

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	28-019
Project title	Protecting ecosystem functions in key watersheds for biodiversity and people
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Bolivia
Lead partner	Asociacion Armonía
Partner(s)	1) Tiquipaya Municipal Government 2) Secretaria de la Madre Tierra – Gobierno Departamental de Cochabamba (Regional Government of Cochabamba) 3) Tunari National Park 4) Faunagua
Project leader	Rodrigo W. Soria-Auzq
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	01/Apr/2023 to 30/Sep/2023 - HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	https://armoniabolivia.org/

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 1. We have surpassed the proposed number native trees to be produced every year for reforestation (130,000 trees/year). This year alone we have produced 300,000 saplings in our nurseries (we built a new community nursery that is operated by community members that we have trained and continue supervising; Click [here](#) to see some pictures). These trees will be planted during the coming rainy season (December 2023 to March 2024). By March 2024 we will have planted over 740,000 native trees since the start of our programme back in 2020. Moreover, we have already secured funds to the 2024-2025 reforestation season and we aim to produce at least 400,000.

Twenty-five firefighters trained last year continued their training to the advanced level and 28 new community members received the basic training (see pictures [here](#)). It is important to highlight that this year we included persons that belong to communities that are located in the neighbouring municipality of Quillacollo (where we will also start planting trees in December 2023). In November 2023 we will deliver 15 sets of firefighting to persons that are committed to continue their training to the advanced level and are also committed to intervene in cases of wildfires. Finally, a protocol to control wildfires that is designed to community-based brigades of firefighters will be printed in November 2023 (see [here](#)).

Output 2. The sustainable forestry management plan has been presented to the SERNAP (national office in charge of the national protected areas) several months ago. As the Ministry of Environment and Water designated a new director late August, we arranged a meeting with the new director to bring this pending subject to his attention by mid-September 2023. We are

expecting the visit of the SERNAP's technical personnel to our project area by end of November.

Output 3. The platform conformed by representatives of local communities governing body (locally known as OGC (Organismo de gestion de cuencas)) and the municipal government is consolidated and recognized by a municipal government (a municipal decree will be issued soon. [Here](#) is the draft). Sadly, the lack of capacity within the Tunari National Park is preventing its full integration in this this platform. A 10-year sustainable development strategy has been developed (see the draft [here](#)). This process required a total of 7 meetings and workshops where numerous members from the 5 communities participated.

Outup 4. We are presently writing the protocols to monitor: 1) reforested areas (land surveys (see draft [here](#)) and also drone photography (see draft [here](#)) to compare landscape changes), 2) key biodiversity (bird species; see draft [here](#)). 3) rivers water flow protocols (see draft [here](#)). 4)The protocol to monitor socio-economic changes in the mid and long-term will be developed between October and December 2023.

Output 5. As reported earlier, we have already established a relationship with several neighbouring municipalities, in fact, we have already started to plan reforestations in basins in other municipalities (from September 2023). So, we can confidently state that we have already achieve the desired scaling up of our projects impacts. During this period at least four notes were published in Bolivian newspapers (click: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)), an animated educative video clip was produced (click [here](#)) and we also produced a short clip was produced by a influencer that was shared over WhatsApp and Tik Tok (click [here](#)). We have also coordinated with the institute of technical training in forestry, agronomy and environmental sciences to train approximately 50 of its students as environmental facilitators. These group of students are reaching school events (reaching approximately 10,000 school children) to convey to students the importance of protecting the Tunari basins and the biodiversity that this protected area contains (see some pictures [here](#)).

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.

A challenge we are facing is to obtain the SERNAP's approval for the Forestry management plan of exotic trees (pines and eucalyptus). We have already obtained the approval of the government office that is in charge of supervising the forestry activities in the Bolivia (ABT = Autoridad de Bosques y Tierras), however, as the project area is located in a protected area, the SERNAP (Bolivia's national office that manages the Bolivian system of national protected area) must also approve the forestry management plan. As explained in the previous report and in the change request that we submitted this year, the SERNAP went through an institutional crisis (two directors were removed this year). We have already contacted the new director to put this process in his agenda as priority and no we are expecting SERNAP's answer by mid-November. A consequence of SERNAP's institutional crisis is the peripheral integration of the Tunari National Park administration (TNP) in the platform of key actors that helps the communities' governance-body. Its fully integration will remain a challenge to be faced in the coming months of project implementation.

We have made efforts to involve the TNP in projects activities. The body of park rangers have been present in the training course that were conducted to train communities' members in wildfires combating. Park rangers assisted in this course that was led by personnel of the Cochabamba regional government. Armonía also invited personnel of the TNP to several training workshops (mostly focused on monitoring of biodiversity and monitoring of the reforested areas). This has been important to motivate some personnel; however, it is evident that the director of this protected area requires significant training to improve the management of this protected area. This is something we will address in a following project.

We have now a fairly comprehensive data of the local communities' socio-economic conditions when we started with the project. Though we will be able to report the socio-economic conditions by the end of the project implementation, we are fairly certain that more evident

changes will take place later. We have already included indicators in the local communities' 10-year strategy of sustainable development that we are developing together with local communities.

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/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/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: ██████████

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**