

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 2022

Project reference	DARCC013
Project title	Coordinated invasive plant management to protect Tanzanian biodiversity and livelihoods
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Tanzania
Lead partner	CABI
Partner(s)	TAFORI, TNRF, CORDS, TAWA, CDE
Project leader	<i>René Eschen and John Richard</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	www.woodyweeds.org ; @woodyweeds_org

1. 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).

The project's key achievement between July and the end of September 2022 was the successful organisation of two workshops for regional and local stakeholders, including a one-day field trip that exposed the stakeholders to the problems caused by *Prosopis juliflora* (prosopis) invasion and left them motivated to manage the species in the study region before it becomes impossible to deal with.

A one-day workshop of the "Regional Working Group" brought together about twenty actors and decision makers from the national, regional and the district level, who were informed about Tanzania's National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (NISSAP), how this Darwin-funded project will support the implementation of the NISSAP, about biological invasions and principles of their management, and experiences with joint land use planning in Tanzania. In the afternoon, participants worked in groups: the first group prioritised alien species and potential "conflict" areas inside and outside protected areas for management and the second group discussed how invasive species management should be coordinated across regions, ministries, projects and sectors/institutions with regions in Tanzania. A third group discussed how invasive species management can be coordinated across national borders in East Africa.

Stakeholders from regional to local level participated in a three-day workshop of the "Local Implementation Group" (LIG). During three days, the approximately twenty-five participants also learned about Tanzania's National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (NISSAP), how this Darwin-funded project will support the implementation of the NISSAP, biological invasions and principles of their management as well as potential management practices specific to spatially explicit management of prosopis. In groups, the participants complemented maps of the project regions based on their local knowledge and assigned prosopis management aims for the region: prevention to areas where the species does not occur, early detection and rapid response to areas where the species can still be removed, and control or asset protection in areas where the species is too abundant to be removed. Management aims were allocated to zones that covered the entire project region. For small sections of the project region the

participants then made detailed suggestions for management aims and practices to achieve those aims. Together with the project team the participants will take these detailed plans to their communities for validation prior to the next LIG workshop.

In between the workshops, all participants visited an area that is heavily affected by prosopis invasion and had an opportunity to hear from people living with the invasion about its impacts and methods to manage the species and mitigate impacts. The field visit left participants, in particular livestock keepers, very impressed and the experience motivated them to take swift action, which the project will facilitate in the coming months. During both workshops, information and extension materials developed and availed by the Woody Weeds project (www.woodyweeds.org) were used, to increase stakeholders' knowledge of invasive species management strategies and practices.

After the workshop, a WhatsApp group was formed that facilitates communication among the stakeholders who formed the LIG. The group has also provided an important platform for sharing information materials developed on prosopis identification and best practices for management. Members of the group can share images, videos and important information with one another as well as to others within their networks who may find value of the information specifically in the context of prosopis management.

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.

Although the MSc students have already been registered with the Nelson Mandela African Institute for Science and Technology, the start of their projects has been delayed due to negotiations with the university and the requirement to develop proposals before the work begin. The students have participated in the workshop and were in the field to learn about the issues and meet with stakeholders. We expect that the delayed start will have limited effects on the results, as it was important for the students to meet the stakeholders during the workshop – especially local knowledge about the occurrence of prosopis in the project region is key as it will be the baseline to assess some of the project's impact.

It is possible that the initial workshop, as well as coverage of the workshop and field visit on national television, has affected stakeholder perception of prosopis. However, we noticed that especially in the north, towards Kenya, stakeholders were already very aware of the negative effects prosopis may have and the experiences during the workshops may just have reinforced their perceptions. In the south of the project area stakeholders have a positive opinion about prosopis (we suspect it is a similar but different species that does not appear to be invasive in the area), largely because planting of the species has been promoted in the past by a project funded by the Darwin Initiative. The workshops were attended by a small representation of stakeholders, yet we aim to design especially the interview instrument for one of the two students in a way that may allow identifying the influence of the initial workshop and media attention on perceptions of many stakeholders from around the project area.

The delayed start of student work has no budget implications.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS-LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known: N/A. As indicated, the issue has no budget implications.

4a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

4b. 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.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), 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.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS-LTS International 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**