



বাঘ আমাদের গর্ব
বাঘ সুরক্ষা করবো



A debrief session before the patrolling begins

Combating Illegal Wildlife Crime

Background

The demand for tiger parts in traditional Chinese medicine is one of the biggest drivers of the international illegal trade. Organized criminal groups are poaching tigers to meet this demand. The result is a sharp decline in tiger numbers showing that wildlife criminals are more organized and stronger than law enforcement agencies. In Bangladesh, this is caused by a lack of capacity within law enforcement agencies and poor coordination at the local, national and international levels. The trade routes for tigers share the Bangladesh-Indian border in the Sundarbans and Myanmar border as well. In addition, intense pressure on the prey poaching has negative impacts on tiger populations and thereby inducing more human-tiger conflicts. Therefore, USAID's Bagh Activity is very keen to combat all forms of wildlife crime in the Sundarbans.

Approach

Under this component, Bagh aims to create a strong wildlife crime monitoring and law enforcement platform in collaboration with relevant national and international agencies and to enhance the capacity of the Forest Department (FD). Through our strategic partners, Bagh will leverage the learning from India's advanced anti-trafficking initiatives by WPSI and WWF, National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, and Nepal's Wildlife Crime Control Committee and Bureau. Bagh will also access global technical expertise namely the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), INTERPOL, UNODC, World Customs Organization, World Bank, US Government's Department of Justice, Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the USAID's regional ARREST project. To enhance technical expertise, Bagh will coordinate with regional wildlife enforcement networks such as ASEAN-WEN and SAWEN. Panthera has started working with this component as cost share partner.

Objective

To build the capacity of Government and stakeholders to respond to all forms of wildlife crime through engaging with regional and international bodies.

Expected results/outcomes

- Frontline law enforcement strengthened.
- Patrol monitoring system enhanced.
- Regional collaboration and capacity improved.

Activities

- **Identify gaps in wildlife crime response and create realistic solutions:** Bagh conducted a training needs assessment (TNA) for the FD and its Wildlife Crime Control Unit (WCCU) through a systematic process. Wildlife crime experts facilitated the process through analyzing the ICWC Toolkit and its recommendations. Some immediate, medium-term and long-term training needs for FD and WCCU staff were recommended in the TNA.



- **Strengthen frontline law enforcement at government level:** One of the key objectives of this component is to increase the capacity of FD staff in combating wildlife crime. As part of this effort, Bagh will organize training for both frontline and mid-level FD staff based on the TNA recommendations.
- **Strengthen frontline law enforcement at community level:** Bagh facilitated existing community patrolling/policing models like community patrol group (CPG) with VTRT and VCF members in Satkhira range under CMC in consultation with FD and CREL Project. The strategy for CPG is being developed currently. These teams will be provided with training and relevant logistics for community patrolling. They will conduct ground patrolling on foot and motorized vehicle in the periphery of Satkhira range.
- **Strengthen patrol monitoring system:** Bagh and Panthera jointly started SMART patrolling in the West Sanctuary and Satkhira Range in June 2015. A total of 14 FD staff and 4 Bagh staff are operating the patrols in 2 teams on a 15-day rotation to cover 30 days in a month. Within and around the sanctuary, they visit the hot-spots and facilitate community engagement. Bagh will also explore scopes of joint operations patrolling involving Coast Guard and aims to support the expansion of SMART patrolling in other ranges.
- **Develop national enforcement response:** Bagh regularly monitors the wildlife crime incidents in the Sundarbans that include data collection, verification, analysis and reporting on a monthly basis. The information is being reported to the relevant agencies for their actions. Wildlife crime trend and hotspot analysis reports are being shared with SMART patrol team, FD and other stakeholders for reducing wildlife crimes in the Sundarbans. Since 2008, a Tiger Hotline is being operated for helping the community to reach out to WildTeam for information and supports. The data related to Tiger Hotline, CPG and FTRT patrols will also be put into the SMART software for analysis and reporting. The report will be shared with FD, WCCU and other agencies.
- **Build regional collaboration and capacity:** Bagh also collaborates with regional bodies to increase law enforcement coordination and enhance relevant capacity and thus will support combating the cross-border trafficking through India and Myanmar borders. Bagh will also collaborate with other tiger range countries through GTF and GTI and will be involved with existing enforcement networks like SA-WEN and ASEAN-WEN.

Way forward

In coordination with FD and other relevant projects, Bagh will be working on to develop common guidelines for SMART patrolling in the Sundarbans. In addition to the teams in West Sanctuary, Bagh will also work to develop the capacity of the SMART patrol teams working in other ranges. In 2017, Bagh will design a plan for West Sanctuary so that the SMART patrol teams can continue patrolling beyond the timeframe of the Project. Besides, Bagh will lay out a long-term plan for wildlife crime monitoring in the Sundarbans and enhance the capacity of GIS lab based staff on SMART software, data management, analysis and reporting. Based on the success of Satkhira range CPGs, Bagh will work to develop the capacity of CPG members on community patrolling to ensure effective crime monitoring at the community level for tiger conservation.



The SMART patrol teams cover the West Sanctuary of the Sundarbans

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