

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.

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| Project reference | DARCC033 |
| Project title | Marine Preservation And Coastal Poor Livelihood Betterment Through Sustainable Fishing |
| Country(ies)/territory(ies) | Lebanon |
| Lead Organisation | Friends of Nature |
| Partner(s) | Ghadi NGO, Fishing in Lebanon network |
| Project leader | <i>Myrna Semaan</i> |
| Report date and number (e.g. HYR1) | <i>30 Oct. 2024, HYR2</i> |
| Project website/blog/social media | www.f-o-n.org <i>insta: fonlebanon</i> <i>twitter: @FONLebanon</i> <i>fb: Friends of Nature FON</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).

- 1- FON was approved in a change request the extension of the vocational training workshops on sustainable fishing till September 2024 due to the eruption of unforeseen instability in South Lebanon; the instability forced us to exclude some communities that we had reached out to and approved to conduct the trainings. We have concluded the vocational course successfully and reached the target number.
- 2- We have been connecting with the trainees regularly sending out messages and inciting them to send feedback on their practices. We have been receiving varied types of information from different participants. We are recording all into an excel sheet to share with you as a final output.
- 3- FON engaged national stakeholders and decision makers on strengthening the conservation of biodiversity in the MPAs. Each MPA management plan was discussed in a workshop that addressed the relevant municipality, Head of Ecosystem Department at the Ministry of Environment, representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, and Tourism, the Marine Research Centre, and the Civil Defence office closest to the MPA.
- 4- MPA outreach material between documentaries and booklets: the rushes for the documentaries are concluded and interviews were taken with local stakeholders to feature in the documentaries to promote adoption and ownership. The booklets took time to

conclude the material and the design, they are available for final touches from respective owners (MPAs) to print them.

Assumptions

- One assumption failed but not completely. We assumed that socio-political stability is maintained and conducive of project implementation. Socio-political stability collapsed locally in September 2023 and then on a broader scale in South Lebanon in October 2023. Our response strategy was to stop activities South of Saida and focus on the calm zone, accepting participants from further south only if they would commute and join workshops outside the south.

- In September 2024, the armed conflict expanded from South Lebanon northward.

Impact: the situation was shocking to us as to everybody in Lebanon. We had planned and prepared activities, which we were waiting to execute as the heat waves of July and August quell, so we were opting for September. One of the activities that we wanted to start was the initiation of the MaRe Network with a little celebration by the mural painting. Another was the community workshops, which we planned to start in September and had prepared with some centers and communities. However, the people grew shocked and delusional, so we had to postpone. Also, activities involving outdoors and assemblies are not advisable as these could risk the security of the participants.

Adaptation: It took us a while to digest the situation and discover how we adapt and regain momentum and effectiveness. 1- We tuned our campaign to activate our sustainable fishing trainees in this situation to carry the slogan "Fishing for Unity" where we fish to support the displaced people if we can. We started ourselves, and we encouraged our trainees to do the same. 2- We were worried that we will not be able to conduct our engagement workshops with coastal communities until we investigated the possibility of reaching out to the displaced communities from coastal areas and the south coast. These communities were integrated in our plans originally, they are now grouped in refugee centers for the internally displaced. We visited some refuge centers and discovered that the hosting organizations and the displaced communities welcome our proposal to conduct engagement workshops on the marine ecosystem, biodiversity conservation and sustainable fishing. The displaced communities will receive a message to carry back home and an aspiration to develop as they return. We believe the protection of marine biodiversity will be identified with hope and better life. We will start this activity the soonest and speed our activity to catch up; as we cover a number of displaced communities, we will then focus back on the residing communities. We will not be able to take names of workshop attendees from displaced communities for confidentiality, but we will be able to take group photos which will indicate the number of participants.

Standard indicators

2 indicators may be difficult to meet concerning the number of trainees training other members of community, and the number of trainees whose livelihood improved with sustainable fishing. Due to the unfolding surprise situation, people are visiting the shore less to protect from potential danger and in some areas to respond to forbidding warnings. A couple of our trainee communities left their towns, and other trainee groups as in Qoube for example are serving in the refugee centers assisting at distributing food and other. We will report what we collect, we have a number of trainees providing feedback, but we may not meet the target numbers. On the other hand, we will meet additional standard indicators that we will report in the final report.

With our new adaptation strategy, we regained confidence that we will meet all our deliverables.

Kindly inform us of any obligations for approvals or any comments on the above.

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.

- 1- Security situation collapsed in wider part of the country. We were baffled for a month, some planned activities were postponed, not cancelled. We re-defined and adapted our strategy to cope with the situation. We will progress as stated above.
- 2- A slow down/delay of activities took place in September to early October. It will not impact our activities; we are in the process of catching up. We did not anticipate to submit a change request. We are still confident that we will complete project deliverables.

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

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| Discussed with NIRAS: | No |
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| Formal Change Request submitted: | No |
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| Received confirmation of change acceptance: | 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?

We are very comfortable with your 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.

The approval of the annual report included a comment stating that the biodiversity database should not be made only of fish. We have recorded 82 species from the MPAs from different marine groups, they will make part of the MPAs management plans and the database (lists attached).

Checklist for submission

| For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1st April 2024) | |
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| 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. | X |
| For All Projects | |
| Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email. | X |
| Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com . | X |
| Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website? | X |
| Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ? | X |
| Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report. | X |