materials for mass media, education materials, and posters		4.3 Cooperate with airlines and freight forwarders in airports and key border areas to prevent trafficking of ivory and other wildlife specimens			

<p>5. Reporting</p>		<p>5.2 Establish and maintain a robust system for the management of stockpiles of seized and confiscated ivory and other wildlife specimens</p>	<p>5.1 Ensure reporting of information to MIKE and ETIS following reporting requirements (for ETIS using the <i>Ivory and elephant product seizure data collection forms in Annexes 1 and 2 to Notification to the Parties 2020/005</i>), and by providing training to stakeholders on how to use the relevant forms</p> <p>5.3 Implement CITES MA/DOF Agreement with Lao Customs Department on controlling and reporting of legal and illegal trade by recording and monitoring import and export of wildlife</p> <p>5.4 Ensure monitoring of elephants, wild or domestic, preventing individuals, parts and products entering the illegal trade, and to improve reporting.</p>			
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C: Detailed evaluation of actions

ACTION		EVALUATION	SUMMARY OF PROGRESS (and comments)
PILLAR 1: Legislation and regulations			
1.1 Develop and adopt regulations for the implementation of CITES Decree	Adoption of regulations to implement CITES	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 11 November 2022, the Prime Minister of Lao PDR signed the Government's Decree implementing CITES to regulate the international trade in endangered species of wild flora and fauna listed in CITES Appendices. The Government Decree became effective in January 2023. The revision of the Government's Decree was approved under the new Government Decree No. 299 on 5 June 2024. (Annex 1) The revision of the Law on Wild Animals was also completed with the approval of No. 42/SNP in 2023. Five thousand copies of the law were printed and distributed to relevant sectors. (Annex 2) The Wild Animal List of Prohibited Category (List I), Management Category (List II), and General Category (List III) was also updated and amended on 5 April 2024 under a Ministerial Decision No. 1874. (Annex 3) The Department of Forestry will continue to work with its development partners and supporting organizations to address CITES gaps and inadequacies that may still exist in the Law on Wild Animals, including relevant regulations that need to be developed under the Law on Wild Animals and related laws.
1.2 Review institutional mandates to improve enforcement to address illegal ivory trade within and transiting through Lao PDR, identifying barriers for prosecution and punishment and make recommendations on required revisions	Institutional mandates have been clarified and enforcement agencies implement their mandates accordingly	Achieved	<p>Action 1.2 was reported in the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023 as achieved with the following progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lao-WEN Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry under Decision No. 1223/MAF on 10 September 2021, provides guidance on cooperation and mandates between Lao-WEN agencies in relation to wildlife and forest crimes. The Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI) and the Police Department of Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (DCNEC) also clarified their mandates through an agreement signed on 11 March 2022 where the mandate to lead the handling of transnational organized wildlife and forest crime was handed over to the Department of Forest Inspection as lead agency and the DCNEC to support through initial investigations and in complex cases. On 29 April 2022, the Department of Forest Inspection has signed its decision (No.0939/DOFI, date 29 April 2022) on establishment the Rapid Response Team (RRT) to combat the illegal wildlife and timber trade; The Department of Custom has approved and instruction letter on extension of the mandate of the Investigation and Tax Evasion Suppression Division, ref. No. 04737/ITESD, date 01 August 2022; The decision of Ministry of finance on establishment the coordination point with the Investigation and Tax Escaping Suppression Division, ref. No. 0898/MF, Date 03 August 2022; The decision of Ministry of Finance on the appointment of responsible authority for investigation and tax escaping suppression across the country, ref. No. 1098/MF, date 22 April 2022; The decision of Department of Customs on appointing the management committee to manage the CEN system, ref. No. 07684/DC, date 23 August 2023; The notification of Department of Customs on the CEN system utilization, ref. No. 07683/DC, date 23 August 2023. MAF has adopted and promulgated the Agreement of Inspection and Investigation on Natural resources on 24 March 2023 In 2024, MAF further appointed forest inspection officials as national contacts for the ASEAN Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WG-CITES-WEN) (Annex 4) and as CITES Enforcement Authority in Lao PDR (Annex 5).

1.3 Develop strategic action plan to improve the institutional roles of the Department of Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (DCNEC), General Police and the Supreme Prosecution in the investigation and prosecution of ivory-related crime.	Ministry of Public Security (MoPS) Decision on Strategic Action Plan on transnational wildlife crime to support objective of Lao- WEN	Substantially achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Police Department of Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (DCNEC) signed an agreement on 11 March 2022 with DOFI to hand-over of the transnational organized wildlife and forest crime mandate to the Department of Forest Inspection as lead agency and with DCNEC to support through initial investigations and in complex cases. The Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor (OSPP) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) signed an agreement on the coordinating mechanism for criminal case prosecution for offenders violating the Law on Forestry and the Law on Wildlife and Aquatic on 05 April 2022. In addition, the OSPP also previously signed an agreement with the Ministry of Public Security (MOPS) on 15 July 2021 and the State Inspection Authority on 20 July 2021 to implement and improve case prosecutions. On 7 October 2022, the OSPP and MAF held their 2nd coordination meeting in Vientiane Capital where both agreed on improving legal clarity in implementing relevant criminal procedures and enforcing laws as well as recommendations on improving capacities for enforcement and prosecutions at local levels The OSPP is also currently implementing with WCS Laos Program a cooperation agreement, with support from project donors such as the US Government, the EU, and GIZ, to strengthen the lead coordination role of the prosecutors, under its agreements with MAF, MOPS, Ministry of Finance, and the State Inspection Authority, in combating wildlife crime.
PILLAR 2: National level enforcement action and inter-agency collaboration			
2.1 Improve capacity of multi-agency (Lao-WEN) enforcement officers through training courses in the following areas: a) conducting inspection and detection regarding smuggled wildlife including species identification (e.g. genuine ivory from fake); b) CITES requirements and examination of [CITES] documents, including detection of documentation misuse and fraud; c) relevant laws and regulations on wildlife crime, including: Penal Code, CITES,	Enforcement officers have improved capacity on ivory enforcement with training activities implemented	Substantially achieved	<p>Action 2.1 was reported in the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023 with the following progress: Through technical and funding support from donors and development partners, Lao PDR continued implementation of capacity building activities in relation to enforcement, as indicated below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three training workshops on wildlife rescues and handling and criminal procedure organized by DOFI with the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife (LCTW) and WCS for forest inspection officers at the central level, provinces, and selected protected areas in January 2022, May 2023, and July 2023, at the LCTW Rescue Centre in Thoulakhom District, Vientiane Province. DOFI and Luangnamtha POFI organized a consultation workshop on law enforcement related to wildlife crime from 1-3 February 2022. Officers from Lao-WEN agencies participated in a training on investigation of wildlife crime organized by UNODC at Lao Plaza Hotel from 17-18 February 2022. A workshop on investigation techniques was organized by the SUFORD-SU-AF for DOFI, POFI and Lao WEN from 7-11 March 2022. UNODC organized a Training of Trainers workshop on addressing wildlife crime at Crowne Plaza from 14-18 March 2022. Law enforcement training on wildlife crime was organized by WWF in Vangvieng from 9-12 May 2022. The Institute of Legal Support and Technical Assistance (ILSTA) also conducted a series of trainings to strengthen investigations and prosecution among relevant officers from Lao Customs Department, Forest Inspection, Police, and Prosecutors in 2022 and 2023. Three basic wildlife enforcement training workshops were organized by DOFI for new forest inspection officers at provincial and district levels: in Xiengkhouang Province in October 2022, in Bolikhamxay Province in July 2023, and in Bokeo Province in November 2023.

Wildlife List, Wildlife and Aquatic Law, Criminal Procedure Law; d) wildlife crime investigation including crime scene management, forensic awareness, controlled deliveries, questioning use of technology, information management, intelligence analysis, judicial procedures, prosecution referrals, and case presentation in courts; e) inter-agency cooperation			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three cooperation training workshops on information research and wildlife crime investigation and criminal procedure were organized by DOFI for central-level DCNEC, DOFI and provincial officers from the forest inspection offices and environmental crime police divisions from Savannakhet, Khammouane, Oudomxay, Luang Prabang, Luang Namtha, Phongsaly and Bokeo: in Savannakhet Province from 21-23 December 2022, in Khammouane Province from 14-17 February 2023, and in Oudomxay Province from 13-16 June 2023. Representatives from prosecutors and judges also attended. The training focused on recent wildlife trafficking trends in Lao PDR, research, analysis, and information management, CITES controls, wildlife crime provisions and procedures under current laws and regulations, and the Species Victim Impact Statement (SVIS) and its potential value in the prosecution and sentencing of wildlife cases. From 4-5 April 2023, DOFI organized a wildlife crime online information research and analysis training in Vang Vieng District, Vientiane Province for 20 participants from the provincial forest inspection offices in Vientiane Province, Sayaboury, Houaphan, Oudomxay, and Luang Prabang. <p>The following activities were additionally implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three provincial multi-agency cooperation meetings were held: (1) on 19 December 2023 in Luang Namtha Province; (2) on 20 March 2024 in Bokeo Province; and (3) in October 2024 in Phongsaly Province. From 16-22 June 2024, training on techniques for the investigation and seizure of goods for relevant enforcement authorities was held for Savannakhet province (Annex 6).
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2.2 Strengthen capacity of enforcement and border officers to detect illegal wildlife specimens, including illegal ivory specimens, through the provision of necessary tools, guides, manuals and technology, to assist in: clarifying CITES species, determining genuine from fake documentation, species identification guides and kits, mobile phone technology for reporting, scanner equipment, and other relevant materials	Officers have increased access to tools, guides, manuals, and technology and use them successfully	On track	<p>In the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023, Lao PDR already provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAF has adopted and promulgated an agreement on Standard Operating Procedure for wildlife, aquatic and forest laws enforcement network (Lao-wen) on 10 September 2021; DOFI has endorsed and promulgated the Operational Guide Enhancing the Enforcement and Cooperation on Wildlife and Forest Crime on 27 December 2022. <p>The following activities were additionally implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 11 July 2024, DOFI approved its Decision No. 0994 to adopt and promulgate the Wildlife Crime Evidence Seizure Management SOP for forestry investigating authorities (Annex 7). The following activities were implemented with technical support from TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network and WCS under a US-funded project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two dissemination events were held to present the approved SOP to provincial forest inspection officers and to update enforcement results, challenges, and recommendations: (1) on 26 July 2024 in Luang Prabang with officers from DOFI and POFI in 8 provinces (Phongsaly, Luang Namtha, Bokeo, Oudomxay, Xayaboury, Xiengkhouang, Luang Prabang, and Vientiane Province); and (2) on 8 August 2024 in Thakek, Khammouane with officers from DOFI and POFI from 10 provinces (Vientiane Capital, Bolikhamxay, Khammouane, Xaysomboun, Houaphan, Savannakhet, Sekong, Champasak, Attapeu, and Salavan) (Annex 8) Two training workshops on the Principles of Wildlife Crime Evidence Seizure Management in Luang Prabang: (1) on 19-20 August 2024 for DOFI officers; and (2) on 21-23 August 2024 for POFI officers from Savannakhet, Bolikhamxay, Vientiane Capital, Luang Prabang, Oudomxay, and Bokeo. The training included lectures and presentations on the principles of wildlife crime seizure evidence management, and practical exercises to apply these principles in simulated wildlife crime scenarios. (Annex 9) From 16-18 July 2024, the OSPP held the first meeting to develop the wildlife crime prosecution manual as a tool that will improve, clarify and facilitate criminal case proceedings related to wildlife crime and CITES, including international cooperation. The meeting was attended by representatives from the OSPP, People's Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) National Institute of Justice (NIJ), DOFI, Police Department of Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (DCNEC), the Customs Department, the National University of Laos Faculty of Law and Political Science (NUOL-FLP), and WCS.
2.3 Strengthen implementation of the Penal Code, Wildlife and Aquatic Law, Prime Minister Order No. 05 (2018), and other relevant laws and regulations, in controlling, enforcing, investigating and prosecuting against illegal ivory trade in	Increasing number of seizures, arrests and prosecutions of ivory-related and other wildlife crime offenses	Substantially achieved	<p>In the CITES Annual Illegal Trade Report submitted to the CITES Secretariat on 30 October 2024, there were 5 cases reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 9 June 2024, three Lao individuals involved in the illegal transportation and trading of 52 pieces of elephant bones and a pair of elephant tusks were sentenced to imprisonment for 6 months and a fine of 3,000,000 Lao Kips per person with 10,300,823 Lao Kips to be reimbursed to the State. The seizure occurred on 28 February 2022. On 28 December 2023, Forest inspection and police authorities in Luang Namtha Province confiscated 543.4 kg of pangolin scales, 13.2 kg of suspected tiger bones, and 1 leopard carcass (37.8 kg). The case has been summarized and submitted to the Luang Namtha Office of the Public Prosecutor on 31 July 2024. (Annex 10) On 17 March 2024, the Environmental Police and Department of Forest Inspection confiscated 16 live Asian black bear cubs. The case was submitted to the Vientiane Capital Office of the Public Prosecutor on 16 September 2024 On 1 April 2024, forest inspection authorities confiscated 71 pieces of elephant skin (20 kg) in Vientiane Capital. The case is being prepared for submission.

markets, and at ports and checkpoints			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 16 April 2024, forest inspection authorities confiscated 1 sunbear carcass (67 kg) and 100 grams of bear bile powder in Houaphan Province. The people's court provided a sentence of imprisonment of 2 years and 6 months, and a fine of 163,000,000 Lao Kips. <p>In addition, other enforcement incidents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 24 July 2024, Luang Namtha Provincial Police handed over confiscated pangolin scales and other parts to the Luang Namtha Forest Inspection Office. (Annex 11) Handover of 2 arrested persons along with the prohibited wild animals to the Khammouane Forest Inspection Office on 19 September 2024 (Annex 12)
2.4 Increase awareness of the seriousness of wildlife crime amongst prosecutors and judiciary	Improved awareness on wildlife crime amongst prosecutors and judiciary, with at least 3 workshops conducted	Achieved	<p>In the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023, Lao PDR already provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 4 prosecutor workshops were implemented to improve awareness among prosecutors and members of the judiciary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OSPP Research and Training Prosecutor Institute organized with WCS a training workshop on wildlife crime prosecution and cooperation for prosecutors and judges from the southern provinces from 5-7 April 2022, and for prosecutors from the northern provinces from 26-28 April 2022. The OSPP Research and Training Prosecutor Institute organized with WCS a training workshop on strengthening wildlife case handling and cooperation for prosecutors, judges, forest inspection officers, police, and national park management officers from Houaphan, Xiengkhouang, Luang Prabang, and Bolikhamxay provinces from 5-7 July 2022. From 29-30 November 2022, the OSPP organized a two-day meeting in Oudomxay Province on Exchange of Practices and Lessons in the Inspection and Monitoring of Wildlife Crime Prosecution between the Northern, Central, and Southern Regional Prosecutors Offices. The meeting included key topics on case studies on wildlife crime, including research and analysis on lessons from these cases, CITES and its implementation in Lao PDR, and reporting on wildlife crime case monitoring among the provinces to inform prosecutors on approaches to improve implementation of roles, rights and duties of government to address wildlife crime in Lao PDR. From 13-14 February, the OSPP organized a national meeting on monitoring of criminal case prosecutions in Lao PDR in Vientiane Capital, participated in by 231 Director and Deputy Director Prosecutors from the Public Prosecutor's Office in Vientiane Capital and the seventeen provinces in Lao PDR. The meeting focused on understanding challenges and identifying solutions for criminal case prosecutions in Lao PDR with a specific focus on wildlife crime cases. In addition, prosecutors and judges from Savannakhet, Khammouane, Oudomxay, Luang Prabang, Luang Namtha, Phongsaly and Bokeo also participated in three cooperation training workshops on information research and wildlife crime investigation and criminal procedure: in Savannakhet Province from 21-23 December 2022, in Khammouane Province from 14-17 February 2023, and in Oudomxay Province from 13-16 June 2023. <p>The following activities were additionally implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 5-7 December 2023, a prosecutor and investigating authorities multi-agency workshop to combat wildlife crime was organized in Salavan Province for officers from the central-level OSPP, the Department of Forestry CITES MA, and the provincial OPP, POFI, PEPD, and PCO from Champasak, Savannakhet and Salavan Provinces in

			<p>southern Laos. The workshop provided an opportunity to disseminate the CITES trade suspension and its implications, as well as CITES recommendations on Lao PDR in relation to wildlife law enforcement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 27-28 February 2024, the OSPP with WCS organized a meeting with prosecutors from 18 provinces across Lao PDR in Pakse, Champasak Province. The meeting was to evaluate the implementation of (i) the MOU between the OSPP and the MAF (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) signed in April 2021 on establishing a coordination mechanism for wildlife and forest resources cases, and (ii) the minutes of the OSPP Conference on the Exchange of Practices and Lessons in the Inspection and Monitoring of Wildlife Crime Prosecution between the Northern, Central, and Southern Regional OPP held in November 2022. In March 2024, DOFI and the OSPP, with WCS, cooperated with the National University of Laos Faculty of Law and Political Science to hold a wildlife crime legal research findings dissemination workshop to better understand gaps and challenges to wildlife crime enforcement and also to increase awareness and understanding among law students and practitioners on relevant policy and practices relating to wildlife crime. The legal research findings have been finalized and printed for dissemination among law institutions in Lao PDR.
2.5 Improve the prosecution of ivory- related and other wildlife crime offenses, in line with the enforcement of the Penal Code, Wildlife and Aquatic Law, Prime Minister Order No. 05 (2018), and other relevant laws and regulations	Cases of prosecution referrals, prosecution, and conviction of wildlife crime offenses are tracked and increasing in number	Substantially achieved	<p>See progress under Action 2.3. Based on the CITES Annual Illegal Trade Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two cases received sentencing from the People's Court. One of the cases involved the illegal trade and transport of elephant parts (bones) and ivory tusks. Three cases are being prepared for case summary and prosecution referral. These cases involved elephant skin, pangolin scales, and Asian black bear cubs.
2.6 Develop the capacity and equipment of scientific officers to provide technical support to law enforcement and prosecution efforts against ivory-related and other wildlife crime cases, such as on: scientific identification of	Scientific and technical officers with increased capacity to provide support to law enforcement needs, with equipment/ resources developed/ acquired.	On track	<p>In the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023, Lao PDR already provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 24 October 2023, with support from TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network and WCS, DOFI organized a wildlife DNA forensics and mobile laboratory demonstration workshop in Vientiane Capital targeting participants from the forest inspection authorities, Customs, police, CITES Scientific and Management Authorities, prosecutors, and judges. The workshop aimed to improved understanding among agencies regarding wildlife DNA forensics, sampling techniques and demonstration from bone and elephant ivory, and the laboratory service process to potentially support wildlife DNA forensics needs of law enforcement in Lao PDR. <p>Other activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff of the CITES Management Authority (MA) received specialized training in biodiversity research and monitoring, focusing on plant survey techniques and species identification. This training is part of the Lao Landscapes and Livelihoods (LLL) project, aimed at enhancing research and conservation efforts in designated Protected Areas. This

species; scientific/expert advice and testimony in case consideration and prosecution; forensic sampling and identification.			<p>initiative is supported by the World Bank (WB), the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), and the Canadian Clean Energy and Forest Climate Facility (CCEFCF).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty members from the National University of Laos' Faculty of Forest Science, serving as the CITES Scientific Authority (SA), have undertaken botanical research projects. These projects contribute to the Flora of Laos initiative, aiming to improve plant species identification skills. The knowledge gained will be disseminated through training programs on CITES-related issues, organized for the CITES MA staff. • The CITES Scientific Authority of Lao PDR also conducted the identification of wildlife specimens in January 2024, upon the request from law enforcement authorities (forest inspection, customs, and police). These specimens, which include elephant ivory, unidentified wild animal teeth, and rhino horn, were seized during transit at the international airport in Vientiane. Currently, the case is undergoing legal proceedings, with the matter being referred from the prosecutor to the courts. • DOF, DOFI, WCS, and TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network are planning another activity to improve understanding and capacity on wildlife DNA forensics in November 2024.
PILLAR 3: International and regional enforcement collaboration			
3.1 Continue participating in relevant international and regional law enforcement seminars, trainings, meetings and operations that increase enforcement capacity and cooperation against ivory trafficking	Information and skills from relevant enforcement events on ivory trafficking and cooperation opportunities are improved, and authorities actively participate in and contribute to regional or global operations initiated to address wildlife crime	Substantially achieved	<p>In the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023, Lao PDR already provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two officers from the CITES Management Authority of Lao PDR participated in the CITES Big Cats Task Force Meeting in Uganda from 24-29 April 2023 to improve capacity and understanding in implementing CITES Decision 19.92 to address illegal trade in specimens of big cat species; • The representative from DOFI participated in INTERPOL Annual Meeting to discuss on wildlife illegal transportation, the meeting was held in September 2023 in Singapore. • DCNEC participated the training course on the natural resources' crime investigation, in Thailand during 17-18 April 2023; • DCNEC participated the training course on the environmental criminal judging, in Thailand during 06 -10 November 2023. <p>Lao PDR has continued participating in relevant events. See also progress under Action 3.2.</p>

<p>3.2 Continue to cooperate with other Asian and African countries (e.g. China, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, South Africa) in combating ivory trafficking and other wildlife crime by facilitating information exchange and sharing of best practices</p>	<p>Information and best practices are made available and used to improve ivory investigation, enforcement, and other measures. Engagement in support on investigation is increased.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>	<p>In the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023, Lao PDR already provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 2-3 June 2022, representatives from the Supreme Courts of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Lao PDR participated in a conference on wildlife crime. Officers from the Forest Inspection office also attended the event. • From 14-15 September 2022, representatives from the provincial wildlife enforcement networks (P-WEN) of Bokeo, Luang Namtha and Oudomxay in Lao PDR participated in a cooperation meeting with officers from Chiang Rai P-WEN in Thailand to increase cooperation between the provinces of the 2 countries. This was a follow-up to a similar cooperation meeting between the P-WENs, hosted by Lao PDR in Bokeo Province. • From 14-15 September 2022, representatives from the Police DCNEC, DOFI, and DOF CITES MA participated in a cross-border training workshop hosted and organized by the Viet Nam Environmental Police in Quang Binh, Viet Nam to update on trends in cross-border trafficking between the two countries and to share case information on trafficking. • From 23-24 February, the Thailand DNP organized the Bilateral Meeting on Strengthening Transboundary Collaboration on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade between Thailand and Lao PDR in Nong Khai, Thailand. Lao PDR was led by the Director General of the Department of Forestry and joined in by representatives from DOFI, Police DCNEC, and the Lao Customs Department. The bilateral meeting aimed to increase cooperation between relevant agencies of the two countries on policy and wildlife case investigations and to facilitate exchange of expertise and best practices, including knowledge on the reduction of demand for wildlife consumption. • The Lao Department of Forestry organized the meeting with Thailand on Bilateral Exchange on Forest and Wildlife Management on 23 March in Vientiane Capital for relevant government agencies in Lao PDR and Thailand to share their experiences and policies on forest and wildlife management. Thai officers from the DNP Thailand visited the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife (LCTW) Rescue Center in Vientiane Province, Free the Bears and the Elephant Conservation Center in Luang Prabang to learn about wildlife rescues and rehabilitation practices in Lao PDR. In both meetings, Lao and Thai authorities discussed plans for signing a Memorandum of Understanding on the Cooperation to Combat Wildlife Trafficking. • In June 2023, officials from the Salavan province of Laos and the central Thừa Thiên-Huế province of Việt Nam signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in protecting forests, forest products and wildlife in the border areas of the two localities over the next five years. • From 23-24 August 2023, the Lao Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor (OSPP), with support from WCS, the US DOJ and the US Embassy in Vientiane under INL funding, organized a bilateral cooperation meeting with the Viet Nam Supreme People's Procuracy (SPP) on transnational organized wildlife crime in Luang Prabang. The meeting included presentations on wildlife trafficking including incidents between Lao PDR and Viet Nam, the institutional and legal frameworks in both countries, case studies and practices on wildlife crime prosecutions, and mutual legal assistance between Lao PDR and Viet Nam. • Revised and Signed MOU between DOF, DOFI (MAF, LAOS) and FPD, DOF Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Viet Nam 22nd December 2023. • DOFI participated in the meeting on wildlife inter-regional enforcement held in Abu Dabi, November 2023. <p>Additional progress include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry (27th ASOF), held on 18-19 July 2024 in Bogor, Indonesia, the Head of CITES MA Laos presented the progress made in fulfilling Laos' obligations under CITES and called for enhanced cooperation at the regional level.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seminar on Research on the Path of Deepening CITES Implementation and Enforcement Cooperation Mechanism in Lancang Mekong Countries (Online) (20-30 September 2024) Concluding the work on the implementation of the memorandum of cooperation mechanism to prevent the violation of forest resources, wild animals and the management of forest products along the Lao-Vietnam border, Savannakhet Province and Kheuang Quang Chi Province signed a cooperation agreement on forest and wildlife management on 15 July 2024 (Annex 13) On 23 April 2024, a proposal letter (Reference No. 2107/DOF, Annex 14) was sent to CITES MA China to request for information support as regards the status of the live elephants exchanged with China, and to extend the bilateral MOU (Annex 15) between the CITES MAs of Lao PDR and China on CITES.
3.3 Increase the use of international tools to exchange information and intelligence on transnational wildlife crime (e.g. INTERPOL Ecomessage, INTERPOL Notices, WCO-RILO).	Use of international tools is increased.	On track	Customs Department continues to use and apply the CEN comn system (Asian notification system)
3.4 Increase networking by the Scientific Authority laboratory unit to build capacity, exchange information and best practices on wildlife forensics with other established laboratories in other countries.	Networking and cooperation with other countries and laboratories on testing, training, and equipment increase.	On track	<p>In the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023, Lao PDR already provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One delegate from the CITES management authority and one delegate from the Scientific Authority of Lao PDR participated in the workshop organized by ITTO in Malaysia on the report on the validation of Agar wood from 20-22 June 2022. In June 2022, the Department of Forestry traveled to Malaysia to meet with the Department of Wildlife National Parks and its National Wildlife Forensics Laboratory to hand-over tiger samples for DNA analysis. Two officers from the CITES Management Authority of Lao PDR, with the Department of Livestock and Fisheries and DOFI, participated in the SAFE Project Field Survey Training and Workshop in Thailand from 21-23 September 2023 to increase their capacity on safety and security risk assessment, and animal identification. Representatives from the CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authority of Lao PDR participated in a wildlife forensics meeting “Beyond Species Identification” from 20-22 March 2023 in Bangkok Thailand hosted and organized by the Thailand Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) and TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network. The meeting focused on building collaboration and discussing intelligence gathered from large seizures, but also provided opportunities to understand wildlife forensic identification techniques and potential collaboration on regional captive tiger DNA registration database. <p>Additionally:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Forestry is reviewing next steps as regards the database which include understanding the Tigerbase developed through TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network and activities to be implemented under the cooperation with the Foundation for the Conservation of Elephant and the Environment (Thailand) in relation to monitoring of the tiger captive facilities in Lao PDR. This Letter of Agreement on technical cooperation on the sterilization of tigers in zoos and animal farms in the Lao PDR between the Department of Forestry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Laos) and the Foundation for the Conservation of Elephants and the Environment (Thailand) was signed on 12 July 2024 and would also assist in building scientific capacity and exchange of information and practices. (Annex 16)
PILLAR 4: Outreach, public awareness and education			
4.1 Continue raising awareness and conducting wildlife crime prevention at key airports, border checkpoints, and market areas	Activities being conducted and materials available to increase awareness	Achieved	<p>In the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023, Lao PDR already provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Forestry and Department of Forest Inspection have coordinated with relevant agencies and development partners in continuing outreach campaigns and awareness activities. These included: the installation of 2 new billboards in Oudomxay and Bokeo warning about the prohibition for the trade and hunting of prohibited wildlife; the ongoing One Health campaign under EU funding and implemented by the RDK group on one health risks from the trade and consumption of wildlife; continued awareness raising on the wildlife crime reporting hotline supported by LCTW, and continued engagement with media reporters and journalists in raising awareness on activities related to addressing illegal wildlife trade. A social media campaign on illegal wildlife trade, under the support of GIZ ProFEB, is also expected to start in the subsequent months. A series of public service videos on biodiversity conservation and the illegal wildlife trade is also undergoing finalization before dissemination in available media outlets. On 3 March 2023, MAF hosted the World Wildlife Day celebrations in Vientiane Capital, with the DLF and DOF coordinating the activities with support from international and non-governmental organizations - Organization of Animal Health, Japanese Trust Fund, WCS, WWF, AFD, EU, and GIZ. The event was attended by 201 individuals (143 male / 58 female) from various government sectors, organizations, the National University of Laos, and media. The event was presided by the Vice-Minister of MAF who was joined by the Ambassadors of US and France in Lao PDR to open the event. The two focus of the event was to launch two new government policies related to wildlife health surveillance and CITES: (1) the Government Decree on CITES, and (2) the Lao National Wildlife Health Surveillance SOP. Two panel discussions regarding One Health and wildlife conservation were held. There was also a public exhibition from participating organizations. From 21-24 March 2023, with GIZ funding and additional co-financing from the EU and AFD supported Ecosystem Conservation through Integrated Landscape Management in Lao PDR (ECILL) Project, the Lao Journalists Association and DOFI implemented the Lao Journalist Workshop on Wildlife Crime Prevention targeting Lao journalists from the central level and Bolikhamxay to: (1) strengthen their understanding of wildlife crime and trafficking issues in Lao PDR and their important roles as journalists towards wildlife crime prevention, (2) improve their connections and networks with forest inspection authorities for information sharing and support, and (3) develop their communication channels with Vietnamese journalists for potential cooperation and exchanges in the future. The Department of Forestry and DOFI are currently implementing, with GIZ ProFEB and other development partners, a social media campaign named Lao Wildlife Heroes to raise awareness on illegal wildlife trade and responsible

			<p>behavior. The Lao Wildlife Heros social media campaign showcases different awareness materials (photos, interviews, videos).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWF has also implemented a campaign to reduce wildlife meat consumption among urban and provincial consumers and to make changes in their wild meat consumption, motivations for eating wild meat. WWF also installed wildlife awareness materials in Salavan and Sekong Provinces. • The Department of Forest Inspection set up 60 banners in Lao PDR. • DOFI participated in a Seminar on public awareness and tourism related to wildlife in Luangprabang, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha and Bokeo December 2021; • DOFI in cooperated with the Chinese Embassy/Chinese Consulate on Cooperating organized a Seminar on combatting the illegal wildlife trade <p>Additional activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 4 March 2024, the Ministry Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) hosted the World Wildlife Day celebrations in Vientiane at the National University of Laos. The event was attended by hundreds of individuals from various government sectors, organizations, the National University of Laos, and media. The event was presided by the DDG of DoF to open the event. The focus of the event was to raise awareness among students, researchers, organizations, and consumers about the laws and regulations of the State for the protection of fauna and flora. There was also a public exhibition from participating organizations. • On 24 October 2024, with technical support from development partners and supporting organizations in Lao PDR, dissemination activities and training sessions were conducted to enhance understanding and implementation of CITES and the Government Decree. This high-level dialogue included participants from all National Assembly members across Lao provinces, as well as key government agencies. • Ongoing planning with GIZ ProFEB to develop materials and increase awareness along the Lao-China railway
4.2 Work with the public and education programs in secondary schools and universities on awareness raising on wildlife crime prevention, including prevention of illegal ivory trade, through production of materials for mass media, education	Materials to support awareness through public and education programs are readily available and used.	Achieved	<p>See progress under Action 4.1 also on ongoing planning of materials along the Lao-China railway.</p> <p>In March 2024, DOFI and the OSPP, with WCS, cooperated with the National University of Laos Faculty of Law and Political Science to hold a wildlife crime legal research findings dissemination workshop to better understand gaps and challenges to wildlife crime enforcement and also to increase awareness and understanding among law students and practitioners on relevant policy and practices relating to wildlife crime. The legal research findings have been finalized and printed for dissemination among law institutions in Lao PDR.</p>

materials, and posters			
4.3 Cooperate with airlines and freight forwarders in airports and key border areas to prevent trafficking of ivory and other wildlife specimens	Programs and activities for engagement with airlines and freight forwarders are in place and actively implemented to increase awareness and prevent trafficking.	On track	<p>In April 2024, DOFI and WCS implemented with the Department of CyberSecurity under the Ministry of Communications and Technology a wildlife crime prevention workshop with telecommunications companies to understand possible cooperation activities to prevent wildlife crime.</p> <p>Ongoing planning with GIZ ProFEB to develop materials and increase awareness along the Lao-China railway</p>
PILLAR 5: Reporting			
5.1 Ensure reporting of information to MIKE and ETIS following reporting requirements (for ETIS using the <i>Ivory and elephant product seizure data collection forms in Annexes 1 and 2 to Notification to the Parties 2020/005</i>), and by providing training to stakeholders on how to use the relevant forms	All known elephant deaths are reported to MIKE and all ivory seizures are reported to ETIS using the prescribed templates.	On track	DOF continues to report to MIKE and ETIS.
5.2 Establish and maintain a robust system for the management of stockpiles of	Ivory and other wildlife specimens seized and confiscated	Substantially achieved	<p>In the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023, Lao PDR already provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023, the Department of Forestry also implemented the stockpiling of confiscated elephant ivory products and wildlife parts and keeping the stockpiles in a secure location at the Department of Forestry. Stockpiles in Savannakhet

seized and confiscated ivory and other wildlife specimens	are dealt with in accordance with a well-developed management system for stockpiles		<p>(2.14 kilograms of elephant ivory, June 2022) and Luang Prabang (34.40 kilograms, June 2023) were handed over to the Department of Forestry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The temporary stockpiles which has been established at the CITES MA office has installed the surveillance camera, in May 2023. <p>DOF is currently planning with TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network and WCS to do a DNA testing of the ivory stockpiles. This is being planned to take place in November 2024.</p>
5.3 Implement CITES MA/DOF Agreement with Lao Customs Department on controlling and reporting of legal and illegal trade by recording and monitoring import and export of wildlife	Information is made available between Customs and CITES MA on CITES legal and illegal trade for reporting.	On track	<p>In the last NIAP Progress Report submitted in 2023, Lao PDR already provided the following updates which is still being implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed MoU between Department of Forestry, MAF and Department of Customs, MF; Implement all the tasks under the roles of Lao-WEN.
5.4 Ensure monitoring of elephants, wild or domestic, preventing individuals, parts and products entering the illegal trade, and to improve reporting.	Robust database to monitor elephants in Laos	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lao CITES Management Authority is committed to taking substantive steps to implement Decision 18.226, with a strong focus on the management and conservation of captive Asian elephant populations. We are actively developing and refining strategies to ensure that all trade in Asian elephants is conducted in full compliance with Article III of CITES, particularly for individuals of wild origin, thereby supporting the long-term conservation of this iconic species. To enhance regulatory oversight, Lao CITES MA is strengthening its system for the registration and marking of captive Asian elephants in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. These measures will improve traceability, prevent illegal trade, and uphold international standards for wildlife management. Our actions underscore our dedication to preserving Asian elephants, ensuring responsible trade practices, and contributing to regional and global efforts to protect this vulnerable species. In October 2024, DOF also met with EIA to discuss on activities and challenges regarding the management and trade in live Asian elephants and implementation of CITES Decision 18.226. Further work will be planned with Decision No. 4077 committee.

Part D: Annex (supporting information) (OPTIONAL)

PILLAR 1: Legislation and regulations

Annex 1: Decree 299 on Management of International Trade in Endangered Species of Aquatic Animals, Wild Animals and Wild Plants

Annex 2: Law on Wild animal (Revised Version) 42. National Assembly July 17, 2023

Annex 3: Decision No. 1874 on the Wild Animals List of the Lao PDR 2024

Annex 4: Forest Inspection appointment as national contacts ASEAN-WG-CITES-WEN

Annex 5: Forest Inspection appointment as national contacts CITES Enforcement Authority

PILLAR 2: National level enforcement action and inter-agency collaboration

Annex 6: Training techniques for the investigation and seizure of goods for the authorities

Annex 7: Wildlife Seizure Management SOP Lao

Annex 8: SOP Dissemination Events July to August 2024

Annex 9: SOP Principles Training August 2024

Annex 10: Luang Namtha confiscated of pangolin scales, leopard, and bones

Annex 11: Luang Namtha Provincial Police handed over Luang Namtha Forest Inspection 24 July 2024

Annex 12: Khammouane handover prohibited animals

PILLAR 3: International and regional collaboration

Annex 13: Savannakhet Province and Kheuang Quang Chi Province have signed a cooperation agreement on forest and wildlife management 15.07.2024

Annex 14: DOF proposal letter to CITES MA China

Annex 15: MOU CITES MA LA CN

Annex 16: LoA DoF and Save Elephant Foundation (Thailand)