

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	30-019
Project title	Building resilient landscapes and communities for Rukiga's cranes and wetlands
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Uganda
Lead partner	Margaret Pyke Trust (MPT)
Partner(s)	International Crane Foundation (" ICF "); Rugarama Hospital (" RH "); and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (" LSHTM ").
Project leader	Kathryn Lloyd
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	Website: https://margaretpyke.org/environment/projects Twitter: @MargaretPyke @savingcranes @TheEWT @LSHTM Facebook: @MargaretPykeTrust @InternationalCraneFoundation @EndangeredWildlifeTrust @RugaramaHospital

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).

Our project commenced on 1st August 2023, therefore activities reported on below relate to only two months (August and September 2023).

Activity 1.1: Partners have met to agree the selection process for Conservation and Health Mobilisers (peer educators). Meetings with local leaders and members of local government offices to support this process will take place in the coming months and the training will take place before March 2024.

Activity 1.4: ICF has initiated the procurement process for crane ringing materials, which can only be sourced from outside of Uganda. ICF's team in Kenya is assisting with this and has already established contact with the supplier in Germany. Crane ringing will commence in February 2024.

Activity 1.6: Partners met in August and September to discuss the communications strategy, which is in the process of being finalised.

Activities 1.7 and 1.8: Meetings with church leaders have commenced and 15 churches have been identified as locations for upcoming community talks. Further investigation will take place

in October to identify additional churches in surrounding communities to increase the reach of our project messages/activities.

Activity 2.1: Partners have undertaken scoping activities to confirm the selection of the new parishes and villages in Rukiga District, where our expansion plans will be implemented. In the coming quarter we will next select and sign agreements with the Conservation and Health Groups.

Activity 2.8: ICF has successfully secured a location for the Calliandra Nursery, leveraging a partnership with a small-scale Calliandra producer, with whom they have previously worked. Attention is now turning to identifying a second site. Concurrently, ICF are deepening their discussions with the farmer to broaden the nursery initiative. The three Napier grass nurseries are already operational and thriving. Next quarter, we have scheduled the distribution of Napier grass stems, targeting both Conservation and Health Groups and the broader community within the wetland catchment area.

Activity 3.1: RH has recruited two new project nurses and one new clinical officer, who will be trained in the coming months by MPT staff on family planning and project implementation.

Activity 3.2: Needs assessments have commenced at 14 health centres, so that we can plan our healthcare outreach service delivery and loudspeaker announcements.

Activity 4.1: We are currently developing a comprehensive concept that will shape the execution and content of the community-supported environmental byelaws. We anticipate that it will be finalised in November 2023, with the training of 20 local council leaders will take place in December 2023.

In addition, we have undertaken a number of 'cross-cutting activities' including:

Activity X.1: All project partners (project team members and their organisations' senior managers) met in Kabale, Uganda, in July 2023 (ahead of the start of our grant), for a week of inception and strategy meetings, including two days of site visits in Rukiga District. Partners met with stakeholders and project beneficiaries, conducted M&E (see activity X.2) baseline activities, agreed on next steps and began strategizing about the project's long-term sustainability, including exit strategy. Partners have also agreed to have a monthly project team update call, the first was held on zoom in October 2023.

Activity X.2: LSHTM has commenced its baseline, undertaking 18 focus group discussions with 108 community members and 14 key informant interviews. The analysis report is in the process of being finalised. Next quarter a cross-sectional household survey will be undertaken with approximately 3,000 respondents, to establish community awareness on key project themes.

Activity X3: Project partners have published a project brief detailing the evidence and learnings from our recent baseline, which include the impact partners have had in their Darwin Main project 27-002, which this project builds upon. In addition, on 21st September the team presented its project and learnings to 27 senior representatives of conservation donors (the Environmental Funders Network), and conducted a training on our project and the benefits of implementing cross-sector conservation, health and livelihoods projects to 37 staff members from ICF and the Endangered Wildlife Trust from across the globe.

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.

A key lesson learnt, relates to findings uncovered in our strategy meeting (see activity X.1 above), where, in a mapping exercise we found we needed improved communication around activities between partners to enable better integration of project themes and messaging. We agreed to update our reporting systems and now have a monthly project team update call.

Unexpected positive developments include:

- ICF, in partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust (**ICF/EWT**) and the Uganda National Meteorological Authority, are in the early stages of establishing the first weather station in Rukiga District. This will significantly enhance our climate-smart agriculture initiatives, fostering sustainable practices, climate change resilience, and food security.
- In February 2024, a cross-national delegation comprising staff from ICF/EWT in Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, and South Africa will visit our project site in Rukiga District to learn more about our project's Population, Health, and Environment (PHE) design, with an aim to replicate the model in their respective countries.
- Project partners have identified a need for latrines in certain project villages, the lack of which is a barrier preventing girls from staying in school, especially when menstruating. ICF have previously supported a school with a latrine in Rukiga District and it has been decided that this strategy will continue more widely in our project areas, where possible (and with matched funding). Linked to this, partners are in the preliminary phases of developing a menstrual hygiene initiative aimed at supporting young girls in select primary schools across Rukiga District. RH has particular health education expertise but we are seeking potential partners to collaborate on this, in particular in regard to reusable menstrual hygiene products.

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: N/A

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.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No thanks.

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**