

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	DARCC009
Project title	Strengthening conservation and management capacity in Tanzania through collaborative research
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Tanzania
Lead Organisation	Lion Landscapes
Partner(s)	WildCRU (University of Oxford), Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) Tanzania, Southern Tanzania Elephant Program (STEP)
Project leader	Dr Charlotte Searle
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR3
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.lionlandscapes.org/ https://twitter.com/lionlandscapes https://www.instagram.com/lionlandscapes/ https://www.facebook.com/lionlandscapes

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 1.1 & 2.4: In August the Selous-Nyerere large carnivore monitoring team set up a camera trap survey in eastern Selous Game Reserve (GR), in close collaboration with management authority TAWA. This is our biggest survey to date, with 116 paired stations together covering more than 2,500 km², and has been used to deliver training to 2 TAWA ecologists, 3 TAWA rangers, 3 NGO staff, and 2 MSc students (1M, 1F). The team also deployed collars on 6 lions and 7 wild dogs in Nyerere National Park (NP) and Selous GR, delivering training to 3 TAWIRI researchers, 8 TANAPA staff, 2 TAWA staff, 1 male MSc student, and 2 female student interns in the process.

Activity 1.3 & 3.2: In September, we met with senior staff from TAWA and TANAPA to present the findings of our research and provide recommendations on how to improve lion protection in Selous-Nyerere. This discussion is now forming the basis of a new grant application to support more intensive lion monitoring with a stronger link to protection in the ecosystem.

Activity 1.5 & 3.1: Since April, we have published one paper on a record of strawberry leopard in Selous GR (78% Tanzanian authors); we have also submitted two papers on wild dog (64%, Tanzanian lead author) and lion (71%) status in Selous-Nyerere. An additional two papers on leopard status in Selous-Nyerere (75%) and caracal occupancy in Ruaha-Rungwa (25%, Tanzanian lead author) are also nearly ready for submission.

Activity 2.1: One of the project's training participants enrolled on his PhD at Washington State University in August, and will be using data collected through this project for his research. We have also continued to supervise two MSc students (1M, 1F) who started their studies before April 2024, one of whom is a TAWA ecologist and project training participant, and have supported three new MSc students (3F) to develop their research projects (although one of these students has unfortunately had to suspend her studies – see Question 2).

Activity 2.2: The wildlife monitoring course for students and staff at University of Dar es Salaam is planned for mid-November. This training will be led by the Darwin Project Assistant and will be delivered by an all-Tanzanian team, including staff who have participated in the training activities and will now pass on what they have learned through the course.

Activity 4.1: After being postponed due to scheduling conflicts and delays with the permit renewal process, the Ruaha-Rungwa – Udzungwa corridor assessment is now planned to take place in November, led by partner organisation STEP. This means that it will not be possible to complete the final report during the project timeframe, although a preliminary report will be produced.

Activity 5.1: After being postponed due to delays with acquiring permits (see Question 2), the wildlife capture & immobilisation training course for Tanzanian wildlife vets is now scheduled to take place at the start of November.

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.

One major challenge we have faced is the logistics of organising the veterinary training (activity 5.1). We originally planned for the training to take place in July, but TAWIRI were unable to secure the necessary permissions for the trainers to enter the country far enough in advance of the planned dates; we then postponed the training until the end of October, and have faced further delays with obtaining permits for the trainers to import the required drugs (partly due to the slow and somewhat disorganised bureaucratic system here in Tanzania and partly as the TAWIRI collaborator who submitted the request entered some information incorrectly on the online form). However, we have now been able to secure the drug import permit and the training should go ahead at the start of November.

Another unexpected development has been that one MSc student – who joined us for the camera trap survey setup in Selous GR, and was planning to carry out a research project on spotted hyaena ecology using data collected through the project – has had to suspend her studies for pregnancy-related health reasons. We have made it clear that we will be here to support her if and when she is able to resume her studies.

The 2024 lion & wild dog collaring activity also ended up being more expensive than originally anticipated, partly due to the decision to have two vets on the team due to challenges we have faced earlier in the project (discussed in our Y2 annual report). We are now working on a change request to reallocate some of the budget for new GPS collars (under Other Costs) to Operating Costs, to cover the additional spend on fuel, vehicle repairs, and fieldwork allowances. We will submit this as soon as possible once we have been able to review the allocations to the other grants supporting this work.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:

Not yet – we will be submitting a financial change request to reallocate >10% of the other costs budget line to operating costs in November 2024

Formal Change Request submitted:

No

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

N/A

Change Request reference if known: N/A

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?

As noted in Question 2, we are working on a change request to reallocate some of the remaining budget for Other Costs to Operating Costs, to cover the higher than expected spend associated with deploying GPS collars in Y3. We will submit this in November, after we have been able to review the other grants supporting this work.

No

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.

Our latest annual report review (AR2R) the reviewer highlighted two suggestions for planning of future work: to consider supporting or collaborating with others to support livelihood interventions in corridor areas, and reflecting on lessons learnt to share with similar programmes elsewhere. While alternative livelihoods are not directly within the scope of our expertise, partner organisation STEP are currently seeking more substantial grants for the corridor activities that would explore the community aspect in more detail, and we will continue to support monitoring in these areas. We have also just submitted an application for a new Capability & Capacity grant that, if granted, would incorporate more explicit links of wildlife research to human benefits, including through activities to help reduce human-wildlife conflict and zoonotic disease. This follow-up grant would also explicitly seek to share our lessons learnt and best practices with similar capacity-building projects in Tanzania and beyond.

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.	N/A
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	N/A
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.	Y
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