



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus

Half Year Report

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2024

Project reference	DAREX006
Project title	Increasing Ecological and Socio-Economic Resilience in the Upper Ewaso Ngiro North Ecosystem
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Kenya
Lead Organisation	Fauna & Flora
Partner(s)	Mount Kenya Trust (MKT), Mount Kenya Ewaso Water Partnership (MKEWP), Ol Pejeta Conservancy (OPC), Laikipia Conservancies Association (LCA), Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), National Museums of Kenya (NMK)
Project leader	Serah Munguti
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 st October 2024. Half Year Report 2 (HYR2)
Project website/blog/social media	

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed project implementation timetable

Output 1: Habitat restoration, reduced fuelwood use, equitable water-demand regulation and sharing, and climate-resilient cropland management, increases quantity and quality of dry-season river flows, and improves soil, rangeland, and forest habitat health.

A total of 41,059 seedlings planted in Marania Forest (**Annex 1**). Tree monitors patrolled restoration sites (Marania and Ontulili forests) checking forest health and addressing threats to planted seedlings (**Annex 2**). 13 community groups 218 people (89M, 129F) trained in nursery establishment and management (**Annex 3a-e**). Feedback survey for 8 groups trained in Y1 conducted with 87.5% satisfaction score reported (**Annex 4**). Preparations for the October tree planting season completed with all seedlings already procured (**Annex 5**). OPC conducted 8 community meetings (**Annex 6**), identifying 6 schools with 334 (157M, 177F) students to be involved and 3 community groups with 110 members (50M, 60F) as ideal sites for nursery establishment (**Annex 7**). On fire prevention and Management, 20 scouts (14M, 6F) trained and certified as elite firefighters (**Annex 8**). To date, 101 (76M, 25F) people from 6 Community Forest Associations (CFAs) have been trained to support firefighting efforts across 72,577 Ha of Mt. Kenya Forest. Firefighting equipment to be distributed across 6 Forest stations have been procured (**Annex 9**).

OPC identified 720 (270M, 450F) beneficiaries for energy saving stoves through a participatory process (**Annex 10**). 15 (7M, 8F) youths also picked as ToTs for energy stove construction. MKEWP supported 1 survey on Energy Consumption in Meru, Laikipia, and Nyeri Counties by 18 ToTs (5F, 13 M) (**Annex 11**) and offered 1 training session on data collection using the Kobo Toolkit to determine impact of the energy stoves constructed in Y1 (**Annex 12**).

1 (one) community validation meeting held for the mechanical removal of Opuntia (**Annex 13**). Vegetation baseline report across 5 NRT member conservancies completed. During the baseline, 250 plants were identified and counted across 100 sampling points. The major plants constituted mostly grass species (**Annex 14**). A licence for the mechanical removal granted by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) (**Annex 15**) and Opuntia removal underway (**Annex 15b**)

MKT Patrol teams covered 2,616.94 Kms while doing routine monitoring biodiversity, recording illegal activities such as illegal logging, intrusion of restored areas by domestic animals and recovering any illegal cutting tools and wildlife snares (**Annex 16**). A total of 27 (17M, 10F) people including CFA scouts and

MKT staff trained on forest restoration monitoring techniques (**Annex 17**). Consequently, 41 sample plots covering 12.874Ha of the 160Ha restored were marked and monitored in Marania. Survival rate of the planted seedlings stand at 85% (**Annex 18**). Monitoring teams sighted and recorded 1,010 wildlife across 19 different species including Buffaloes, Bushbucks, Common Zebras, Waterbucks, elephants, Suni, Spotted hyena, warthogs, Colobus monkeys and a lion among others. 63 snares (wires, string, cable, and pit traps) targeting small to medium-sized wildlife destroyed. 8 wildlife carcasses found (1 buffalo, 4 waterbucks, and 3 hares) attributed to trapping, predation, Human-Wildlife Conflict with 1 case unknown. 73 illegal logging cases intercepted during the period (**Annex 19**).

Participatory meetings held with 2 Water Resources User Associations (WRUAs) on Information sharing from hydrological Assessment and design reports for 2 Common Water Intakes (**Annexes 20**). Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) license for Teleswani Common Intake obtained from NEMA. (**Annex 21**).

NRT assessed the existing water pans in the three Naibunga Conservancies for desilting (**Annex 22**). 25 people (20M, 5F) participated in governance gap analysis and capacity needs assessment of water project committees within Maiyanat Conservancy (**Annex 23**). An inception meeting involving 25 people (15M,10F) on a conservancy-based water governance model with water sector stakeholders in Laikipia County done (**Annex 24**). Draft design reports (**Annexes 25-26**) and EIA reports (**Annexes 27-28**) for Ilngwesi and Lekurruki water pans prepared. The terms of Reference (ToR) for hydrological model development and water sharing plans completed (**Annexes 29-30**). Hydrological model consultant identified with recruitment of the others ongoing.

2: Climate-resilient, nature-based solutions, sustainable land, pasture and water management practices, and improved market linkages, increase wellbeing for 2,906 farming, agropastoral and pastoral households / c.14,530 people (at least 40% women).

OPC identified 1,118 (502M, 616F) crop farmer and agro-pastoralists to benefit from farm input support as well as skill development (**Annex 31**). Farmer trainings to be done across 30 demonstration farms (**Annex 32**). A socio-economic baseline survey (**Annex 33**) for the beneficiaries conducted with the following key findings drawn.

53% (n=341;56% M and 51% W) of respondents reported medium well-being, 37% (n=238; 36% M and 37% W) reported high well-being, and 10% (n=64;7%M and 13%W) reported low well-being. OPC North communities had a higher rate of low well-being at 18%, compared to 9% in the other two zones. In the past five years, 58% (n=374;65%M and 54%W) reported improved well-being due to sustainable agriculture, climate resilience, and better water security. Meanwhile, 14% (n=90;12%M;16%M) saw no change, and 28% (n=180;25%M and 30% W) experienced a decline, citing high living costs, taxation, and climate-related stress.

A total of 50 ToTs identified and trained. MKEWP trained 20 (13M,7F) ToTs including MKEWP staff on information gathering during the farmer extension needs assessment. Consequently, farmer needs assessment covering 524 people (60% W, 40% M) was conducted revealing that only 51% of farmers conduct pre-production market surveys often leading to over-production; 35% rely fully on rainfed farming with only 30% of the farmers being water secure with storage to support farming activities during dry season. Over 70% of the farmers were found to have challenges accessing agrometeorological services. Only 42% have access to extension services (**Annex 34**). OPC trained 15(8M and 7W) ToTs drawn from a pool of 30 ToTs (20M, 10F) trained in year1 to :1) familiarize them with Kobo toolbox to be used in beneficiary data collection to enable ongoing impact evaluation of supported climate smart interventions and 2) clarify roles of ToTs in supporting climate smart beneficiaries **training (Annex 35)**.

MKEWP identified 12 demo farms and signed 6 agreements with the landowners (**Annex 36**). Land preparation of 2 demo farms completed with soil samples collected and analysis ongoing. OPC identified and trained 225 (165 M, 60F) farmers across 8 communities on basic principles of livestock husbandry, nutrition and feeding, health management, breeding management, record keeping and financial management, market access and value addition (**Annex 37**). Consequently, 113 steers purchased from 45 Pastoralist households (**Annex 38**) with the average weight per steer being 278.72kgs as part of the livestock scheme. The households will benefit from additional Ksh. 314, 950 (£1,909) being a bonus from the scheme based on the concept agreed (**Annex 39**), with the bonus being calculated as a percentage of profit to be made by OPC during the sale of its premium brand of meat.

<p>NRT trained 70 graduates of the vocational training program on business plan development. 50 (24M, 26F) graduates enrolled into Sacco and are expected to save and access the startup loan. Qualifying graduates are expected to access the startup loan in Y2Q4 (Annexes 40).</p> <p>Output 3: Conservation CBOs (6 WRUAs and 5 CFAs) and local civic organisations (MKEWP, OPC, LCA, NRT, MKT) have the capacity and capability to jointly, equitably, and sustainably manage natural resources.</p> <p>1 (one) exchange visit to support peer-to-peer learning on water demand and sharing to the Mutitu Community Water Project engaging 94 people (43F,51M) from 8 WRUAs. This learning exercise generated a commitment by all community water projects to consider installing master water metres at the point of abstraction to ensure the quantity abstracted is known (Annex 41). MKEWP Conducted 1 quarterly meeting with the EMUSACCO Board to review the year 1 support on the Micro-credit seed fund and the Revolving fund for Year 2. The meeting resolved to have bulk SMS for loan reminders as a way of reducing operation cost as well as feedback on levels of savings. Unique customer identifiers (account numbers for individual members in a group also agreed (Annex 42). 12 Water scouts (3 F, 9 M) trained on data collection using the Kobo toolkit to track water quantity levels and pollution points. Effectively, the trained scouts conducted river system Monitoring (Annex 43).</p> <p>Output 4: The value of project outcomes, (biodiversity conservation, human-wildlife co-existence, economic productivity, water security, climate resilience), is evidenced and ready to be scaled up, through local stakeholder commitment and larger-scale investment.</p> <p>The project supported World Desertification Day and World Rangers Day national celebrations in Laikipia (Annex 44). Fauna & Flora staff attended National Museums of Kenya 1st international Scientific conference and shared project lessons. Internal discussion within Fauna & Flora has seen the market analysis component structured to: map out current sustainable finance instruments used by project partners; describe enabling conditions needed for scaling up these instruments; correlate ecosystem services priorities and hydrological needs to funding constraints and prioritize sustainable finance instruments to build up a tailored roadmap in a future phase.</p>							
<p>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.</p> <p>The project has experienced a few delays in the rollout of some activities specifically construction of dams and slow pace of rangeland restoration especially due to slow removal of <i>Opuntia stricta</i>. These delays are however not expected to affect budget or timelines. Measures have been agreed with NRT to fast track these actions.</p> <p>Delays in the delivery of the 2 common water intakes mainly resulting from policy shift and the need to work directly with the mandated government agency necessitated a change request to move funds to Fauna & Flora to work directly with Water Resource Authority (WRA), the mandated government entity. This concern will have no effect on budget.</p> <p>Foot & Mouth Disease outbreak in Laikipia could slow rollout of OPC's livestock program. While this has the potential of affecting both budget and time of implementation, combined efforts by the National and County Governments is expected to contain the situation in shorter time to allow OPC resume the livestock purchase scheme.</p>							
<p>3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%; padding: 2px;">Discussed with NIRAS:</td> <td style="width: 30%; padding: 2px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Formal Change Request submitted:</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Received confirmation of change acceptance:</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">No</td> </tr> </table> <p>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></p>		Discussed with NIRAS:	Yes	Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes	Received confirmation of change acceptance:	No
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<p>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date. Actual spend:</p>
<p>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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully.

N/A

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

None

6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report.

Comments and queries from the most recent annual report:

1. The total number of identified households in activity 2.1 is unclear. The project planned to identify 6,506 households and apparently identified 2,733. This may need clarification.

OPC activities were moved to Y2 through a change request and as such, their beneficiaries are being identified in Y2. As of the reporting date, OPC already selected a total of 1,880 beneficiaries. This includes 1,118 crop farmers and agro-pastoralists who will benefit from climate-smart agriculture interventions, as well as 720 households that will receive energy-saving Jikos. Additionally, 42 pastoralists have benefited from the livestock-to-market scheme. OPC also plans to identify 56 beneficiaries for the livestock-to-market scheme by end of Year 2, bringing the total beneficiaries to 1,930 at the end of Y2. Beneficiaries of common water intakes will be identified in the second half of Y2. A total of 1,923HHs are expected to benefit from Common water intakes. This activity will be completed by EOY2 and as such, the total beneficiaries will be 6,586 by EOY2. The common intake beneficiaries are yet to be identified.

2. The report announces that the revised and updated project risk framework will be shared separately. Please add it to the next AR if available.

Revised and updated project risk framework shared with the half year report. **See Annex 45.** A separate risk framework covering confidential OPC information to be shared separately (**Annex 46**).

3. The project apparently developed training manuals (activity 2.4), but the evidence added to the report as Annex 46 could not be opened by the reviewer.

See Annex 46.

4. Activity 2.2 mentions a learning needs assessment which the reviewer could not find in the evidence documents. Please add it to the next AR (**Annex 34**).