



**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: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025**

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

**Submit to: [BCF-Reports@niras.com](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com) including your project ref in the subject line.**

<b>Project reference</b>	30-009
<b>Project title</b>	Developing Sustainable Sea moss Methods in Saint Lucia
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Saint Lucia (W.I)
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Fauna & Flora
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries, Food Security and Rural Development: Fisheries Department, Saint Lucia National Trust
<b>Project Leader</b>	<i>Adams Toussaint</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	HYR3
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	N/A

**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).**

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) 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.

**The following are notable activities that were implemented during this reporting period:**

Activity 2.2: Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for sea moss farmer associations are currently being drafted.

Activity 2.5: The legal framework research and consultations engaged 6 government agencies and stakeholder groups, including the Crown Lands Department, Department of Fisheries, Department of Physical Planning, and Saint Lucia National Trust. The process identified two primary pathways for formal seabed access as well as a non-leasing pathway, providing a clear

basis for policy and regulatory development. A guiding report to inform a cabinet memo and lease templates is being drafted.

Activity 2.6 and 1.2: More generalized biodiversity monitoring through farmer reporting on species sightings and interactions will be conducted through the updated sea moss monitoring log. The survey was refined through a series of review meetings between Fauna & Flora and the Department of Fisheries. The tool, with data fields across 7 themes, including sea moss production, biodiversity changes and encounters and farming infrastructure, is coded in KoboToolbox and ready for testing and deployment in Q3 of Year 3. It will enable tracking of major sea moss farms once deployed as well as enable national reporting on production trends, farm footprint, and sustainability metrics.

Activity 2.7: The draft sea moss management plan created within the Department of Fisheries is currently being updated by the project team and our partners while also outlining a strategy for implementation of this plan, on track to be completed before project end.

Activity 3.2: Sea moss, sargassum and water samples were collected from both Praslin and PSEPA between February and May 2025 and analyzed for heavy metals (arsenic, cadmium, mercury, lead), nutrients (nitrates, phosphates), microbiological indicators (E. coli, total coliforms), and other chemical and physical parameters (pH, salinity, turbidity, dissolved oxygen). Heavy-metal levels were at safe levels, below the acceptance threshold for those with regulatory maximum levels in edible seaweed. However, some microbiological contamination above acceptable levels was observed at Potwee Beach, Praslin. The report will be shared with the PSC in Q4 2025. The findings will guide national monitoring standards and inform the design of a long-term, national, environmental monitoring plan.

Activity 3.6: Upcoming assessments of major processing facilities within pilot sites will be conducted through the support of the British Standards Institute alongside authority agencies: the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards, Export Saint Lucia, Department of Environmental Health and Department of Fisheries. The processors assessed will be guided on the best ways to improve and produce sustainable, high quality sea moss products. Additional support from the South East Coast Project will also lend to additional training for environmental stewardship and product development within the final months of this Darwin project.

Activity 4.1: Best practices and lessons learnt from both project trials and individual farmer methods are currently being compiled to create communication material to be shared toward the project end.

Public Awareness: An article, [Sea Moss: Sustainable Growing - The Future of Saint Lucia](#), was published in Oceanographic Magazine (August 2025). The first of a series of short videos on the project was drafted for release in Q4 of Year 3.

**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.**

As detailed in the October 2025 Change Request (submitted alongside this report in a separate email), activities to accelerate the adoption of sustainable farming methods faced logistical constraints. These factors, together with the short remaining timeframe, prompted the project to scale back this component, among others, and focus on documentation of sustainable techniques, ensuring technical knowledge is captured for future uptake.

The legal framework assessment revealed that parts of Savannes Bay's seabed are vested in the Saint Lucia National Trust. This reframes sea moss governance on the South East Coast and creates an opportunity for sustainable financing in the Pointe Sables Environmental Protection Area that can be modelled in other farming areas.

<b>3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</b>	
Discussed with NIRAS:	Yes/ <b>No</b>
Formal Change Request submitted:	<b>Yes</b> / No
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes/ <b>No</b>
Change Request reference if known: <i>If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome</i>	

**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.

<p><b>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)</b></p> <p>Actual spend: £ <span style="background-color: black; color: black;">[REDACTED]</span></p>
<p><b>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)?</b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £</p>
<p><b>4c. If you expect an underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully.</b> Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.</p> <p><b>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 31<sup>st</sup> 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. <b>Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.</b></b></p> <p><b>NB:</b> if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.</p>
<p><b>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</b></p> <p>No</p> <p>Suspicious or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to <a href="mailto:fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk">fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>6. Project risk management</b></p>

**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

**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.**

No responses were requested for this HYR.

## Checklist for submission

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