



**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 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 including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	31-012
Project title	Afroalpine conservation through sustainable livelihoods and institutions inspired by tradition
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Ethiopia
Lead Organisation	University of Oxford
Partner(s)	Dinkenesh Ethiopia
Project leader	<i>Jorgelina Marino</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>Half Year Report 1 – October 2024</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>ethiopianwolf.org</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.

In-country Social Scientist with ample relevant professional background was recruited and successfully inducted into the team. official appointment as Research Associate at Addis Ababa University.

Initial meeting of Project Team in full in Addis Ababa was carried out to develop detailed work plans, livelihood scenario questionnaires, socio-economic baseline surveys, and multidimensional poverty index, assisted by Senior Social Scientist from Oxford University.

Official project launch was celebrated in Addis Ababa with representatives of all main collaborators and with assistance of Project Team in full. All top-level stakeholders are engaged and very positive about the project.

Livelihood scenarios questionnaires were conducted in one project site (Lasta *Woreda* in North Wollo) with the objective of assessing interests and preferences of local communities on the “Guassa Takala” (grass plantation) project. A first local meeting was conducted with representatives from these communities and local government; results of scenario analyses were discussed and implementation of Guassa Takala scheme agreed.

Subsequently, guassa committees were convened, project beneficiaries selected, and land for plantation identified and measured. In total, 82 households received training and planted guassa, organized in three groups of “*budins*” (6 in Wedebeye *Kebele* and 2 in H/petros *Kebele*); conservation agreements were signed. Socio-economic baseline interviews were conducted.

The Community Conservation Leader investigated and assessed current Community Conservation Area governance structure, including councils, bylaws and community management agreements. The Senior Social Scientist trained the team on aspects of community-led monitoring. General plans were developed and in the process of consultation with local actors.

In country Project Coordinator developed content and targets for various training components and developed training impact assessments approaches. A collaboration with the Honey Museum was established; and customised training content for the training of trainers for the Highland Honey initiative was developed.

Standard indicators and assumptions remain relevant.

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.

We have achieved reasonable and realistic progress against initial targets, considering the current political unrest and security concerns in Ethiopia, which at times precluded access to project sites. While some activities were delayed, the team’s 6-month appraisal, conducted in person with Dinkenesh and Oxford project members in November, concluded that it was safe and feasible to go ahead with the project, with no current need for substantial changes at the moment.

Activities will remain focused in and around the Abuna Yosef Community Conservation Area in North Wollo, where travelling, meetings and communications are currently possible. The project team has established good relationships with the “Community Representatives” that virtually operate as an alternative government in the project site (as it is the case in other highland communities), while also maintaining healthy relationships with the regional and woreda government and the Community Conservation Area. The strength of our project is the grass-root support for the work of the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme and the genuine interest of the communities to engage in sustainable livelihoods.

Project staff rely on their local networks to assess the security situation in real time. They access reliable information on safety status along roads and in the highlands, and make informed decisions regarding safe access the project sites. We follow closely our risk register, and update it regularly. We remain confident with the suitability of our risk management plans.

,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:	NA
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>	

<p>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)</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 2025)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend:</p>
<p>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.</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. 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>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 BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</p>

<p>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.</p>
<p>We responded to the feedback provided when the project was confirmed.</p>

Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1st April 2024)

Have you responded to any additional feedback (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 risk register ?	Already submitted
For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	
Submit to BCF-Reports@niras.com .	
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	