

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: 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 2023

Project reference	DARCC004
Project title	Upskilling Uganda Wildlife Authority staff to tackle human wildlife conflict
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Uganda
Lead partner	Space for Giants
Partner(s)	Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) & Uganda Wildlife Research and Training Institute (UWRTI)
Project leader	Maurice Schutgens
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	N/A

Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Output 1: Improved technical capacity of UWA staff to address HWC (through training and mentorship)

Activity 1.1: Develop short courses for electric fence construction, GIS training and SMART Training

- Earthranger Course Outlines for courses 1 & 2 were successfully delivered - these courses were designed in consultation with UWA management, after the distribution of smart phones to all conservation areas (CA). The course content was responsive to the practical needs of field data collection and administration of Earthranger both at headquarter and CA levels.
- The Geographical Information System (GIS) courses, for the 3rd and 4th training sessions, were also developed in collaboration with ESRI. The course content was designed to achieve in-depth understanding of content covered in training sessions 1 & 2. Additional new content was included to widen the scope of knowledge, skills and application of ArcGIS.

Activity 1.2: Construct electric fence demos at Uganda Wildlife Training Institute (UWRTI).

- Element complete - SFG has introduced a logbook to note all visitors to the fence both local and international to learn from this best practice demonstration site. QECA management has assigned staff for its permanent maintenance.

Activity 1.3: Identify and select target individuals from all of UWA's 7 CAs

- 14 UWA staff trained in Earthranger were selected by UWA management through guidance of SFG on the category of staff needed. All the UWA staff who were trained in

ArcGIS were selected to be trained in Earthranger, except 2 staff from UWA headquarters and Bwindi Impenetrable Conservation Areas who were replaced due to being busy with other assignments and not able to attend.

Activity 1.4: Develop a training plan to deliver all training within the project period without interfering with core CA activity

- A comprehensive training schedule was developed at the start of the project but this has been periodically updated due to delays or competing requirements. Training sessions have been scheduled as per the availability of the Uganda Wildlife Training Institute (UWRTI) facilities.

Activity 1.5: Delivery of training courses

- Electric Fence Training - all completed in the previous period.
- Earthranger Training (initially it was proposed that all 4 courses would have been completed by the end of May 2023) - due to delays explained in AR1 this was not possible. However SFG was able to deliver all the courses during this period: - Course 1 & 2: April 17 - 2 May, 2023 and Course 3 & 4: 19 - 30 September, 2023.
- GIS Training Courses: (initially intended to have been completed by July 2023 but due to scheduling conflicts this was moved to October 2023)
- Community Scout Training: (initially proposed for the second course to take place in September 2023) was moved to October 2023 to allow for facility availability at the UWRTI.

Activity 1.6: Delivery of mentorship to all project participants

- Monthly Mentorship sessions were conducted for Fence construction, ArcGis and Earthranger. These were conducted through scheduled online sessions. For Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth conservation areas, physical mentoring sessions for fence construction and maintenance were conducted.

Output 2.0: Improved HWC data collection and reporting around CAs (through the provision of equipment, standardised data collection and templates)

Activity 2.2: Equip all CAs with necessary tools & software

- All equipment was procured and handed over in YR1.
- EarthRanger standardised data collection tool and HWC reporting templates were developed. These were given to the 7 CAs through the UWA headquarters.

Output 3: Better informed HWC responses by UWA and community engagement (through improved data availability, trend mapping, training by CWS etc.)

Activity 3.1: Monitoring of activities conducted by UWA (including quality control of HWC databases etc.)

- Templates for reporting national and CA HWC monthly cases were developed and shared with UWA and all the conservation areas for adoption.

Administrative & Communication Activities

- The project implementation executive committee comprising officials from UWA, SFG and UWRTI continued to guide the implementation of the project through quarterly review meetings. The committee met twice to discuss and sign off implementation of project activities.
- Monthly and quarterly reports were compiled and shared among stakeholders.

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.

Output 1: Improved technical capacity of UWA staff to address HWC (through training and mentorship)

In the first training session of 14 UWA staff between (15th April - 2nd May, 2023), the aggregated improvement score was 60% in both knowledge and skills in using Earthranger for HWC management.

In the second Earthranger training session conducted between 19th - 30th September, 2023, the same group of 15 UWA staff achieved an aggregated improvement of 11.7almost 20% after the evaluations.

Output 2: Improved HWC data collection and reporting around CAs (through provision of equipment, standardised data collection and templates)

A standard template for capture of HWC data by all the Conservation areas was developed, discussed with UWA and adopted for implementation and distributed to CAs in July 2023 together with 168 smartphones. Data bundles were provided for HWC data uploading to CA and headquarter servers. In August and September 2023, 45% and 48% HWC cases were reported through Earthranger respectively compared to the same period in 2022.

Output 3: Increased involvement of communities in preventing HWC through the CWS

The UWA Community Wildlife Scout Trainers who received training as part of this grant have now gone on to train a total of 1,154 Community Wildlife Scouts out of which 14% were females. This is well above 300 CWS who were targeted to be trained during the implementation of the project.

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 poor internet connectivity together with limited staffing levels at CA level contributed to low participation of the trained staff in scheduled mentoring sessions. This impacted the levels of understanding of the topics discussed in mentoring sessions.
- The limited coverage of the smartphones issued to CAs. Most conservation areas expressed the need for more smartphones to cover all areas affected by HWC incidences. The adoption of paper based HWC templates was also slow and not easy to verify. This led some areas not receiving smartphones and therefore under reporting of HWC incidences through earthranger.
- Slow adoption of earthranger by some CA management staff due to limited orientation to the benefits of the software. This delayed the deployment of the smartphones in some conservation areas leading to low reporting of HWC incidences.
- None of these changes are going to impact either the budget or timetable of the activities with the majority of activities now completed however it will have an impact on the amount of data available by the end of the project to draw conclusions from and measure impact.

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- Yes
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes/No- No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes/No - No

Change request reference if known: - N/A

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

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 2024)?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £ 0

4c. If yes, then you need to 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 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.

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**