



**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: 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	DI-31-007
Project title	Human-wildlife coexistence toolkit for biodiversity conservation and sustainability of rural communities
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Namibia
Lead Organisation	Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF)
Partner(s)	Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Tourism (MEFT) Elephant-Human Relations Aid (EHRA) Namibia Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO) Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) University of Namibia (UNAM) Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)
Project Leader	Dr. Laurie Marker, Founder and Executive Director, CCF
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	April 2025-Sept 2025 Half Yearly Report Year 2
Project website/blog/social media	www.cheetah.org

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.

Output 1: Perceived and real livestock losses to carnivores and elephants quantified.

Activity 1.1-1.9

Our team (CCF community officer and PhD student) have completed the planned 200 semi-structured questionnaire surveys and 16 focus group discussions across the eight communal conservancies included in the project by Y2-Q2. The Conservancy Management Committees (CMCs) provided written consent to the project team and the community members willingly participated in the discussions and interviews. The PhD student is currently compiling the datasets to estimate the losses to carnivores and elephants perceived by the communities. This is expected to be completed by Y2-Q3.

The MSc students provided training to the eight women community members and 20 game guards regarding collection of scat and bite mark samples by Y2-Q2. Our scat detection team collected over 200 carnivore scats. The community members have collected more than 30 bitemark samples. The students carried out an initial validation of the scat sample assignment to carnivore species and are quantifying real livestock losses to carnivores. The laboratory work flow to identify carnivore species from bitemarks was optimized and species of the predator responsible for the bitewound are being determined. Genetic analyses are expected to be completed by Y2-Q4.

Output 2: Spatially-explicit knowledge on carnivore and elephant occurrence and status, as well as mammalian biodiversity developed.

Activity 2.1-2.4

Our team members (CCF Community officer, PhD student, Ecology technicians) provided training to 20 game guards from the eight conservancies regarding deployment of camera traps. Our team deployed 100 camera traps and finished the entire camera trapping by Y1-Q4. We collected >2 million photos through the camera trap effort to date. The photos have been uploaded on the digital platform TrapTagger. The PhD student and Ecology technician are currently analyzing the camera trap data and updating the database. The spatially explicit models for carnivore and elephant distribution and occupancy will be completed by Y2-Q3. The CMCs nominated a list of game guards from the conservancies included in the project. MEFT, CCF and local partners are finalizing logistics regarding providing the SMART training to these 20 game guards and finalising the work contracts. The game guards will be employed from Y2-Q3.

Output 3: Spatially-explicit model of human-wildlife interactions generated, HWC hotspots mapped, and framework of practical conservation actions for human-wildlife coexistence formulated.

Activity 3.1-3.4

The PhD and MSc students are analyzing the perceived and real HWC datasets collected in Y2. Once the analyses are completed, they will be combined to model HWC and generate hotspots across the eight conservancies. The HWC hotspots will be matched with the carnivore and elephant occupancy maps (camera trap data) to identify ecological traps. To this end, the students will be using statistical and GIS based modelling techniques with predictive abilities and will complete this work by Y2-Q3. The baseline data from the questionnaire and focus group discussion will be used to understand the trends and patterns of HWC for the project sites. Information from the scats, bite mark samples (genetics), camera trap (ecology) and questionnaire surveys (social) datasets will be combined to design a toolkit which will be effective in reducing negative impacts of HWC. The toolkit will be discussed with partners in Y2-Q4.

Output 4: HWC mitigation toolkit implemented in select conflict hotspots identified in the project; damage from and towards wildlife minimised, poverty reduced and human well-being improved.

Activity 4.1-4.6

Once the hotspot mapping is completed (Output 3), specific areas will be identified as control and experiment for the traceable implementation of the HWC toolkit. These areas will be finalized by Y2-Q4 based on clear and transparent selection criteria and consultation with partners and local community representatives.

Output 5: Dissemination of HWC toolkit to broader communal areas communities, and of project findings to the national and international conservation community through a comprehensive outreach plan; Upscaling strategies deliberated.

The activities related to the HWC toolkit and publications are planned in Y3 and Y4. The CCF team has prepared one half-yearly report and one Annual report for 2024-2025. We are currently submitting the half-yearly report for Y2. CCF team have written online blogs and social media posts in Y2 (Q1-Q2).

*All timelines are based on the revised log frame which was submitted to DEFRA in Sept 2025



Figure: A. Camera trap deployment to sample carnivore distribution in one of the western conservancies. B. Damage to water storage infrastructure caused by desert elephants. C. Questionnaire survey on human-wildlife interactions with one of the communities in the project area.

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.

The Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) was unable to initiate several critical community based aspects of the project in Y1-Q4, which included employment of the game guards and women community members, as well as associated SMART training. CCF submitted a combined (financial and technical) change request in April 2025 explaining the necessity to shift the budget from Y1 to Y2 and the timelines of specific activities related to NNF. This change request was declined by DEFRA (18th June 2025). CCF submitted an appeal in writing to reconsider this decision, following a zoom call with the BCF team on 17th July 2025. Meanwhile CCF also reached out to MEFT who agreed to take on the responsibilities assigned to NNF. DEFRA approved the appeal letter (technical and financial changes) on 23rd July 2025. As NNF was unable to meet its project commitments, this impacted employment duration and training scheduling for the local communities. CCF has been able to revise the timelines based on these developments and has submitted a technical change request to DEFRA (with revised logframe) in Y2-Q2, which was approved on the 21st October 2025. As part of that change request, the log frame and risk register were updated. The revised log frame includes the changes in timetable of project activities. These changes will affect the budget and this will be submitted as a financial change request in Y2-Q3.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?	
Discussed with NIRAS:	Yes/ No
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes/ No
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes/ No
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> (DI-31-007 Appeal for Change Request Reconsideration 23rd July 2025, received from BCF Finance)	

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>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)</p> <p>Actual spend: £ </p>
<p>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)?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £ </p>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We will submit a Financial Change Request including a re-budget Change Request before 31st December 2025.</p> <p>NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.</p>
<p>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</p> <p>Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk</p>

No, we have no other issues to raise related to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures.

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.

The project does not have any Overseas Security and Justice assessment.

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.

We are providing details regarding the feedback received for our Annual Report 2025.

2. Comments and queries for Project Leader

Comment 1. The change request was approved by DEFRA in July 2025 after an appeal was made earlier in the same month. As per the change request, there was a change in partner from the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) regarding the engagement of community game guards and SMART training. NNF remain part of the project but with a substantially decreased role, and are being informed regarding major activities that they do not have the capacity to implement.

Comment 2. The project activities are being monitored carefully to avoid further delays, and subsequent changes in the log frame have been made regarding these.

Comment 3. The planned predictive models and maps (3.1+3.2) will be ready by Y2-Q3. Majority of the timelines for the project activities have been revised and an updated log frame was submitted to DEFRA in Sept 2025. Approval was received in Oct 2025.

Comment 4. The Outcome indicators for reduction of carnivore and elephant conflict will be measured using a case-control design. A total of 50 control households will be selected in addition to the 50 households where the HWC toolkit will be implemented. Camera traps, carnivore scat and bite marks, carnivore and elephant presence and the number of HWC incidents will be recorded monthly for a period of 12 months for both control and experimental households by CCF team and community rangers. Reduced livestock, crop and infrastructure losses to wildlife in experiment vs. control households would indicate efficient use of the HWC toolkit, resulting in reduced threat to livelihoods. A total of 50 households (across eight conservancies) receiving the toolkit will report (50%) less livestock depredation incidents, (50%) less damage to water infrastructure by elephants, reduced levels of retaliatory killing of carnivores (30%) and improved tolerance (positive perception 30%) towards key carnivore species and elephants, when compared to the 50 households and respondents not receiving the toolkit (control).

Comment 5. Namibia has been downgraded from an Upper Middle Income to a Lower Middle Income country by the World Bank in July 2025. The communities living within the selected project sites are some of the poorest economic groups in Namibia and they are already challenged by arid environmental conditions, lack of water, transportation and HWC. The project aims to improve our understanding of human-wildlife interactions and to develop a model for coexistence which could be applied to other lower income countries in Africa and Asia. The project enhances the concept of community based natural resource management which could be replicated in other Sub-Saharan African landscapes and also transferable with some adjustment to South Asian countries where communities share space with wildlife.

Comment 6. Livestock depredation, retaliatory killing of carnivores and damage to water infrastructure by elephants will be recorded for both the control and experimental households. They will be compared in a case-control design between control and implementation households to assess effectiveness of the toolkit for enabling coexistence with wildlife. Social effectiveness of the toolkit will be measured by comparing perception and tolerance between control and experimental households.

Comment 7. The community officer was not hired as planned due to capacity problems with the partner organization Namibia Nature Foundation. Budget issues were addressed through a financial change request and appeal made between April-July 2025. The changes were approved by DEFRA in July 2025.

Comment 8. Due Diligence and SEAH. Our major partners MEFT and EHRA have existing safeguarding policies and procedures in place. We will be discussing the Diligence and SEAH guidelines with the community members and partners during the SMART training scheduled in Y2-Q3. Further details will be provided in Annual Report 2 in April 2026.

4.3 Progress Towards Outcome

Outcome Indicators 0.1-0.3 will be delivered between Y2-Q2 to Y2-Q4. Outcome Indicator 0.6 regarding the reduction of HWC damage will be measured using a case-control design for 100 households (50 households as control and 50 as implementation/experiment). A toolkit will be implemented within experiment households depending on the characteristics and nature of HWC (based on the baseline surveys) conducted as planned in Y1&Y2. The damage due to carnivores and elephants and impact on livelihoods will be compared between control and experiment households and will be monitored using social surveys, community ranger patrols, camera traps and use of genetic based methods.

4.4 Progress towards impact

Biodiversity conservation will be achieved through poverty alleviation by reducing negative impacts of HWC, improving tolerance and providing economic benefits to local communities through employment.

6. Project Support to multidimensional poverty reduction

Namibia has been downgraded from an Upper Middle Income to a Lower Middle Income country by the World Bank in July 2025. The communities living within the selected project sites are some of the poorest economic groups in Namibia and they are already challenged by arid environmental conditions, lack of water, transportation and HWC. This project aims to improve our understanding of human-wildlife interactions within shared landscapes and aims to develop a model for coexistence which could be applied to other lower income countries in Africa and Asia. The project enhances the concept of community based natural resource management which could be replicated in other Sub-Saharan African landscapes and in some South Asian countries where communities share space with wildlife especially large mammals.

8. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons learnt

The Outcome Indicators for the reduction of carnivore and elephant conflict and improved livelihoods will be revised and the log frame will be submitted to DEFRA during the next Annual Report due in April 2026.

10. Risk Management

The risk register has been updated and all issues have been mentioned for this reporting period.

11. Scalability and Durability

The impact of the project activities is being monitored and discussed with partners including MEFT, EHRA, NACSO, NNF and conservancy leadership to fully leverage the potential for scalability and durability. Certain aspects of the project such as continued employment for the community members, capacity building for monitoring biodiversity and HWC reporting, mitigation and collaboration with partner organizations beyond the project's timeframe will be explored further during the timeline of the project.

16. General assessment

The Outcome indicators for reduction of carnivore and elephant conflict will be measured using a case-control design. A total of 50 Control households will be selected in addition to the 50 households where the HWC toolkit will be implemented. The indicators will be changed and the log frame will be revised and submitted during the next Annual Report in April 2026.

*We were not scored as 'Not Yet Sensitive' in the GESI assessment for the latest Annual Report

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?	NA
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