

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 2022

Project reference	27-008
Project title	Rangeland Guardians: Women entrepreneurs for rangeland restoration
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Tanzania
Lead partner	University of York
Partner(s)	Oikos East Africa, Instituto Oikos, Ujamaa Community Resource Team
Project leader	Prof. Colin Beale
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	https://sites.google.com/york.ac.uk/rangelandguardians

1. 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).

1.4 Practical restoration activities by RGs

- Restoration training and activities have continued. This has focused on restricting grazing, which continues to be a problem due to the severe lack of rains and vegetation throughout study area
- Other activities included continuing invasive species (*Ipomea hildebrandtii*) removal in Lolkisale – approximately 15 acres has been removed. Rangeland Guardians have been trained in creating and implementing seeds traps and barriers in preparation for the much-needed rains.
- Grass plugs have been transferred in Naitolia and the Rangeland Guardians are managing these as best as possible given the lack of rains, such as with supplementary watering and grazing restrictions.
- The communities are still keen to trial the use of re-seeding, this will be trailed as appropriate depending on seed and rain availability, using locally collected seeds ('seed bombs' mentioned previously were not possible/suitable).

1.5 Identification of next 400 Ha of degraded rangelands

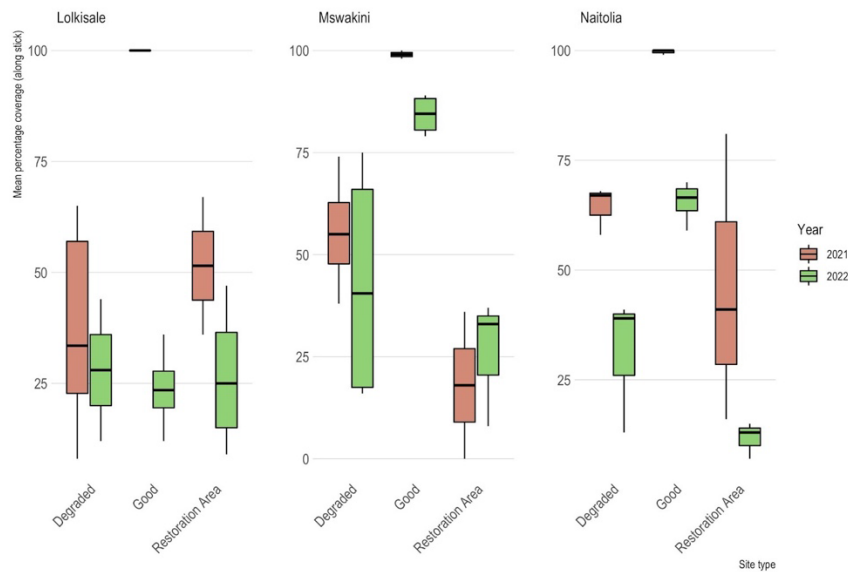
- This is an ongoing process, and it remains difficult to implement restoration activities in areas other than the existing restoration sites due to the need for any grazing land for livestock given the lack of rainfall over the past year. The communities are particularly concerned by invasive bush. In Naitolia the project has measured and mapped the extent of invasive bush within the community grazing areas (CCRO) in Naitolia, where it is planned the Rangeland Guardians can train and encourage the community to proactively managed this degraded land. In Lolkisale, community engagement is ongoing to identify further areas for restoration that have recently been farmed.

1.6 Livestock tagging

- 60 (of 100) GPS collars were deployed in June and July 2022 across the villages of Naitolia and Lolkisale. This required significant engagement with District and Ward livestock officers together with the project team and communities.
- This work has been well received by the communities and at least 30 more GPS devices are expected to be deployed in Mswakini by the end of 2022
- OEA staff have been trained in setting up and deployment of the devices (protocol developed) and will continue to monitor the progress of the data collection approximately every 3 months. To date, only one GPS device has been reported as broken

1.7 Biodiversity surveys

- The second set of biodiversity surveys (fixed point bird surveys, vegetation transects, sweep netting for invertebrates and butterfly transects.) were implemented by the project team during June 2022.
- 31 site surveys were conducted in 2022, 8 of these were surveys in new locations due to the some of the 2021 locations being unsuitable (private land) for repetition in 2022.
- In summary, across the three villages the percentage of grass cover has declined significantly between 2021 and 2022 within all land types (degraded, good and restoration areas). The exception was for Mswakini where there has been a small increase in the percentage of grass cover within the restoration areas. This is summary is illustrated in the figures below. This is not surprising giving the lack of rainfall in the preceding 18 months.



3.3 Awareness campaign in primary and secondary schools

- Due to the positive response from communities to this program, it has been expanded to more students in the study villages
- A poster highlighting problem vegetation species found in rangeland of the 3 villages has been provided to schools and village offices with the aim of expanding awareness and encouraging reporting of problem species by communities to respective grazing committees.

4.2 Training grazing committees on sustainable grazing management

- This planned training continues to be delayed due to the lack of rains and limited implementation of restoration activities within the current restoration sites. The project team are hopeful this can be implemented by March 2023 depending on the arrival or rains that can help show the impact of grazing management in the pilot restoration areas

4.3 Learning events and exchange visits

- On the 6th September 2022 the Lolkisale Environmental Committee Secretary was invited to attend the 1st Steering Committee Environmental Meeting between 5 villages in the nearby Arumeru District to share and promote the experience of the Lolkisale Rangeland Guardians (identification of restoration areas, training, management and governance). From this visit, the 5 villages have unanimously agreed to trial the Rangeland Guardian initiative in their respective villages. This learning event is also part of Activity 3.2 to increase the awareness of the Rangeland Guardian groups, and the impact that they can have.

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.

The main concern for the project is the continued lack of rainfall across the study area. This is causing a couple of notable problems. Firstly, the pilot restoration areas are difficult to manage – these areas have had available grazing (due to the initial Rangeland Guardian management activities), but due to the lack of grazing elsewhere, livestock have continued to access the Naitolia and Mswakini areas in particular. Discussions have taken place in July with community leaders in the villages to ensure that grazing restrictions are maintained as best as possible. Secondly, this is impacting the moral of the Rangeland Guardians and expectations and engagement of the communities. It is currently difficult to see and prove any benefit of the rangeland management activities. The in-country partners are working hard to maintain regular contact and rangeland management training when appropriate, to help with this. This has impacted on the identification of additional restoration areas that can be used by the rangeland guardians. However, community discussions have focussed on identifying and quantifying the condition of the existing CCROs (community grazing areas), particularly in Naitolia. The project will aim to expand the training and awareness of rangeland management to ensure communities are fully aware of the condition of their grazing areas and work with them to implement restoration activities where appropriate to encourage self-management as best as possible

Recently, communication between partners has not been as good it should be. While OEA and York are in regular contact, there can often be a lack of communication between OEA and UCRT, resulting in the lack of awareness of what activities are being implemented. York have also perhaps not provided enough detail of activities and support to UCRT. All project partners are aware of this lack of communication and the York team will ensure detailed activity plans are available for all project partners ensure awareness of the roles of each partner and to promote efficient fieldwork activities, such as vehicle sharing where appropriate. We do not expect these issues to impact the budget or activity timetable.

Regarding the livestock monitoring, while excellent progress and community engagement has been made, this activity has proved more difficult to implement than expected. During the project development, it was agreed that UCRT would play a key role in helping to facilitate this activity with the communities. However, as the project has progressed, it was agreed among all partners that this is an incredibly sensitive activity (monitoring of livestock movements) and it is important for UCRT to not risk damaging their excellent community relationships by being heavily involved in this activity. This has put more pressure on OEA to assist the York team to implement the activity, and a change request will be submitted to ensure funds are available to OEA to complete the remaining GPS livestock tagging and ensure participant support can continue.

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

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

4a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

4b. 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.

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 (including the submission of your risk register), 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.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS-LTS International 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**