

Annex 5 – Final Progress Report

Period: 01 December 2022 - 31 August 2023

1. Identification: SSFA/2022/5020

Partners Name: Space for Giants (for Big Life Foundation)

Budget line: BAC SB-000676.06 USD 50,000

POW 2018-2019 Sub-programme: AFRICAN ELEPHANT FUND

Expected Accomplishment(s):

- Maintain low elephant poaching and high ivory recovery rates, thus removing ivory from the illegal wildlife trade
- Reduce the number of elephant crop raids, and area of crops destroyed, to minimize financial losses to community members from elephants
- Reduce the number of elephants injured and killed in retaliation for HEC
- Protect critical natural elephant habitat from illegal human activities
- Secure key dispersal areas and movement corridors necessary to support a viable elephant population in the long-term
- Maintain and improve local community tolerance for elephants to encourage support for conservation initiatives on community land

Output(s):

The key output of the project is to support and maintain core operations of 2 Big Life mobile ranger units in order to mitigate Human-Elephant-Conflict (HEC), monitor threats to and prevent elephant poaching.

Title of the approved PRC project: Securing the elephant population within the Greater Amboseli Ecosystem from escalating human-elephant conflict and poaching risk due to COVID-19

SSFA starting date: 30/08/2022

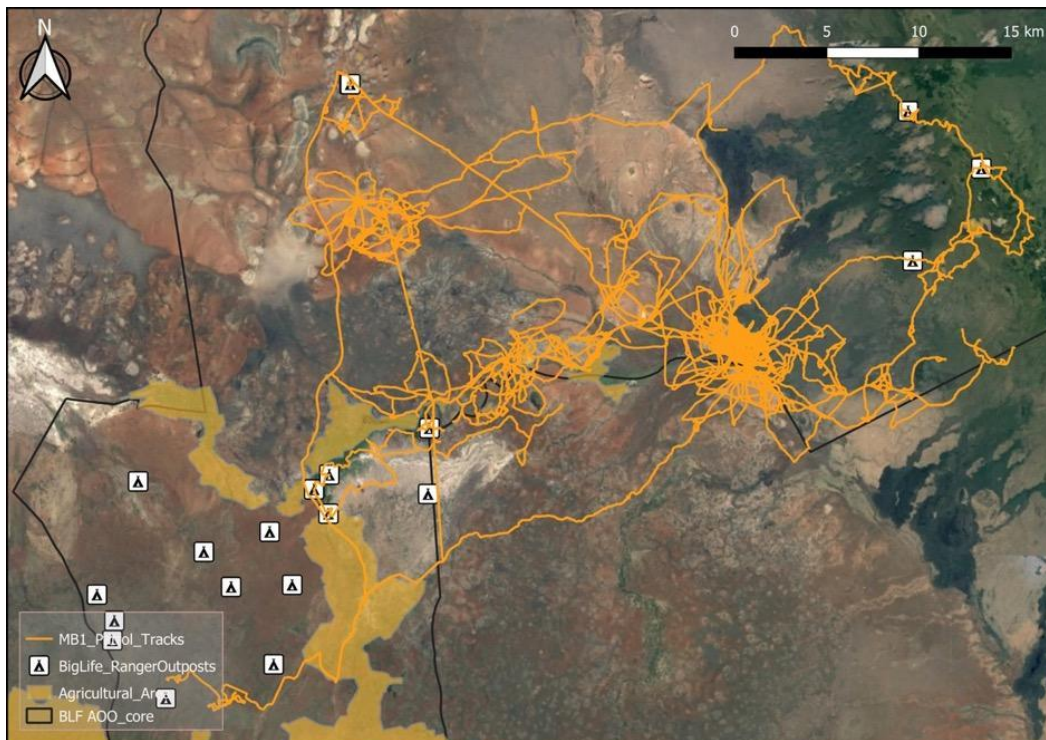
Completion date: 31/08/2023

2. Summary of Status:

Brief description of the main achievements, main implementation challenges and lessons learned towards achieving SSFA's objective

The Big Life Mobile 1 (M1) and Mobile 2 (M2) units have successfully accomplished all the SSFA objectives during the grant period. Their most important achievements include the completion of the SSFA's first objective, with zero incidents of illegal elephant poaching for ivory, and 100% ivory recovered from elephant mortality; as well as the second objective, reduction of elephant crop-raids and associated damage, thus minimizing financial losses to communities. However, mobile units also made important contributions toward Objectives 3, 4, 5 and 6: reducing the number of elephants injured and killed in retaliation for HEC, protecting critical elephant habitat from illegal human activities, securing elephant dispersal areas and corridors, and maintaining/improving community attitudes for elephants.

M1 and M2 units patrolled daily, completing 59,777km in 459 patrols, simultaneously looking for and responding to poaching, human-wildlife conflict and habitat destruction related incidents (*patrol maps included below*). In doing so, the rangers also acted as an important deterrent for illegal activity that might otherwise take place if the rangers weren't present. This directly resulted in fewer illegal activities during the reporting period, and as such, these two mobile units had zero elephant related poaching incidents, only one habitat destruction related incident, and 2 minor corridor/conservancy violations.



Map: M1 patrol tracks on Mbirikani Group Ranch for reporting period 1 December 2022 through August 2023



Map: M2 patrol tracks in ALOCA conservancies for reporting period 1 December 2022 through August 2023

There was one attempted retaliation incident by community members to hunt an elephant responsible for killing a woman, however, M1 and M2 rangers were able to jointly intercept and placate them before they could injure or kill any elephants. Unfortunately, the elephant responsible had to be euthanized by KWS, but historically the community would take matters into their own hands and rarely cooperated allowing the proper channels to be followed to enable the responsible elephant to be euthanized and in as safe and painless way possible. Year on year, there has been a downward trend in the number of crop-raiding incidents by elephants and acres of crops damaged. This is in major part a result of the completion of electric fencing around the most critical farming areas, as well as the experience of ranger units like M1 and M2 in dealing with elephant crop raiders, and the awareness of community members about communicating with ranger teams about elephant activity before they get too close to cultivated areas. Other ranger achievements during the reporting period are detailed in the sections below.

The ongoing drought posed the largest challenge to fulfilling the SSFA objectives. Initially, crop raiding incidents were high due to elephants not having forage in conservation and rangeland areas, leading them to venture into cultivated land. However, as the drought wore on, crop raiding incidents reduced in many because farmers were not able to grow crops outside of the areas fed by spring water. However, in these waterfilled

areas, HEC escalated as pressure for food and water in these hotspots increased. Fortunately, rangers remained effective at their mitigation work. For both Mobile units, as well as across the board for all Big Life units, more crop raids were stopped before damage was caused, or intervened during a crop-raid to reduce damage caused, than incidents in which no intervention was possible. Though conflict was higher than in a typical non-drought year, Big Life's rangers significantly reduced the crop loss for community members and potential retaliation incidents toward elephants.

A community survey undertaken at the end of this grant to verify community attitudes toward elephants and understand changes in HEC and Big Life's impact to mitigate such conflict reinforced what we already knew, that the last year's drought has been a tough one for communities and HEC. This is most clearly shown through a shift in attitudes toward elephants from largely positive to more neutral (but not negative). However, the majority of people said HEC and crop-raiding has been reduced thanks to Big Life's mitigation strategies and that their attitudes toward elephants have improved as a result. Additional results from the survey are detailed below.

One of the single greatest long-term threats to protecting critical natural elephant habitat from illegal activities and securing their key dispersal areas and corridors has been the decision by all remaining group ranches in the Amboseli ecosystem to pursue subdivision. The entire ecosystem has been divided into small plots and each recipient, once given the title deed, will be able to do as they wish with their land. However, Big Life has been at the table since the beginning, advising the community members and leaders on how to keep this critical elephant habitat open and connected. To date, Big Life has begun to lease some of the most important dispersal areas. Big Life leases Kimana Sanctuary, 5,700 acres of critical elephant habitat and corridor linking the east of the ecosystem to the west and Amboseli National Park. 660 landowners in Eselengei have signed lease agreements with Big Life, totalling 31,020 acres. In ALOCA, where M2 operates, 335 landowners already benefit from the lease fees paid by Big Life. This amounts to 20,100 acres of elephant habitat in ALOCA. Recently, Big Life signed an agreement with 650 landowners to secure 13,650 acres in Olgulului thus far. Big Life aims to continue to sign land leases, securing more elephant habitat as land subdivision plots and documents are issued throughout 2023 and 2024.

These economic benefits, as well as those provided by the support of Big Life rangers to communities, are essential to maintain so the burden of living with elephants doesn't outweigh the positives. This is Big Life's ultimate goal. Conservation to support the people, so people support conservation.

3. Activity delivery status

Activity	Description of work undertaken during reporting period	Deliverables	Delivery date	Status of Activity (completed or not completed)	If activity not completed, please describe why and actions taken.
Activity 1.1. Mobile anti-poaching ranger patrols	Core operations supported for 2 mobile units	1. 12 months core operations supported for 2 mobile units	Monthly	Completed	
	2 ranger patrol vehicles fuelled once a week for the reporting period.	2. Two ranger patrol vehicles fuelled for 12 months	Monthly	Completed	
	2 mobile units completed 459 patrols in 243 days. Patrols are simultaneously anti-poaching, human-wildlife conflict and habitat protection patrols. Looking for and responding to any such incidents at any given time. Additional ranger anti-poaching related achievements summarized in the table below.	3. Daily anti-poaching patrols conducted looking for illegal activity or in response to community reports	Daily	Completed	
	Rangers patrolled a total of 59,777km (3,478km on foot and 56,299km by car), averaging 3,736km per month per unit.	4. Rangers units patrol a minimum average of 2,000 km per month (for all project activities combined)	Monthly	Completed	
	All poaching incidents reported to Big Life HQ/Radio Room. Incidents captured in Earth Ranger database	5. Daily poaching incident reporting	Daily	Completed	
	All poaching incident reports compiled and included in monthly Big Life M&E operational reports.	6. Monthly Wildlife Protection Program reports	Monthly	Completed	
	Zero elephants recorded poached.	7. Zero elephant poaching	30	Completed	

			August 2023		
Activity 1.2. Maintain community information networks	The 2 mobile units supported in this grant were involved in only 4 poaching related incidents during the period (2 bushmeat arrests and 2 snare recovery incidents), and none were community reported. However, poaching related incidents were reported to other Big Life units during the period and therefore the community are actively reporting generally.	1. Communities reporting poaching-related activity	Daily	Completed	
	Not applicable for Mobile 1 and Mobile 2 units	2. 100% of poaching-related community information reports followed up on by Big Life	Daily	Completed	
Activity 2.1. Support HEC ranger teams (to reduce crop-raiding)	Core operations supported for 2 mobile units	1. 12 months core operations supported for 2 mobile units	Monthly	Completed	
	2 ranger patrol vehicles fuelled once a week for the reporting period.	2. Two ranger patrol vehicles fuelled for 12 months	Monthly	Completed	
	2 mobile units completed 459 patrols in 243 days. Patrols are simultaneously anti-poaching, human-wildlife conflict and habitat protection patrols. Looking for and responding to any such incidents at any given time. Additional ranger HEC related achievements summarized in the table below.	3. Daily crop protection patrols conducted	Daily	Completed	
	All crop-raiding incidents reported to Big Life HQ/Radio Room. Incidents captured in Earth Ranger database	4. Daily crop-raiding incident reporting	Daily	Completed	

	All crop-raiding incident reports compiled and included in monthly Big Life M&E operational reports.	5. Monthly HEC Program reports	Monthly	Completed	
	2 Mobile unit rangers stopped 24 crop-raids before they started and intervened in another 24 incidents thus reducing the damage. Only 2 incidents were reported after crop-damage occurred. Therefore, rangers successfully reduced the number of crop-raid incidents and crop damage caused by elephants.	6. Reduced crop-raiding incidents and area damaged	30 August 2023	Completed	
Activity 2.2. Maintain community information networks	Community members alerted mobile unit rangers to 50 crop-raiding incidents.	1. Community reporting of crop-raiding incidents	Daily	Completed	
	All 50 incidents followed up by Big Life.	2. 100% of crop raid-related community information reports followed up on by Big Life	Daily	Completed	
Activity 3.1. Mobilize HEC ranger teams to respond to HEC incidents (to reduce HEC injury & mortality)	Core operations supported for 2 mobile units	1. 12 months core operations supported for 2 mobile units	Monthly	Completed	
	2 ranger patrol vehicles fuelled once a week for the reporting period.	2. Two ranger patrol vehicles fuelled for 12 months	Monthly	Completed	
	2 mobile units completed 459 patrols in 243 days. Patrols are simultaneously anti-poaching, human-wildlife conflict and habitat protection patrols. Looking for and responding to any such incidents at any given time. Additional ranger HEC related achievements summarized in the table below.	3. Daily HEC mitigation patrols conducted, specifically in response to community HEC reports	Daily	Completed	

	All HEC incidents relayed to Big Life HQ Radio Room. Incidents captured in Earth Ranger database.	4. Daily HEC incident reporting	Daily	Completed	
	All HEC incident reports compiled and included in monthly Big Life M&E operational reports.	5. Monthly HEC Program reports	Monthly	Completed	
	There were zero retaliatory hunts following elephant crop raids. However, one person was killed by an elephant and community attempted to retaliate. Rangers were able to prevent the retaliatory hunt and calm community members, but the elephant responsible was euthanized.	6. HEC retaliatory incidents reduced	30 August 2023	Completed	
Activity 3.2. Maintain community information networks	Community members alerted Big Life to: - 2 injured elephants that were then treated for spear wounds - 15 incidents where elephants were in settlements or blocking paths. - 6 incidents of property damage by elephants - 1 incident of human threat, 1 incident of human injury and 1 human death	1. Community reporting of HEC incidents	Daily	Completed	
	All community HEC reports followed up on.	2. 100% of HEC-related community information reports followed up on by Big Life	Daily	Completed	
Activity 4.1. Ranger patrols intervening in habitat destruction incidents	Core operations supported for 2 mobile units	1. 12 months core operations supported for 2 mobile units	Monthly	Completed	
	2 ranger patrol vehicles fuelled once a week for the reporting period.	2. Two ranger patrol vehicles fuelled for 12 months	Monthly	Completed	
	2 mobile units completed 459 patrols in 243 days.	3. Daily habitat destruction	Daily	Completed	

	<p>Patrols are simultaneously anti-poaching, human-wildlife conflict and habitat protection patrols. Looking for and responding to any such incidents at any given time.</p> <p>Rangers assisted community leaders in removing 13 generators illegally pumping water from Kimana River.</p>	intervention patrols conducted looking for illegal activity or community report follow-up			
	All habitat destruction incidents relayed to Big Life HQ Radio Room. Incidents captured in Earth Ranger database.	4. Daily habitat destruction incident reporting	Daily	Completed	
	All habitat destruction incident reports compiled and included in monthly Big Life M&E operational reports.	5. Monthly Habitat Protection Program reports	Monthly	Completed	
	325,000 acres of habitat protected through ranger patrols	6. Elephant habitat protected	30 August 2023	Completed	
Activity 4.2. Maintain community information networks	There were no community reported habitat destruction incidents to the 2 mobile units supported by this grant during the reporting period. However, communities reported habitat destruction incidents to other Big Life units in other areas of the ecosystem, and therefore the community are actively reporting generally.	1. Community reporting of habitat destruction incidents	Daily	Completed	
	Not applicable for Mobile 1 and Mobile 2 units	2. 100% of habitat destruction -related community information reports followed up on by Big Life	Daily	Completed	
Activity 5.1. Ranger	Core operations supported for 2 mobile units	1. 12 months core operations	Monthly	Completed	

patrols in corridors to enforce conservancy rules		supported for 2 mobile units			
	2 ranger patrol vehicles fuelled once a week for the reporting period.	2. Two ranger patrol vehicles fuelled for 12 months	Monthly	Completed	
	Mobile 2 rangers conducted 236 patrols inside ALOCA corridor/conservancy areas. They recovered 3 snares targeting general wildlife. Responded to 2 incidents of conservancy rules enforcement for illegal grazing. Additional ranger corridor related achievements summarized in the table below.	3. Daily conservancy patrols conducted looking for illegal activity or in response to community intel reports	Daily	Completed	
	All conservancy violation incidents relayed to Big Life HQ Radio Room. Incidents captured in Earth Ranger database.	4. Daily conservancy violation incident reporting	Daily	Completed	
	All conservancy violation incident reports compiled and included in monthly Big Life M&E operational reports.	5. Monthly Conservancy Program reports	Monthly	Completed	
	ALOCA corridor still open and functional, daily images from camera traps placed right at the Kimana Corridor crossing confirm that a myriad of wildlife continues to rely on this tiny patch daily to move between Amboseli and Tsavo ecosystems.	6. Important elephant corridor linking Amboseli and Tsavo ecosystems secured	30 August 2023	Completed	
	Activity 5.2. Maintain community information networks	There were no recorded community-reported conservancy violations incidents to Big Life during the reporting period. However, there most certainly were incidents reported to rangers during the period, it is just that rangers do not always report to the radio room that the information was from a community member.	1. Community reporting of conservancy violation incidents	Daily	Completed

	Incidents reported to rangers would have been followed up on.	2. 100% of conservancy violation-related community information reports followed up on by Big Life	Daily	Completed	
Activity 6.1. Completion of Activity 2.1 & 3.1 will contribute to the achievement of Obj. 6	All community HEC related reports received by Big Life were responded to by rangers. These include those listed in the achievements table below.	1. Response to 100% of community HEC reports	Daily	Completed	
	53% of farmers interviewed reported positive attitudes toward elephants, with an additional 28% feeling neutral. All those with positive attitudes felt that way because of the benefits as a result of elephants (tourism, jobs, student bursaries, and other revenue). Those that felt neutral all mentioned the problem of crop-damage but also recognized that elephants brought benefits. When compared to past surveys, the number of people with negative attitudes toward elephants continued to drop (20% in 2023, 23% in 2019 and 33% in 2015). However, the number of positive attitudes has also dropped with more people feeling neutral.	2. Positive community attitudes toward elephants	30 August 2023	Completed	
	Survey of 80 farmers in 3 HEC hotspots completed. - 91% said they call Big Life rangers for HEC help - 93% said HEC has decreased thanks to rangers help - 91% said crop loss has been reduced thanks to rangers - 78% said Big Life crop-protection strategies were successful or very successful at reducing crop-raiding - 84% said their attitudes towards elephants somewhat or significantly improved since Big Life' HEC help	3. Social survey completed verifying community members' attitudes toward/tolerance of elephants in HEC hotspots	30 August 2023	Completed	

	Detailed survey results attached separately.				
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Table 1: Mobile 1 & Mobile 2 Units achievements during the reporting period, Dec 2022 – August 2023

Anti-poaching	
Arrests	2 bushmeat poachers in 2 incidents
Confiscated	1 Ivory piece, one 32kg tusk, 2 snares, 160+kg bushmeat, 12 poaching tools
HEC response	
Confiscated	Secured ivory from an elephant that was eliminated for fatally injuring a man
Elephant treatments	Assisted 4 speared elephants
HEC intervention	15 incidents pushing elephants away from community areas; 1 elephant translocation; 1 elephant hunt stopped
Human injury or death	Rangers responded to 1 human threat incident, 1 human injury and 1 human death all caused by elephants
Crop-protection	Rangers responded to 50 crop-raiding incidents: they stopped 24 incidents before elephants started, stopped 24 raiding incidents during elephant raids to reduce damage; pushed elephants away from crop protection fence in 42 incidents
Habitat Destruction intervention	
Confiscated	13 illegal water pumps

Enforcement incidents	2 illegal grazing
Corridor protection / conservancy enforcement	
Kms patrolled in corridor/ conservancy	30,756 kms
Enforcement incidents	2 illegal grazing

4. List of attached documents

- 1. M1 & M2 incident photos**
- 2. HEC Community Survey Report**
- 3. Budget – Final expenditure**
- 4. July 2023 BLL operational report, including Wildlife Protection Program section**



Date: 13/09/2023

Name and title of signing officer: Maurice Schutgens , Managing Director of Conservation