



**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 2025**

Please note all projects that were active before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 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>	<b>31-018</b>
<b>Project title</b>	Strengthening policy, capacity, climate resiliency to conserve Mutitu and Mumoni
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Kenya
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Nature Kenya
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Mutitu Hill Site Support Group (SSG), Mumoni Hill Site Support Group, Mutitu Hill Community Forest Association (CFA), Mumoni Hill Community Forest Association, County Government of Kitui, Kenya Forest Service
<b>Project Leader</b>	Paul Matiku
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2025; HYR2
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR31018">https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR31018</a>

#### **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).**

During the last six months (April 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup> 2025, Nature Kenya implemented actions for project targets guided by the approved log frame and workplan.

Actions contributing to **Output 1** were undertaken. **Indicator 1.1**; experts from Kenyatta University produced Final Draft of Mutitu and Mumoni Ecosystem Services Assessment Report (see Annex 1), and results applied informing Kitui County forestry policy processes. Supported by consultant experts from Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), County Government of Kitui technical committee conducted consultative meetings (see Annex 2) forming a Roadmap (see Annex 3) for development of the policy and law. Draft forestry policy (see Annex 4) and Bill\_2025 (see Annex 5) were produced. **Indicator 1.2**; KEFRI finalized social-ecological (see Annexes 6 and 7), and ecological (see Annexes 8 and 9) reports for Mutitu and Mumoni results informing participatory forest management plans (PFMPs) for both sites. With support from KEFRI, Kenya Forest Service (KFS) led Drafting of Mutitu PFMP (see Annex 10). Necessary stakeholder consultative meeting and field visits (see Annex 11) were conducted progressing Mumoni Hill Forest PFMP. **Indicator 1.3**; to enhance capacity for forest protection by Mutitu

and Mumoni CFAs and SSGs, KFS was supported developing training materials (see Annex 12), training 33(23M, 10F) community scouts (see Annex 13) drawing an action plan (see Annex 14) for joint post training implementation.

Targets for **Output 2** were progressed. **Indicator 2.1**; six (6) Kitui County Government officials (2M, 4F) were trained (see participant lists Annex 2) supporting development of Forestry Policy and Law enhancing potential for adoption and implementation. **Indicator 2.3**. Trained Mutitu and Mumoni CFAs maintained a tree nursery each stocked with estimated 150,000 seedlings (see Annex 15) to supply planting target 70,000 seedlings October – December 2025 rains informed by assessment showing 60% (see Annex 16) survival rate previously planted areas. **Indicator 2.7**; capacity of 19 (10M, 9F) SSG members was strengthened through hands-on training (see Annex 17) on birds monitoring equipment and techniques during common birds monitoring July 2025 (see Annex 18).

Targets for achieving **Output 3** were progressed. **Indicator 3.1**; to contribute to local communities' climate resilience through climate smart agriculture, 300 people (92M, 208F) representing 300 households (c.1500 people: 31%M, 69%F) received 600Kgs certified seeds (see Annex 19) for planting during the October – December 2025 rains. Support implemented recommendations from a household survey (see Annex 20) assessing the March – May 2025 rains beneficiaries results showing average household harvest of 36kgs for 160 farmers who planted mean sales of 25kgs overall earning them income of Ksh324,000. **Indicator 3.2**; to promote adoption of energy-saving cook stoves in Mutitu, 836 people (589F, 247M) representing 836 households (c.4180 people) each collected a jiko (cookstove) liner (see Annex 21) aimed at reducing firewood consumption by 30% end of project. Household survey in Mumoni (see Annex 22) showed 82% of 1000 beneficiaries frequently used the stoves citing reduced firewood consumption, shorter cooking times, and improved indoor air quality. **Indicator 3.4**; a guideline for bee hives beneficiary identification in Mumoni was developed (see Annex 23) applied allocating 72 (28M, 44F) people 100 Langstroth hives (see Annex 24). Overall, 142 (c.852 people: 31%M, 69%F) of targeted 200 households (c.1200 people, 50%M, 50%F) have adopted modern bee keeping assessment (see Appendix 25) showing 25% colonization during the prevailing dry season conditions.

Targets for **Output 4** were achieved through documentation of actions and publicity through multimedia. **Indicator 4.1**; Nature Net articles on climate resilience actions (see Annex 26), feature energy-saving stove in Mumoni (see Annex 27), and hand-on training community bird monitors (see Annex 28) were published communicated to more than 1000 member Nature Kenya readership. The project restoration action featured in Kenya Birding magazine (see Annex 29) distributed widely Nationally and globally. Mutitu and Mumoni SSGs participated in an Annual National SSG workshop sharing 27 other groups from across Kenya key lessons and experiences about the project (see Annex 30). **Indicator 4.3**; Published articles were uploaded onto Nature Kenya Website openly accessible to global audience.

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**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 not encountered any serious problem impactful on project delivery. We continue monitoring closely for any challenges mitigating ensuring success in delivery. Insufficient erratic rainfall affects rain-fed agricultural productivity and nature-based ventures (honey production and tree nurseries) posing threat to climate resilience building.

Lessons. 1. Catalysed through active engagement, education and awareness with supportive investments, local communities are real champions of change protecting, restoring maintaining biodiversity adopting sustainable living building resilience against climate impacts; this is the cornerstone of achieving target project impacts. 2. Implementing in partnership and with

experts is key for delivery of project activities cost effectively and in set time. Partnership with County Government of Kitui, Kenya Forest Service, and community groups (CFAs and SSGs), and experts from KEFRI and Kenyatta University enabled rollout of activities seamlessly supporting progress towards project outcome. We will document key lessons from all activities applying to strengthen implementation.	
<b>3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</b>	
Discussed with NIRAS:	<b>No</b>
Formal Change Request submitted:	<b>No</b>
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	<b>No</b>
Change Request reference if known: <b>None</b>	

<p><b>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)</b></p> <p>Actual spend: <span style="background-color: black; color: black;">██████████</span></p>
<p><b>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)?</b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £</p>
<p><b>4c. If you expect an underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully.</b> Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.</p> <p><b>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 31<sup>st</sup> 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. <b>Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.</b></b></p> <p><b>NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.</b></p>
<p><b>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</b></p> <p>Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to <a href="mailto:fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk">fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>None</b></p>
<p><b>6. Project risk management</b></p> <p><b>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.</b></p>

None

**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.**

No feedback received.

## Checklist for submission

Have you responded to <b>feedback from your latest Annual Report Review</b> ? You should respond in section 6, and annexe other requested materials as appropriate.	<b>No feedback received.</b>
Have you reported against the most <b>up to date information for your project</b> ?	<b>Yes</b>
Have you <b>clearly highlighted any confidential information</b> within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	<b>None</b>
Include your <b>project reference</b> in the subject line of submission email.	<b>Yes</b>
Submit to <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a>	<b>Yes</b>
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	<b>Yes</b>