

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	31-013
Project title	Habitat restoration, sustainable conservation for Niger Delta red colobus monkey
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Nigeria
Lead Organisation	SW/Niger Delta Forest Project
Partner(s)	Rewild; Apoi Community Conservation Association; Apoi Community Development Committee; Partners for Red Colobus (Forest Collective); Bayelsa State Ministry of Culture and Tourism
Project leader	<i>Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>25th October 2024 (HYR1)</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>@swnigerdelta</i>

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.

We have made measurable and significant progress in the last 6 months such that we can report against the SMART indicators highlighted in the project application. Our M & E systems is indeed most appropriate to track the progress of the project.

Indicator 1.1 - We had envisioned the establishment of 1500ha designated as community-managed (conserved) areas by the end of Yr1. However, we could only reach an agreement with the two communities for an area cumulatively covering 1020ha. The first four months involved rigorous stakeholder consultations, but we successfully concluded the site identification, location, clarification on land use rights, ownership etc., and participatory mapping. We are currently in the stage of documentation – drafting and consultations on the provisions of the MoU/Land Use agreements.

Indicator 1.2 - Illegal logging activities recorded in the last 6 months show a 91% reduction and hunting by 86%. Implementation of technologies has not commenced yet because we have been in the process of procurement and now partnering with an international university to deliver training in the systematic deployment of the camera traps.

Output 2 - *which is to deliver on engaging local people in habitat restoration involving tree nursery, seed handling, propagation, transplanting, aftercare and monitoring processes is not at the stage to be implemented yet only at the full completion of indicator 1.1. However, preparations are being made for the tools, professional services and infrastructure to deliver the activities related to this output by November 2024.*

Indicator 3.1 - We have commenced work on the provision of basic infrastructure for educational access (i.e. classroom renovations, teaching aids/materials provided including school uniforms and books in the Apoi community); Worked with the Apoi CDC to equip the Apoi Health Centre while seeking support for staffing the clinic and there has been efforts to get support from developmental agencies involved in other infrastructural projects in the community. Efforts are still ongoing and will be replicated in the two new communities where interventions just started.

Indicator 3.2 - 20 people receive training and start-up equipment for MSMEs, specifically in tailoring, 95% of beneficiaries are women. Another 20 people are scheduled to commence snail farming training before the end of this month, plans were put on hold because one key team member and representative of the Local communities are attending COP16 in Cali, Colombia.

For most of Output 3, there are ongoing efforts to get the State and private sector involved in the delivery of the results for this objective. We have commenced discussion with Bank of Industry and other private sector actors.

Indicator 4.2 - Niger Delta red colobus monkey conservation and management plan drafted and submitted for endorsement by end of Yr2. *We have exceeded our expectations on this* because, at the site level where the remaining population of the species is known to occur and is being conserved, this conservation management plan is 100% complete and endorsed. What is required now is for the plan to be developed for use at the government level.

Indicator 4.3 – We have facilitated a roundtable discussion, and press conference and published a policy series for policymakers titled '**Building the policies that support community-based conservation.**

Indicator 4.4 – We have launched the Radio show tagged *Kekere Ife* (which means Conservation Time) – a live interactive radio show curating educational topics on forest, conservation and individual responsibilities. The program reaches ~ 2 million people across Bayelsa State and listeners can call in to air their views on each topic.

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.

The most notable problems we encountered were the disputes between communities over land borders. It could have escalated and set the project backwards and would have also negatively affected what we had accomplished in previous years but through intense stakeholder consultations and conflict management, we were able to collectively find a resolution to the disputes that erupted during this time.

Secondly, after administration changes occurred in the government ministries earlier in the year, we discovered that the project would benefit more from a partnership with the State Ministry of Environment instead of a Ministry of Culture and Tourism which we had hoped to work with owing to the collaborations we have had in previous times. So we have proposed to change one of our project partners.

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

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

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?

None for now.

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 responded, please confirm when.

Most of the responses were provided in a letter dated the 13th of March 2024. However, two bullet points in reviewers' feedback that are pending responses are as follows:

1. more detail is also needed on the nature of the SMEs that will be supported (the response to feedback did not say enough about this):

Response: Developing sustainable livelihood practices that integrates environmental consciousness while alleviating poverty with increased yields. For example, harvesting snails and selling them in urban markets like Yenagoa and Port Harcourt can bring in significant amount of money for a family/household if done right and will not require large numbers of people inside the forest during snail harvest season. Another instance is the use Mercury in the waters to increase their fish capture but doesn't have to be the case where there are demonstrable ways in which fishing can be environmentally friendly and profitable. As regards this specific project, we will bring in trainers to demonstrate these different projects to specific number of interested participants, provide seed funding or equipment to support the business or trade and will have a livelihood unit that follows-up on each participant to monitor their progress and measure improvement. In addition, beneficiaries will receive trainings in financial literacy, organizing themselves into cooperatives, marketing their products (harvests) and capacity-building in pricing and business strategies. Local communities can live off their harvest at any given month if they can 1) have the same business strategies as the city-dwelling middlemen and 2) have knowledge on proper storage or preservation techniques for when those produce are not in season e.g. snails can be sun-dried or at commercial levels dehydrated using solar-powered food dehydrators. These poverty reduction strategies are all embedded in improved knowledge, the sort of information-sharing that will also lead to better use and management of forest and wildlife resources where local communities derive a source of livelihood. Other examples are Fishery resources such as shrimps, cray fish and periwinkles; NTFPs such as bush mango seeds (*Irvingia gabonensis*) used as food condiment nationwide, invasive species into natural capital could lead them to have sustainable income e.g. improved yields from improved crop variants; developing marketing strategies, value chains for harvests etc.

2. the logframe refers to efforts to enhance local infrastructure (e.g. schools, clinics) without indicating where the funds will come from or how this will be sustained;

Response: The CBO established within each community as a conservation association (and have as part of their articles of association, to enhance socio-economic wellbeing of the community) are being provided training to fund- raise and together with them as partners are seeking to develop partnerships, networks and support from development agencies and other grant-giving bodies to provide these amenities. The communities also can access state government and private sector CSR funding to sustain these infrastructure projects. We are already guiding them on this path to the extent of providing and sustaining a health care facility in Apoi community. This has been 70% completed and funding to staff this health centre is still being sourced.

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.	✓
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	
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.	
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	✓
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	✓
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	✓
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	✓
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	✓