



**Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects  
Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus**

**Half Year Report**

<b>Project reference</b>	30-019
<b>Project title</b>	Building resilient landscapes and communities for Rukiga’s cranes and wetlands
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Uganda
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Margaret Pyke Trust ( <b>MPT</b> )
<b>Partner(s)</b>	International Crane Foundation (“ <b>ICF</b> ”); Rugarama Hospital (“ <b>RH</b> ”); and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (“ <b>LSHTM</b> ”).
<b>Project leader</b>	Kathryn Lloyd
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	HYR2
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://margaretpyke.org/environment/projects">https://margaretpyke.org/environment/projects</a> <b>Twitter:</b> @MargaretPyke @savingcranes @TheEWT @LSHTM <b>Facebook:</b> @MargaretPykeTrust @InternationalCraneFoundation @EndangeredWildlifeTrust @RugaramaHospital

**1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end of September).**

**Activity 1.2 & 1.5:** In April, 37 new Conservation and Health Mobilisers were trained on a one-day course linking wetland and crane conservation, livelihoods and family planning, and a five day course on health mobilisation.

**Activity 1.4:** ICF has ringed 14 chicks so far this year, with 8 of these individuals successfully resighted during follow-up monitoring. This ongoing tracking contributes to our understanding of crane movements and habitat use in the project area.

**Activity 1.6:** Partners have finalised and launched the communications strategy.

**Activities 1.7 and 1.8:** Since training was completed in April, mobilisers have been raising awareness of crane and wetland conservation, human health, including family planning and nutrition, and climate-smart agriculture, in addition to project staff who have been running four community talks per quarter on conservation, human health, cranes, and the interlinkages between them. As a result, 7,849 community members have been reached with these messages and signposted to relevant project services and support.

**Activity 1.9:** All partners developed messages together for radio broadcasts, and delivered two radio shows (one per quarter) on project messages. The live Q&A shows were broadcast on Voice of Victory/Revival Radio and Kigezi Radio, which is broadcast to an estimated four million and seven million people respectively.

**Activity 2.5, 2.6 & 2.7:** Partners provided livelihood materials and support to eight new and eight existing Conservation and Health Groups (16 groups in total, with a total of 1,392 members all together, which is significantly higher than our initial target of 498 households). Each household has received assorted vegetable seeds, fruit and agroforestry trees to support backyard agriculture initiatives. In addition, 45 peer farmers have been trained in climate-smart agriculture practices and 1,392 Conservation and Health Group members received fruit trees.

**Activity 2.8:** ICF has planted two Calliandra nurseries and has maintained three Napier grass nurseries, which has been distributed to communities.

**Activity 3.3:** RH and MPT have run a six-day USHAPE training for 19 project staff and health centre staff, in addition to running a one-day family planning awareness training for 130 RH staff.

**Activity 3.4 and 3.5:** RH have supported 21 project clinics (an increase from 10, which is significantly higher than our target of 12) on monthly 'outreach days' in accordance with agreed delivery timetables, and provided staff with ongoing mentoring and support. A total of 3,756 people have been seen for healthcare services, of which 644 were for family planning services.

**Activity 4.1 and 4.2:** Leaders have received guidance on implementing environmental bylaws, with particular focus on enforcement strategies and community engagement. Five agricultural extension workers have been supported to attend hands-on training sessions outside the district to broaden their knowledge on agricultural practices in different contexts.

In addition, we have undertaken a number of 'cross-cutting activities' including:

**Activity X.1:** Partners developed a fundraising plan to expand and enhance the work in Rukiga. They committed to seeking additional matched funding to implement necessary activities. Partners also meet online each month to provide updates on activities and to identify opportunities for collaboration.

**Activity X3:** MPT promoted the project at the CanWaCH Healthy World Conference: Dialogues on Health, Gender & Climate Resilience, the Wilson Center Private Roundtable on Climate Finance and Gender Equality and the RHSC Advocacy & Accountability Working Group's September training session. Additionally, project data was used in the submission to the Canadian government online consultation on the future of Canada's Nature & Climate Finance Commitment.

**2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

Unexpected positive developments include:

- ICF, in partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and the Uganda National Meteorological Authority, has successfully installed the first weather station in Rukiga District, which is enhancing climate-smart agriculture initiatives by providing local weather data to inform farming decisions, strengthen climate resilience, and improve food security.
- ICF has installed three water tanks, located in two schools and a community centre.
- To enhance ICF's work last year which saw two latrines being installed in schools, project partners have developed a comprehensive menstrual hygiene education programme. These schools and others in the region will benefit, which will help to keep girls in school (as water collection duties and menstrual stigma prevent girls from attending school regularly). A feasibility study is currently underway to assess implementation strategies, led by RH, which is linking to their existing health education expertise.

**3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with NIRAS:	No
Formal Change Request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	No
Change Request reference if known: <i>If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome</i>	

<p><b>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)</b></p> <p><b>Actual spend:</b></p>
<p><b>4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2025)?</b></p> <p>Yes      No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully.</b> Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.</p>
<p><b>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</b></p>
<p>No thanks.</p>

<p><b>6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report.</b> If your project was subject to an Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment please use this space to comment on any changes to international human rights risks, and to address any additional mitigations outlined in your offer letters. Please provide the comment and then your response. If you have already provided a response, please confirm when.</p>
<p>We had three comments in our last annual report but the reviewer requested we respond in our next annual report, not this half year report. Therefore, we will respond in our next report.</p>