

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2022

Project reference	29-007
Project title	Developing Sustainable Management of Tropical Peatlands in Southern Borneo
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Indonesia
Lead partner	University of Exeter
Partner(s)	Borneo Nature Foundation
Project leader	Dr Frank Van Veen
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	October 2022 – HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	BNF Website ; BNF Facebook ; BNF Twitter ; BNF Instagram

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 first four months of the project (June – September 2022) represented the inception and initial mobilisation phase. During this period, we have developed the following initiatives:

A. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Programme launch and kick-off meetings: Initial coordination and launch meetings have been held with BNF Programme and Division Managers to define the work plan and the project timetable. External meetings with key stakeholders, including the Sebangau National Park Authority and the Central Kahayan Forest Management Units, were held to socialise information about the Darwin Initiative and the current work plan.

Stakeholders' partnerships development: A project stakeholder analysis has been conducted to identify key stakeholders, their influence, and expected involvement in the project implementation. This stakeholder analysis has helped to map and establish appropriate levels of communication and participation, identify baseline predispositions, develop the engagement strategy, and define the expectation of change. [REDACTED] Strategic meetings with priority stakeholders, including the Government of Pulang Pisau and Gunung Mas Districts, were held to develop crucial collaborative framework agreements.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: A specific Darwin Initiative project M&E plan has been produced, including baseline data to which the impact of our activities will be compared. Areas in which baseline data is sparse have also been identified, and acquisition of such data will be included in the work plan. Expected outputs have been defined for each year, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Verification Variables have been assigned. [REDACTED]

Risk Analysis and Management Framework: The Darwin Initiative *Risk Framework Register* and *Delivery Chain Risk Map* have been completed, with risk mitigation strategies identified. [REDACTED]

Recruitment: Since the submission of the project budget, three members of staff listed of the proposal have left BNF and been replaced by new staff. The staff replacement does not affect the initial project budget. [REDACTED]

B. PEATLANDS RESTORATION

Hydrology Restoration: Initial mapping, characterisation, and baseline-data collection for 11 large ex-illegal logging canals located in the Sebangau National Park (BTNS) has been completed. BNF and BTNS socialised the canal blocking plans with neighbouring communities to minimise associated risks of community conflict. Four of the mapped canals have been blocked with 18 large dams and we have defined an implementation plan to block another four canals. The dam building strategy has been revised according to The Ministry of Environment and Forestry's (KLHK) national standards. Baseline data collection and ongoing monthly hydrology monitoring activities are underway.

Reforestation of degraded areas: BNF in partnership with BTNS staff, identified, surveyed, and characterised five large target areas for reforestation, based on the official Zoning system. Within these five areas, there is potential to plant 245,000 seedlings, of which 51,950 have so far been planted in three of the target areas. Baseline data has been collected and monitoring plans are in place.

Community Seedling Nurseries: During the reporting period, four new community seedling nurseries have been established, joining the BNF network that supplies a regular seedling stock for the replanting of degraded areas. To date, a total of 105 community members are engaged in a total of 14 community seedling nurseries. A seedling stock of 125,000 native tree seedlings for next year's planting activities has already been secured.

C. SUSTAINABLE PEATLAND MANAGEMENT

Enhancing long-term sustainable management of peatlands: BNF is facilitating the establishment of 10 new community-protected areas, representing 14,154 ha of protected peatlands. The necessary steps and requirements for the development of social forestry proposals have been initiated in all 10 target villages, with four proposals already submitted to the Social Forestry Agency (BPSKL). Of these, two technical verifications have been implemented by BPSKL, and we anticipate that these two new social forestry decrees will be issued before November 2022. With the support of the Central Kahayan KPHs and BPSKL, BNF has established the *Rungan Landscape Social Forestry Communication Forum*, which includes a total of 14 villages with >15,000 ha of managed forest.

Paludiculture practices development: During the last four months, the BNF Community Development team have developed a strategy for scaling-up peat-friendly livelihood activities across the landscape. A new community agricultural group has been established in Bukit Tunggal village with 23 members, who have received training in organic agriculture, agroforestry, and honey production alongside three other community groups. Two new agriculture groups are in the process of being created in Marang and Habaring Hurung villages.

Sustainable fisheries: A training session on sustainable fisheries was delivered, reaching 28 community members from two villages. Currently, we are facilitating the construction of 54 semi-permanent fishponds in two villages new to the project and planning a series of capacity-building sessions. Fisheries research and monthly monitoring of fish stocks and species composition in the Sebangau River are ongoing (complementing five years of baseline data).

Education and community outreach: 46 environmental education sessions (including school modules and after-school activities) have been implemented, reaching a total of 180 children and teenagers. BNF also has held a total of nine public events in partnership with local stakeholders, with a total of 898 in-person and 1,841 online participants.

D. PEATLAND PROTECTION

Establishment of patrol and firefighting teams: Over the last four months, BNF supported the establishment of three new Community Patrol and Firefighting teams (MPA) in three villages bordering the Sebangau National Park. Initial discussions to develop community patrol teams have been held with seven villages in the Rungan Landscape with granted Protected Areas.

Ongoing support and capacity building to firefighting teams: BNF facilitated a 2-day training session on Integrated Fire Management for the newly established Patrol and Firefighting teams, which was attended by 36 members. Currently, BNF is supporting nine firefighting teams with a total of 143 active community members.

Regional Network of Firefighting Team: BNF has initiated meetings with strategic stakeholders to introduce the regional network concept. In September, a meeting was held with the Head of the Central

Kalimantan Emergency and Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) who offered their positive support and contacts to establish the forum.

E. PROJECT COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

BNF relevant publications: [Earth Day](#), [Rungan Social Forestry Forum](#), [Agriculture and Food festival](#), [Community Fire Fighting establishment](#), [Organic Farming](#), [Bornean Wild Cats Conservation Forum](#), [Partnership with Gunung Mas District](#), [National Park Reforestation](#), [International Orangutan Day](#), [Indonesian Nature Conservation Day](#).

Related Articles in Indonesian press: 47 publications (29 local and 18 national) in different media platforms covering a total of 12 news: [VTOL drone for fire detection](#) ; [BNF Socialisation event in Bukit Tunggal](#) ; [BNF Education Project](#) ; [The endangered Borneo Bay cat and its conservation](#) ; [Social Forestry Workshop](#) ; [Farmers gathering and prevailing local food](#) ; [Conservation of the five species of wild cats in Borneo](#) ; [Forest Food Festival](#) ; [Reforestation of degraded peatlands](#) ; [Orangutan Day 2022](#) ; [Forest fires and firefighting teams training](#).

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.

Environmental conditions: 2022 has been a meteorologically unusual year, with recurrent storms, high rainfall and no dry season. Fortunately, this means fire risk has remained low with little forest loss this year, however, as our dam construction and tree planting activities can only be carried out when surface water levels are relatively low, the timeframe in which we could implement these activities was shortened by water levels being too high for the majority of the year, impacted our annual targets.

Potential designation of a new concession: Early this year a Palm Oil company (PT BEST) submitted a technical proposal to obtain operation permits on the western side of the KHG Sungai Kahayan - Sungai Rungan. This will affect 13,660ha of indigenous forests and high biodiversity areas, compromising current forest connectivity in the Rungan Landscape. To anticipate the concession being granted permits, BNF initiated discussions with community representatives from affected villages and began developing a proposal for the establishment of two Protected Areas based on the Community Forest (HKm) designation approach. The total community-managed protected area could cover up to 6,200 ha (Marang village 4,000 ha and Petuk Katimpung 2,200 ha).

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 **N/A**

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?

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.

N/A

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

N/A