



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



Biodiversity challenge fund projects

Darwin Initiative, Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade Fund and Darwin Plus

Half-yearly report

This report is expected to 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, be sure to highlight it clearly.

Deadline for submission: 31st October 2024

Please note that all projects that were active before 1 October 2024 must complete a Semi-Annual Report.

Send to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project reference in the subject line.

Project reference	30-024
Project title	Strengthening ecological and socio-economic resilience in the seascape of Atlantida (Honduras)
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Honduras
Lead Organisation	Fundación Cayos Cochinos
Partner(s)	Fauna & Flora Fundación Cuero y Salado (FUCSA) Centro de Estudios Marinos (CEM) Fundación Islas de la Bahía (FIB) La Asociación Pro Comunidades Turísticas de Honduras (LARECOTURH)
Project leader	Marcio Aronne
Date and number of the report (e.g. HYR1)	30/09/2024 HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	N/A

Describe progress over the last 6 months (April to September) in relation to the agreed project implementation schedule (if your project started less than 6 months ago, report on the period from inception to the end of September).

Output 1

Activity 1.1 Since April 2024, 141 patrols were conducted in collaboration with the Honduran Navy, of which 89 were in the Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge (CSWR), 42 patrols in Utila, Islas de la Bahía National Marine Park (BIMNP) and 10 patrols (down from 172 last year; see challenges section below) with rangers in the Cayos Cochinos Archipelago Marine National Monument (CCAMNM), resulting in the identification of:

- 10 incidents of illegal fishing gear (8 in CSWR; 2 in CCAMNM),
- 2 dead manatees (cause of death not identified; CSWR)
- 3.9 ha of forest burnt down (CSWR)
- 1.5 km clandestine road opening in the CSWR vegetation to enable transit of vehicles and cattle.

- 234 metres river dredging (CSWR), with sediment release affecting the transit of boats and the manatee
- 9.7 ha deforested (CSWR)
- 28 tourism infractions (CCAMNM) e.g. not wearing a lifejacket, taking starfish from the sea.

Activity 1.2. The partners have conducted 36 turtle surveys on CCAMNM (37 nests recorded, 5 turtles tagged and 1 nest looted), 24 iguana surveys on Utila (207 females (66.35%) and 105 males (33.65%)) and surveys in CSWR resulting in sightings of 14 manatee individuals at 9 different sites.

Activity 1.3. During the corresponding period, needs were identified in the CCAMNM and CSWR protection programme, leading prioritisation of funds to address these gaps during 2024. This includes equipment acquisition by the end of 2024 and training scheduled for the first months of 2025. FUCSA is currently developing terms of reference for a consultant to update the CSWR protection plan and has planned an exchange between organisations implementing patrols. Once the recruitment of the new rangers has been finalised, coordination with other co-managers (FIB, FCC and others) will be taking place. FIB has continued with patrols and is proposing to hold meetings with key actors to review and validate the existing protection plan (developed by BICA in previous years), considering the needs and contributions of local community members.

Activity 1.4. Celebration of the Gararu Festiva, named after the Garífuna word for hawksbill, in CCAMNM this year consisted of recreational activities relating to hawksbill conservation with the participation of members of Cayos Cochinos communities, Honduras Naval Force, and FCC staff. Out of 53 people, 38 were men and 15 women, of which 15 were Garífuna and 5 were Miskito.

In CSWR, 11 environmental education talks were carried out, with 178 participants (95 boys and 83 girls) and 45 in Utila and Cayitos de Utila with the participation of 997 students (523 girls and 474 boys).

Activity 1.5. Five Fishing for Life campaigns have been developed with the communities of Orotina, Miramar, Dantillo, Balfate and Cacao, across which 99 people (77 men, 22 women) participated. The campaign was developed with the objective of reinforcing fishers' pledges to register themselves for fishing licenses, participate in responsible fishing and respect fishing regulations. Further, one training session focusing on responsible fishing practices was held with two fishing associations in Utila, with 15 fishers (12 men, 3 women).

A workshop on responsible fishing was held in the community of El Porvenir with the participation of 8 people (3 men, 5 women), focusing on CSWR's fishing regulations and the national fisheries law.

The communities of Balfate, Río Esteban, Bambú and Río Coco have signed voluntary commitments to adopt responsible fishing guidelines for 12 species of commercial and ecological importance. These endorsements are also the technical supports for the declaration of a municipal ordinance for the municipality of Balfate Centro.

Activity 1.6. The half-yearly report of Our-Fish registrations has been generated. There are currently 27 users, three of whom are new within the last quarter.

Activity 1.7. Collection of 752 mangrove seedlings and planting of 200 coconuts in the areas of Oyster Bed and Big Bite (Utila). A reforestation day was held with the school of Río Coco, during which 0.5 ha of mangrove was reforested, and 50 coconuts were planted on the beach of El Porvenir. Due to the high temperatures, on June the Institute of Forest Conservation (ICF) instructed organisations to stop reforestation activities until further notice and committed to accompany these activities when they resume at the national level.

Activity 1.9. The National Conservation Plan for the Antillean manatee was developed through a consultancy and a workshop was carried out with the relevant authorities to fine tune the plan. It has now been submitted to the Wildlife Department of ICF for review and is awaiting

approval. Once approved, the first National Conservation Programme for the Antillean manatee will be launched.

Activity 1.11. Six technical staff from FUCSA and two from FIB have been trained in the use of the SMART software.

In this second year, training will be carried out in the identification and monitoring of sharks and rays, for which a meeting has been held with elasmobranch research and conservation NGO Ilili, as well as training in the application of surveys for a first diagnosis of shark bycatch in the seascape.

Output 2

Activities 2.1 and 2.2. The Business Development programme was completed, and a workshop was held, resulting in 6 business models being developed. Two models from Delfines del Caribe and Delfines de la Rosita focus on added value to fish products: gutted, filleted, ground fish, fish bone, fish cutlet (35 fishers). There are four alternative business ideas to fishing, specifically: 1) young people from Río Esteban: hot and cold drinks including slushies of different flavours, coffee (7 young men), 2) women's group from El Porvenir: canteen selling pastries, baleadas, and drinks (7 women), 3) young people from Orotina: preparation and sale of plantain slices (4 fishermen), 4) women's group from Nueva Armenia: preparation and sale of coconut bread, rolls, doughnuts (5 women). In addition, support is being given to the business initiative of Sambo Creek fisher association: sale of typical dishes, such as fried fish and fish soup (14 fishermen).

Activity 2.6. An artisanal fisheries fair was held as part of the celebration of the National Day of the Artisanal Fishers of Honduras on July 28th. This activity was attended by 418 people who tasted responsibly fished seafood products and dishes. We were accompanied by local, departmental and national authorities, entrepreneurs from the city of La Ceiba and other traders.

Output 3

Activity 3.2. The board of directors of the Seascape Fishers' Roundtable has a two-year work plan in place, which will be reviewed in November 2024 at the closing assembly of the year and, if necessary, changes will be made as deemed appropriate by the Roundtable.

Activity 3.6 Two seascape fishers, LARECOTURH Executive Director and Fauna & Flora Americas & Caribbean Programme Manager took part in the FAO-organised Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Summit and Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Rome, Italy. These representatives had the opportunity to present the current situation of artisanal fisheries in Honduras and initiatives underway to promote responsible fishing in the area. Seascape fisher representatives also participated in national and departmental meetings on biodiversity strategy and climate vulnerability with fishers.

A youth network called "Jovenes Conservando la Pesca" has been created, made up of 18 women and 5 men, to promote generational leadership transition in the seascape. Two workshops have been held with the network, the first aimed at consolidating the youth network and identifying the environmental problems of their communities to visualise how young people can get involved, and the second aimed at presenting the Seascape Partnership (all partners involved in this project) and its link with the youth network.

Output 4

Activity 4.1. Members of Fauna & Flora's Partnerships & Organisational Development team facilitated two week-long workshops with FIB and FUCSA's teams and board members, to pull together the necessary information for both organisations to update their strategic plans and engage in team building activities along the way. This was the first time FUCSA's updated strategic plan had been fully crafted by its staff, and the team expressed a greater sense of ownership as a result.

Activities 4.2. and 4.6. Fauna & Flora delivered a week of fundraising and financial management training in October 2024. The agendas for both were crafted based on needs identified during the Organisational Resilience Check (ORCs) and written by partners into their Organisational Development Plans (ODPs).

Activity 4.3. Fauna & Flora organised a Seascape Committee meeting in July 2024 where they, GOAL (humanitarian NGO), ICF and UNDP's Small Grants Programme presented their social safeguards and safeguarding initiatives. This was the first-time seascape-level discussions had taken place regarding these topics, and all committee members agreed on the importance of coordinating and aligning initiatives going forward.

Activities 4.4. and 4.5. All Honduran partners now have a social safeguard and safeguarding focal point and received dedicated one-to-one support from Fauna & Flora specialists in person in July 2024. Based on priorities identified, Fauna & Flora shared resources and is providing coaching support.

Output 5

Activity 5.1. Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (CVCAs) were carried out in Chachahuat community (CCAMNM), with the participation of 28 community members, of which 21 were women, 7 men, and 22 Garifuna; and in the community of Boca del Toro (CSWR), with the participation of 14 people, including members of the Tourism Committee, local community board, local emergency committees (CODEL), young people and older adults.

Activity 5.3. Collection centres in La Rosita and Salado Barra communities (CSWR) were provided with the right equipment to grind and season fish, and prepare fish cakes and pastries, as these forms of processing fisheries products have been successful in adding value to seafood in other seascape collection centres. The possibility of establishing a community restaurant was evaluated; this will go ahead, led by Boca del Toro's Tourism Committee and will directly benefit 12 families and indirectly benefit 51 families.

Activity 5.5. With support from parallel funding, FUCSA will be supporting various economic initiatives, including:

- The construction of a restaurant for the Tourism Committee of Boca del Toro, a project that will directly benefit 12 families and indirectly benefit 51 families.
- The participation of a group of entrepreneurs from the Municipality of San Francisco in the Municipal Fair.
- The adaptation of fisher's groups' collection centres to add value to fish of low commercial value to facilitate their sale.

LARECOTURH will support the initiative of a bakery, as identified in the CVCA, with a group of 5 Garifuna women in Nueva Armenia, through training and purchase of equipment and inputs necessary for its development.

2. Provide details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learned that the project has encountered during the last 6 months. Explain what impact they might have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and schedule of project activities.

In the fourth quarter of year 1, patrolling efforts in CCAMNM were reduced due to complaints made by community members to the Foundation and the Honduran Navy. This was due to the confiscation of illegal fishing gear not permitted in the protected area, undertaken by the authorities in strict compliance with the law. These complaints led the Honduran Navy to temporarily suspend patrols, in order to de-escalate tension. As a result, monitoring and enforcement has been difficult this semester, with our team identifying a number of illegal tourism and fishing activities, including pot fishing by two industrial boats. We deeply appreciate the stability afforded by this project while we work with enforcement authorities and community groups to resolve this situation, which has already markedly improved, and ensure the sustainability, widespread understanding and support of environmental and socioeconomic initiatives within CCAMNM.

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 acceptance of the change:	No
Change request reference if known: None submitted.	

4a. Confirm your actual expenditure in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024) Actual expenditure:
4b. Do you currently anticipate having any significant underspends (e.g. over £5000) in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2025)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (No <input type="checkbox"/>)
4c. If you anticipate underspending, you should carefully consider the budgetary needs of your project. Remember that the funds agreed for this financial year are only available for the project during this financial year. If you anticipate underspend due to justifiable changes to the project, please submit a request for a budget change as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will accept a new quote, so make sure you have enough time to make appropriate changes to your project if necessary. Do NOT send these changes in the same email as your report. Note: if you expect to spend less than you expect, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend during this financial year.
5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise in relation to the project or to the management, monitoring or financial procedures of the BCF?
N/A

6. Use this section to respond to any comments you received when your project was confirmed or in your most recent annual report. Write the comment and then your response. If you have already responded, confirm when.
N/A

Checklist for submission

For new projects (i.e. starting after ¹ April 2024)	
Have you responded to any additional comments (other than warnings) received in the letter you received informing you that your application was successful and requesting a response in HYR (including protection points)?	
If you have not yet sent it, have you attached your risk register ?	
For existing projects (i.e. started before ¹ April 2024)	
Have you responded to the comments from your last review of the annual report ?	Y

For all projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of the submission email.	Y
Send to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	Y
Have you submitted your reports with the most up-to-date information on your project?	Y
Ensure that claim forms and other communications from your project are not included in this report.	Y