



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



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	28-017
Project title	Establishing a biocultural heritage territory to protect Kenya's Kaya forests
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Kenya
Lead Organisation	IIED
Partner(s)	KEFRI
Project leader	Krystyna Swiderska
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	14 November 2024, HYR3 (year 4)
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.iied.org/establishing-biocultural-heritage-territory-protect-kenyas-kaya-forests

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.

Many of the activities outlined in the project implementation timetable have been completed, as the project was due to end in September 2024, but a no-cost extension has been agreed up to December 2024. This report outlines progress against the project implementation timetable attached:

Output 1 – establishing a BCHT

1.1 Project workshops: A detailed report of the final project workshop in March 2024 was prepared and published online, see: [Establishing a biocultural heritage territory to protect Kenya's Kaya forests: third annual project workshop | IIED Publications Library](#). The report was shared with all workshop participants and linked to a blog ahead of CBD COP16 (see below).

1.3 Village & inter-village meetings on BCHT & 1.5 BCHT registration: KEFRI prepared a matrix of by-laws identified by 10 villages for registering a BCHT Association, to identify common

elements and differences. This was discussed at a landscape level meeting bringing together the 10 villages in October 2024, to agree on the by-laws for registration. The results will be passed to a lawyer to prepare an application for registering a BCHT Association. A video was produced to raise wider awareness of the BCHT process and the importance of culture amongst the Rabai community and youth (with IIED co-funding). In addition, from 29 May to 4 June, we facilitated a learning visit to the Potato Park BCHT in Peru for the 2 project coordinators at KEFRI and 6 Rabai community representatives, including Kaya elders, community researchers and youth. This was a valuable learning experience to support the BCHT and cultural revival process in Rabai.

1.4 A Project Steering Committee was established in early September 2024 with community researchers, Kaya elders and village elders and chairmen, women and youth from 10 villages (45 people), to ensure active community engagement in project decision-making and strengthen leadership of the project and BCHT process by the community in the final 4 months of the project.

1.6. Blog, briefing, news-story, side-events: IIED and KEFRI organised a session on Biocultural Territories at the ISE (International Society of Ethnobiology) Congress in May 2024, where we presented the project. IIED prepared an Insight (blog) in the run up to CBD COP16 which highlights the importance of IP & LCs and biocultural territories for addressing the biodiversity and climate crisis and the work to establish a BCHT in Rabai, and includes a link to the last project workshop report see: [Indigenous Peoples are the real solutions to the nature and climate crises | International Institute for Environment and Development](#). IIED also submitted a side event application to present the project at CBD COP16 – this was not accepted, but we approached DEFRA who agreed to include a presentation during the UK BCF side event.

1.7 Case study, journal article: A book chapter on 'Enhancing ecological connectivity in Kaya forests landscape through Biocultural Heritage Territory (BCHT) management model' was submitted to Satoyama Development Mechanism for publication. Final revisions were made and the Book Chapter is due for publication.

Output 2: Sustainable livelihoods: The BCHT logo was finalised and applied to product labels, including honey, coconut oil and briquettes in April 2024. The labels are ready for use on all BCHT products. IIED and KEFRI held meetings with Community Researchers and Kaya elders in August and September to address a few remaining issues with microenterprises – for brooms, briquettes and Jikos (fuel efficient stoves). KEFRI worked with community researchers and Livestock officer (from County government) to support the distribution of 50 goats to the community including training of beneficiaries and sourcing vaccination, to support alternative livelihoods and food security and reduce pressure on bushmeat (elephant shrew) (with IIED co-funding).

Output 3: Fuel efficient stoves & briquettes: The production of Jikos was delayed as suitable soil was not found in Rabai; but soil was brought from Taita Hills and delivered to the Jikos group in September and about 500 fuel efficient stoves have now been produced. Training in traditional firing methods for stoves is being arranged. There is high demand for briquettes – 4 presses have been installed but 1 of them has had issues with electricity supply as it depends on a polytechnic whose supply was cut off. The group has negotiated with the local dispensary to connect electricity from their premises. Further training for briquettes is being organised to enable use of local raw materials (eg. farm organic waste).

Output 4: Tree restoration: Kaya elders, farmers and community researchers continued to regularly monitor trees restored in Kayas and on-farm. Although tree survival rates were 60% in Kayas and 80% on-farm, due to drought and livestock grazing, it was not possible to replace lost seedlings due to limited funds remaining. The issue of livestock grazing in forests was raised with the County government, local administration (Chiefs) and Kenya Forest Service and they promised to put in place measures to address it.

Output 5: Agrobiodiversity restoration:

5.2: Farmer Field Schools: Two Farmer Field Schools were held in August and September 2024 with KARLO each involving about 200 farmers from 10 villages, to provide training on restoring traditional crops, based on science and traditional knowledge. These also enabled sharing of traditional seeds. Follow-up meetings were held in August 2024.

5.4: Community seed bank and register expanded: A community seed bank has been established in one of the traditional huts constructed in Bofu cultural village with project support.

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 project has not encountered notable problems, but there have been a few challenges and lessons learnt in the last 6 months:

- Obtaining raw materials for microenterprises has been a challenge in some villages, particularly for scaling up briquette production and brooms, partly due to drought and pests (palm beetle). It has also been difficult to enter the broom market and bypass middle-men. Therefore it would be wise to further explore and tap the potential of ecotourism, such as homestay, trekking, gastronomy and cultural education, to generate income from services that don't require raw materials (eg. through a follow-on project). There is likely to be good tourism potential given that 2 Kaya forests are World Heritage Sites and Rabai is close to Mombasa and coastal hotels.
- Establishing a BCHT requires support from local organisations that are able to actively engage government agencies and can facilitate decolonial processes that empower marginalised indigenous communities and strengthen customary governance. A single organisation may not have strong capacity in both aspects. Bringing in a new partner after a project has started can require careful facilitation and time to build mutual trust and respect, in order to ensure good collaboration and avoid delays. In the case of the project, engaging a new local organisation to support cultural dialogues in the final year contributed to some relationship issues between partners. This along with along with international travel eg. to the ISE Congress and Potato Park, slowed progress in Quarter 1, but the pace of work picked up in Quarter 2.
- Establishing a Project Steering Committee with active participation of community leaders and regular (eg. monthly) meetings is important to build and maintain trusted partnerships with communities, fully engage communities in decision making, devolve power and address challenges that arise. This may require allocation of funds for participants' travel and food.
- Establishing a BCHT requires careful facilitation, where external facilitators act as equals and friends, explicitly recognise the importance of traditional knowledge and culture, fully share and transfer decision making power, and are careful not to instruct or blame communities or use tones that reinforce power imbalances.
- The partnership with KEFRI, a parastatal organisation, has been vital to facilitate engagement with government agencies which is necessary to help address key challenges such as Kaya forest degradation. IIED in turn has been able to provide additional co-funding to address challenges identified during the project such as youth turning away from traditional culture (eg. through the video and trip to the Potato Park).

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: *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** ☒ **Estimated underspend:**

4c. If you expect an 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?

Although we are not expecting an underspend, we are planning to submit a change request in November 2024 to rebalance the budget between cost categories for the final project period.

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.

The most recent annual report contained some comments for the project leader which it said should be addressed in the next annual report – but that will be the final report, so here are some brief responses:

1. “The project could highlight some of the issues around the IIED and KEFRI relationship and how these are being addressed”. The relationship became a bit strained after the last annual workshop due to a disagreement over the need for further cultural dialogues facilitated by SALT. After a few months of discussion, IIED agreed not to pursue further dialogues facilitated by SALT so as not to delay the project. Since then the relationship has improved.
2. “For Output Indicator 2.3, provide reasons why the target of 3,200 forest dependent women and youth will not be met and consider revising the indicator through a change request”. This was an ambitious target and has not been met mainly due to shortages of raw materials due to drought spanning three years from 2021-2023, which killed many palm trees (raw materials for brooms, baskets, coconut oil and briquettes). In addition, charcoal dust is no longer available for free to make briquettes. It has also been difficult to enter the brooms market due to competition from middle-men; and it has not been possible to establish a Jikos enterprise as suitable soil was not found in Rabai (and it is too expensive to buy). We therefore propose to revise the Output 2 target to doubling incomes for 2,000 women and youth.

3. "Consider revising indicator 3.1 to overcome the poor soil quality challenges being experienced by the project and indicator 5.3." Given the delay with obtaining suitable soil, we propose to revise the 2nd part of indicator 3.1 to "by November 2024 microenterprise groups produce 800 fuel efficient stoves"; and indicator 3.2 to "By December 2024, fuel efficient stoves are installed in 800 forest-dependent households". Since Indicator 5.3 is 'by 2024' 800 farmers have restored 8 indigenous/traditional crops, the timing is realistic.

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.	
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	
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.	Yes
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	
Submit to BCF-Reports@niras.com .	
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	
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.	