



**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	30-001
Project title	Beekeepers Restore the Forests of Afram Plains
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Ghana
Lead Organisation	Bees for Development UK
Partner(s)	Bees for Development Ghana Ghana National Fire Service Afram Plains Development Organisation Forest Commission of Ghana
Project Leader	<i>Dr. Janet Lowore</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR3
Project website/blog/social media	https://beesfordevelopmentghana.org/blog/ https://web.facebook.com/BfDGhana https://www.instagram.com/officialbfdghana/ https://x.com/BfDGhana https://www.beesfordevelopment.org/blog/ https://x.com/BeesForDev https://www.facebook.com/beesfordevelopment https://www.instagram.com/beesfordevelopment/

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).

Project started in April 2023 and will end in March 2026.
The following reports the progress made April to October 2025.

Under output 1: We intensified our extension and monitoring support to existing beekeepers especially hive cleaning after absconding of colonies, apiary and colony management. We also helped new people to start beekeeping – building beehives and setting them up. We facilitated the construction 130 beehives for 70 women who have strong interest in beekeeping but for had not been able to start without extra support. We also updated the data of beekeepers we engaged with over the reporting period. We also conducted scouting in 12 new communities for existing beekeepers who needed extra support and guidance, and we provided this support in the form of beekeeping skills and knowledge. We distributed beekeeping equipment. We also introduced Bee Champion model into the project. Carefully selected individuals (Bee Champions) were intensively trained to provide timely support to beekeepers – these 16 Bee Champions (10 males and 6 females) are residents of the target communities and so they can visit every beekeeper easily and provide the needed support to them. These Bee Champions have been introduced to their respective cluster communities. The verbal feedback from the beekeepers is positive. For instance, a beekeeper said, *'We are happy that there is someone from our community who is closer and can help us in beekeeping.'* We have also started piloting Village Savings and Loan Associations in five communities to allow members to save and borrow money to either start beekeeping (new beekeepers) or expand their beekeeping enterprises. Though we are at the early stages, the feedback from the communities is positive.

Under output 2: There was continuing improvement and updating of Mobile Honey System over the period. Our honey brand (Digya Forest Honey) was certified and issued certification permitting the Honey and Beeswax Trade Centre (HBTC) to sell our honey on the Ghanaian market. We also finalised the development of Standard Operating Procedures and our workflow chart for vetting by Ghana Food and Drugs Authority. All staff did the Food Handlers Certification tests and obtained the required certificate to be able to work at the processing centre. Beekeepers from seven communities sold 2081.80 kg of honeycomb to the HBTC over the reporting period. The HBTC also procured additional packaging material and 50 stainless-steel buckets for beeswax rendering. We participated and sold over [REDACTED] worth of honey at an AgriFair in Accra.

Under output 3: We continued to pick apiary coordinates for the mapping of apiary cluster sites and monitoring of burned area therein. We also continued forest fire awareness creation using bushfire management and control posters and beekeeper engagement in project communities.

Under output 4: Provided ongoing support for and monitoring of tree planted by beekeepers. We distributed 240 seedlings to 21 beekeepers and also started introducing Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration to augment our tree planting effort in the project communities.

Under output 5: There is an ongoing constructive engagement with charcoal producers in project communities. We have also been engaging in constructive engagement with traditional authorities to raise awareness of trade-offs between charcoal and honey production. We have used radio stations to explain to the general public in Kwahu Afram Plains the advantages (for both livelihood and the environment) of keeping bees instead of producing charcoal

Under output 6: Project news and progress published throughout the implementation on both BfD Ghana and BfD UK website - six articles on the project were published on our websites within the reporting period. Several activities and progress posts – made up of photos, videos and texts – have been shared across BfDG and BfD social media handles. We also participated and presented the project approach and impact at Apimondia 2025 in Copenhagen in September 2025. We initiated conversation with video production company to produce an animated explainer video explaining how the Mobile Honey System works and what it is for.

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.

Challenges

The affects of the extended drought [already reported in Year 2 Annual Report] continued to be felt at the start of this 6-month period i.e. lower than expected honey harvests. This impacted income generation and community motivation.

We addressed this by strengthening our extension system – to ensure messaging, communications, training and skills development could ‘compensate’ for the fact that beekeepers experienced less inherent motivation achieved by selling honey. Our message is that effort invested in beekeeping during a ‘low’ year, will still deliver dividends in the future.

Also in the Year 2 Annual Report we reported the loss of the local radio station to fire. This has not been repaired and our planned broadcasts have not been made.

We have now managed to negotiate with another radio station to ensure continuity of the show. During these 6 months pre-recorded episodes have been replayed through community information centres, allowing the programmes to remain accessible to listeners. Therefore, we are confident that this incident will not have any significant impact on the project’s progress or outcome.

We have learned important lessons.

(1) The drought revealed to farmers/beekeepers the strong link between forage availability and honey production reinforcing the need for forage conservation, tree planting and climate adaptation strategies

(2) Unforeseen events, such as drought or loss of key communication infrastructure require backup plans and flexible implementation strategies. Consistent community engagement must be maintained.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS:

No

Formal Change Request submitted:

No

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

No

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*

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?

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

No

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.

n/a

6b. Have any concerns or allegations relating to sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment been reported in the past 6 months?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please provide further information, ensuring no sensitive data is included within responses.

Suspicious or allegations related to safeguarding concerns should be reported to ODA.Safeguarding@defra.gov.uk

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.

We were asked to respond to feedback at the next Annual Report not Half Year Report – which we will do. Having said that some of the issues raised by us, and reported in the Year 2 Annual Report did necessitate some changes. These have been submitted in a Change Request which we submitted in August 2025 – and we responded to queries about this also in October 2025.

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.	✓
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	✓
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	n/a
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	✓
Submit to BCF-Reports@niras.com	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	