

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	<i>DARCC026</i>
Project title	Mentoring GEN Fellows to incubate Global South biodiversity-livelihoods initiatives
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Kenya, PNG, India, Brazil, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Tanzania, Samoa, Nigeria, Zambia, Bhutan, Nepal, Peru, Bolivia, Indonesia, Belize, Guatemala
Lead Organisation	Global Diversity Foundation
Partner(s)	The Human Edge (formerly Mowgli Mentoring), Common Purpose, WildTeam University of Cambridge, University of Kent, University of Edinburgh Grassroots Global South CSOs represented by the 31 fellows of the Conservation and Communities Fellowship (from the above country list)
Project leader	Emily Caruso
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	01 April 2024 – 30 September 2024 HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	https://global-diversity.org/gdf-conservation-and-communities-fellowship/

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.

The core grant activity – the Conservation and Communities Fellowship (CCF) – encompasses indicators 0.1, 0.2, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.3. The fellowship began on 1 November 2023, and concluded on 29 August 2024. In the period April – September 2024, the following activities were completed:

1) Fellowship programme implementation (activities. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2)

a) Online training:

Over the course of the last 6 months, following the CCF [calendar](#), the online training (articulated in three streams) and mentoring (individual as well as peer-to-peer) of the CCF fellows continued on a regular, weekly basis.

Starting in June 2024, the fellows also attended the Darwin Initiative proposal-writing clinics, led by GDF Founder Dr. Gary Martin and focused on developing skills to design and submit high quality DI proposals. This activity extended beyond the Fellowship graduation date of 29 August. We agreed with clinic participants that even once their DI proposals were submitted, we would continue with the clinics as long as there is demand for them, focusing on project cycle management. The DI clinic and associated mentorship contributes to the achievement of indicators 0.1 and 1.1. We are currently mentoring 13 individuals to submit DI proposals at the October 2024 deadline for C&C proposals. Ongoing individual and peer-to-peer mentoring contributes to the continued development of fellows' projects and fundraising capacities, helping to achieve indicators 0.2, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3. We will report on this quantitatively in the AR2-March 2025.

Beyond the online training, in May 2024 we completed and published the CCF publication entitled [Our Land, Our Story: Voices from the Edges](#), which is a compilation of stories by the fellows, written as part of the storytelling component of the training, and contributing to outreach for the fellows (indicator 3.1). The publication was printed and widely shared during the International Society for Ethnobiology Congress in Marrakech 15-19 May 2024.

b) Community Exchange in Morocco:

Between 12 and 15 May, the 31 fellows of CCF came together in Demnat in the High Atlas (Morocco) for an in-person [community exchange](#) (indicator 2.4)

Activities included:

- Storytelling sessions;
- Initial co-design of the future CCF Alumni Programme;
- A facilitated 'donors and fellows conversation' with four guests from philanthropic organisations, an experience that both fellows and donors found transformative;
- Field trip visit at the Iminifri Natural Bridge and hike through the Atlas foothills;
- Meeting with members of two rural cooperatives: the Tiwizi Women's Cooperative in Tizout and the Samili Agricultural Cooperative in Tidili.

c) The fellowship culminated with the fellows Graduation ceremony held on 29 August 2024. An overall summary of the fellowship's journey and outcomes can be read [here](#)

2) CCF outreach and dissemination (act. 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)

a) Attendance and fellows' sessions and presentations at the International Society for Ethnobiology (ISE) Congress 2024

From 15 to 19 May, the cohort of fellows joined the 18th edition of the [ISE Congress in Marrakech](#) as delegates and speakers (indicator 2.4). With almost 400 participants from 69 countries, the Congress offered a unique opportunity to learn, exchange and network with leading scholars and practitioners in the conservation field.

The fellows contributed to the Congress by organising three well-attended sessions:

- *Indigenous landscape and resource governance: Innovations, best practices and environmental justice*
- *Documenting and protecting traditional knowledge: methods, ethics and respect for the sacred in Indigenous and local community-led initiatives*
- *Unweaving the fabric of colonial conservation: local narratives, indigenous methods and plural perspectives*

View the ISE Congress [website](#) & [programme here](#).

- b) Attendance at the [Conservation Optimism Summit](#) and presentation of the CCF by Rosebell Abwonji (CCF fellow) & Nessie Reid (GDF director). See their presentation [here](#).
- c) Participation in the Harvest Festival and launch of “Our Land, Our Stories” publication. As an outcome of storytelling & writing sessions, in May 2024 the CCF fellows presented in a dedicated [event](#) the publication “Our Land, Our Stories” codeveloped with Project In/Visibility - a rich text comprising articles written by 18 fellows. Distributed across our network in Morocco and internationally to ISE Congress 2024 audience, the publication is also available online [here](#) for widespread dissemination and readership (indicator 3.1)
- d) GEN in Conversation special series:
In contribution to the two toolkits we originally planned to produce as part of this grant (now reframed as the Conservation Futures Dialogues; see below), and to offer fellows spaces for in-depth reflection about leading topics in the field of conservation, in June and July we hosted a four-part dedicated series of online seminars (GEN in Conversation events). “[Conservation’s Leading Edges](#)” gathered practitioners and scholars to discuss practical and philosophical innovations in community-based conservation.
- e) Internships (Indicator 3.3):
With the triple objective of (a) offering conservation graduates an experience of grassroots conservation, (b) offering grassroots organisations research and strategic support, and (c) building relationships between UK higher education institutions and the CCF, we developed an internship programme for UK-based MSc students in the fellows’ organisations.
To date, we have funded seven internships (out of the 10 total proposed in indicator 3.3) within fellows’ organisations in Bolivia, Cameroon, Guatemala, Kenya, Madagascar and Tanzania. In early 2025, we will organise four additional graduate internships in fellows’ organisations, currently planned in fellows’ organisations in Bhutan, Cameroon, Peru, and São Tomé and Príncipe.
For an illustrative account of this transformative journey, read about the experience of Sam Rees, who undertook an internship in Cameroon [here](#).
We can attest to the value of these internships, as University of Cambridge and University of Edinburgh are keen to continue the relationship with the CCF into the future. Unfortunately the MSc Ethnobotany at University of Kent has been discontinued.

Activities still in progress:

- 1) Toolkits (Indicators 1.4, 3.2)
- 2) Podcasts (Indicators 1.5, 3.4)
- 3) MSc training (Indicator 3.1)

Please see section below for details.

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.

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

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

Discussed with NIRAS:	Yes/ No
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes/ No
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes/ 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>	

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** Estimated underspend: £

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?

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.

There were two items of feedback on our AR1, due for our response at AR2. Nevertheless, we are happy to provide an update here:

- 1) Delays on the indicators related to the toolkits and podcasts; the reviewer requested an update. The above plan for the Conservation Futures Dialogue is our update; we fully expect to complete the process by 31 March 2025.
- 2) Clarity on the reports about fellows' proposals submitted - whether those proposals were written during the reporting period or not. We can confirm that those proposals were written and submitted during the project's reporting period, however to ensure greater clarity when we carry out our subsequent survey in Feb 2025 in advance of

AR2, we will reframe the survey structure to ensure the proposal submission dates are clearer and transparently shared.

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.	Yes
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.	