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	31-020
Project title	Sustainable management of palm swamp peatlands by local communities
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Peru
Lead Organisation	CIFOR
Partner(s)	Instituto del Bien Común (IBC)
	Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonía Peruana (IIAP)
	Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA)
Project Leader	Kristell Hergoualc'h
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2 *(April – September 2025)*
Project website/blog/social media	*https://www.cifor-icraf.org/project/ed9eac3ef68d4d036c5d08dcb0737e28/*

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.

This report aligns with the logical framework indicators and targets, showing measurable progress toward expected results. The underlying assumptions remain relevant.

Since March 2025, **CIFOR** has coordinated project implementation and facilitated collaboration among partners (**IBC**, **IIAP**, **SPDA**). Five coordination meetings were held for Activity 2.6 (Design and run 1-day workshops) between April and May, along with two Project Management Team (PMT) meetings in July and October. These ensured effective communication, planning, and alignment of activities.

Field Workshops and Stakeholder Engagement (Activity 2.6)
In June 2025, CIFOR and partners conducted a series of stakeholder meetings and community workshops in Loreto and Ucayali. Activities included:
• Meetings with national, regional, and project stakeholders in Lima, Iquitos, and Pucallpa.
• Field security training in Iquitos.
• Half-day community workshops in San Francisco, Chanchamayo (Loreto), Panaillo, and Ricardo Palma (Ucayali) (Indicator 2.6, 4 workshops, 88 people).

CIFOR also coordinated the production of a multimedia package (photo album, blogs, and social media content) documenting the activities, with complementary co-funding.

Output 1 (IBC – Activities 1.1 & 1.2)
IBC, in collaboration with CIFOR, designed and implemented a **socioeconomic survey** in the four target communities, focusing on household livelihoods, *Mauritia flexuosa palm* harvesting practices, perceptions of sustainability, and social capital. A total of **87 household surveys** were completed, forming the basis for ongoing data analysis and reporting (Indicator 1.2).

IBC also led **three training workshops** on sustainable palm management and harvesting techniques, engaging all four communities. Participation included 23 people in San Francisco (35% women), 22 in Chanchamayo (32%), and 30 in Panaillo–Ricardo Palma (20%), supported by the use of climbing equipment to promote sustainable fruit collection (Indicator 1.1, 75 people, 27% of women).

Output 2 (IIAP – Activities 2.1–2.4)
IIAP secured community consent and established **four permanent monitoring plots** in each of the communities: San Francisco and Chanchamayo (Loreto) and Ricardo Palma and Panaillo (Ucayali). Field measurements included data collection on **tree species**, **carbon stocks** and assessments of **forest degradation**. Drone-based surveys were also conducted to map the **density of *M. flexuosa* palms**, forming a baseline for monitoring harvesting impacts (Indicators 2.1-2.4, 4 inventories).

Output 4 (SPDA – Activities 4.1–4.3)
SPDA advanced the legal and governance components, focusing on **land tenure** and **regulatory challenges** for sustainable peatland use (Indicators 4.1 & 4.6). In Ucayali, coordination with the Regional Government yielded updated data on tenure, customary rights, and forest zoning, leading to a map illustrating forest access modalities and formalization options for Panaillo and Ricardo Palma. In Loreto, SPDA organized a **legal workshop** using a case-based approach to identify and address two legal barriers to palm fruit harvesting: (i) the mandatory prior opinion from SERNANP, and (ii) administrative burdens for communities harvesting within and outside protected areas. The session resulted in the agreement to establish a **legal working group** led by the Regional Government and SPDA's commitment to promote a **formal consultation to be sent by the Regional Government to SERFOR** to clarify institutional responsibilities.

Output 3 & 4 – Inter-Institutional Collaboration
An inter-institutional meeting in Iquitos gathered CIFOR, IBC, IIAP, and SPDA to discuss the ***M. flexuosa fruit* value chain** (Indicator 3.1) and regulatory gaps in Loreto. Participants proposed solutions with local authorities and stakeholders, laying the groundwork for a joint **working group** to **improve forestry regulations** for non-timber forest resources.

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 project experienced several operational and contextual challenges that provided valuable learning opportunities across partners.

Community engagement and site selection:
The initially selected community of Veracruz was replaced by Chanchamayo due to its limited use of palm swamp peatlands. While this late inclusion required additional effort to introduce and explain the project, subsequent meetings and workshops led to strong local support and formal consent to participate. Field interactions confirmed that community engagement must be gradual and based on trust-building and clear communication of benefits and responsibilities.

Socioeconomic differences and participation levels:
The socioeconomic assessment revealed marked variation in communities' dependence on palm swamps and *M. flexuosa* use. In Chanchamayo, livelihoods are more agriculture-based, leading to lower initial engagement in palm management. The team adapted by focusing on community members most interested in *M. flexuosa* management to foster ownership and potential replication within the community.

Implementation and staffing challenges:
CIFOR & IIAP faced staff turnover when the coordinator of Activities 2.2 and 2.4 resigned in July. Recruitment for a replacement was completed by August, with the new staff member joining in November to ensure continuity of technical and coordination tasks.

Legal and institutional complexities:
In Ucayali, it was clarified that Panaillo and Ricardo Palma are not titled native communities, but populated centers linked to other local communities, while San Francisco and Chanchamayo are titled native communities located in a protected areas. These distinctions have significant legal implications, particularly regarding the allocation of forest use rights, which can only be granted to individuals or formally recognized associations. SPDA and partners are addressing these challenges by developing differentiated legal analyses, supporting regional governments to explore viable formalization options, and ensuring transparent communication with communities to manage expectations and strengthen participation.

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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: *If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome*

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.

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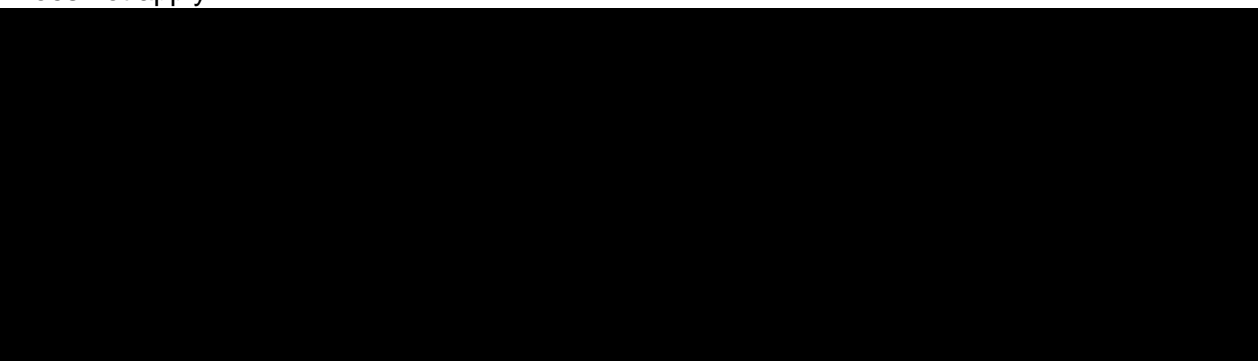
Suspicions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk

Not to date.

**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.

Does not apply.

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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.

The project ensures respectful and safe engagement with local communities by working through their established spaces for dialogue—such as assemblies and meetings with local authorities—where objectives, activities, and behavioral expectations are clearly explained. Staff emphasize respect for community norms, time, and spaces during all interactions.

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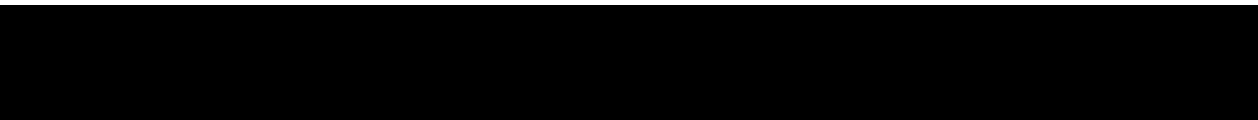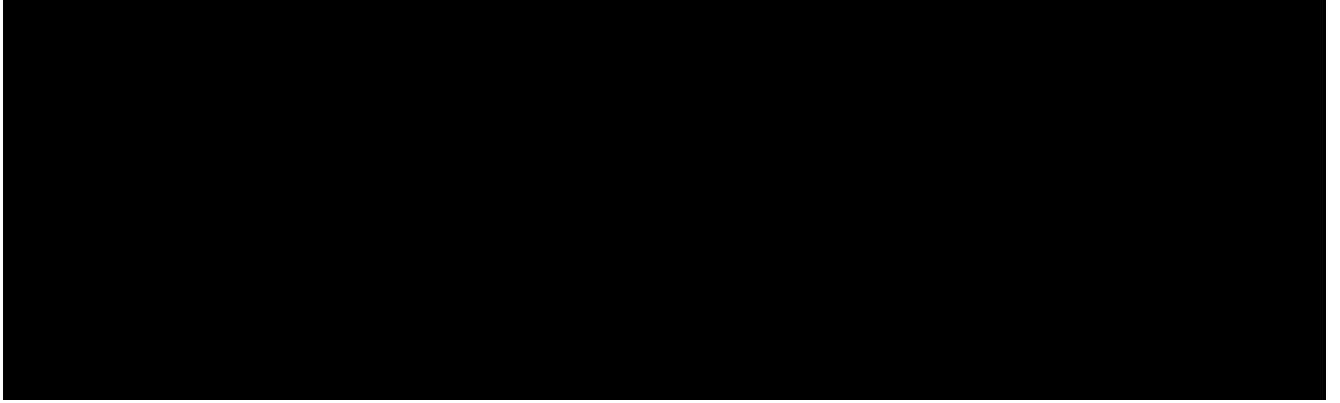
Checklist for submission

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?	N.A.
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.	