

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: 31st October 2023

Project reference	30-001
Project title	Beekeepers Restore the Forests of Afram Plains
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Ghana
Lead partner	Bees for Development UK
Partner(s)	Bees for Development Ghana Afram Plains Development Organisation
Project leader	<i>Dr. Janet Lowore</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	26/10/23 HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	https://beesfordevelopmentghana.org/blog/ https://web.facebook.com/BfDGhana https://www.instagram.com/officialbfdghana/ https://twitter.com/BfDGhana

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).

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.

Project Initiation: A project inception workshop was held in Donkorkrom, the centre of the project area, between 24-29 April 2023. This provided an opportunity to review project plans and objectives with the participating organisations, but also brief local officials and elders about the project. There was overwhelming support, which has been evidenced by the high level of participation in project activities across the project area.

Implementation: The project is on track with targets for the first 6 months with 95% of planned activities being actioned. Frequent communication and information exchange with project partners and regular project management meetings have been useful tools for keeping on track, for being able to identify issues early on and for identifying mitigating action.

An adjustment to the training approach was adopted. It was decided that it would be beneficial to condense the delivery of the training workshops to the second and fourth quarter of the year, rather than spread evenly throughout. The reason for this came from the training team who felt it would be positive for trainees if the training followed as soon after the introduction of the project to each individual community. Participation of women has been very encouraging with 380 of the 843 people trained to date being women.

Progress against Outputs:

Output 1: Beekeeping training workshops delivered across 17 communities. Interest is high with attendance higher than anticipated in many communities. Expressions of interest from un-anticipated groups such as Persons With Disability (PWD) have been received. This is highly encouraging, but will require adaptation on the part of the training team. BfD will link team with BfD funded projects in Uganda to learn from their PWD specific approach. We have adapted training to be more convenient for women to attend. Through feedback we learned that the timing of training events did not fit with their other demands. Delivery timing has been adjusted to be more sympathetic to this requirement.

Post-training mentoring and support is now ongoing for the groups which have been trained. Early evidence of hive making and apiary establishment is encouraging, notwithstanding the unusually high rainfall experienced in the area which has severely affected mobility and access to forest areas.

Output 2: Construction work on the processing facility has progressed well. The unseasonably high rainfall has had an impact with some time being lost. Work was 70% complete at the end of the reporting period. We are confident that the facility will be ready for the start of the honey harvest. Expected to be early November.

Output 3: Fire management training started in October (outside the reporting period). Ghana National Fire Service is delivering the training together with BfD Ghana. Community awareness meetings have been held with 15 communities scheduled to receive training during October. There is a real enthusiasm at community level for this training indicating that the threat of fire is very real for communities.

Output 4: Survey of beekeepers' tree planting priorities was conducted in 21 communities. Priority tree species have been selected and are being raised for distribution to the beekeepers once their apiaries have been established. Phase 1 of the Plant Species Population and Diversity Baseline Study (forest inventory) took place in the reporting period to define the survey sites (10) and the method. The detailed survey will be conducted in November.

Output 5: Identified and constructively engaging charcoal producers to participate in the project with 200 being invited to join the beekeeping training. The traditional authorities and other opinion leaders have been engaged and are playing an active role in raising awareness of the benefits of honey production over charcoal production.

Output 6: Project news and progress is being published through BfD Ghana website, with three articles on the project being published during the reporting period. Several activity and progress posts – made up of photos, videos and texts – have been shared across BfD and BFDG social media channels.

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.

Unusually heavy rainfall: Heavier than usual rainfall during the reporting period has impacted project activities, in particular training events. In favourable circumstances, training takes place outdoors to allow for practical demonstrations and participant practice. When it rains indoor venues, usually churches, needed to be identified and used – and this is not always possible. The rain has also discouraged trainees from making their first hives as access to sites to harvest hive-making materials has been problematic. Once the rains ease, participants have confirmed they will start making more hives and establishing their apiaries. Whilst this has had an impact on the number of hives we had anticipated by this time, we do not believe it will negatively impact outputs. Indeed, we are encouraged by the number of hives being made under these adverse conditions

Access to communities: The heavy rain has made an already poor road system far more challenging for vehicle access. On the premise that beekeeping is a viable livelihood for people living remotely with poor access to markets for their produce (if kept well, honey does not have a shelf life) we have actively chosen some communities which are remote and harder to reach. As a consequence, we have not been able to deliver training to 3 communities as had been planned in the first 6 months. We will deliver the training as soon as conditions allow in the next quarter and do not anticipate a negative impact on the project.

We had anticipated that radio broadcasts about the project, the livelihood and biodiversity benefits of beekeeping, advice and panel/chat shows would have started in quarter 2. Unfortunately, the project partner APDO (Afram Plain Development Organisation) who deliver the service, encountered technical problems with their broadcasting equipment and this delayed the schedule. Replacement parts have been found and we fully expect the broadcasts to begin early in quarter 3. We do not anticipate this will affect outputs and it does not affect the budget.

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:

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

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

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)?

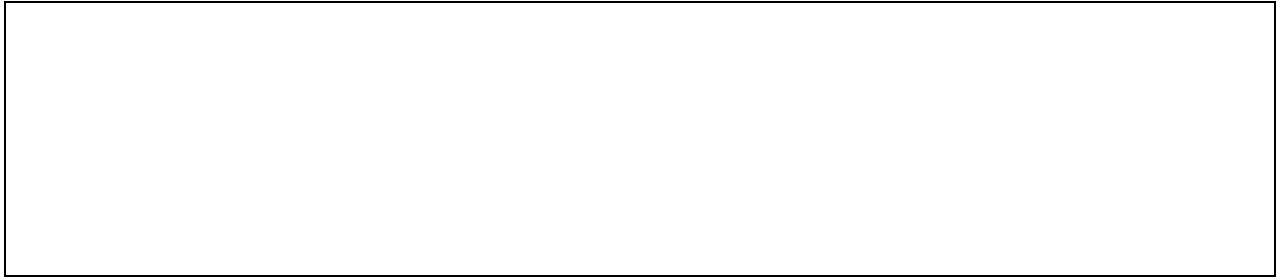
Yes No Estimated underspend: £

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.

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 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?



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**