Project Update May 2021

As clearly indicated in the proposal, the project schedule was revised and started from 1st March 2021.

Reconnaissance surveys for 3 days from 1st to 3rd March 2021 were conducted. All necessary information about the location, topography, habitat types, and climatic condition was collected. Official communication with the surrounding local government officials and community leaders was also made.

A meeting with local government officials and community leaders and 18 people from six parks adjacent to Kebles was conducted at Chebra Kebele which is the center for all Kebeles and participants. Presentation and discussions on the central essence of the project was successfully conducted on 4th March 2021 (Photo 1).

A meeting with the park staff and presentation and discussions on the central essence of the project was successfully conducted with patrolling teams for data collection on 5th March 2021 (Photo 2).

A workshop was organised and training on how to fill the data collection formats and how to operate the field equipment such as GPS and compass was given for three patrolling teams, comprising 3 park experts/rangers, on 6th March 2021. Required information and necessary materials, such as GPS and data collection sheet was also assigned for each patrolling team (Photo 3).


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Relevant comments and suggestions given on the workshop was incorporated into the data collection formats and the project document and the orientation were finalised on 7th March 2021 and each group moved to the respective Kebles where they are assigned to collect data.

Actual data collection of dry seasons was carried out from 9th March to 30th May 2021 in six parks adjacent Kebles Seri, Chebra, Delba, Yora and Shita.

<u>During this period</u>
Questions were addressed for the selected 1200 household from the six villages closest to the park boundary using standard formats and questioners of the IUCN African

Elephant Specialist Group's Human-Elephant Conflict Working Group. The following data were collected from 1200 households during this period - if elephants ever feed on their crop or kill their livestock, the type of crop grown, and the season, how they attempt to protect their crop from elephants, the level of effectiveness of the techniques and the estimated loss were asked. Data on the attitudes of local communities towards the African elephants and the park management were also collected from the selected communities. The interviewers were selected on the basis of chance encounter by the interviewer following the method (Newmark, *et al.,* 1994, Demeke Datiko, 2013).

Data on different techniques that local communities implement as human-elephant conflict mitigation measures were collected by ranking orderly based on their level of effectiveness of each mitigation measures top to down from the most effective to least effective (Photo 4).

Actual measurement on extent of damage was also made during this period to crosscheek the perceived extent of damage by the local communities with the actual damage caused by human-elephant conflict (Photo 5-10).

Whenever crop damage, livestock injury and death happened actual measurements were made by data collectors following Method 2, actual measurement on extent of damage for each crop type, including the area of damage by m^2, the proportion of damage and the growth stage of crops, the elephant group responsible for the damage, location, the age, sex, and number of elephants that caused the damage and proximity to the park were made and recorded. Information on current price of each crop type and domestic animals in the local market were also collected. Incidence of crop damage of six different crop types were reported from 102 farmers

and actual measurement on approximately 120 ha of farmland from the six adjacent Keble were made during this dry season period. Loss of two human lives and three cattle due to human-elephant conflicts were also reported and data was properly collected during this period. Estimate of total economic loss due to the elephants will be calculated based on the data collected on the current price of each crop type and estimated price of domestic animals in the local market when the data collection is over. Seasonal variations in the level of conflict and the amount of crop loss/damage will be compared.

Continuous supervision of the whole process was done by the principal investigator and supervisors during this period to make sure that data collection was taking place as previously planned.