

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	29-028
Project title	Linking science to management: restoring community forests in Nepal
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Nepal
Lead partner	ForestAction Nepal
Partner(s)	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) UK, Kathmandu Forestry College (KAFCOL), Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal (FECOFUN)
Project leader	<i>Naya Sharma Paudel, PhD</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.facebook.com/JalthalBiodiversity/ https://twitter.com/BiodiversityNep

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).

We started this project in July 2022 and we have a good start of project. Projects preparatory works including staff selection has been done. This report presents project progress of July-September 2022. Activities in different outputs are presented. Number in the parenthesis represent the activity number from the agreed implementation timetable. If supporting reports are available that has been cited and they will be attached separately while submitting the report.

Output 1: Forest ecosystem restored and biodiversity conserved in Jalthal community forests

Project inception meeting was organised on 09 September 2022 at project site in Jalthal Jhapa. All partners and major local stakeholders were present in the meeting, the meeting turned an important platform to share project concepts and activities with wider audience (1.1, Doc 01). Several interactions and meetings have been organised with community forests and other stakeholders to plan the restoration (1.2, Doc 02, 04). Participatory assessment of the most degraded patch has been started and area has been selected in two community forests (CF) (1.2, Doc 02, 03). CF members have been trained to collect and transplant rare plant seedlings, over 100 seedlings of three rare species-which have impaired regeneration, have already been transferred to suitable areas (1.3, 1.4, Doc 02). An awareness program was organised at Panchayat Secondary school on 26 August, more will be organised (1.6, Doc 03). 400 bamboo culms have been planted in Bishal CF (1.7, Doc 02).

Output 2: local governments and stakeholders take strong measures, both policy and operational, to control existing and newly reported invasive alien species

Over a half dozen of meetings have been organized to discuss and plan about Mikania and other invasive species control (2.1, Doc 02, 03) and these meetings will form basis for further concrete actions. A draft report has been prepared to demonstrate progress in Mikania management related activities and it will be updated with more data (2.5, Doc 08). A communication materials on Invasive species control along with overall project has been published in Nepali language (2.6, Doc 05). In addition we have reprinted communication materials (Leaflet on two most problematic invasive species of the region) of earlier project. Local government heads were present in the inception meeting (Doc 01) as well as in restoration planning workshop (Doc 04) and they have shown commitment to support projects initiation (2.6, 2.7).

Output 3: Income and employment of forest dependent poor increased and improved through better management of land and bio resources

A series of meetings and interactions have been organised with CFUGS to initiate agroforestry and fodder plantation. These preparatory work will contribute towards activities 3.1 and 3.2 (Doc 03). Fodder species like bamboo and elephant apple targeting wildlife have been planted in forests of Diyalo and Bishal CFs (3.5, Doc 02, 03). Meetings have been organised with CF User to provide support in agroforestry and fodder trees plantation (3.6, Doc 03, 02).

Output 4: Long term restoration of forest mainstreamed through knowledge management, capacity building and enabling policies

An Nepali article on various aspects of Plantation has been published in Nepals leading online portal. This analyses current policy status of plantation and species selection (4.2, Doc 09). An article on importance and special features of Jalthal Biodiversity has been published in renowned newspaper of eastern Nepal (4.4, Doc 06). The article in Nepali language was both in printed and online version and its English summary has been prepared (Doc 07).

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.

Not applicable

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.

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?

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**