



**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: 31st 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 including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	DARCC036
Project title	Building Capacity for Reciprocal Watershed Agreements in the Tropical Andes
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Bolivia
Lead Organisation	Natura Bolivia Foundation
Partner(s)	Corporación Autonoma Valle de Cauca (CVC), Instituto del Bien Común (IBC), ETAPA ((Empresa de Telecomunicaciones, Agua Potable, Alcantarillado y Saneamiento de Cuenca)
Project leader	Maria Teresa Vargas
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2 October 31 st 2023
Project website/blog/social media	www.naturabolivia.org

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).

Four activities were planned for Q1-Q2 FY 2024-2025

2.4.3. Support network participants in their peer- learning process

3.1.1. Mentor the workshop participants ("Implementers") who will be setting up Reciprocal Watershed Agreements around their Key Biodiversity Areas.

3.1.2. Assist implementers in incorporating Conservation Agreements into annual operational planning

3.2.1. Support and mentor Implementers, virtually or with site visits, to overcome political and technical implementation challenges

2.4.3. Support network participants in their peer- learning process: As well as generally supporting our Bolivian trainees in the field, in October a team of 12 Bolivian trainees and staff from Natura visited Cali to meet with their Colombian counterparts and exchange lessons and experiences. They visited one of the first Colombian RWA, in the indigenous communities of Resguardo Indígena Betania and Triunfo Cristal Páez, which was particularly interesting for the indigenous Bolivians from San Ignacio and Charagua.

3.1.1. Mentor the workshop participants ("Implementers") who will be setting up Reciprocal Watershed Agreements around their Key Biodiversity Areas: In June we held a third training workshop, this time in Peru, in the municipality of Oxapampa, close to the Asháninka-Yánesha Biosphere Reserve KBA. This workshop, led by partner Instituto Bien Comun (IBC), focused on building the capacity of new "JASS" to enter the RWA program. JASS are rural water boards, in some cases very small, ranging from 50 to 200 families, they do not have water consumption meters, and are community-based organizations. Eight new JASS participated in the three-day workshop (we had invited 13 JASS), and in attendance were Municipal Technicians, the national water regulator (SUNASS), and a representative of the biosphere reserve for a total of 26 participants. Conclusions were that the JASS can legally include an additional contribution for conservation, and that they will start to promote the RWA mechanism to their water users, along with the Municipal Technicians. All eight of the participating JASS agreed to implement RWA, under a work plan that they will prepare with the technical support of IBC.

3.1.2. Assist implementers in incorporating Conservation Agreements into annual operational planning: After the school, we met with the mayors of Chontabamba and Oxapampa who asserted that both their municipalities will be able to co-finance the RWAs that are to be executed by IBC. Moreover, both municipalities have the facility to establish a municipal Water Fund, and the Management of the Biosphere Reserve also wishes be part of each Fund as an operating entity. Indeed, the deputy manager of the Biosphere Reserve, Julio César Castillo, noted that the coordination committee of the Reserve – more than 15 organizations – wants to act as the primary program operator and can actually help finance RWA implementation. Interestingly, just as in Bolivia, the Biosphere Reserve managers consider RWA as one of the main strategic lines for the conservation of the area. We also held meetings with the municipal technicians who monitor water quality and the operation of the systems, who will be part of the operations team. Meanwhile, the SUNASS representative Jesús Flores, committed to trying to access co-finance from the District of Oxapampa.

3.2.1. Support and mentor implementers, virtually or with site visits, to overcome political and technical implementation challenges: There literally thousands of RWA in Bolivia, across a variety of ecosystems, but all related to maintenance of water quality. The Colombian partner, the Corporación Autónoma Valle de Cauca (CVC) invited program partners to visit a brand-new type of RWA, in the mangroves to the south of Cali. Twelve Bolivian partners spent two days with CVC in the community of Punta Bonita, learning how the same RWA principles used in the dry Chaco forests are being applied by afro-Colombian women and children to protect mangroves and the piangua shellfish, vital for the local economy (see this link for a description of the visit <https://youtube.com/watch?v=eCT6k3JaToU&feature=shared>).

We will hold the final workshop of the project in Ecuador in Q4 and are meanwhile continuing with all capacity- and network- building activities. We consider that the project is advancing well, and that our indicators are still relevant, and our assumptions still hold true.

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.

There have been no notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt. We expect that the budget and timetable of project activities will continue as planned.

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:

No

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

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*

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 other issues

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.

No feedback was made in the last AR that required response in this HYR. We have, however, taken the reviewers comments into account as we have advanced with the project and will respond to them in the next AR.

Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to any additional feedback (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 risk register ?	
For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	n/a
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	Yes
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	Yes
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	Yes
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	Yes
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	Yes