



**Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects
Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus**

Half Year Report

Project reference	DARCC039
Project title	Empowering East African Universities to build national conservation capacity & capability
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda
Lead Organisation	WildTeam
Partner(s)	Natural State
Project leader	Alison Skeats
Report date and number	31 Oct 2024 HYR1
Project website	https://www.wildteam.org.uk/trainers-network

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 4.3 - Adapting training materials. Training materials have been created for four out of five of our vocational wildlife conservation courses: Project Management, Project Planning, Stakeholder Engagement, and Grant Writing, this is ahead of schedule. Materials for the fifth course (Monitoring & Evaluation) will be complete by end of Q4 as planned. All materials are suitable to be taught in a classroom setting, with or without computers, online or offline. They include PowerPoint presentations with notes, and exercises that can be done on print-outs or on a black/white board for low-tech options, and the same exercises that can be done on Google Drive or offline worksheets for students with internet and/or computers.

Activity 4.1 - Instructor engagement, and Activity 4.2 - Instructor training

Eleven people have been recruited to become instructors. Of these, six people (3 male, 3 female/non-binary) are currently in training, and five people (3M, 2F/NB) have completed training, and are certified in one or more WildTeam best practices; these people are now considered able to deliver training to others. Six people are continuing to learning a second WildTeam best practise, which will increase their familiarity with the materials and skills in how to deliver the courses. None have yet started delivering training themselves, but from discussion with them, we estimate that two people will start training others in Q1 2025.

The people above were recruited through one-to-one conversations, and although successful, we needed to reach more people in a shorter space of time. Therefore, we held a webinar in early October, with a presentation outlining the network and a live Q and A to introduce potential instructors to the project and invite them to start their journey towards becoming a trainer. 577 people registered to attend, and attendance was 31% of those registered. A follow up email with active next steps to become an instructor had 90 respondents (39M, 49F, 2 preferring not to say). This is progress towards our objective that 50% of the instructors engaged are female or non-binary.

Our objective was to recruit instructors from 14 countries across East Africa; people from seven of these 14 target countries registered to attend the webinar (Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda). Only people from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda attended (12 people: 7M, 5F). English is widely spoken across these countries, so it was expected that at this stage in the project (while our training materials are only in English) that we might not engage people from East African countries where English is rarely spoken. However, globally, people from 96 countries registered to attend, and people from 43 countries responded to the next steps email, which paves the way for translating of our training materials to increase accessibility to the other countries we intend to target.

The webinar was recorded and sent out to all those who registered but who were unable to attend, and it will be publicly available on [YouTube](#). Therefore we believe that it will reach wider than only the attendees. The recording will be sent to any new interested potential instructors in the future to introduce them to the project.

Activity 3.1 Trainer network creation

The online page to provide support for the instructors has not yet been created. This is slightly behind schedule, but it was judged to be better to wait until after the webinar to create the space and introduce potential trainers into it. By waiting, we are more able to assess what the instructors need from the space and populate it with useful content and resources. This page and online community will be built over the next 3 months.

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.

A lesson learned: the project manager reaching out individually to those who had completed an expression of interest survey proved to be time consuming, with many of the same questions being raised in each conversation. We addressed this with the webinar in order to address many potential trainers at once. Following this webinar, admin such as emails, signup forms and course enrolment will be largely automated, increasing the capacity of staff to concentrate on relationship development for engaged and selected trainers and establishment of the trainer network. Following on from the webinar and the recording, we do not envisage this original delay impacting expected project activities and planned outputs.

A conservation network based across 8 West African countries (Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal and Sierra Leone) expressed an interest in teaching our materials in French. This opportunity has been taken and we are working with them via their bi-lingual staff to translate the materials. We have also secured pro-bono work from [Prozprobono](#). We hope to have trainers in the network delivering in French by Q2 2025.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:	No
Formal Change Request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	No
Change Request reference if known: <i>N/A</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)?

No Estimated underspend: £0

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?

N/A

6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report.

N/A

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 ?	Yes
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.	N/A
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