



**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 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](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com) including your project ref in the subject line.**

<b>Project reference</b>	DARCC025
<b>Project title</b>	Building Local Capacity to Protect National Marine Biodiversity
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Cabo Verde
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	University of Aveiro
<b>Partner(s)</b>	University of Plymouth, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Biosfera, UNICV - Universidade de Cabo Verde, UTA - Universidade Técnica do Atlântico, Biosfera
<b>Project leader</b>	Teresa Amaro
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	April-September 2024, HYR2
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://www.cesam-la.pt/teresaamaro/">https://www.cesam-la.pt/teresaamaro/</a> <a href="https://www.instagram/bait_cv">https://www.instagram/bait_cv</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).**

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.

## Summary

Over the past six months (April – September), the BAIT project has made significant strides in enhancing national capacity for deep-water marine biodiversity research, increasing community awareness of marine ecosystems, and establishing pathways for policy impact. Despite initial delays in the commencement phase, the project has successfully rescheduled fieldwork and engaged local stakeholders effectively.

### Progress (April – September)

The BAIT project experienced notable progress during this period, despite delays in starting fieldwork. The first fieldwork campaign has been rescheduled to July 2024 to ensure optimal sea conditions.

### Progress Against Implementation Timetable

#### 1. Preparation for Fieldwork:

- Preparations for expeditions have been meticulously arranged among all partners, including securing necessary equipment and defining exploration areas in Santo Antão. This groundwork was completed between April and June 2024 through a series of online meetings, ensuring that all logistics were ready for the rescheduled fieldwork campaign.

#### 2. Training and Engagement Activities:

- The University of Plymouth and the University of Aveiro focused on developing training materials in both English and Portuguese, coordinating with local partners (Biosfera, UTA, and UNICV) to meet research and capacity-building goals. Comprehensive training protocols were created to guide fieldwork, data analysis, and archiving processes.
- Two MSc scholarships were advertised, with recipients selected based on their potential contributions to marine biodiversity research. Candidates for knowledge transfer visits were also identified to facilitate skill exchange.

#### 3. Collaboration and Community Engagement:

- Collaboration efforts with local sociologists and community leaders began, focusing on defining roles in conservation discussions. Meetings between UA-Biosfera and key stakeholders in Santo Antão (including the fishing community, city hall mayors, and the Institute of the Sea) helped lay the foundation for integrating social aspects into biodiversity conservation efforts. A workshop was held in June 2024 in Porto Novo city hall.
- Imagery and video collected during fieldwork were shared as part of an initiative aimed at raising awareness of marine ecosystems.

### Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Systems

#### • Standard Indicators and Assumptions:

- The project continues to align well with its standard indicators related to capacity building (local scientists trained) and ecosystem monitoring. Staff from Biosfera, UTA, and UNICV were trained during the July campaign.
- The underlying assumptions—such as availability of local partners and access to required areas—remain valid as we approach our first campaign in July 2024.

### Lessons Learnt and Adjustments

- The necessity to reschedule initial fieldwork highlighted the importance of maintaining flexibility in project timelines. Contingency planning allowed for adjustments without significant disruption to overall goals.
- Early stakeholder engagement proved valuable; involvement from Biosfera/UA and local sociologists was crucial in maintaining community interest.

### Field Campaign and Training

The first field campaign scheduled for July 2024 covered the Tarrafal and Monte Trigo areas on Santo Antão Island. These areas were selected based on calm sea conditions.

- **Training Activities:**
  - During three weeks in July, training for local scientists were conducted aboard JAIRO (Biosfera's boat). This expedition included construction, maintenance, and safe deployment of cameras.
  - Follow-up sessions are planned for October and November 2024 to cover data analysis and integration into conservation management practices. Three sessions will be organised in both English and Portuguese to ensure full understanding among participants.
- **Data Collection:**
  - The BAIT team has completed groundwork for assessing 84 stations along a depth gradient in Tarrafal and Monte Trigo Bay. All images were saved on several hard drives.
  - Two students engaged in all activities during the fieldwork campaign incorporated data (locations, images, videos) acquired from these stations into their Master's Thesis programme commencing in early September 2024.
- **Camera System:**
  - The camera system developed by the University of Plymouth will remain in Cabo Verde as a permanent monitoring asset owned by Biosfera, allowing for ongoing data collection.

### Community Engagement

In addition to our field campaign, local sociologists from UNICV were engaged to discuss conservation practices with local communities. Dr Adilson Semedo led discussions with fishermen from Monte Trigo and Tarrafal, highlighting how biodiversity data could support conservation measures that may lead to improved fish stocks.

- Images and videos of local fauna were shown during these discussions to raise awareness of marine ecosystems.

### Conclusion

The BAIT project is progressing well toward its objectives despite initial delays. Continued monitoring and evaluation will ensure that outputs remain relevant while fostering collaboration among stakeholders for effective marine biodiversity conservation

**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.**

Over the past six months, the project has progressed smoothly without any notable problems or unexpected developments. The implementation of activities has adhered closely to the planned timetable, and all objectives set for this period have been successfully met.

**Key Highlights:**

- **Timely Preparations:** All preparations for fieldwork were meticulously arranged, ensuring that necessary equipment was secured and areas for exploration were clearly defined.
- **Effective Training:** Training sessions were conducted successfully, with participants expressing confidence in their abilities to maintain equipment and conduct research.
- **Strong Collaboration:** Collaboration with local sociologists and community leaders has strengthened, fostering community engagement and support for marine conservation efforts.

**Impact on Project:**

- **Positive Momentum:** The lack of significant issues has allowed the project team to maintain positive momentum, ensuring that all activities are progressing as planned.
- **Budget Stability:** Since there have been no unforeseen challenges during this period, the budget remains on track, with resources allocated effectively to meet project needs. The rescheduled field trip to July 2024 and subsequent follow-up activities in October/November 2024 are still within a manageable timeframe that should not compromise the overall objectives or concurrent activities.

**Conclusion:**

Overall, the successful execution of planned activities over the past six months has reinforced our confidence in achieving future milestones. We are optimistic that this positive trajectory will continue as we move forward with upcoming phases of the project.

**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: *CR24-026*

**4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)**

**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 2025)?**

Yes ☐ No ☒

**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.

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.**

**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

**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.

This Project was not subjected to any Overseas Security and Justice Assistance.

## Checklist for submission

<b>For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024)</b>	
Have you <b>responded to any additional feedback</b> (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.	
If not already submitted, have you attached your <b>risk register</b> ?	
<b>For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024)</b>	
Have you responded to <b>feedback from your latest Annual Report Review</b> ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	
<b>For All Projects</b>	
Include your <b>project reference</b> in the subject line of submission email.	
Submit to <a href="mailto:BCFs-Report@niras.com">BCFs-Report@niras.com</a> .	
Have you <b>clearly highlighted any confidential information</b> within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	

Have you reported against the most <b>up to date information for your project?</b>	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	