

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

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| Project reference | 28-021 |
| Project title | Improving coastal resilience and ecosystem services through biodiversity restoration (Philippines) |
| Country(ies)/territory(ies) | Philippines |
| Lead partner | International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) |
| Partner(s) | Zoological Society of London (ZSL) |
| Project leader | Julian Gonsalves, Ph.D. |
| Report date and number (e.g. HYR1) | April 1-September 30, 2022, HYR2 |
| Project website/blog/social media | |

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).

Progress towards Outcomes

Significant progress is being made in Guinayangan in engaging the local government and communities in managing coastal zones while conserving biodiversity. From the total 382.78 has. of mangrove forests in the municipality, 20.12 has. in ICORE sites and another 36.82 has. in non-project sites have been identified for inclusion in a municipal-wide mangrove conservation ordinance.

Coastal agriculture interventions by the project are helping scale up agro-biodiversity and widen livelihood options, with an ongoing campaign aimed at enhancing natural assets by distribution of fruit trees, banana, and root crops (with inter- and intra-species diversity), as well as small livestock. Value addition activities to provide enterprise opportunities for women are also currently being developed. A baseline survey listing agricultural crop diversity in the project barangays has also been completed.

The project has engaged communities in climate change adaptation through workshops, trainings, and the distribution of information materials on regenerative agriculture and green infrastructure functions of mangrove forests. Women leaders and farmers are being actively targeted in project activities.

Activities towards Outputs

Output 1: Total of 330 hectares of coastal areas with sparse mangrove cover rehabilitated, protected, and sustainably managed through community-led initiatives

A Y1 review and Y2 planning workshop for project partners was conducted in May 2022. An [MOU](#) was signed between IIRR and DENR Region 4-A (DENR R4A), while a [MOA](#) between IIRR and the Guinayangan MLGU on the ICORE project was also signed. A courtesy call and orientation for the newly-elected municipal mayor and the Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council) (SB) was conducted to introduce the project and provide updates on its progress.

A mangrove mapping and standardization workshop was conducted between IIRR, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic

Resources (BFAR), the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU) of Guinayangan, and ZSL to harmonize mapping efforts and find out areas freely available for inclusion in the Local Conservation Area (LCA) ordinance.

A total of 6 workshops and community consultation activities were conducted in relation to the setting up of the LCA. The 14 target coastal barangays were divided into 3 community clusters with 2 separate consultation meetings each cluster. A workshop on LCA ordinance drafting was also conducted, with the Vice-Mayor and the SB in attendance. The draft ordinance is to be scheduled for its first hearing during the SB sessions.

On-site mangrove rehabilitation and conservation plans have been partially completed for 6 of the 14 coastal barangays. Trainings on mangrove conservation, nursery establishment, and rehabilitation were completed for 14 coastal barangays, with 100 community members trained. The establishment of mangrove nurseries is planned for the 4th quarter of 2022.

A Deputized Environment and Natural Resource Officer (DENRO) training for 8 MLGU staff and 1 IIRR local staff was organized in partnership with Haribon Foundation and facilitated by DENR R4A. The deputation papers of the 8 MLGU staff are currently being processed and they would be tapped to train a larger cadre of community members engaged in coastal law enforcement.

Output 2. 700 hectares of coastal agroecosystems in 14 villages in Guinayangan are utilized for regenerative agriculture including promotion of agro-biodiversity.

A seasonal planning workshop was facilitated by staff from the Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO) and attended by farmer and fisher group leaders.

Commodity prioritization was conducted through FGDs with women community members, and several commodities with potential for further development were identified.

Distribution of almost a dozen types of fruit trees has been completed, with an additional 60 beneficiaries in 3 barangays this semester, bringing the total to 570 beneficiaries since the project started. Continued monitoring of farm inputs are being done through household visits and Farmer Learning Group (FLG) meetings. This is part of the on-going Participatory Action Research (PAR) with FLGs to assess the suitability and acceptance of select crops and initiatives, aimed at identifying and propagating crops that perform well in saline coastal areas.

Innovation funds helped local communities purchase Quezon breed native pigs, with 7 boars placed in a decentralised breeding center and another 16 gilts distributed among 5 women beneficiaries in 5 barangays.

Output 3. Around 1,000 poorest households in 14 coastal villages with improved livelihood security and resilience resulting from regenerative agriculture and sustainable use of resources found in the designated multiple-use mangrove forests.

The project is emphasizing small livestock species as food-based enterprises. Meetings were held with native pig and chicken raisers from the project barangays to revitalize their organizations. Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) (SK) were also organized and briefed on their own chicken raising project, which is planned for the last quarter of 2022.

A coconut by-products enterprise planning meeting was held with farmer leaders. Several commodities were prioritized, including coco coir production that is being currently piloted by the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) with its decorticating machine. This work is expected to be expanded as the project moves forward.

Vegetable container gardening has been initiated in 8 barangays with seeds and supplies provided to 105 households.

A community-managed savings and credit association (COMSCA) has been initiated in 1 barangay. This provides members access to emergency funds as well as capital for livelihoods. The project seeks to replicate this initiative in the other barangays.

Outcome 4. Knowledge and good practices derived from the project are shared widely to the public as well as to various agencies of the government within Guinayangan and in the province to mobilize policy, funding, and public support.

The project communications plan has been developed in cooperation with University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) Development Communications interns and the Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO). A workshop on multimedia materials development was also facilitated by the UPLB interns and attended by women and youth leaders, and staff of the LGU.

Lectures and mangrove planting activities were done in coordination with the SK of 2 barangays. Printed information materials on regenerative agriculture were also distributed to 318 community members.

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 2022 Philippine national election affected the implementation of some of the activities, i.e. prohibitions of social gatherings prior to election day, unavailability of LGU staff due to restrictions, etc. There were no major impacts in terms of timetable or budget, save for slight delays in the implementation of some activities.

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: Yes/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/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.

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

Addressing the issue raised in the Y1 Report review on questions on the original award letter, these were answered by our Country Director for the Philippines in an email to Eilidh Young dated August 30, 2021. Corresponding changes to the logframe were submitted and accepted in an email dated March 9, 2022.

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