



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	30-025
Project title	Developing Sustainable Near-shore Sea Cucumber Aquaculture on Selayar Island, Indonesia
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Indonesia
Lead Organisation	Centre For Sustainable Energy & Resources Management @ Universitas Nasional, Indonesia (CSERM-UNAS)
Partner(s)	Heriot-Watt University, UK (HWU)
Project Leader	<i>Dr. Jito Sugardjito</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 October 2025, HYR3 (April-September 2025)
Project website/blog/social media	https://cserm.unas.ac.id/ ; instagram.com/cserm_unas

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.

In the third year, our project focuses on sea cucumber production from ranching, including harvesting, restocking, and processing, as well as preparing for the integration of sea cucumber aquaculture into the economic planning of Selayar Islands (Outputs 3, 4, and 5). In the first and second quarters of this year, our progress is as follows:

Output 3: Expand aquaculture operations with profit from first harvest

3.4 Monitor and maintain aquaculture sites, ongoing harvest and restock

- Monthly monitoring and harvests ongoing in all sites according to rolling schedule, Bontobangun almost completed a full restocking cycle.
- Integrated 'sero' fish trap and grow-out pens program ongoing along Northern coastal areas.

- Coordinated sales and shipment to private sector partner (PT Agang Nelayan) ongoing, preparation and processing targets established for optimal product quality.

3.6 Monthly site visits

- Monitoring ongoing. Discussion with local communities about the approaching handover process. Expanded monitoring program implemented including predator assessment to account for stock loss during specific tidal periods.
- Meeting conducted with cooperative representatives to prepare for independent business operation, including a range of business scales as a reinvestment and planning guide, and additional funding support mechanisms available from government programs and other sources.

Output 4: Sea cucumber ranching integrated into district-level economic planning agenda

4.1 Processing and preparation infrastructure developed

- Enhanced drying utilising an oven is being explored as a supporting infrastructure to be collectively owned by the processing cooperative and receive harvests from each village site according to tidal harvesting schedule.
- Enhanced drying protocol implemented to deliver maximum product quality, including detailed guidance, infographics and training sessions provided to each participating community. Drying rate data collection implemented to support business development plan.
- Hatchery operation SOP developed into policy brief for government partners to expand industry in post-project period.
- Policy brief for sea cucumber ranching as economic initiative under fisheries agency and regional planning & development agency in progress, to be delivered as part of handover ceremony and ongoing post-project liaison

4.2 Quarterly FGDs with Bappeda, private sector partner, local communities and other stakeholders

- Regular FGDs conducted with all stakeholders across Q1-Q2 of Y3, with a dedicated government-community forum held in facilitated by project team to support information sharing.

4.3 Harvesting of ready stock, processing and selling

- Regular harvest program implemented to account for variable growth rates, with data as follows:

4.5 Bi-weekly monitoring and reporting

- Field officers conducting monitoring program, with additional correspondences via WhatsApp, fed back to project management on a bi-weekly basis.

Output 5: Sea cucumber aquaculture business transferred to local women's ownership

5.1 Monthly monitoring, feedback

The feedback regarding business prospects ongoing with cooperative leadership and other participants in a monthly basis. Training for post-handover business operation delivered, and ongoing support program from state agencies in development.

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.

Restocking Program (natural and hatchery sourced)

- First phase stocking of sero-integrated pens was conducted, however initial survival rates were quite low due to strong low tide currents through an eroded sand channel following construction. Current mapping and flow monitoring is being conducted as a supplement to growth and survival rate monitoring to establish improved SOP for further stocking sites.
- Hatchery stock continues to be raised in near-shore ponds to ensure safety during the juvenile stage and improved survival rate when released into grow-out ranching pens in coming months.
- Restocking program for Lowa and Kahu Kahu village has been hampered by unstable weather, with restocking postponed until the East monsoon to ensure improved survival rate for first batch of post-funding stock. CSERM will work with each village to support successful restocking in the post-project period.
- Kahu Kahu sea cucumber growth rate and survival has been hampered by the convergence of the East monsoon periods.
- Bontoborusu survival rates have been adversely affected by a proliferation of blue swimming crabs in that location, and a supplementary predator monitoring program has been implemented. Additional rearing stage in near-shore ponds (Bontobangun) has been initiated to prepare stock for pen release at a larger size, thereby less prone to predation.

Production Group Dynamics

- Several participants have elected to discontinue participation in the project due to personal reasons (10) and health concerns (2). Consultation and liaisons with each group have been conducted to establish any additional concerns participants have.
- Economic planning and business development programs have been implemented to strengthen participant commitment in the post-project period.

Security

- Three security officers have been replaced due to external commitments and scheduling conflicts with the cashew nut harvesting season. The new staff are being trained to maintain and repair grow-out pens where necessary.

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:	

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)

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 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?

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

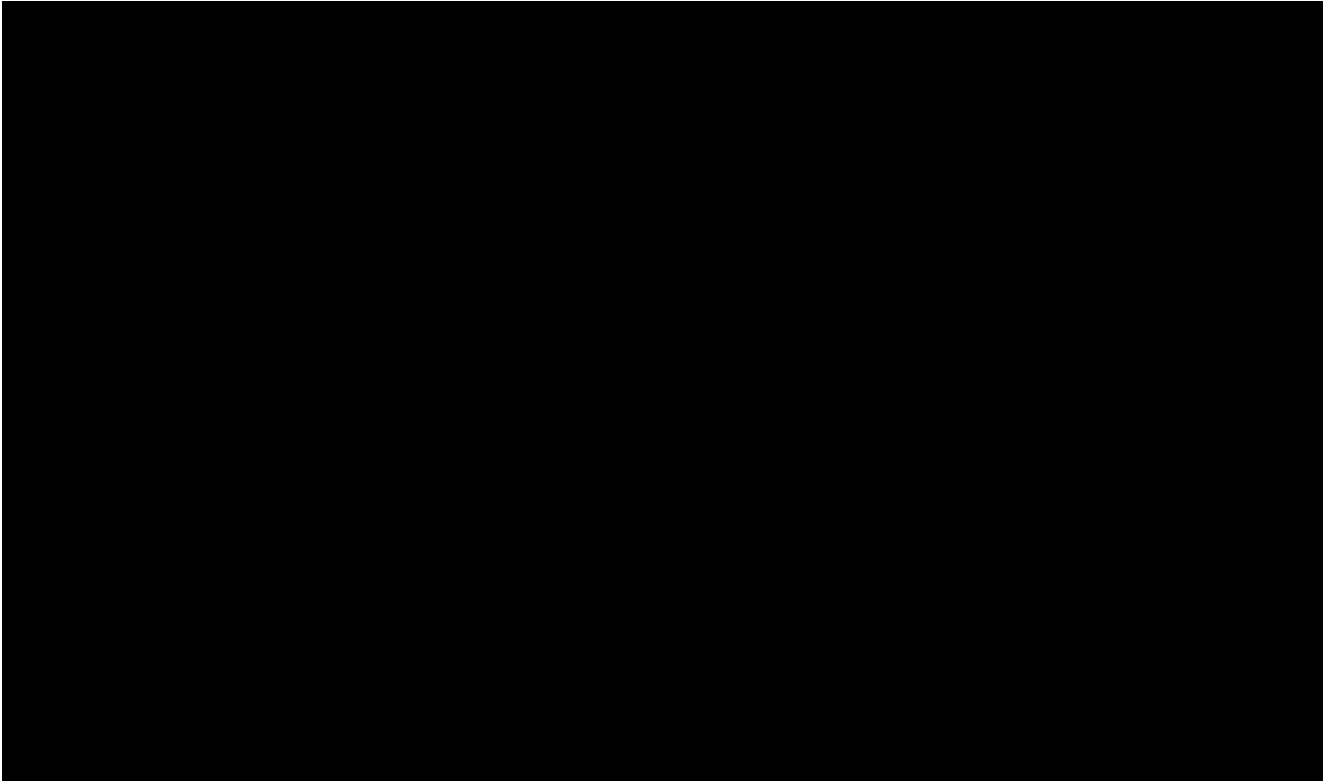
6. Project risk management

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.

This project has no overseas security and justice assessment.

Our project has updated its risk register to account for CSERM's updated GESI-SEAH policy, in response to comments by reviewers and the regular policy review schedule.

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.



Checklist for submission

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