

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: 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: 31th October 2024

Project reference	DE Grant 010 DAREX010
Project title	Thriving together: lasting solutions for collaborative management of tamaraw landscapes
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Philippines
Lead partner	Re:wild
Partner(s)	D'ABOVILLE Foundation and Demo Farm, Inc. and Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.
Project leader	Dr. Tobias Garstecki
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 October 2024, HYR 1
Project website/blog/social media	Under construction

Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Output 0: Project Management

Recruitment of staff: As of 30 September 2024, DAF has recruited five (5) staff positions: Deputy Program Operations Manager, Output 2 Coordinator, Output 5 Coordinator, MEL Officer, and Administrative and Finance Assistant. MBCFI has also recruited five (5) staff positions: Policy and Advocacy Officer (Output 1 Coordinator), Events and Communications Manager, Awareness and Education Assistant, Bookkeeper, and Curriculum Design Specialist. Recruitment of the remaining staff – including the two positions at Re:wild – as per proposal will be completed in the next reporting cycle.

Identification, negotiations, and contract preparation for consultants: Re:wild has agreed sub-contracts with ZSL and an IUCN SSC Asian Wild Cattle SG representative (James Burton, to be contracted via North England Zoo) as per proposal, which will be signed shortly. DAF held a workshop with two consultants (already involved in Darwin Main) to come to a shared understanding of the project, the Terms of References (TOR) of the consultants, and priority activities and establish coordination mechanisms.

Office and accommodation: Contract to rent a project office was signed by DAF in September and the lease started on 1 October 2024.

Procurement of equipment: List of equipment to be procured prepared by DAF and MBCFI. Two computers already bought by DAF for immediate needs of existing members of staff. Requests for quotations from suppliers for MBCFI purchases are in progress.

Admin & financial systems setup: The Re:wild Director of Finance and Director of Awards Administration and Partner Success visited DAF and MBCFI in early September 2024 to help setup admin and financial systems. Both partners have an established financial and

administrative system, including on finance and staff time (relevant to staff not working 100% on DE).

Detailed workplans and MEL plan: Workplan template prepared by Re:wild and discussed. Output teams at DAF and MBCFI have started populating the template. Work planning to be completed once all the key project staff are onboard, during the next reporting period. Detailed MEL plan drafted and under discussion – indicators deemed adequate and feasible.

Consortium coordination: Pre-inception meeting of Re:wild representatives and Boards of DAF and MBCFI, and pre-inception planning workshop of Re:wild, DAF and MBCFI management conducted in May 2024. Regular bi-weekly operational coordination calls of Re:wild, DAF and MBCFI management conducted since June 2024.

Stakeholder engagement: The Regional Executive Director (RED) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Mimaropa Region invited the project to a workshop on September 11 of the UNDP-supported Mindoro Biodiversity Corridor (MBC) Project. The two projects shall complement each other. Various other institutions, organizations and projects have also been engaged. Official meetings and workshops with key political partners and stakeholders at the national and local level are planned for November 2024.

Project communications: Strategies for the conceptualization of the following components are under preparation under MBCFI's leadership: website, printed materials including for public events, web and social media content, project branding.

Output 1 – Enabling framework (one activity (1.08) planned for reporting period)

Activity 1.08: The project was also invited to the launching of Hapag Katutubo - a project that is being implemented by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in partnership with various government agencies on September 26. During this event, the formal signing of the blueprint of the map of the Taobuid ancestral domain was held. The map is for publication in the newspapers by October. The NCIP Regional Director who was present during the event expressed her commitment and desire for the ancestral domain application process of the Taobuid to be completed within the year, with the support of the project.

Preparation for Activity 1.02: The final draft of the DENR Administrative Order (DAO) on Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP), which is due for signing by the DENR Secretary, specifies the Corridor Alliance Advisory Committee (CAAC) the Mindoro Biodiversity Corridor (MBC) Project of the GEF-UNDP-DENR to be the coordinating body for tamaraw conservation. Meetings among the team. The project partners have agreed to engage with this body for the time being, aiming at establishing a sub-committee that can fulfil the functions of the TCCG as per Activity 1.02 while being in line with the relevant DENR policy, and DAF/MBCFI have started practical steps in this direction.

Preparation for Activity 1.06: The consortium has engaged DENR MIMAROPA RO to plan next steps in the legal designation of the Aruyan-Malati tamaraw habitat and to overcome existing obstacles. A report and a draft Administrative Order designating Aruyan-Malati as Critical Habitat will be prepared and made available for editing by government partners.

Output 2 – Reliable information (no activity planned for reporting period)

Output 3 – Lasting capacity (No activity planned for reporting period)

Preparation for Activity 3.04: The consortium examined the feasibility of employing Indigenous Peoples (IPs) as rangers without high school qualifications by reviewing the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA). We discussed challenges related to qualification standards for permanent government positions and explored hiring IPs on "Contract of Service" roles, backed by a Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) resolution – at least as an interim solution. We also initiated policy discussions within the DENR MIMAROPA Regional Office for possible internal solutions.

Output 4 – Monitoring and protection framework (no activity planned for reporting period)

Output 5 – Bio-cultural approach (no activity planned for reporting period)

Preparation for Activity 5.01: The Taobuid Council of Elders invited DAF to present the draft Memorandum of Agreement between DENR and the Taobuid elders on the expansion of the

tamaraw safe reproduction zone during their regular meeting on September 25. This has been brokered with support of the previous Darwin Main project. During the meeting, the draft MOA (in Tagalog) was read line by line and an open discussion ensued. The elders were in agreement. They agreed that Tribal Leader Fausto Novelozo shall be the principal signatory on their side.

Preparation for Activity 5.03: DAF conducted a regular monitoring visit to MIBNP on September 26-28 to physically observe and document the growth and development of the different components of the permaculture system and to discuss with the field staff the routine maintenance manual for the system. The continual rains resulted in the spur of growth of vegetation in the area. Staff of MIBNP PAMO who in the beginning doubted that plants and tree seedlings would grow in the poor soil in this area are now expressing surprise that these positive results are possible.

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.

Activity 1.02: Establishing the coordinating body for collaborative tamaraw conservation within the advisory framework of another project is sub-optimal in terms of sustainability, but the only current solution given DENR policy. We will use engagement as per above to help make the coordinating body sufficiently independent, sustainable and effective to fully contribute to Output 1.

General: Minor additional communication and briefing effort needed because of staff turnover at DENR (e.g. PA Superintendent of MIBNP). There was also a change request on project staff submitted and accepted before the start of the project.

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

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

Change request reference if known: Not known

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 – 30 September 2023)

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 2024)?

Yes No

4c. If yes, then you need to 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.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

An outline of our safeguarding framework has been shared with the NIRAS Safeguarding Manager and an online meeting to discuss further development of it requested.

A DAF project staff (John Carlo Santos) injured his left knee after slipping on a muddy trail when returning from a project activity at MIBNP on 23 October in poor weather. He needed medical treatment but has since returned to the office. A full recovery is expected. An incident report and lessons learned summary is in preparation.

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**

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 ?	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.	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.	Yes