



**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: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024**

**Please note all projects that were active before 1 October 2024 are required to complete a Half Year Report.**

**Submit to: [BCF-Reports@niras.com](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com) including your project ref in the subject line.**

<b>Project reference</b>	DAR31009
<b>Project title</b>	<b>Fostering human-wildlife coexistence in a biodiversity hotspot in southern Guinea-Bissau</b>
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Guinea-Bissau
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	University of Exeter (UK)
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (IBAP, Guinea-Bissau) ONG Palmeirinha (Guinea-Bissau) Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal) Centre for Research in Anthropology (CRIA, Portugal)
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Dr Kimberley J. Hockings</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	27/10/2024, HYR1
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<i><a href="http://www.cantanhezchimpanzeeproject.com">www.cantanhezchimpanzeeproject.com</a> (live by end of 2024)</i>

**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 M&E 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.

Our project started on the 1st of July 2024 and this report covers 3 months until the 30th September 2024.

Two IBAP (one woman, one man) and two Palmeirinha DPOs (one woman, one man) were selected via open job calls (total 29 Bissau-Guinean applicants) and shortlisted interviews (total nine).

During the first three months of the project, progress was made to develop the social sciences data collection strategy for two project outputs: **(Output 1) Enhanced understanding of the drivers of human-wildlife coexistence, including conflict levels** and **(Output 3) Co-developed and community-led sustainable livelihood initiatives**. Specifically, Dr Ana Nuno (NOVA) with the support of the PI and DRF and project partners (IBAP, Palmeirinha) developed and finalised semi-structured interviews and focus groups to determine drivers and levels of conflicts over wildlife and conservation (**Activity 1.1**) and to identify locally relevant wellbeing indicators (**Activity 3.1**). These interviews and focus groups will be used to evaluate our project impact (**Indicators 0.3, 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 3.3**). All research has had full ethical clearance from the University of Exeter (application IDs: human dimension 6935873; wildlife dimension 6935919).

Progress was made towards **(Output 4) Building national expertise and promoting collaborative processes in conservation decision-making**. The four Bissau-Guinean DPOs were trained in human dimension of conflicts including conservation conflicts and wildlife behaviour, as well as social sciences approaches, including methods and tools that will be used in the project (**Activity 4.1**). DPOs were also trained in data entry, data management and report writing.

Progress was also made towards **(Output 2) Strengthened biodiversity conservation capacity through improved multi-stakeholder understanding of laws and regulations and the establishment of a systematic conservation surveillance system**. On July 17th we held a workshop with project partner IBAP to develop the conservation surveillance strategy and communication chain (**Activity 2.2**). During the workshop, we discussed how to integrate parts of the surveillance systems into existing and planned IBAP strategies. These parts included the use of KoboToolBox to collect and manage patrol data, and complementing remote sensing tools occasionally used by IBAP (incl. monitoring forest loss with Global Forest Watch) with additional tools (e.g., qualitative review of True Color Sentinel 2 data over core zones, CTrees Land Use Change Alerts). The surveillance system protocol is currently being written up by DRF. In addition to data supporting Output 1 and 3, semi-structured interviews include a section to evaluate Output 2's outreach communication activities (pre-intervention household interviews to measure understanding and access to rules and regulations, **Activity 2.10**).

The **Cantanhez park management plan** is currently under revision by independent consultants employed by IBAP. The management plan will integrate actions and strategies detailed in the **Cantanhez mammal action plan** (Bersacola and Hockings 2023), which was developed with data from our previous Darwin Initiative project (**DAR26018**). Analysis of forest loss is ongoing by UoE (**Activity 2.1**) and these data will support the development of the revised management plan. New conservation zones and regulation recommendations are expected to be finalised by the end of March 2025, which will coincide with the finalisation of our project's conservation surveillance protocol (**Activity 2.3**).

**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.**

No important unexpected developments/lesson learnt have arisen during the first three months of the project.

The road conditions particularly north of the park have deteriorated significantly during this year's rainy season, which will end in November. These deteriorations include the total collapse of a small bridge inside the park in September, which cut the whole of Cantanhez and Cacine peninsulas off from road vehicle access for several weeks before an alternative road passage was built next to the collapsed bridge in October. This event delayed the start of data collection by about 10 days, though will not affect budget or timetable of project activities.

**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 **NA**

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 2024 – 30 September 2024)**

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 2025)?**

Yes ☐ No ☒ Estimated underspend: £0

**4c. If you expect and 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. 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 BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

No

**6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report.** If your project was subject to an Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment please use this space to comment on any changes to international human rights risks, and to address any additional mitigations outlined in your offer letters. Please provide the comment and then your response. If you have already provided a response, please confirm when.

We have responded to reviewers comments in a letter following acceptance of the grant. Please see below the response to project confirmation feedback:

- *Will the camera traps and other equipment the in-country team are being trained in remain with them at project end?*

Yes, the camera traps and other project equipment will remain with project partner IBAP and the Cantanhez NP headquarters at the project end.

- *while the project presents an impressive team (helped by some descriptions of the team in the narrative), it was not possible to ascertain the expertise of all team members as some CVs were not translated into English;*

We apologise for not translating some CVs into English. This is duly noted for future applications.

- *there does not appear to be a clearly defined plan for sustainability of livelihoods initiatives beyond the life of the project;*

The initiatives will be co-developed with local communities in Y1. We will include this plan in the strategy documents, and in the final report detailing the initiative strategies and recommendations for scaling up.

- *does the ambitious inclusion of women (80%) in livelihoods interventions present a potential risk in terms of social disruption and gender relations among beneficiary communities? How will this be mitigated?*

As we are implementing this livelihood plan through the local women's group then we do not see this as an issue. There is a history in Guinea-Bissau of women's livelihood interventions, and it is culturally acceptable within the communities and viewed as essential to sustainable development.

- *please clarify whether the wording in Question Q21 should be 'potential prosecution', rather than 'potential persecution'?*

Indeed, the reviewers are correct. This sentence should read: "Potential prosecution for illegal activities due to new project surveillance system".

- *please clarify that specific location data, especially for heavily trafficked and rare species such as the pangolin, will not be published;*

That is correct. The specific location data for heavily trafficked and/or rare species will not be published.

- *a significant amount of budget is for one UK-based hire, and a large amount of the total award will go to a UK-based institution, while several in-country staff are offered as matched funding: this runs contrary to our focus on direct support to local organisations;*

We understand, and fully agree with, Darwin's focus on providing direct support to local organisations. A large amount of the award will go through the University of Exeter to minimise risks of mismanagement and time loss due to heavy bureaucratic processes in Guinea-Bissau; based on 15 years working in close collaboration with local institutions in the country, we believe this is an effective approach and the partners felt this was appropriate. However, most

research money will be spent in Guinea-Bissau to implement project activities and for capacity and capability training, and all Bissau-Guinean DPO salaries go through the Guinea-Bissau partners, IBAP and Palmeirinha.

We discussed the budget with our Bissau-Guinean partners and agreed on this funding structure to facilitate the execution of the project due to capacity and personnel constraints. The DRF Bersacola, has a unique set of research and applied conservation skills, including long-term work in Cantanhez NP, an excellent relationship with local communities, and extensive experience in capabilities training of Bissau-Guinean. The DRF will be paid through the University of Exeter to ensure pay that is commensurate with their experience and to ensure the retention of expert conservation science and practise skills. As detailed in our application, Guinea-Bissau does not have comparable conservation capacity to many other African nations (e.g. very recent undergraduate Environmental Science degree program). A critical step to achieving this is through capability and capacity training by conservation experts as provided by the DRF and PI. Our ultimate 10-year goal is that all conservation activities in Cantanhez NP will be coordinated and implemented by Bissau-Guinean conservation scientists and practitioners. IBAP is a Government organisation, and does not require salaries to be matched, and it is easier for them if logistical expenses are paid by Exeter when required. Palmeirinha agreed to follow the same protocol. University of Exeter overheads are offered as matched.

- *the logframe could be strengthened:*

Thank you for this feedback we have incorporated changes (as outlined below) to the revised logframe.

*o some Output Indicators appear overly complex;*

Without more detailed feedback it is unclear how to simplify them without losing clarity.

*o Output 4 doesn't seem linked to the rest of the project;*

This Output broadly relates to building capability and capacity for conservation science and practise in Guinea-Bissau. Across Guinea-Bissau most wildlife live alongside local human communities hence these activities will work orientated towards promoting human-wildlife coexistence and conflict mitigation.

*o access to information does not mean compliance e.g. Output Indicator 2.4;*

Yes we agree, here we refer to access to information

*o for indicator 1.3, the meaning of 'baseline 10%' is unclear;*

The reviewers are right, we have reevaluated the indicator and changed to baseline zero.

*o the indicators could more directly capture livelihood benefits and improved habitat and species conservation;*

Without more detailed feedback it is unclear how to adapt the indicators at this stage considering what we know is realistic in the three year period.

- *the workplan includes Activities 2.11 (on the ground patrols) and 2.12 (satellite surveillance of habitat) across 27 months which could be used in some form to measure species, HWC and habitat. Activity 1.3 (camera trap monitoring) covers only 15 months mid-project. Extending this to incorporate early and late project camera trapping would help indicate stability or changes in species numbers and distribution.*

Thank you for providing this opportunity to clarify. Activity 1.3. involves intensively monitoring five chimpanzee communities to understand fine-scale movement over one full annual cycle. The use of camera traps to monitor wildlife distribution and abundance across Cantanhez NP more broadly will be part of Activity 2.11 (see Figure 2a in the main application) and the surveillance system will also include systematic reports of conflict (e.g. attacks, crop foraging, animal corpses etc) with all guards fully trained in how to record details. These methods have been developed to ensure they are realistic considering the huge data collection effort required.

## Checklist for submission

<b>For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024)</b>	
Have you <b>responded to any additional feedback</b> (other than caveats) received in the letter you received to say your application was successful which requested response at HYR (including safeguarding points)? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	YES
If not already submitted, have you attached your <b>risk register</b> ?	
<b>For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024)</b>	
Have you responded to <b>feedback from your latest Annual Report Review</b> ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	
<b>For All Projects</b>	
Include your <b>project reference</b> in the subject line of submission email.	Done
Submit to <a href="mailto:BCFs-Report@niras.com">BCFs-Report@niras.com</a> .	OK
Have you <b>clearly highlighted any confidential information</b> within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	NA
Have you reported against the most <b>up to date information for your project</b> ?	YES
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	OK