

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

Half Year Report

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 2-3 pages** in length.

If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2024

Please note all projects that were active before 1 October 2024 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	31-004
Project title	Effectively tackling Human-Carnivore Conflicts through Systematic Approaches in Uganda
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Uganda
Lead Organisation	WWF UK
Partner(s)	WWF UCO, WWF Kenya
Project leader	Dervla Dowd
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31/10/24 (HYR1)
Project website/blog/social media	N/A

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).

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

During the first two quarters of the project, we have focused on agreeing ways of working, contracting, updating the work plan, logframe and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework. A core team has been set up made up of WWF UK, WWF UCO and the East Africa Wildlife Crime Hub, who meet biweekly to track progress, plan and troubleshoot, monitor risks, etc. A RACI has been developed to ensure each project staff member knows their role and responsibility. An M&E Working Group has also been set up to strengthen the M&E Framework and Logframe, update baselines and plan for baselines surveys. Recruitment of the full time Senior Project Officer was also completed (See CV in ANNEX 1). A summary on progress following the agreed implementation table is provided below.

0.1 INCEPTION MEETING: An Inception Meeting was held on the 27th of August, followed by a kick off meeting on the 28th, in Kanungu District next to Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP). The Inception meeting brought together representatives from WWF Uganda Country

Office (UCO) and the WWF East African Wildlife Crime Hub; Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) including QENP Authorities and a Senior Manager for Research and Monitoring from the UWA Headquarters who is also the Focal Point for the Uganda's National Carnivore Strategy; as well as other technical stakeholders (e.g. Wildlife Conservation Society, Uganda Carnivore Programme) and community representatives. The meeting covered presentations on the Conflict to Coexistence (C2C) approach; current Human-Wildlife Conflict Interventions in QENP and the wider landscape; and issues they currently faced by community members due to Human-Carnivore Conflict (HCC). The meeting also provided the space to: agree on sharing of relevant baseline information; work together on the project's communications plan; ensure environmental and social safeguarding aspects are considered in project implementation; work together on the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) plan. Time was spent reviewing and updating the M&E Framework.

The kick-off meeting on the 28th brought together the same participants as the internal inception meeting, as well as other technical stakeholders working in the landscape (e.g. The Virunga Foundation), and both political and technical representatives from district local government agencies. The project was formally launched through a ceremonial signing and followed by speeches from the UWA Senior Manager, Carnivore Experts and Kanungu and Rukungiri District Officials. UWA were keen to learn more about the C2C approach and have requested WWF to present the approach and project to UWA headquarters before the end of the calendar year. They recognise the clear alignment with the new National Carnivore Action Plan and formally see it as part of its implementation. Overall, the project was welcomed by stakeholders and Community members.

A meeting report is provided in Annex 2 and includes photos, attendance lists and the agenda. The Communications Plan that was worked on during the meeting is available in Annex 3, while the GESI Action plan is available in Annex 4. The group also updated the risk register in the past month which is in Annex 5.

1.1 COLLATE BASELINE DATA FOR EQUIPMENT PROVISIONS/AVAILABILITY: This has been completed by the project team by communicating online and via phone calls with UWA, rather than travelling, to be more cost effective. UWA have confirmed which equipment is needed based on their experience of using Smartphones for data collection. This led to a discussion on the need for UWA, WWF and partners to seek a way to best ensure that data from different platforms that UWA and partners use can be integrated to ensure that UWA has access in the long term and can therefore put it to best use to inform their decision making. Following on from this, WWF UCO has started the procurement process to purchase 20 smartphones, which will be completed in Q3.

1.2 CONDUCT TRAINING WITH QEPA/UWA STAFF ON CONFLICT TO COEXISTENCE APPROACH: This has been moved to Q3 and will be conducted in conjunction with the SMART training for rangers. Plans are being made with Drew McVey who is providing technical support from WWF Kenya (East Africa Wildlife Crime Hub). In the meantime, WWF UCO met with colleagues in WWF Tanzania to learn from their experience with C2C under their Darwin Initiative funded project (30-004 - Collaborative approaches to manage human-wildlife conflict in transboundary Ruvuma landscape).

Activities 1.3 to 1.5 are planned from Q3 onwards.

2.1 SUPPORT COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION ON C2C APPROACH: This was planned for Q2 but will be conducted in Q3 with UWA, once the baseline survey has been completed.

2.2. IDENTIFY ACTIONS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT: A landscape wide GESI Action Plan had previously been developed under another project led by WWF UCO ('Climate Adaptation and Protected Areas - CAPA' funded through the Canadian Government) prior to the project starting (NB. This was initially budgeted as Match funded). Based on this, the WWF UCO Gender Officer worked with the team to further develop a specific project level GESI Action Plan that will be used to inform project delivery going forward (see Annex 4).

2.5. SUPPORT COMMUNITY PATROLS TO MONITOR CARNIVORES AND POTENTIAL CONFLICT SITUATIONS AND REPORT AND RESPOND TO CONFLICT EVENTS: This activity is planned from Q4 onwards, but in the meantime we have begun the procurement process to purchase the equipment for the Community Scout Teams. This includes: boots, vuvuzelas, whistles, torches, batteries, first aid kits, t-shirts, water bottles.

Activities 2.3, 2.4, 2.6 & 2.7 are planned for Q3 onwards.

3.1 COLLECT AND COLLATE REMAINING BASELINE GAPS FOR LOGFRAME AND MONITORING & EVALUATION PLAN: A M&E Working Group has been set up and have been meeting on a regular basis to strengthen the M&E Framework, plan and logframe. Going forward this group will meet at least on a quarterly basis to track project progress and indicators, update results and adapt as needed. A household level survey has been developed (see the Questionnaire in Annex 6) to collect missing baseline data for the logframe around well-being and selected C2C pillars. Preparations are underway to conduct the survey in October 2024. Other missing baseline information, related to wildlife, is being collated from stakeholders in QECA (e.g. UWA and UCP). Going forward, UWA will share relevant data at the regular stakeholder meetings (also supported by this project) which will be collated to monitor the project and inform delivery. Once we have the final baseline information, an updated logframe will be submitted as part of a change request before the end of the year.

3.3. Facilitate regular meetings between community groups and park management on conservation challenges, adaptive measures and opportunities and develop shared actions to reduce human carnivore conflict: This was planned for Q2 but will be conducted in Q4, once the baseline survey has been completed.

Activities 3.2, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 are planned from Q3 onwards.

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.

No notable issues have come up – the project has started smoothly with support from stakeholders.

As mentioned in the report above, we are working on strengthening the logframe and adapting the work plan based on how work has progressed so far. We will submit an updated logframe and workplan with a revised budget if this proves necessary before the end of Q3. This will not affect overall project outputs and outcomes and will only strengthen project delivery.

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:	Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes
Change Request reference if known: CR24-047	

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)

Actual spend:

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)?

Yes No

4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes to your project if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

N/A

6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report. 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.

Response to feedback from reviewers:

- **The Impact statement appears under-ambitious and could be strengthened to “restored and stable” carnivore populations:** The project team have discussed this thoroughly. We recognise that the potential impact of the project could be achieved long after project closure. We also recognise that HCC is a leading driver of carnivore population decline and as such, with the effectiveness of the proposed project interventions, we agree that the expected impact should be more ambitious and therefore we propose to change the impact statement to “restored and stable” carnivore populations. This is reflected in our updated logframe which will be formally submitted as a change request before the end of the year.
- **Will there be incentives for volunteer community wildlife scouts? Have similar projects elsewhere suggested that such voluntary activity is sustainable in similar communities?** Incentivizing volunteer community wildlife scouts can be an effective strategy to encourage participation and ensure the sustainability of such voluntary activities. Various forms of incentives linked to this project for volunteers may include: Training and Capacity Building, Access to Resources and Equipment and other non-monetary incentives. While each community and conservation project is unique, similar initiatives elsewhere have demonstrated the sustainability of voluntary activities. By understanding the specific needs and motivations of the volunteers, we shall design a volunteer wildlife scouting program and implement it in a manner that promotes long-term sustainability and positive conservation outcomes. WWF UCO have been exchanging with the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) that has set up similar groups (known as HuGos) around nearby Bwindi Impenetrable National Park,

to learn from their approach and understand their success and how it can be applied for Queen Elizabeth National Park. Moreover, efforts will be made to see if and how the scouts would also benefit from livelihood support under the project.

- **What is the hierarchy of government decision-making on benefit sharing? Are decisions devolved and made at the QECA (Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area) level or are these made at the national level i.e. are park-entry fees collected locally and then shared locally, or another model? If these are made at the national level, how will associated barriers be removed through community engagement of UWA at the QECA level?** Uganda's benefit-sharing mechanism is described in a national policy which states that UWA, at the national level, is responsible for the design of the mechanism; and makes the decision that 20% of Protected Area Entry Fees are allocated for communities at the parish level who share a border with the protected area. The amount of revenue shared depends on the number of tourists who visit a given protected area in a particular year. Decision making on what is actually funded is devolved to the protected areas. Communities are invited to submit proposals to the sub-county chief, who together with UWA Conservation Area Manager and other government officers subsequently identify the strongest proposal for funding. Community engagements will enhance knowledge about procedures and requirements of benefit sharing among the park-adjacent communities so that they confidently and equitably participate in calls for revenue sharing opportunities.
- **Training of UWA rangers has been identified as one of the solutions to Human Carnivore Conflict (HCC), but no information is given on the hierarchy of failures/challenges within UWA that have exacerbated significant HCC and biodiversity loss:** While specific information may vary depending on the context, we recognise that several common challenges within UWA could contribute to this issue (e.g. insufficient engagement with local communities, inadequate training and equipment, limited resources and capacity, institutional constraints, enforcement challenges, limited research and data, among others). While addressing all issues falls out of scope of the project, we are taking a holistic and multi-stakeholder approach to tackling the drivers of HCC, which will develop more effective and sustainable solutions, including improving some of the challenges faced by UWA.
- **It is not clear what the proportion of the park the four identified Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) hotspots represent:** The four hotspots are outside the park and as such do not represent a proportion of the park as such. They have been selected based on the prevalence of HCC. The four areas are Kihiki in the south and Kyambura, Hamukungu, and Nyakatonzi in the north.
- **What would the scale of recompense be from the benefit sharing and how will this be disbursed amongst communities?** UWA Revenue Sharing Funds for financial years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 were disbursed in the four hotspots as: Kihiki UGX 94,357,285, Kyambura UGX 14,395,715, Hamukungu UGX 109,811,179 and Nyakatonzi UGX 101,602,408. As such, we would assume similar amounts for the years the project operates and subsequent years.
- **lots of livelihood diversification (1,500 beneficiaries) is proposed, but there is no mention that there are markets for them;** WWF UCO has already conducted the mapping of private sector and market access in the region under a previous project; and is actively working with local CSO partners on strengthening product market linkages around QENP and more broadly across the Ugandan Greater Virunga Landscape. Specific livelihood projects supported under this project will be identified with the local communities as part of the HCC Action Plans in Year 2. Criteria will be developed to help identify potential successful initiatives and will also be informed by market access, viability and sustainability. From the data and information that WWF UCO already has, potential livelihood projects could include: Beekeeping /Honey and Coffee value addition, commercial crafts, community tourism; briquette making from invasive plants,

milk value addition, zero grazing programs and strengthening cattle infrastructure and vet services.

- **while the cover letter indicates evidence will be made widely and publicly available, this has not been reflected in the logframe:** Upon reflection we have identified the need to add an indicator at the outcome level related to this, which will be reflected in a logframe change request to be submitted before the end of Q3.
- **if HCC is a key driver of the declines then this project should result in an increase in lion numbers from the currently low baseline:** While this is correct, it would not be possible to see an increase in lion numbers within the timeframe of the project, with the impact of the mitigation taking effect in year 3. Most lionesses give their first birth at 3.5 years which is beyond the project duration and the males may take up to 5 years to get mating opportunities despite reaching the reproductive age at about 26 months. These and other reasons mean that lion numbers may not be a sufficient indicator of project results because of low detectability in the 3 year period. It will take longer for the lion numbers to recover which is reflected in the long-term impact statement of the project.
- **In a couple of places, logframe indicators would benefit from numerical target (% improvement) rather than just ‘improvement against baseline’ (e.g. indicators 0.3, 2.3):** For Indicator 0.3, we do not think at this stage it would be beneficial to add a % increase without the full baseline information available – and as such propose to keep indicator 0.3 as it stands while the baseline data is collected. However, for indicator 2.3, we do recognise the need to provide a numerical target and will amend the logframe to show a proposed 10% improvement.
- **Indicators in Output 3 are vague in places - meetings/awareness raising/development of integrated solutions are not necessarily impactful:** Upon reflection, we are updating indicator 3.3 in response to this feedback to cover implementation of agreed actions. Note that indicator 3.2 is more focused on tracking the engagement of communities in developing the solutions and aligns with the BCF standard indicator.

Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to any additional feedback (other than caveats) received in the letter you received to say your application was successful which requested response at HYR (including safeguarding points)? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	Y
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	Y
For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	N/A
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	Y
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	Y
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	N/A
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	Y
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	Y