

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 2023

Project reference	30-003
Project title	Developing a sustainable model for human-elephant coexistence in Thailand
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Thailand
Lead partner	Zoological Society of London
Partner(s)	Human-Elephant Voices Network, IIED
Project leader	Susie Offord-Wooley
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	

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).

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

Output 1:

Regional workshops: At least three virtual and/or in-person pre-workshop meetings were held with partners in each of the HEC regions to introduce the project and discuss partner organizations' roles and contributions. Due to differences in priorities and management, separate meetings were scheduled for Kaeng Krachan NP and Kui Buri NP. Local partner organizations have offered to help offset the additional costs of separate meetings. To ensure equitable benefits, ZSL and HEVN negotiated opportunities for collaboration and capacity-building with partners in each HEC region. Regional workshops have been scheduled from late September through December in line with partners' schedules and availability, and sometimes extended to two-day workshops with matched funds from regional partners to accommodate regional agendas and capacity needs.

[Redacted content]

National workshop: Given that the project introduction was conducted during pre-regional workshop virtual meetings to facilitate negotiations, the national workshop with regional project partners was rescheduled to the end of November and will consist of presenting and reviewing a summary of the data collected during the regional workshops, including participatory HEC maps and trends, capacity assessment results, and preliminary results from the systematic review.

HEC mitigation capacity assessment: Online HEC capacity and HEC data surveys were disseminated during pre-workshop meetings and partners have been given until the end of November to complete the surveys. Capacity surveys were also presented during the regional workshops with options to fill out an online or paper version. Different capacity survey formats were developed for community elephant guarding teams, DNP, and NGOs, tailored to the organizations' structure and experience. For example guarding team surveys focused on their experience and capacity around responding to elephant crop raiding, while DNP and NGO surveys focused on capacity to implement and monitor many HEC mitigation methods. So far, OCA surveys have been completed by 14 organizations in Khao Yai, 29 elephant guarding team members from the Eastern Forest Complex, and 40 elephant guarding team members from Dong Phrayayen Khao Yai. Surveys will be edited as needed for clarity and replicated at the next four regional workshops in Q3. All survey data will be collated and synthesized in Q3 and Q4 to inform and develop best-practice guidelines for HEC mitigation, the systematic review, and project monitoring and evaluation. Additional baseline surveys will be designed and tailored for smallholder farmers for the insurance focus groups in 2024.

Output 2:

HEC insurance feasibility assessment: IIED has been elevated as partners in the project to support and guide throughout the three years of the project. Selection of an appropriate insurance broker consultant is ongoing, but consultation with local Thai agricultural insurance experts, including Dr. Sommarat Chantararat Janvilisri, has narrowed down candidates. Focus groups with farming communities in five HEC regions to assess financial impact of HEC and WTP premiums have been scheduled for early 2024 after the regional meetings are completed.

Output 3:

Elephant-friendly alternative livelihoods assessment: In Year 1's first half, Output 3's Elephant-friendly Livelihood Feasibility Assessment and Market Analysis has been a key focus, co-funded by the WWF-NbS Accelerator programme. An agroforestry consultant and a value-chain advisor have been contracted to collaborate with ZSL, HEVN and other partners in the development of value chains for HEC-friendly agroforestry commodities in the 16 sWEFCOM focus communities.

Activities 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 have all been initiated, and 3.1 (soil and farm ground-truthing surveys) and 3.2 (identification of suitable elephant-friendly agroforestry/alternative crops) are slated for completion in Y1Q3 following fieldwork in November 2023. This fieldwork will include ground-truthing geospatial mapping data and conducting multi-variable land suitability tests on proposed agroforestry sites, including soil sampling and community engagement.

Qualitative and quantitative data being collected under Activities 3.3 and 3.5 will be used in the selection of agroforestry crops (Activity 3.2), as well as in the development of a financial model for agroforestry development. This will help to ensure that value-chain development undertaken under Output 3 is sustainable and in alignment with local and national objectives, with the possibility of integration into more complex agricultural financial models such as carbon crediting and agricultural insurance (Output 2, Outputs 3.2, 3.4).

Output 4:

Capacity building of elephant-friendly coffee CBO:

A workshop was conducted at Kanchanaburi Rajabhat University on 25 August to disseminate the coffee agroforestry NbS components of the Darwin project to stakeholders including The Thong Pha Phum Coffee Enterprise Group, Provincial Agriculture office, local farmers and coffee graders, the Kanchanaburi Provincial Commerce Office, coffee shop representatives, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand. This was also an opportunity to obtain insights and perspectives from the various actors along the value chain to ensure project success.

Suggestions included ensuring alignment of government land use guidelines with those of ethnic groups, price incentives to encourage transition to coffee over other economic crops such as durian, and careful consideration of the additional effort and challenges involved in switching to coffee agroforestry to ensure quality and marketability. HEVN is regularly engaging with the TPP Coffee Enterprise Group and the local communities in TPP and is in the process of developing criteria to select households for scaling the coffee agroforestry model.

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.

Pre-workshop introductions, negotiations, and scheduling with the five HEC regions have delayed the regional and national workshops, but these activities are still expected to be completed within Y1. In addition, IIED was elevated from consultant to partner and their support extended equally across all three years of the project rather than concentrated in Years 1 and 2. This process has delayed selection of an insurance broker, but should not affect activity delivery as data collection to inform the development of insurance products is ongoing and guided by the recently published “Insurance to promote human-wildlife coexistence” how-to guide co-developed with IIED and ZSL. Administrative delays in hiring an agroforestry specialist have also delayed soil and farm mapping surveys to Q3, but an agronomist has been hired and will be conducting field visits and surveys in November. These changes should not impact the project timeline, as all other activities are currently on track, and have not significantly altered the budget.

A change request form has been filed denoting these changes.

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/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

Change request reference if known:

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

Actual spend: £

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 2024)?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

4c. 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.

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 BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, 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.

All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS 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**