



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



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

Half Year Report

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 2-3 pages** in length.

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 2025

Please note all projects that were active before 1st October 2025 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	29-028
Project title	Linking science to management: restoring community forests in Nepal
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Nepal
Lead Organisation	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>HYR4</i>
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.facebook.com/JalthalBiodiversity/ https://twitter.com/BiodiversityNep

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end of September).

We started this project in July 2022 and now the project is towards the end of the project. Currently project is running in low profile and without technical staff. Most of the projects field level activities have been completed. Some meetings and interaction with policy level audience will be priority in remaining time. This report briefly presents the progress of period of April-September 2025. To keep this report brief, detail has been given in attached reports (Doc 01, 02).

1) As a flagship and legacy publication of the project we have concentrated our effort in drafting, editing, revising the 'tree guidebook'. The book will be shared in December this year organising a program in Kathmandu (Doc 01).

2) A newspaper article (in Nepali language) was published in one of the most viewed online portals of Nepal. Taking case of Jalthal forest, the articles discusses how biodiversity outside protected area is important to conserve overall biodiversity and secure livelihood of people dependent on forest resource (Doc 2).

3) International day of Biodiversity was celebrated with wider stakeholders' participation in project site. The celebration highlighted projects achievements and discussed conservation needs of the forest (Doc 02). Similarly, project interacted with various stakeholders; ministry, local governments, journalists and community forest user groups.

4) Project has also supported communities in wetland restoration, agroforestry and fodder species cultivation (Doc 01).

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.

So far, we did not have any problem but would like to share political development that have some consequences in our project. There was political uprising on 8th and 9th September in Nepal that dismantled government. The country is in highly politicalised and preparing for general election. We thought we might get low attention in policy level discussions, therefore, we wanted to conduct these activities when window of opportunity is available.

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

Formal Change Request submitted:

Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

Yes

Change Request reference if known: *If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome*

We communicated and sent formal change request on 15 oct. It was about project end date, we have got email confirmation on Oct 22, 2025 [REDACTED]

Guidance for Section 4: The information you provide in this section will be used by Defra to review the financial status of projects. This review will identify projects at random for spot checks on financial management and will include requests for evidence of the actual spend information provided below. Please ensure the figures you provide are as accurate as possible and that you have the evidence to support it. You do not need to provide it now.

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

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 2026)?

Yes ☐ No ☒ Estimated underspend: £

4c. If you expect an underspend, then you should 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, and not later than 31st December. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes to your project 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 BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk

We are mainly working to consolidate results and organise policy level meeting, therefore there are few activities. In addition, currently project is running with minimal staff.

6. Project risk management

6a. If your project has an Overseas Security and Justice assessment, please provide an update on any related risks, and any special conditions in your award paperwork if relevant for your project.

NA

7. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent Annual Report. As a reminder, all projects that were scored as 'Not Yet Sensitive' in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment of their latest Annual Report should demonstrate how they are meeting the minimum GESI-Sensitive standard.

Checklist for submission

Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, and annexe other requested materials as appropriate.	X
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	X
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	X
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	X
Submit to BCF-Reports@niras.com	X
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	X