

## 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: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

<b>Project reference</b>	<i>This should be the project reference provided in your offer paperwork and not your application number</i>
<b>Project title</b>	Mentoring GEN Fellows to incubate Global South biodiversity-livelihoods initiatives
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Kenya, PNG, India, Brazil, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Tanzania, Samoa, Nigeria, Zambia, Bhutan, Nepal, Peru, Bolivia, Indonesia, Belize, Guatemala
<b>Lead partner</b>	Global Diversity Foundation
<b>Partner(s)</b>	The Human Edge (formerly Mowgli Mentoring), Common Purpose, WildTeam, University of Cambridge, University of Kent, University of Edinburgh
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Emily Caruso</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	<i>HYR1</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://global-diversity.org/conservation-and-communities-fellowship/">https://global-diversity.org/conservation-and-communities-fellowship/</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).**

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.

Since the launch of our project in April, we have enhanced our original plans for Outputs 1 and 2. Our original plan was to mentor and train a group of 15 GEN fellows, with the support of 5 GEN Advisors, with a focus on proposal writing and project management, in year 1 and another 15+5 in year 2, providing the year 1 fellows with mentoring training that they could use to support the year 2 cohort.

In dialogue with our partners ([The Human Edge](#) and [Common Purpose](#)) for delivery of this two-pronged approach, we made the bold and ambitious decision to launch one singular 10-month fellowship programme over the two years. We also decided that rather than offer this opportunity only to GEN members, we would open it up to the public for application. We opened the applications for the Fellowship on 1 August 2023, closing them on 17 September. In that time, we received **627** applications for the Fellowship and selected 32 finalists by end September.

The [Conservation and Communities Fellowship](#) includes mentoring and leadership training; skills-building workshops, technical assistance clinics and proposal-writing clinics; one-on-one mentoring for proposal writing and project management; and an in-person training event. The

Fellowship is being offered to [32 fellows](#) and will be launched on 1 November 2023. It is bolder and more ambitious than our original plan because we have woven the threads of mentoring, leadership, proposal-writing and skills-building into one coherent – and scalable – unit. The curriculum for the Fellowship consists of 52 online sessions, including the Kick off and Graduation sessions. The calendar of the fellowship is [available here](#), and below we provide a summary of the streams and number of sessions.

<b>Mentoring Stream</b>	<b>Leadership Stream</b>	<b>Capabilities &amp; Capacities Stream</b>
-Mentoring training: 6 sessions -Mentoring pairing: 1 session -Mentoring check-ins: 2 sessions	-Leading Beyond Authority: 5 sessions -Peer-coaching: 3 sessions	-Skills-building workshops: 7 sessions -Technical Assistance clinics: 14 sessions -Darwin Initiative proposal-writing clinic: 12 sessions

In May 2024, the Fellows will meet in the Moroccan High Atlas for a 3-day “Conservation and Communities: Global South Leaders Exchange”, immediately followed by participation at the International Society for Ethnobiology’s 18th Congress being held in Marrakech, 15-19 May 2024, where they will organise and facilitate a panel on Conserving Biodiversity and Sustaining Local Livelihoods: Voices from the Global South, as well as a panel on Decolonising Conservation Philanthropy.

We are on track to achieve – and even supersede – almost all of our project indicators for Outputs 1 and 2 (which we track together given how interwoven they are through the Fellowship). In the associated project change request, we are requesting a change to our indicators to shift the figures between the years: we do not expect to be able to have fellows submit Darwin Initiative proposals by end of year 1 because the Fellowship does not start until November 2023. We therefore have requested to shift all submissions of DI proposals to Year 2; this has an impact on indicator 0.1. In [this document](#) (our final logframe) we have made the proposed changes to indicators in pink, and are submitting this to BCF for review at the same time as we submit this report. The other changes we are requesting for indicators related to Outputs 1 and 2 relate to numbers of fellows (more than what we had anticipated) and nomenclature of the fellows – these changes do not have an impact on the content of the output.

With regards to Output 3, we have begun developing partnerships with UK Universities for both the MSc Internships (Indicator 3.3) and for providing training, in the form of a workshop series, in decolonizing conservation practice, research and funding (Indicator 3.1). We have already completed one MSc internship between Mr Sam Rees, a MSc Ethnobotany student from the University of Kent and ABOYERD, a grassroots organization in Cameroon working with communities around the Campo Ma’an National Park. Dr Valery Binda, the Executive Director of ABOYERD, mentored Sam Rees; Valery is also one of our CCF fellows. We expect fellows’ organisations to be selected to welcome MSc students and are establishing a procedure to present organizational projects to conservation/biodiversity MSc students from Universities of Kent, Cambridge and Edinburgh. Our partnership with Oxford University is slower to take off.

With regards to the training under Indicator 3.1, which connects to Outcome Indicator 0.3, we have some tardiness with the development of the Project In/Visibility which has led us to request a language change in the logframe through the project change request. Whilst the Project In/Visibility platform is slower to develop because of health issues of the leader on this initiative, we are still planning to invite submissions of conservation narratives from our fellows as key learning tools for training in decolonial conservation practice, research and funding within UK universities. This process will be launched in the second week of November 2023, through a dedicated engagement with CCF fellows to work with them on their stories for the training and/or P In/Visibility platform.

The toolkit for Global South NGOs (indicator 1.4) is under development as a collective endeavour between GDF, an external consultant and the CCF Fellows. We plan to develop it using GDF's and our consultants' experience, but also based on the direct experiences and the articulated needs and challenges of the Fellows. This will lead to a toolkit that speaks from and for grassroots NGOs, and is written in a language and structure that truly is useful for – and used by –grassroots NGOs. Our toolkit on Decolonising Conservation Research, Practice and Funding (indicator 3.2) will be based on the conservation narratives we harvest, alongside the curriculum presented in the University trainings. It will also be gathered through dedicated sessions at the [ISE Congress](#) in May 2024 during which we are planning 2 sessions (one open, one closed) on decolonizing conservation philanthropy. We are currently planning the structure and content of this toolkit. Both podcasts (indicators 1.5 and 3.4) will be developed on the basis of the toolkits, and will interview key contributors.

Our partnerships continue to be valid. We are developing new partnerships with [WildTeam](#) for the delivery of the programme and University of Edinburgh's [MSc in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health](#) for the delivery of the MSc internships and higher education training programme.

**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 principle issue we have encountered is timing. In deciding to offer a more holistic and ambitious fellowship programme we needed more lead-up time to launch it. This was because we dedicated significant staff time to co-designing a holistic programme (May/June/July 2023) during which we developed content for 52 online sessions and a 6-day in person event. We ran a large-scale application and selection process (Aug/Sep 2023), meaning that the Fellowship could not start until 1 November (to provide the needed time to complete post-selection procedures). This has resulted in the shifting of the content of some indicators to completion by year 2 rather than year 1. We feel that our project has significantly benefited from this timing shift as we have been able to be much more creative about how to interweave all the project components to deliver a truly innovative set of outputs. Any resulting (intra-annual) budget changes have been included in the project change request document.

It is challenging to draw a lesson from these changes given that it was during the detailed design of the deliverables that we got creative about the potential and opportunities available to us through this 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: No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes, alongside this application

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

**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)?**

<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £</p>
<p><b>4c. If yes, then you need to 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. 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.</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 BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</b></p>
<p>N/A</p>

**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](mailto: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**