



**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 2025**

**Please note that all projects that were active before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 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>	<i>DARCC047</i>
<b>Project title</b>	Improving habitat and livelihoods through equitable governance and effective management
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Tanzania
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Honeyguide
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Makao WMA
<b>Project Leader</b>	<i>Maximillian Msack</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	HR Y2 Apr 1st 2025 to September 30th 2025
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="#">Honeyguide Foundation</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 monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) 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.

Project status: Progressing well; no material challenges this period; all activities on track.

Outcome: Mid-2025 MAT shows 54% overall compliance with clear gains in governance, finance, and operations. AA/committees met regularly with signed minutes; monthly/quarterly financial reports issued. Patrols now cover all 50,900 ha; 179 patrols, 9,913 km, 1,109 hrs logged Apr–Jul (near-daily through Sep), keeping poaching very low (two incidents in six months). This indicates that capability is translating into full spatial coverage and deterrence,

strengthening community confidence and outcome delivery. Next (H2): finalize governance handbook/conflict guideline; complete year-end external audit.

Output 1 – Management tools and best practice.

Core tools endorsed: Financial Management Manual; annual work-plan and budgeting templates; Women’s Empowerment Policy; Environmental Management Guidelines; HR Manual. Governance handbook/conflict-management guideline in final draft for BoT approval. The standardized controls and procedures reduce execution risk and improve accountability. Next: adopt handbook, implement version control, and run quarterly compliance checks.

Output 2 – Stakeholder engagement and communication.

Quarterly governance meetings (April, August) with ~30–35 reps (meets/exceeds logframe), with higher women’s participation following the Women and Youth workshop. Comms strategy advanced: awareness film produced (screenings starting) plus village information materials. The clearer two-way communication improves legitimacy and rule compliance. Next: complete film roll-out and issue a short quarterly bulletin.

Output 3 – Governance capacity and conflict resolution.

A total of 56 leaders trained (target 50) on roles, financial oversight, conflict management, and NRM law; action plans in use. Conflict Management Guideline drafted for adoption and public use. So what: better-run meetings and clearer oversight lines are already visible. Next: formalize the mechanism (committee, case log, awareness) and review application at six months.

Output 4 – HWC mitigation and livelihoods (concise + context)

VCPTs active in all 7 villages; 114 members trained across ~35 sub-teams, equipped with roman candles, torches, chili, air horns. Zero crop-damage incidents in July; local data show a 53% reduction vs 2022. The first-response shows that capacity is limiting losses and strengthening coexistence. Next: expand VCPT coverage in a few underserved sub-villages, refresh kits, and scale food-storage education to prevent attractants.

**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 were no material challenges or changes during this period; however, key lessons learned emerged: first, continued vigilance and targeted patrols are essential after two isolated poaching incidents (including a July arrest) and recurring illegal grazing, which reinforce the value of consistent enforcement and community dialogue. Second, elephant habituation to some

deterrents means we should rotate tools, expand VCPT coverage in a few underserved sub-villages, and pair deterrents with better household crop-storage practices. Third, policy approvals and a planned awareness film took longer than expected, so we will front-load document reviews, fix approval timelines with AA/BoT, and lock production schedules to keep communications on track.	
<b>3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</b>	
Discussed with NIRAS:	Yes <b>No</b>
Formal Change Request submitted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• <b>No</b></li> </ul>
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes <b>No</b>
Change Request reference if known: <i>If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome</i>	

**Guidance for Section 4:** The information you provide in this section will be used by Defra to review the financial status of projects. This review will identify projects at random for spot checks on financial management and will include requests for evidence of the actual spend information provided below. Please ensure the figures you provide are as accurate as possible and that you have the evidence to support it. You do not need to provide it now.

<b>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)</b> Actual spend: £
<b>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 2026)?</b> Yes No Estimated underspend: £
<b>4c. If you expect an underspend, then you should 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. <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, and not later than 31<sup>st</sup> December. 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.</b> NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.
<b>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</b> Suspicions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to <a href="mailto:fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk">fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk</a>

We have no other issues to raise regarding project implementation or the management of Darwin/BCF funds.

## **6. Project risk management**

**6a. If your project has an Overseas Security and Justice assessment, please provide an update on any related risks, and any special conditions in your award paperwork if relevant for your project.**

No security/justice incidents; patrols ran smoothly under OSJA and national guidelines; risk level stable with existing mitigations.

**7. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent Annual Report. As a reminder, all projects that were scored as 'Not Yet Sensitive' in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment of their latest Annual Report should demonstrate how they are meeting the minimum GESI-Sensitive standard.**

We delivered a dedicated Women and Youth workshop; women now sit on the AA with equal voice and voting rights, and female rangers (VGS) are deployed on patrol teams. Women also participate in VCPTs and governance trainings. Next steps: formalize the Youth and Women's Empowerment Policy and track sex-disaggregated participation to sustain gains.

## Checklist for submission

Have you responded to <b>feedback from your latest Annual Report Review</b> ? You should respond in section 6, and annexe other requested materials as appropriate.	
Have you reported against the most <b>up to date information for your project</b> ?	
Have you <b>clearly highlighted any confidential information</b> within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	
Include your <b>project reference</b> in the subject line of submission email.	
Submit to <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a>	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	