

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	28-028
Project title	Pairing community conservation areas with sustainable aquaculture in Lake Victoria
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Kenya
Lead partner	Conservation International Foundation
Partner(s)	Fauna and Flora International, Pathfinder International, Victory Farms LLC
Project leader	Leonard Akwany
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.conservation.org/projects/conservation-international-ventures-llc/community-conservation-in-lake-victoria

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).

The following progress has been attained in the period of April-September 2022:

- o On 15 September 2022, Conservation International (CI) facilitated a focused participatory discussion with Roo village riparian farmers, who operate within the proposed riparian portion of the Community Conservation Areas (CCAs). An agreement was reached to designate a 30-meter riparian buffer area for the CCAs, to benefit soil and water conservation, as well as the fish breeding areas. CI will be exploring a solar irrigation system for watering the farms away from riparian areas, as well as other practices of integrated conservation or regenerative agriculture. Since the Ukula riparian area is not currently being farmed, CI will explore restoration practices through active and passive regeneration interventions (**Output 1, Activity 1.1**)
- o CI conducted outreach between 19-22 July 2022, in order to verify the findings of the baseline dialogues and surveys, by gathering information on income levels, potential CCA sites, and gender dynamics (**Output 1, Activity 1.2**).
- o CI undertook additional outreach to the Beach Management Unit (BMU) assembly, focused on increasing awareness of the necessity of CCAs for protecting the lake's native fish species and sustaining the fishery's productivity. This outreach, held in the Roo and Ukula villages, was attended by 102 participants and was held between 1-25 August 2022 (**Output 1, Activity 1.2**).
- o From 12-15 September 2022, CI conducted focus group discussions with women in the two partner communities of Roo and Ukula on gender-related empowerment issues and needed interventions. The women confirmed that the jaboya (the practice of exchanging sex-for-fish) culture is still prevalent and also highlighted the low female representation within the BMU leadership. They voiced a need for training on business management and leadership, access to capital, empowerment, and the establishment of local financing mechanisms, such as group savings and loan associations (**Output 1, Activity 1.2**).

- o CI facilitated participatory discussions with community members focused on the incentives required for the establishment of the CCAs. Requests included: training on leadership and governance, business development and management; support for cage aquaculture through capital for small businesses; linkages with affordable financiers like the Women Enterprise Fund and the National Government Affirmative Action Fund; group savings and loans; provision of legal fishing nets, boats, and life jackets; beach bathrooms and toilets; portable/drinking water; and provision of omena drying structures to reduce post-harvest losses. These requests are being evaluated and will help to form part of the project incentives packages **(Output 1, Activity 1.3)**.
- o Consultations by CI with the BMUs and community members has led to the outlining of community commitments towards functional CCAs. These consultations took place from 29 August-2 September 2022 and the commitments included: designation of the CCA sites, demarcation, surveillance and monitoring, and local mobilization and awareness-building on the CCAs **(Output 1, Activity 1.3)**.
- o CI facilitated sessions with the two BMUs and community members (including men, women, and young people) from 14-15 September 2022, which were focused on CCA by-laws. Topics included designation of areas, access, and penalties **(Output 1, Activity 1.4)**.
- o In collaboration with the Kenya Marine Fisheries and Research Institute (KMFRI), from 6-10 June 2022, CI conducted a second and more in-depth limnological and fish species survey, to establish baseline ecological information for impact monitoring and evaluation. Outputs include clarifying indicators and earmarking potential fish breeding sites **(Output 1, Activity 1.5)**.
- o From 12-15 September 2022, CI consulted with the BMUs on CCA management and governance needs. Identified needs included: an expanded patrol subcommittee to provide surveillance and monitoring to the CCA; incorporation of other stakeholders beyond the BMUs, such as farmers, local authorities, and County and National Government agencies; and awareness-raising among neighbouring BMUs for compliance **(Output 1, Activity 1.7)**.
- o With the BMUs, CI undertook a training needs assessment from 25 July-1 August 2022. The following training topics were agreed upon: leadership, group savings and loans, business practices, fundraising/resource mobilization, CCA surveillance and monitoring, and BMU governance. As a result of the topics that were identified with the BMUs, CI is now developing basic training manuals to deliver these trainings through participatory workshops **(Output 1, Activity 1.8)**.
- o CI continues with our desktop review on sustainable financing approaches, such as devolved funds, trust funds and impact investing. This output and activities are on track to be completed by the end of Year 2, as planned **(Output 2)**.

Field reports and photos from the above activities are all available upon request.

The following outreach was also undertaken during this reporting period: CI presented a summary of the project at the Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa 3rd Governing Council meeting, held 4-5 August 2022 in Nakuru, Kenya. This meeting was attended by the Ramsar Convention Focal Points and associated agencies from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi. The meeting provided an opportunity to reconnect with the Ramsar Focal Point in Kenya for reporting of the project results towards Kenya's national commitment to the Ramsar Convention, and for linking with the Africa Senior Advisor to the Ramsar Secretariat. The meeting was attended by 29 participants and the presentation and photos from the event can be shared upon request.

Communications: Based off of recommendations received in our Annual Report feedback from year 1, we have developed a webpage for the project, which can be found here: <https://www.conservation.org/projects/conservation-international-ventures-llc/community-conservation-in-lake-victoria>

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 challenge faced during the reporting period relates to the establishment of an agreement of the Ukula BMU around the specific CCA site. Initial selection of indicative CCA sites created factions within the BMU, as one faction felt that the suggested sites were biased towards their fishing “territories.” To resolve this challenge, CI undertook additional inclusive and consultative meetings with the BMU assembly members, including the BMU leadership and elders. These open and candid consultations, which included awareness-raising about the importance of CCAs, resulted in an agreement of CCA sites, factoring in local knowledge on appropriate sites.

An additional challenge during this reporting period relates to the expectations among other BMUs in Sindo Bay. In total, 14 BMUs sit within Sindo Bay area, and it has been problematic explaining to the 12 other BMUs, who are not directly involved in this project, why they are not included. Similar questions have also arisen in the BMU Council created by our partner, Victory Farms. CI has explained that although the scope of the project is focused on the 2 BMUs, CI remains available to all BMUs in the area to provide technical advisory and will continue to exchange and work towards making the CCA model accessible to all.

In addition, the political elections which took place in Kenya in August 2022 caused delays in some of our project activities, specifically: the finalization of the designation of CCA sites, incentives design, and training needs assessments. This was due to travel and mobility restrictions during the period, which made it challenging to meet with stakeholders. In addition, we are still awaiting the appointment of a new executive committee member, representing the county/region, to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Co-operatives. The individual who is appointed for this position will have significant influence over the direction of cage aquaculture in the lake.

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: n/a

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?

Given currency fluctuations between the US dollar and the British pound (GBP), CI estimates that the project will experience a currency loss of USD [REDACTED]. This loss is projected based on the exchange rate of the last payment received.

Given this significant loss, the technical team has concerns about the impact of this loss on the project's ability to fully achieve all project outcomes. CI will continue to monitor the currency loss and will notify the Darwin Initiative if any action(s) are necessary.

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**