



**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 2025

Please note all projects that were active before 1st October 2025 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	DARCC059
Project title	Building capacity to tackle the illegal primate trade in DRC
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Democratic Republic of Congo
Lead Organisation	Pan African Sanctuary Alliance
Partner(s)	Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable; Lwiro Primate Rehabilitation Centre; JACK Sanctuary
Project Leader	Kizito Kakule Musubao
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 st October 2025, HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	www.pasa.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).

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.

We are pleased to report that we have made significant progress towards the project objectives during this period. In line with Output 1, on the 29th & 30th April 2025, a strategic capacity-building workshop was held in Buta (Bas-Uele province), bringing together 37 participants from state services, customary authorities, the judiciary, security forces, customs structures and environmental civil society (agencies/roles and sign-in sheets and will be included in the appendices of the final report). This workshop focused on national and international legal frameworks, practical identification of threatened species using the PASA identification guide that was distributed to attendees, techniques of investigation, seizure and management of evidence, inter-institutional collaboration mechanisms, and health risks associated with the wildlife trade.

The workshop had several impressive results that we believe will contribute towards our outcome including:

- Strong inter-institutional commitment: unanimous support was shown among attendees for the creation of a multi-stakeholder unit to fight wildlife crime at the provincial level.
- A proposal to enact a provincial decree prohibiting the capture, hunting, keeping, selling, buying and transporting chimpanzees and other primates or their meat throughout the province of Bas-Uele.
- A recommendation from the provincial authorities to establish a primate rehabilitation sanctuary in Buta.
- Approximately 75% of attendees displayed an improvement in knowledge of legal texts (Law No. 14/003, Law No. 24/020, CITES), species identification, and investigation skills as per pre- and post- workshop surveys.
- 50 copies of the PASA Guide distributed as a field reference tool for identifying protected species.

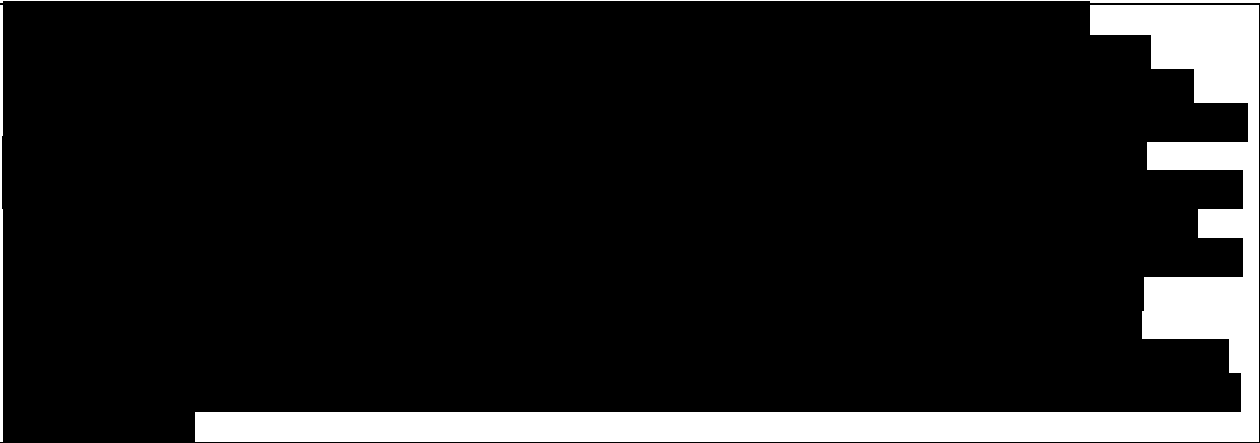
We have also made substantial progress towards Output 2 – the implementation of a standardised record keeping system for IWT incidences in two provinces. After consultation with government agencies in Bas-Uele and Haut-Uele, the absence of an existing system to collect IWT data has been confirmed, and we have developed a trial system for collecting offense data both at the border posts and a method for collating these incidences and tracking them through the criminal justice system. These consist of hard copy forms to be completed and collated, owing to the lack of connectivity and computers available at these posts/offices. These were disseminated to border posts and regional offices in Haut-Uele in early October and will be discussed at greater length in the next report covering that period.

Importantly, we have also created an online messaging group, using Whatsapp as the most convenient mode of communication in this region, to connect all parties involved in the workshop, representing many of the agencies involved in tackling wildlife crime. Participants are already using this group regularly to share information about specific incidences of wildlife crime and to coordinate responses representing inter-agency buy-in to improving wildlife crime responses in this province.

While our implementation of several activities was delayed by the war in Eastern DRC compared to our initial timeline, many of these activities have now been implemented in line with our logframe and we look forward to completing the remaining activities in the remainder of Y2.

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.

As detailed in our Annual Report, there have been considerable challenges in implementation owing to the invasion of Eastern DRC by M23 and multiple armed groups operating in North and South Kivu. As of this month, there are still armed conflict movements in Eastern DRC. For instance, M23 entered one of the wildlife centres, Lwiro Primates Rehabilitation Centre on October 21. Thankfully there was no violence or injuries involved. As per our change request made in July (ref # N0469), we were granted permission by BCF to change the location of our targeted provinces from North and South Kivu to Haut-Uele. The training workshop has now been completed in Haut-Uele (first week of October 2025) and will thus be detailed in our next report. No change of budget was necessary for this change.



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
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes
Change Request reference if known: N0469	

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.

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025) Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]
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)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £
4c. If you expect an 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, and not later than 31st 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. 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 BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures? Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk

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.

N/A

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.

Reviewer comment: "although the narrative mentions reduced zoonotic risk, this has not yet been integrated into activities or indicators. The project could consider collaborating with public health institutions to jointly monitor zoonotic disease risks and raise awareness in frontline communities, strengthening the health dimension of poverty reduction"

PASA: Although the suggested activities are outside of the scope of this project, we included a section on zoonotic disease risk within the Buta workshop training, thereby reaching 30 governmental leaders with this messaging and information, and building their awareness of this threat.

Reviewer comment: To make it easier to understand the project's contribution, the project could consider different methods, such as:

Track training recipients directly by following up and seeing if they have been involved in successful prosecutions.

PASA: We will be directly following up with training participants in the following quarter to collect data on how they have been utilizing the knowledge, tools and skills gained in the training.

-If feasible compare progress in provinces where the project is active to those where no training has occurred.

PASA: Unfortunately, this is not feasible as we are unable to collect data in provinces where we are not implementing activities.

-Map out the causal logic from training, to improve knowledge, to better case handling, to successful prosecution and collect evidence at each step.

PASA: This is currently being conducted, as evidence as being collected before training, following training, in follow-ups that assess both quantitatively and qualitatively the improvement of wildlife crime handling across different agencies and will be discussed as length in the final report.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Checklist for submission

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