



**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	30-014
Project title	Community-based agro-biodiversity systems for improved livelihoods and climate resilience
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica
Lead Organisation	The Development Fund, Norway
Partner(s)	Association of Cuchumatanes Organizations (ASOCUCH); Foundation for Participatory Research with Farmers of Honduras (FIPAH); Federation of Cooperatives for Development, R.L., Nicaragua (FECODESA R.L) and University of Costa Rica (UCR), Fabio Baudrit Moreno Agricultural Experimental Station.
Project Leader	Elin Cecilie Ranum, The Development Fund
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	1 st April to 30 th September 2024, Half year report 3 (HY3)
Project website/blog/social media	<p>https://www.asocuch.com/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/Asocuch/?locale=es_LA</p> <p>https://fipah-hn.org/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/FIPAHonduras#</p>

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).

Output 1 Developed varieties through Participatory Plant Breeding approaches adapted to the effects of climate change.

Activity 1.1: 47 bean trials were conducted in Honduras (27), Nicaragua (3) and Costa Rica (17). One bean variety which is tolerant to drought and high temperatures was liberated locally in Nicaragua (Línea SJC 730-79, Frijol Rojo San Lucas).

Activity 1.2: In Honduras, PIF Zamorano provided trials and validations of maize and beans varieties, and farmers tests for the production of maize, beans and sorghum crops. The project also supported farmers with agricultural inputs and irrigation equipment to develop seed multiplication and trial preparation.

Activity 1.3: Participatory trials of maize varieties were carried out in Guatemala (10) and Honduras (8). In Nicaragua, improvement of 17 advanced maize lines continued through 7 trial plots.

Activity 1.4: Seed packages were distributed in all four countries, benefitting 816 farmers.

Activity 1.5: Training in farmers-managed seed (including participatory plant breeding) combined with field visits was provided to 40 extension workers from the Ministry of Agriculture. This activity was a joint activity with the ITGPRFA BSF supported project. In Nicaragua, 19 farmers received training in conservation of maize and beans seeds. 10 capacity building events on climate change, and genetic improvement of beans were carried out in Costa Rica, benefitting 199 persons.

Activity 1.6: In the four countries, a total of 13 field days with 338 participants (farmers, extension workers, local government representatives among others).

Activity 1.8: Catalogues with characterisation of local and improved maize varieties (developed through participatory plant breeding) were published in Guatemala and Honduras. In Nicaragua, a catalogue of local bean varieties was published. Costa Rica is in the final stage of finalising a catalogue of participator bred bean varieties.

Output 2: Strengthen collaboration between local seed banks and national gene banks in the region.

Activity 2.1: In Guatemala, the project supported assemblies for 11 community seed banks, where 309 persons received training in governance and leadership. In addition, one community seed bank was supported with improved infrastructure, and a regional exchange event for community seed banks was conducted. The project also supported community seed banks in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

Activity 2.2: 5 local seed fairs were conducted in Nicaragua.

Activity 2.3: Training on farmers rights was conducted in Costa Rica, benefitting 62 persons.

Activity 2.4: In Guatemala and Honduras, regeneration of maize varieties, which will be submitted to the National Gene Banks is in process. Regeneration of varieties which will be provided to community seed banks in Nicaragua started, and in Costa Rica, improvement of 7 bean varieties and 2 maize varieties was finalised ensuring access to quality seeds.

Activity 2.5: 47 accessions of maize and 10 accessions of wild relatives of beans were submitted to the National Gene Bank. Preparations for the delivery of 200 accessions of maize, beans and wild relatives of maize which have been developed or identified by ASOCUCH to the Svalbard Seed Vault has started in collaboration with ICTA and the ITGPRFA. In Costa Rica, 35 accessions of local beans collected in Nicoya was submitted to the gene bank of the University of Costa Rica.

Output Level 3: Collection and regeneration of accessions of wild relatives of Phaseolus

Activity 3.2: The process of collecting wild relatives of beans was finalised in Guatemala, resulting in at least 45 collections that are currently being examined by the University of San Carlos.

Activity 3.3: 10 accessions of regenerated seeds were submitted to the National Gene Bank in Guatemala. In Nicaragua, testing of samples of wild bean relatives is being carried out. 21 farmers involved in regeneration and conservation of wild relatives in Honduras were supported. Nurseries for 27 accessions of wild bean relatives established in Honduras.

Activity 3.4: For Guatemala, see activity 3.2. In Costa Rica and Nicaragua, partners are preparing the submission of wild relative collections.

Activity 3.5: Efforts with authorities to declare the areas where wild bean specimens were located as protected areas continue in Nicaragua. In Guatemala, partners is preparing applications to the National Council for Protected Areas (CONAP) for improved protection in the areas where wild relatives of beans have been identified.

Additional activities:

In collaboration with Fritjof Nansen Institute, the Development Fund organised a seminar “Farmers-Managed Seed Systems and Food Security – the Role of Community Seed Banks” in Oslo. One representative from ASOCUCH participated in the seminar, sharing experiences from Guatemala.

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.

Climate change continue to be a challenge which may affect efforts to liberate varieties and might affect the achievement of the target for indicator 1.1.

The negative impact of Trips *Megalurotrips usitatus* on bean production is increasing. Partners are testing different ways of reducing the impact and genetic resilience to the pest.

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*

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?

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

[REDACTED]

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.

[REDACTED]

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.

[REDACTED]

Checklist for submission

Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review? You should respond in section 6, and annex 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