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	DARCC054
Project title	Developing capacity for forest restoration in Africa
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Based in Uganda
Lead Organisation	Tropical Biology Association
Partner(s)	Kabale University
Project leader	*Rosie Trevelyan*
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	*31/10/24 HYR1*
Project website/blog/social media	*https://.tropical-biology.org*

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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.

Management and coordination
An MOU agreement between TBA and Kabale University was signed on 3rd May 2024. This is guiding the joint implementation of the project and will support future collaborations that build on this project.

Progress towards output 1: Increased capacity among African conservation professionals in evidence-based forest restoration techniques
We have carried out assessments of capacity needs for restoration among African managers and compiled a list of challenges that managers face.   We have consulted with experts in restoration working in   different African countries and carried out a site visit to where the training course will take place. We have outlined the field course training curriculum and trialled some materials.   The first field course will take place in Q 4.

Progress towards Output 2 "MSc curriculum updated and strengthened by creating new units in ecosystem restoration covering up to date research, policy, and best practice."

2.1 A draft curriculum course unit on ecosystem restoration covering up to date research, policy, and best practice has been produced and endorsed by over 40 stakeholders from universities, private sector, government, and student bodies. Useful feedback was given which was incorporated into the curriculums.   These new units will be adopted by two MSc programmes in Kabale University: the new M.Sc in Ecology and Conservation Biology and the M.Sc in Environment and Natural Resources.

2.2 Teaching materials are now being drafted with the aim of teaching the new course unit in the second semester of the first year (output 2.3)

Progress towards Output 3: Ugandan trainers with enhanced capacity and capability to teach ecosystem restoration in the classroom, online, and in the field.

A committee is being established in Q3 and the first workshop will be run in Q4.

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.
We were not able to run the first field course in Q2 as planned and will run it in Q4. This will allow us to have generated the training materials and make sure the field course is streamlined with the MSc units. This does not alter the output or budget or predicted expenditure for the first year .

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/ we indicated a change of field course date on our quarterly payments.
Formal Change Request submitted:	/ No
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	/ No

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 happy with how the project is being managed, thank you.

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.
We amended our logframe in response to comments from NIRAS/ Reviewers and submitted a revision on 11 March 2024.

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.	yes
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.	n/a
For All Projects	
Include your **project reference** in the subject line of submission email.	yes
Submit to **BCFs-Report@niras.com**.	yes
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?**	yes
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	OK