



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



**UK International  
Development**

Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

## Darwin Initiative Capability & Capacity Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":

(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/information-notes/>).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes)

**Submission Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

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

### Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	DARCC059
Project title	Building capacity to tackle the illegal primate trade in DRC
Country/ies	Democratic Republic of Congo
Lead Partner	Pan African Sanctuary Alliance
Project partner(s)	Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable; Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre; JACK Sanctuary
Darwin Initiative grant value	191,481.00
Start/end dates of project	01/04/2024 - 31/03/2026
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2023 – Mar 2024) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025, Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Kizito Kakule Musubao
Project website/blog/social media	<a href="http://www.pasa.org">www.pasa.org</a>
Report author(s) and date	Kizito Kakule Musubao, Iris Ho 30/04/2025

### 1. Project summary

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to experience rapidly declining populations of chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and other protected species. Despite being fully protected by DRC and international law, systematic weak enforcement of biodiversity and conservation laws and corruption are pushing wild apes toward extinction across DRC. DRC has been identified as one of the top two source countries for great apes in the international IWT, with organized poaching of protected wildlife posing a huge threat to the survival of these apes. The removal of these umbrella species and "gardeners of the forest" can have serious implications for ecosystems and climate change while networks trafficking in apes are also involved in the trade of other endangered species, including birds and reptiles. Zoonotic disease transmission from the IWT is a serious risk to public health in vulnerable communities – an important dimension of poverty.

Several government agencies hold responsibility for conserving biodiversity, but these agencies are undertrained and under-resourced. Staff in many key areas have not received training in

CITES or DRC national wildlife laws and have a low capacity to recognize and confiscate protected species. Crucially, there is no coherent system for recording wildlife crimes – made more difficult by a lack of equipment, stable electricity and internet. After a redrawing of DRC's provinces in 2015, agencies in some new provinces (e.g. Bas-Uélé) lack the basic knowledge and skills to form a coherent force to protect DRC's biodiversity. Similarly, prosecutions for, and conviction of, wildlife crime remain extremely low due to the lack of awareness among judiciary stakeholders about the importance and seriousness of nature crime. The government has also gone through significant changes in recent years in the management of wildlife, removing the CITES authorities from ICCN to directly under the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development and reverting back. The new CITES team urgently needs to build capacity and capability to fulfil its international obligations and responsibly manage and conserve DRC's wildlife. Another barrier is the "silo" structure of the agencies involved – with little coordination with and understanding of other agencies roles in tackling the IWT, protocols surrounding confiscation, arrests and prosecutions can be unclear. For instance, the CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authority have either never met or do not meet regularly to discuss the implementation of CITES measures.

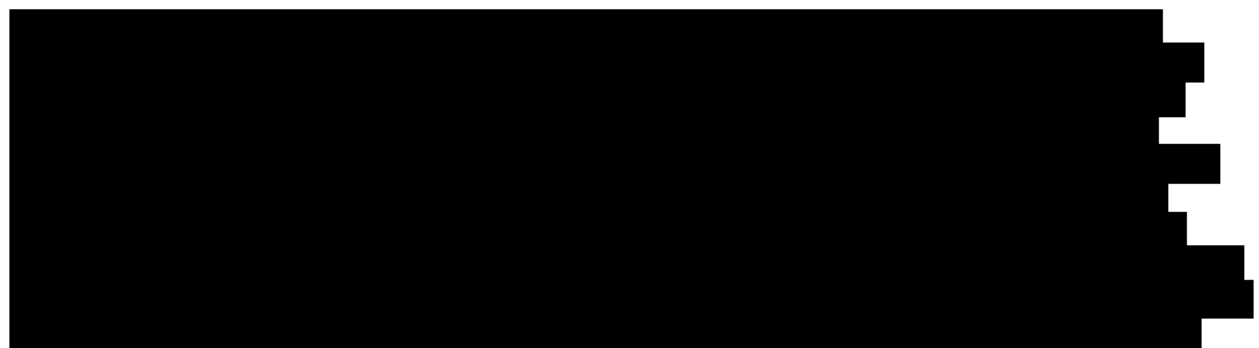
These problems have been brought to our attention by some in the DRC government themselves and PASA's member wildlife centres in DRC who are operating at the forefront of the illegal wildlife trade crisis. Two of these centres have partnered with PASA and the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MoE) on this project to increase the capacity and capability of the DRC to protect its biodiversity and to strengthen the capacity of government agencies, as well as in-country civil society organisations that collaborate with the government, to halt biodiversity loss.

The project partners will implement structured training to personnel in target areas and will work with agencies to develop simple, effective record keeping systems, will improve inter-agency collaboration, and will build networks and foster greater collaboration between government agencies and with civil society organisations.

## **2. Project stakeholders/ partners**

The wildlife centre partners and PASA have collaborated through the first year of the project. Monthly steering committee meetings have allowed partners to engage regularly, sharing progress, challenges, and ideas for building capacity in the fight against the IWT. The steering committee members also frequently share information and discuss strategies via an encrypted messaging group. In addition, PASA regularly seeks input from a local Congolese environmental justice partner (ACEDH) to ascertain gaps and needs on the ground and plan collaboration opportunities. Materials that are disseminated to increase capacity and capability were reviewed by the steering committee members.

In addition to civil society partner engagement, the project lead in DRC and other team members have been in regular contact with management of ICCN, national conservation authority of DRC, and the Ministry of Environment during the Y1 period. These engagement opportunities include in-person meetings in Kinshasa, regular phone calls and text messages, emails, and at CITES meetings. These government contacts are key to the implementation of the project because they are responsible for DRC's implementation of conservation measures including national and international regulations in DRC and thus are crucial to the implementation of this project.



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Finally, we are deeply saddened to report that the leader of a local wildlife crime investigative organization that we planned to cooperate with, APPACOL, to attend the workshop and offer specialized training tragically died while on-board a flight from Kenya to Kinshasa in late 2024. We are saddened to lose this well-known Congolese conservation leader and are looking for ways to continue working with his team after his tragic passing. As mentioned earlier, we continue to communicate with a Congolese organization battling environmental crime, ACEDH, who have been forced to relocate from Goma to Uganda. We remain in frequent contact with them and are working with them to include them as expert speakers at the upcoming workshops in Bas-Uélé and Haut-Uele provinces.

### **3. Project progress**

#### **3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities**

##### **1.1 With MoE, identify training needs and agencies and officials to participate in training.**

The sudden escalation of civil unrest in eastern DRC has had major consequences for our project implementation. While it was known that M23 was active in the areas for some time, the sudden escalation of the attack on Goma since mid-January this year and its consequences were unexpected and far reaching.

[REDACTED] Water and electricity were initially cut off, supplies chains disrupted and businesses and private residences looted, and many people injured. Access to power is still unreliable and civilian



air travels in and out of Goma has been banned by M23.

Because of the ongoing presence of M23 in eastern DRC, PASA has re-evaluated the locations for the training and must forgo the original planning locations of North Kivu and South Kivu provinces that are currently under M23's control. Our new proposed location to replace North and South Kivu provinces is Haut-Uele province while the planning for Bas-Uélé province remains. Bas-Uélé province is adjacent to Central African Republic and Haut-Uele province borders Central African Republic, South Sudan, and is near Uganda. These border provinces have been known as significant routes for wildlife trafficking. We are completing initial scoping and will soon initiate a Change Request with Darwin for permission to change training locations to Haut Uele.

Provincial officials and agencies with greatest relevance to fighting the IWT have been identified to participate in the training for the upcoming training in Bas-Uélé. Terms of Reference for the training in Buta, the capital of Bas-Uélé province has been drafted (see appendices) and is currently under review by the project team and government stakeholders. A list of invited attendees and their agencies is also attached in Appendix 4.

#### 1.2 Conduct specialised training for 50 personnel from government agencies from three provinces.

This activity was scheduled for Y1Q3 – Y2Q4 and target provinces included North and South Kivu, as well as Bas-Uélé. However, this has been severely disrupted due to the civil unrest in eastern DRC.

In March 2025, the Project Lead was able to travel to Buta via Beni and Kampala to continue organizing the training workshop in Bas-Uélé province. His detour to go from Goma via Beni and Kampala was due to the ever-changing M23 security situation in eastern DRC. The Project Lead has been in contact with the Bas-Uélé provincial environmental service about the planning of the workshop and is reaching out to experts, including environmental criminal lawyers from ACEDH and a female magistrate who fled Goma. He has been organizing their travels to Buta to be part of the training as expert speakers. The Project Lead has also been working on collecting baseline data with the project officer for our monitoring and evaluation. We expect to hold this training workshop in Bas-Uélé province in Q1Y2.

As a result of these unexpected and highly limiting circumstances, our delivery of this activity has been delayed. We are currently monitoring the security situation closely and in discussions with project partners about potential further modifications, if need be, to the project and will discuss any suggested modifications with Darwin. A further challenge is the lack of infrastructure in Bas-Uélé province that adds to the logistics preparation for the training which is compounded by the M23 situation which prevented the two experts and Project Lead to travel to these places directly from Goma in North Kivu province where they were based. Because Bas-Uélé is a new province, there is no ICCN and nascent conservation NGO presence. We will need to fly in speakers from another province and again, due to M23, the speakers and the Project will need to travel to Buta via Kisangani. There is only one flight per week from Kisangani to Buta. Therefore, for speakers and Project Lead and other team members to prepare for and give the training, the team will need to stay in Buta for a whole week, substantially increasing the expenses for the workshop.

Please see Appendix 4 for the draft Terms of Reference and invite to participants.

#### 1.3 Train 25 personnel in “train the trainer” method and provide monitoring to ensure at least one colleague is trained by each trainer.

For the same reasons as above, this activity has been delayed. However, given that the list of attendees for the training in 1.3 has been identified and Terms of References have been drafted, “trainers” will be identified and recruited when the training workshop approaches.

#### 1.4 Distribute 75 protected species and related law guides in French to attendees

While the distribution of these guides has been delayed due to the delayed training workshops, the guides have been printed, providing a comprehensive guide to commonly trafficked IWT species in DRC for law enforcement and other agencies related to the IWT will be able to use to identify cases of IWT trafficking. The guides will be distributed during the training workshops at Bas-Uélé and another agreed upon province.

The guide can be found in Appendix 4.

#### 1.5 Conduct training for CITES management authority in Kinshasa.

The training for CITES management authority has been delayed. As of December 2024, we had been regularly communicating with the CITES Management Authority about the training. We had gone through several iterations of the Terms of Reference and was planning to hold the training in March 2025.

When one of the project team members met with the CITES Management Authority in person on the margin of the 78<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee meeting of CITES in February 2025, they discussed the postponement of the training to either Q1 or Q2Y2. One challenge is finding speakers for the workshop. The original plan is to have our project team member who is a CITES expert to travel to Kinshasa to give the training. However, due to the security uncertainty in DRC, this team member will not be able to travel to DRC. It is challenging at this particular moment to find French-speaking CITES experts to travel to DRC at the moment. Draft Terms of Reference can be found in Appendix 4.

#### 2.1 Collect data with officials detailing barriers to record keeping of IWT issues at check points.

We have therefore been forced to divert this activity to another province and begin this research from the start. We will soon be initiating a Change Request with Darwin to divert this activity in Haut-Uele province instead. The Project Lead and M&E officer are currently in Buta in Bas-Uélé province, collecting baseline data as detailed in the logframe with the officials there to better understand the barriers to effective record keeping in this province.

#### 2.2 Trial record keeping system in one province and evaluate success.

This is planned for Y2Q2-Q4. We anticipate there may be some delays to this activity due to the aforementioned civil unrest, but this depends on the developments in eastern DRC where the Project Lead is based. We will keep Darwin notified as the situation evolves.

#### 2.3 Make necessary refinements and roll out record keeping system to checkpoints in three provinces.

This is planned for Y2Q2-Q4. We anticipate there may be some delays to this activity, but this depends on the developments in eastern DRC.

#### 3.1 In series of meetings with ICCN, MoE and other agencies to draft a confiscation protocol for the seizure of trafficked live apes and other animals

Project lead and project partners have been in regular contact with ICCN leadership about the current system – or lack thereof – regarding the confiscation of live primates.

In October 2024, ICCN headquarters called for an all-sanctuary meeting in Kinshasa and invited our Project Lead, project partners and other sanctuaries to attend. It was the first time that ICCN organized an all-sanctuary meeting to discuss the management of confiscated animals and



sanctuarie [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] During the meeting, it was agreed that there was a need to strengthen communication, collaboration and coordination on the confiscation process between the government agencies, including provincial environmental services, and the sanctuaries. It was also agreed that PASA was in the best position to take the lead in organizing periodic all-sanctuary meetings.

Since the all-sanctuary meeting, we have discussed internally with project partners on how to move forward, and the Project Lead continued to follow up with the ICCN management on a draft confiscation protocol. However, the security situation in the DRC has prevented the Project Lead from traveling to Kinshasa to have follow-up in-person meetings with ICCN management about developing the protocol [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

These challenges have therefore added an unforeseen level of complication to this activity. However, we are continuing to liaise with the MOE and ICCN as well as provincial environmental services in efforts to establish a draft protocol to make the confiscation process more transparent for all parties.

### **3.2 Develop communication system allowing quick communication between relevant agencies in event of trafficking incident, and trial in one province.**

This activity will begin following the training workshops in Bas-Uélé to ensure that all relevant agencies are aware of the project aims and goals and have had the initial training to improve response to the IWT via enhances inter-agency communications.

### **3.3 Make necessary refinements and roll out communication system to checkpoints in three provinces.**

This activity will follow activity 3.2

## **Progress towards project Outputs**

**Output 1** Government agencies responsible for wildlife crime and biodiversity conservation in three provinces are trained in CITES, national wildlife laws, and identifying protected species.

Given that unexpected circumstances have prevented us from conducting the trainings as planned, the indicators for this Output remain at baseline levels. We are currently unsure whether the original target of three provinces will be possible with the security situation in Eastern DRC. It is very likely that we will need to reduce the target of three provinces to two provinces. Our plan was to hold a joint training in Goma/Bukavu for officials from both North and South Kivu – however this is unlikely to be possible now.

We are now investigating the possibility of shifting the training in Goma/Bukavu to a different province – Haut-Uele province. The Haut-Uele province borders Central African Republic and South Sudan and is close to Uganda, thus a key province that is vulnerable to cross-border

wildlife trafficking. Haut-Uele province, like Bas-Uélé province, is a newly created province (in 2015) and thus there is no ICCN and very little conservation NGO presence. Holding a training workshop there will start building awareness about IWT and addressing a key gap in wildlife enforcement in DRC. We will soon submit a change request to Darwin to seek permission for this change.

For the training in Bas-Uélé province, we are currently organizing the training that will be held in the provincial capital, Buta, and plan to hold this early in Y2. We plan to evaluate the proceedings and outcomes of the training in Buta and apply any lessons learned, challenges, success towards the next training. The Project Lead and the team members have finalized the materials, including protected species and related law guides in French, for training attendees. The guides were printed and will be disseminated at the training and other relevant law enforcement officers.

[REDACTED] Pre and post training surveys will be distributed to evaluate and monitor the impact of the training. Trainers for Activity 1.3, "training the trainer" will be identified during the training to maximize the reach of the training.

**Output 2** A standardised system is in place to allow for accurate government records of wildlife crime in three provinces.

This output is delayed due to the M23 conflict in eastern DRC. We are currently collecting baseline information about the current record keeping systems in Bas-Uélé province. Due to the M23 situation, we had to abandon the plan for North and South Kivu provinces and move to a different province.

**Output 3** Inter-agency protocols are developed and a system for effective communication surrounding wildlife crime incidents is in place in three provinces.

The development of inter-agency confiscation protocols was discussed during the October 2024 meeting with ICCN. The Project Lead continues to communicate with ICCN management and is awaiting their terms of reference on a draft protocol.

[REDACTED] As soon we receive draft terms of reference from ICCN for the confiscation protocol, we will include it in our next report.

The effective communication mechanism will be developed after the in-person training in Bas-Uele province and other provinces because in-person contact will allow our Project Lead to more effectively ascertain the needs and feasibility, e.g. existing communication infrastructure on the ground, for a communication mechanism both practical and useful for frontline officers.

### 3.4 Progress towards the project Outcome

**Outcome:** *Government agencies in three provinces of DRC have an improved capability and capacity to reduce the illegal trafficking of protected species through increased knowledge, resources, and collaboration.*

0.1 By March 2026, the number of successful prosecutions for wildlife crimes increases in target provinces (baseline established at start of project).

Due to the conflict in two of the three selected provinces as described above, we are unable to continue with this indicator in North and South Kivu provinces. Baseline data is currently being collected in Bas-Uélé for this indicator and will be collected in an additional province if and when a change in location is agreed by Darwin. Due to the difficulties detailed above, it is now likely that this outcome will only be achieved in two provinces.

0.2 By March 2026, accurate records of wildlife crime are being kept at more checkpoints in three provinces (baseline established at start of project).

As above, the trainings have been delayed and as such have delayed progress towards this outcome. Due to the M23 situation in eastern DRC, we will likely need to change the work from three provinces (North and South Kivu provinces and Bas-Uélé province) to two provinces (Bas-Uélé and potentially Haut-Uele provinces).

0.3 DI-A03 Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of the project.

[REDACTED]

While the indicators are useful for measuring the outcome, we believe that qualitative measures will also be useful for tracking progress towards the outcome especially in countries like DRC where there are historical barriers to effectively tackle wildlife crime, such as corruption, systematic and ongoing lack of resources and political will and poor governance.

[REDACTED]

### 3.5 Monitoring of assumptions

**1. PASA and MoE can identify sufficient appropriate participants for the training.**

This has been complicated by the takeover of North and South Kivu regions by M23, meaning that many law enforcement and other government officials that we were previously in touch with are no longer be in place. When a new area for implementation has been confirmed, we believe this assumption will hold true and it is currently holding true for Bas-Uélé.

**2. Management of participating agencies are cooperative.**

[REDACTED]

The local agencies in Bae-Uele province are cooperative and appear eager to engage in this project.

**3. No political obstacles.**

[REDACTED]

**4. Suitable consultants can be found to conduct the training.**

The security situation in DRC has changed this assumption, as we are no longer able to bring in external experts for the training as originally intended. We are continuing to attempt to find alternative consultants who will be able to deliver the CITES training.

**5. A low-tech, effective record collection system can be developed to meet needs of agents.** We are currently assessing the existing infrastructure in Bas-Uélé in person on the ground so that the record collection system is feasible and user-friendly.



### **3.6 Achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty reduction**

By increasing the capacity of the DRC government to increase the cost and decrease the benefits of wildlife trafficking and by increasing the capability of civil society organizations to work alongside the government in this regard, we will lay the foundational steps toward a reduction in threats to biodiversity. The reduction of pressure on biodiversity, and reduced threats to public health, will take time to come to fruition, although the more effective functioning of the agencies will be seen in the short-term.

Short term change expected:

- From structured training and train-the-trainer, at least 75 officials will have a heightened capacity to fight the IWT, especially in provinces where there is no ICCN or conservation NGO presence, including being better versed in international conservation measures and DRC national wildlife laws, being better able to identify protected species, and being better able to arrest traffickers and build and execute successful prosecution cases.

While this is delayed due to the outlined circumstances, we expect this change during Y2 of the project as planning is well underway for the first cohort of trainees in a province where this capacity building is urgently needed. The list of attendees for the first workshop is available in the appendices, as is the booklet that will be disseminated that provide first-responders with appropriate guidance for recognizing and addressing wildlife crime in DRC.

- Government agencies responsible for tackling the IWT will have improved networks with other relevant agencies and increased collaboration and cooperation, resulting in a more effective response to wildlife crime. Our activities will address crucial gaps - in newly created provinces where there is a lack of coordination between provinces and national conservation authority and insufficient IWT and relevant knowledge. We will also create in-person connections with frontline officers so that they know that we are a reliable source of expertise that they can seek out when they encounter IWT in the future.

While this is also delayed due to the circumstances outlined, we expect this change during Y2 of the project given that we will be bringing multiple agencies together for the first of the training workshops.

- A record keeping tool is created that allows for accurate records of wildlife crime detected at check points and is implemented in at least three locations in coordination with the relevant agencies.

Data on the challenges inherent to accurate record keeping are currently being collected in Bas-Uélé province which will inform the development of this record keeping tool.

- Protocols are established to ensure that the relevant agencies are alerted in all cases of wildlife crime and that agencies work efficiently together in each case.

These protocols will be trialed and established following the first training workshop – the workshop will bring the agencies together to discuss the need for greater communication and potential protocols.

- It becomes more difficult for criminal networks to traffic protected primates and other species through check points in Bas-Uélé, North Kivu and South Kivu.

As discussed, this change will need to be revised given the ongoing security situation in North and South Kivu. We are confident that we can deliver the same change in another province equally in need of capacity building in this regard.

## **4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements**

This year, the project has helped to contribute to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The project team member met with the DRC management authority in person at the 77<sup>th</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Standing Committee to discuss various DRC compliance of the CITES measures and the training workshop in Kinshasa [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Project Lead and one project team

members also regularly exchange electronic communication via emails and encrypted text messaging with the DRC CITES Management Authority about CITES matters.

Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs): This project aims to support the following SDGs: 1 and 3 through reducing future threats to public health, 5 and 10 through reducing future unequal impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on women and girls, 12, 13 and 15 through reducing biodiversity loss by tackling the illegal, unsustainable wildlife trade, and 16 through building capacity for the DRC government to effectively enforce its national laws.

## 5. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board <sup>1</sup> .	60% of the Project Board are women
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women <sup>2</sup> .	50% of the project partners are led by women

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
<b>Not yet sensitive</b>	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
<b>Sensitive</b>	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	x
<b>Empowering</b>	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	
<b>Transformative</b>	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

We are keenly aware of the long-term existing societal structural and institutional challenges in the DRC in GESI and have designed the project to be mindful in its approach the planning of events with stakeholders to ensure that gender inequality is not increased. We are attempting to bring as many women participants as possible, including a female magistrate, to the training workshops within the existing limitations of staffing at the relevant government agencies to ensure that these capacity building efforts provide women within these agencies with training opportunities. Additionally, for the train the trainer roles, we are also attempting to recruit as many women participants as possible to ensure heightened capacity building opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

<sup>2</sup> Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

Our training will also address the different roles of women and the environment to advocate for law enforcement in this arena in a manner that doesn't unjustly affect women. In addition, one of the planned speakers for the upcoming Bas-Uélé workshop is a female magistrate. Having a female magistrate as an expert speaker will send a powerful message to the workshop participants and provincial government leadership that women in the DRC play an important leadership role to strengthen rule of law and biodiversity governance and help breakdown the historical gender inequality in the country .

The workshop is being designed such that participants have equal opportunities to participate, regardless of gender, age ability, race, religion or sexual orientation. While we are somewhat bound by existing staffing within the agencies, full expenses for the workshop are paid, including from rural areas to ensure that cost of participation is not a barrier.

While the project is delayed as discussed, we aim for our project to achieve greater equity for women by pursuing training opportunities for women participants within the government agencies and by providing training in non-biased application of wildlife laws.

## **6. Monitoring and evaluation**

PASA takes the lead in M&E for this project, with the Project Lead, M&E officer and project team members regularly meeting online and frequently sharing updates by encrypted communications to discuss project progress against milestones laid out in the timeline and activity plan. The Project Lead and M&E officer provide monthly reports detailing their activities and measure them against the work plan and each listed indicator. Information about progress is shared with partners during our monthly calls and via encrypted messaging on an ad hoc basis to ensure all partners are kept up to date and can contribute.

The Project Lead and M&E Officer are currently collecting baseline data as indicated in the project logframe, including historical prosecution data, for which they are consulting with provincial environmental agencies. These figures will be collected again following the project activities and will provide critical insight into the project's success at achieving our outcome. Surveys of participants both immediately and 6 months after the training will provide insight into the effectiveness of the training – though the training is currently delayed, we will gain baseline data via surveys at the outset of the training (see the survey in Appendix 4). Other indicators are similarly delayed, but the progress of the project team in Bas-Uélé gives confidence that these will be collected as described and used to judge project effectiveness at reaching our outcome.

## **7. Lessons learnt**

While Project Lead and M&E officer who are DRC nationals and our organization are well aware of the challenges in working in DRC, we still face numerous challenges. Planning takes longer than expected, such as coordination and liaising with relevant government stakeholders.

[REDACTED]

The M23 situation also caused extreme concerns and affected the ability of Project Lead and other local partner to organize some of the activities. The shift of the activity location have incurred significant additional expenses that we did not anticipate. The additional expenses are



due to the fact that Project Lead and local stakeholders can no longer travel directly from their homes, such as Goma in eastern DRC, to the location of the training. The travel detour and associated expenses and planning are something that we could not have foreseen.

We will take our lessons learned and build them into ongoing planning for Y2 activities and future project in the DRC. For instance, we will build in more time to implement each of the activity and set realistic indicators. We will also utilize localized knowledge – from Congolese colleagues such as Project Lead and M&E Officer and partners – to ensure that we address the changing needs and gaps on the ground. We will make sure that all our plans are grounded by local expertise and cultural sensitivity – led by Congolese nationals to drive changes for DRC biodiversity and the communities who will benefit from our work.

## **8. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)**

N/A

## **9. Risk Management**

As discussed, the sudden civil unrest escalation in DRC has greatly increased the threat from this risk, which was previously considered to be manageable. We are now in the process of deciding upon significant adaptations to the project design to address the serious risks introduced by the M23 seizing control across Eastern DRC, including a change of location for the second workshop, changes to the budget caused by elongated travel routes because of travel bans, and changes to delivery of training due to travel to the DRC by international experts no longer being safe.

## **10. Sustainability and legacy**

We have seen an increased interest of the Bas-Uélé provincial environmental service since beginning planning for the workshop. As an example, the service has kept the Project Lead informed when it learnt of IWT in great apes in the province and sought his advice. Our regular communications with the CITES management authority and ICCN and MoE management ensures that our project, and our work in general, on tackling IWT and CITES compliance remains constantly on their radar.

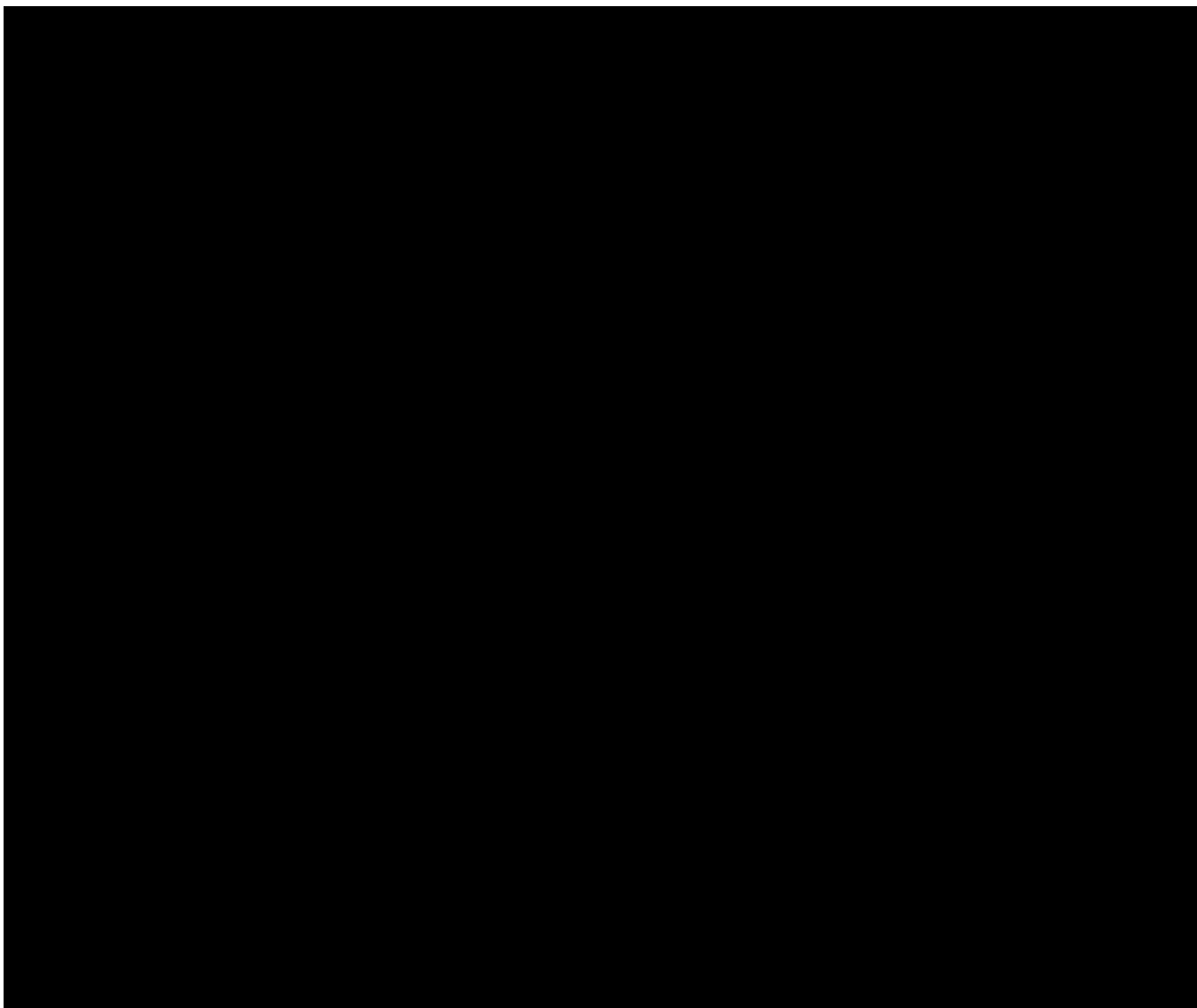
Our activities also allow us to engage with provincial leadership, such as provincial ministers and governors to increase their political will and interest in curbing IWT. Through engaging local experts, such as local environmental justice organization and magistrates, we are expanding and building a core group of like-minded practitioners to strengthen their capacity and influence in combating IWT.

Our in-country project partners, JACK and Lwiro, remain dedicated to the sustained capacity building benefits that will be brought about by this project. Our communication and cooperation over the first year of the grant has allowed for greater capacity of our alliance to work collaboratively to tackle threats to biodiversity in DRC.

## **11. Darwin Initiative identity**

Due to the forced postponement of several key activities, there has thus far been limited opportunity for publicising the Darwin Initiative through the project. However, once the main project activities go ahead, the Darwin Initiative will be publicised at the workshops (included on banners, workshop invitation, and thanked during proceedings), the Initiative will be acknowledged on the field guides, and publicised via our social media when we share the activities conducted. The Darwin Initiative is already acknowledged in the printed species identification guides that will be distributed to frontline officers at the upcoming training in Bas-Uélé province in Q1Y2. When the training takes place, we will make sure to publicize our activity on our social media platforms and link it to the Initiative.

## 12. Safeguarding



### 13. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total Darwin Initiative Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Others (see below)				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£41,488.6</b>	<b>£40,989.5</b>	<b>-2%</b>	

The second column indicate the revised budget from the successful change request approved by Darwin in February 2025.

### Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best			



practices and the project (£)	
-------------------------------	--

**14. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere**

**15. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.**

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

## 16. Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against Indicators of Success for Financial Year 2023-2024

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
<b>Outcome</b> Government agencies in three provinces of DRC have an improved capability and capacity to reduce the illegal trafficking of protected species through increased knowledge, resources, and collaboration.		
Outcome indicator 0.1 By March 2026, the number of successful prosecutions for wildlife crimes increases in target provinces (baseline established at start of project).	<p>Data is currently being collected in Bas-Uélé province by the Project and M&amp;E officer to develop a baseline for this indicator.</p> <p>Due to civil unrest, associated activities have been suspended in S and N Kivu.</p>	<p>Complete baseline collations for this indicator in Bas-Uélé.</p> <p>Hold workshop with government agencies in Bas-Uélé to build capacity for prosecutions of wildlife crime.</p> <p>Submit change request to Darwin to switch to Haut Uele province in place of S and N Kivu provinces.</p>
Outcome indicator 0.2, By March 2026, accurate records of wildlife crime are being kept at more checkpoints in three provinces (baseline established at start of project).	<p>Data is currently being collected in Bas-Uélé province by the Project and M&amp;E officer to provide a grounding in the current system and limitations of record keeping in this province.</p> <p>Due to civil unrest, associated activities have been suspended in S and N Kivu.</p>	<p>Hold workshop with government agencies in Bas-Uélé province and discuss challenges of accurate record keeping at checkpoints.</p> <p>Submit change request to Darwin to switch to Haut Uele province in place of S and N Kivu provinces.</p>
DI-A03 Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of project. (# orgs benefitting from DI-A01, A04 & A05)	<p>[REDACTED] Local environmental justice organization, ACEDH, and a Goma-based female magistrate strengthened their network and shared expertise with Bas-Uélé provincial law enforcement officers.</p>	Hold workshop in Bas-Uélé which will help raise capacity of numerous government agencies.
<b>Output 1</b> Government agencies responsible for wildlife crime and biodiversity conservation in three provinces are trained in CITES, national wildlife laws, and identifying protected species.		

Output indicator 1.1 By March 2026, 50 personnel from at least six government agencies demonstrate improved knowledge of national and international IWT laws after attending specialized training (immediately and 6 months following training). (DIA01: – disaggregated by gender, stakeholder group; DI-A04 – disaggregated by gender, stakeholder group DIA07 – disaggregated by govt org type).	Due to civil unrest, this activity has been suspended in S and N Kivu. The workshop is planned for Bas-Uélé in Y2Q1 to reach approximately 25 personnel from a minimum of 6 agencies.	Hold training workshop with government agencies in Bas-Uélé province.  Submit change request to Darwin to switch to Haut Uele province in place of S and N Kivu provinces.
Output indicator 1.2 By March 2026, 25 trainers train 25 further agency officials in CITES, national wildlife laws, and identifying protected species. (DIA05 – disaggregated by govt org type, training type, gender)	Due to civil unrest, this activity has been suspended in S and N Kivu. The workshop is planned for Bas-Uélé in Y2Q1 to train at least 10 trainers. Selection of potential trainers has begun.	Hold workshop with government agencies in Bas-Uélé province and train at least 10 selected trainers.  Submit change request to Darwin to switch to Haut Uele province in place of S and N Kivu provinces.
1.3 By October 2025, Pocket guides on identifying protected species and related laws are distributed to at least 75 government agency personnel. (DI-CO1 – disaggregated by knowledge area and product type).	These have been printed and are ready to be distributed at the first workshop in Buta.	Distribute the guides as part of the Bas-Uélé workshop.
1.4 By July 2025, the CITES Management Authority in Kinshasa has increased knowledge of CITES regulations and procedures (immediately and 6 months following training).	<div></div> Challenges with international travel has also presented a problem in finding local CITES experts to contribute to the training.	Continue search for appropriate local/regional CITES expert for training. <div></div>
<b>Output 2.</b> A standardised system is in place to allow for accurate government records of wildlife crime in three provinces.		
Output indicator 2.1. July 2025, evidence is collected from government agents in three provinces to understand limitations and barriers to accurate record keeping at check points.	Evidence collection has begun in Bas-Uélé province to understand barriers to record keeping. Civil unrest means three provinces will likely be reduced to two.	Hold workshop with government agencies in Bas-Uélé province and discuss challenges of accurate record keeping at checkpoints.



		Submit change request to Darwin to switch to Haut Uele province in place of S and N Kivu provinces.
Output indicator 2.2 By March 2026, a refined data collection system is rolled out at check points in three provinces	This activity will begin following the workshops.	During workshops, discuss feasible ideas for accurate record keeping systems with agency personnel.
<b>Output 3.</b> Inter-agency protocols are developed and a system for effective communication surrounding wildlife crime incidents is in place in three provinces.		
3.1 By March 2026, a draft confiscation protocol is developed with ICCN.	An all-sanctuary meeting was held with ICCN where a confiscation protocol was discussed and PASA tasked with initiating further meetings. [REDACTED]	Continue to seek funding to support regular all-sanctuary meetings with ICCN, MoE and other stakeholders  Await ICCN to send terms of reference for the draft confiscation protocol
3.2 By March 2026, a communication system is developed to allow for easier collaboration on seizures, arrests and case building in wildlife crime and in use by agencies in three provinces.	This activity will begin following the training workshop in Bas-Uélé to ensure that all relevant agencies are aware of the project aims and goals and have had the initial training to improve response to the IWT via enhances inter-agency communications.  Civil unrest means three provinces will likely be reduced to two.	Hold the training workshop in Bas-Uélé to discuss a potential communication system and any potential barriers to this system across agencies involved in IWT response.
3.3 By March 2026, civil society conservation organisations report cooperation and/collaboration with government agencies on increased number of cases and/or projects (baseline established at start of project)	This output will follow the activities under 3.1 and 3.2.	Conduct activities as outlined in 3.1 and 3.2

**17. Annex 2: Project's full current Indicators of Success as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)**

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification
<b>Outcome:</b> Government agencies in three provinces of DRC have an improved capability and capacity to reduce the illegal trafficking of protected species through increased knowledge, resources, and collaboration.	<p>0.1 By March 2026, the number of successful prosecutions for wildlife crimes increases in target provinces (baseline established at start of project).</p> <p>0.2 By March 2026, accurate records of wildlife crime are being kept at more checkpoints in three provinces (baseline established at start of project).</p> <p>0.3 DI-A03 Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of project. (# orgs benefitting from DI-A01, A04 &amp; A05)</p>	<p>0.1 Court records in three provinces.</p> <p>0.2 Project reports; feedback from agencies.</p> <p>0.3 Training course attendance certificates and post course surveys; Surveys conducted with agencies in three provinces; Project reports, records of numbers of distributed guides and recipients.</p>
<b>Output 1</b> Government agencies responsible for wildlife crime and biodiversity conservation in three provinces are trained in CITES, national wildlife laws, and identifying protected species.	<p>1.1 By March 2026, 50 personnel from at least six government agencies demonstrate improved knowledge of national and international IWT laws after attending specialized training (immediately and 6 months following training). (DIA01: – disaggregated by gender, stakeholder group; DI-A04 - disaggregated by gender, stakeholder group DIA07 – disaggregated by govt org type).</p> <p>1.2 By March 2026, 25 trainers train 25 further agency officials in CITES, national wildlife laws, and identifying protected species. (DIA05 – disaggregated by govt org type, training type, gender)</p> <p>1.3 By October 2025, Pocket guides on identifying protected species and related laws are distributed to at least 75 government agency personnel. (DI-CO1 – disaggregated by knowledge area and product type).</p> <p>1.4 By July 2025, the CITES Management Authority in Kinshasa has increased knowledge of CITES regulations and procedures (immediately and 6 months following training).</p>	<p>1.1 Training course attendance certificates and post course surveys</p> <p>1.2 Surveys conducted with agencies in three provinces; Project reports detailing name and agencies of trainees.</p> <p>1.3 Project reports, records of #s of distributed guides and recipients.</p> <p>1.4 Training course attendance certificates and post course surveys</p>
<b>Output 2</b> A standardised system is in place to allow for accurate government records of wildlife crime in three provinces.	2.1 2.1 By July 2025, evidence is collected from government agents in three provinces to understand	<p>2.1 Project reports; feedback from agents.</p> <p>2.2 Record keeping system detailed in project reports; feedback from agencies.</p>

	<p>limitations and barriers to accurate record keeping at check points.</p> <p>2.2 By March 2026, a refined data collection system is rolled out at at check points in three provinces</p>	
<p><b>Output 3</b> Inter-agency protocols are developed and a system for effective communication surrounding wildlife crime incidents is in place in three provinces.</p>	<p>3.1 By March 2026, a draft confiscation protocol is developed with ICCN.</p> <p>3.2 By March 2026, a communication system is developed to allow for easier collaboration on seizures, arrests and case building in wildlife crime and in use by agencies in three provinces.</p> <p>3.3 By March 2026, civil society conservation organisations report cooperation and/collaboration with government agencies on increased number of cases and/or projects (baseline established at start of project)</p>	<p>3.1 Written copy of draft protocol 3.2 Project reports 3.3 Surveys of four local civil society conservation organisations</p>
<p><b>Activities</b> (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)</p> <p>1.1 With the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, identify agencies and participants for training from three provinces.</p> <p>1.2 Conduct specialised training for 50 personnel from government agencies responsible for IWT in three provinces, including law enforcement, transport officials, and judiciary.</p> <p>1.3 Train 25 personnel in “train the trainer” method and conduct monitoring to ensure at least one colleague is trained by each trainer.</p> <p>1.4 Distribute 75 protected species and related law guides in French to attendees.</p> <p>1.5 Conduct training for CITES management authority in Kinshasa.</p> <p>2.1 At training sessions, collect data with officials detailing barriers to record keeping of IWT issues at checkpoints.</p> <p>2.2 Trial record keeping system in one province and evaluate success.</p> <p>2.3 Make necessary refinements and roll out record keeping system to checkpoints in three provinces.</p> <p>3.1 In series of meetings with ICCN, draft a confiscation protocol for the seizure of trafficked IWT products.</p> <p>3.2 With feedback from trainee participants, develop communication system allowing quick communication between relevant agencies in event of trafficking incident, and trial in once province.</p> <p>3.3 Make necessary refinements and roll communication system to checkpoints in three provinces.</p>		
<p><b>Important Assumptions</b></p> <p>PASA and MoE can identify sufficient appropriate participants for the training.</p> <p>Management of participating agencies are cooperative.</p> <p>No political obstacles.</p>		



Suitable consultants can be found to conduct the training.

A low-tech, effective record collection system can be developed to meet needs of agents.

## 18. Annex 3: Standard Indicators

**Table 1 Project Standard Indicators**

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	People	Men	0		0	25
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	People	Women	0		0	25
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	Agencies	Agency	0		0	6
DI-A04	Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training	People	Men	0		0	25
DI-A04	Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.	People	Women	0		0	25
DI-A04	Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.	Stakeholder group	Agency	0		0	6
DIA05	Number of trainers trained under the project reporting to have delivered further training.	People	Men	0		0	13
DIA05	Number of trainers trained under the project reporting to have delivered further training.	People	Women	0		0	12
DIA05	Number of trainers trained under the project reporting to have delivered further training.	Stakeholder group	Agency	0		0	6
DI-CO1	Number of best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed .	Guides	Knowledge area	1		1	1
DI-CO1	Number of best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed .	Guides	Product type	1		1	1

**Table 2      Publications**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Type</b> (e.g. journals, best practice manual, blog post, online videos, podcasts, CDs)	<b>Detail</b> (authors, year)	<b>Gender of Lead Author</b>	<b>Nationality of Lead Author</b>	<b>Publishers</b> (name, city)	<b>Available from</b> (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)

## 20. Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the <b>correct template</b> (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and <b>deleted the blue guidance text</b> before submission?	x
<b>Is the report less than 10MB?</b> If so, please email to <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a> putting the project number in the Subject line.	x
<b>Is your report more than 10MB?</b> If so, please discuss with <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a> about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
<b>Have you included means of verification?</b> You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	x
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 15)?	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	x
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	x
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	