

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	DARCC021
Project title	Strengthening conservation organisations in Madagascar
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Madagascar
Lead Organisation	Maliasili
Partner(s)	INDRI, GERP Madagascar, Madagasikara Voakajy (MV), Association Tsimoka, Association Famelona, Association Fanamby
Project leader	Karine Nuulimba
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	maliasili.org

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.

Progress towards Output 1: Six Malagasy organisations receive organisational development through a holistic, multi-year partnership that enhances their strategy, people-management, and implementation

1. Four Strategic Plans completed and released, and a fifth one underway:

Maliasili completed strategic planning processes for four of our partners: INDRI, Madagasikara Voakajy, Association Tsimoka, and GERP in May 2024. These plans which are now available in both English and French were designed using photos and style guides developed during the previous reporting period. The strategic plan for Famelona is also nearing completion and is currently in the design phase.

Links to strategic plans: [INDRI](#), [Madagasikara Voakajy](#), [Tsimoka](#), [GERP](#)

Clustered Strategy launch : To enhance visibility and attract sustainable, flexible funding, we brought together Association Tsimoka, INDRI, GERP, and Madagasikara Voakajy to jointly launch their strategies on June 21, 2024. The event attracted over 60 attendees, including nine donors and representatives from big international NGOs. Short videos summarising each organisation’s strategic plan were created for social media dissemination, aiming to engage potential partners and donors. These videos highlight the vision and goals of each organisation, marking a step toward increasing their influence and securing essential funding.

Link to the cluster strategic plan [launch](#)

2. **Organisational structure revised:** Four organisations—Madagasikara Voakajy, Fanamby, GERP, and Tsimoka revised their organisational structures to better align with the delivery of their new strategic plans. Madagasikara Voakajy and Fanamby launched their updated structures, creating senior management teams and improving team efficiency to deliver conservation to communities on the ground. GERP and Tsimoka will have finalised revisions by the end of 2024. Their organisational structures will focus on team growth which will allow for better HR management and improvement prospects for leadership and professional development.
3. **Three communication strategies completed:** Three organisations, INDRI, Tsimoka, and GERP, face common challenges for effective communications, including unclear messaging, limited resources and weak team coordination. To tackle these issues, we held a cluster workshop focused on peer learning. This workshop helped align their communication efforts with strategic plans to better convey their missions
4. **Grant Management tool development:** As Tsimoka, GERP, and INDRI plan for growth over the next five years, robust systems and tools are essential. Each organisation recently underwent an assessment of its grant management capacities, challenges, and needs. Based on this evaluation, tailored grant management tools were developed for each, equipping them to manage grants more effectively as they expand their operations to meet conservation goals

Assessment against indicators for output 1: In the past six months, four out of five targeted organisations have completed and publicly shared their strategic plans. Each of the five organisations received between two and three Organisational Development Frameworks, as follows:

- Madagasikara Voakajy and Fanamby have launched revised organisational structures, while GERP and Tsimoka are set to finalise theirs by the end of 2024, to strengthen their teams for strategy implementation,
- Three organisations -Madagasikara Voakajy, Fanamby and GERP - have developed communication strategies to enhance their visibility and showcase their impact for increased fundraising efforts.
- Furthermore, three organisations- INDRI, Tsimoka, GERP - have received grant management tools to manage funds accountably and strategically.

Progress towards Output 2: Six Malagasy organisations improve their organisational leadership skills to better guide their organisations and build strategic collaborations and networks

1. Organisational Strengthening Plans (OSP) was established in December 2023 for each partner organisation, outlining specific OD interventions for 2024. These OSPs were developed based on end-of-year discussions between Maliasili and partners, which informed the drafting of the intervention plans for the upcoming year. Following this, a mid-year assessment was undertaken to evaluate the progress of each organisation in relation to Maliasili’s interventions and identified priorities for the second semester.

2. Maliasili collects annual data on each partner's operations and impacts, both to monitor the effectiveness of its support and to track each organisation's progress towards its mission using key impact indicators. Overall, the data reveal a gradual increase in donor numbers and revenue, and a decreasing trend in forest loss across protected areas managed by the six partners. This data is then transformed into visual presentations and shared with each partner to foster self-reflection. During recent feedback sessions, all six partners found these insights valuable. It very quickly allowed them to identify strengths and weaknesses in their monitoring and evaluation systems. Seeing the results visually shone light on the link between MEL and communicating impact results to external audiences. This work will form an important base of clustered OD work on MEL in 2025.

Additionally, Maliasili assesses partner satisfaction through an annual survey. In 2023, all six partners reported notable growth and development. Four partners attributed their sharpened strategic focus to Maliasili's support in developing strategic plans, which allowed for more effective resource allocation and greater impact. Five partners emphasised the leadership programme's role in strengthening their leadership skills, enabling them to guide their teams more effectively towards meaningful goals.

3. Maliasili organised an 'Impact Festival', which attracted 300 registrants including 20 funders representatives, and provided a platform for 12 partners to showcase their impacts. Among them, three Malagasy organisations—GERP, Tsimoka, and Fanamby—presented compelling impact figures and shared engaging stories illustrating their contributions to conservation. This was an excellent opportunity for organisations to fully understand the linkages between Theory of Change, data borne out of efficient monitoring and evaluations systems, attractive communications and fundraising. <https://maliasili.org/impact-festival>
4. Senior to mid-level management teams in our current portfolio were invited to participate in thesecond cohort of the Madagascar Environmental Leadership Programme (MELP2) to deepen the bench of leadership skills within the portfolio. Although this initiative is not funded by the Darwin grant, it is designed to entrench the organisational development interventions we have implemented with partner organisations.

Assessment against indicators for output 2:

- Each partner organisation participated in year-end interactions that included organisational development assessments. As a result, six organisational strengthening plans (OSPs) were developed in December 2023.
- End-of-year questionnaires were administered in early 2024 to gather feedback and assess the impact of Maliasili's organisational development interventions. Annual impact data from each partner was also collected in the second quarter.
- Two influential events, the Impact Festival webinar, and the strategy launch were held to enhance strategic collaboration and networking (described in output 1).

Progress towards Output 3 : The voice and influence of three Malagasy organisations were amplified leading to more resources and shifts in funding towards local organisations.

Over the past six months, significant strides have been made to enhance the visibility and funding opportunities for Malagasy organisations.

- **Communication Strategies:** Three organisations have developed tailored communication strategies to effectively convey their impact and objectives. Additionally, Maliasili supported the website design for Tsimoka and GERP (advising role), ensuring alignment with their new strategic plans and enhancing their online presence.

- **Global representation:** Maliasili facilitated the participation of Fanamby’s Executive Director at New York Climate Week, providing a platform for grassroots voices from Madagascar to address critical climate issues. This opportunity not only raised the visibility of Fanamby but also opened doors for new funding sources, networking, and collaborations.
- **Amplifying reports:** Maliasili produced two influential reports, "[Seeding Solutions](#)" and "[From Pledges to Practice](#)." These reports showcase the effectiveness of community-led conservation efforts in Madagascar and position local organisations as essential players in sustainable development. They advocate for increased direct funding to local entities, emphasising the need for long-term investment and recognition of their leadership in driving impactful change on the ground.

Assessment against indicators for output 3:

- Two amplifying reports were produced and published, enhancing the voice and influence of African and Malagasy organisations.
- Four out of five strategic plans were developed, and three communication strategies are in the final design phase, resulting in a total of seven communication products.
- According to the Maliasili’s Monitoring and Evaluation partners dashboard, five of six organisations have seen an increase of 5% to 20% in total revenue over the past two years.

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.

There have been no notable problems over the past 6 months. The only change was presented in July 2023 when three additional organisations: GERP Madagascar, Association Tsimoka, and Association Famelona were added to this project (initial organisations Fanamby, INDRI, and Madagasikara Voakajy). This change request was approved.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:	n/a
Formal Change Request submitted:	n/a
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	n/a

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?

So far, no issues have been raised in relation to this project.

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 the Annual report reviews:

Comments 1: “Many of the indicators are quite process led i.e. completion of the various plans. The challenge is to identify how the enhanced capacity will enable more effective conservation projects and livelihood support, especially as these will doubtless vary among the different NGOs and will involve time spans beyond the lifetime of the project.

This could be addressed by a brief note/report at the end of the project which highlights some of the actions and successes which have occurred - maybe in terms of fund raised, projects secured, or advocacy achieved.”

Response: Here are some concrete examples of actions and successes: Tsimoka Association received funding through Maliasili CEPF grant, to support the expansion of their Dynamic Agroforestry initiative, which aligns with the implementation of their new strategic plan. Fanamby secured significant funding from LCAOF, thanks to Maliasili’s support in connecting partners with donors and providing assistance with grant proposal writing. Regarding increased funding, here are some organisations that have successfully secured additional funds since the start of this Darwin project: GERP 10% increase 2022-2023; INDRI, 20% increase 2021-2023; Tsimoka association: 8% increase 2022-2023; Fanamby: 7% increase 2022-2023.

Comments 2: “ The project might reflect upon how the excellent collaboration engendered by the bringing together of these NGOs can be sustained beyond the period of the

project. This period of support does provide an opportunity to put mechanisms in place to facilitate this collaboration should it be the chosen route. There might be a number of approaches to this but establishing a formal or informal forum to encourage future collaboration would be one option”

Response:

The six organisations in our current portfolio —Fanamby, INDRI, GERP, MV, Tsimoka, and Famelona— are collaborating with other members of the MELP cohort to advocate against the construction of a road through the protected areas managed by Fanamby. In September 2024, Maliasili launched the second cohort of the Madagascar Environmental Leadership Program (MELP2). Together, the members of our current portfolio and both MELP cohorts will form a community of leaders. They will establish both formal and informal gatherings to facilitate peer learning, share experiences, and enhance collaboration among all members.

Comments 3: “I scored the GESI as Empowering rather than Transformative. Future reports could offer more explanation and evidence for why they believe the project is indeed Transformative”

Response: Here is a testimony from the president of Tsimoka association (Razafintsalama Lalao Jeremi), sent to Maliasili on June 21st, 2024:

On behalf of the Tsimoka team, I'd like to thank you for all the help, advice, support and assistance you've given us. Sincerely, thanks to our collaboration, our organisation has really grown. You have made our dreams come true, our team has received a lot of reinforcement, and we now have our strategic plan, which is well-founded, well-structured, attractive and very easy to consult. Thanks to you, we have reached an essential milestone in Tsimoka's future. Thanks to your support, we have regained our serenity, confidence and motivation. For our part, we can assure you that the fruits of our collaboration will materialise into good results with much greater impact on communities and biodiversity.

Comments 4: “The clustered approach to organisational development would be a valuable tool to be widely disseminated and promoted if it continues to work well. A PDF briefing has already been produced on this issue. This could be updated at the end of the project and distributed widely, assuming it is intended as a public document”

Response: This is well noted and will be done at the end of the project.

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.	