

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	DAREX010 <i>This should be the project reference provided in your offer paperwork and <u>not</u> your application number</i>
Project title	Thriving together: lasting solutions for collaborative management of tamaraw landscapes
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Philippines
Lead Organisation	Re:wild
Partner(s)	D'ABOVILLE Foundation and Demo Farm, Inc. and Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.
Project Leader	Dr. Tobias Garstecki
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 October 2025, HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	Thriving Together with Tamaraw Facebook Page

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).

The project made progress across all outputs during the reporting period:

Under Output 1, we strengthened policy and institutional initiatives for tamaraw conservation. Despite anticipated delays due to the 2025 elections, a refined draft of the Tamaraw Bill was prepared (Activity 1.01), and the Tamaraw Conservation Subcommittee was formally established under the Corridor Alliance Advisory Committee (Activity 1.02). The LGUs of Santa Cruz and Calintaan adopted the Tamaraw Conservation Management Action Plan (TCMAP) (Activity 1.03), while efforts toward the Sibuyan, Aruyan, Dangari, Iyason, Kinarawan (SADIK) Critical Habitat designation were supported through multi-stakeholder consultations and the drafting of a municipal ordinance (Activity 1.06). Work also continued on the Taobuid Ancestral Domain Titling (Activity 1.07) and the updating of Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPPs) (Activity 1.09).

Under Output 2, biodiversity assessments in SADIK were completed (Activity 2.03), and standardized monitoring methods are under development, and were integrated in capacity development (Activity 2.02). Research collaborations with University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), the University of Santo Tomas (UST), and international institutions are proceeding (Activity 2.01). Socio-Agro-Ecosystem (SAE) Exploratory Surveys were conducted in additional sites. We are planning for the Online Knowledge Library (Activity 2.07).

For Output 3, capacity needs were assessed (Activity 3.01) and Taobuid customary laws documented (Activity 3.02). Intergenerational learning, long-term training programmes and mentoring program protocols were initiated (Activity 3.03, 3.07, and 3.08, respectively). A Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Regional Memorandum Order formalized the hiring of Indigenous rangers (Activity 3.04), and capacity-building initiatives, such as on SMART and Wildlife Enforcement Officers (Activity 3.09) were conducted.

Under Output 4, the integration of SMART technology was expanded, with several trainings conducted for data analysts and field collectors (Activity 4.02). Indigenous surveillance was supported through the construction of a protection and monitoring hut in Nagbobong (Activity 4.03), while the restoration of the Palbong Ranger Station (Activity 4.04) is nearing completion, slightly ahead of the intended timeframe. For Activity 4.06, the consortium has reviewed the Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed road construction and will share its results with DENR. Preparations are being made for the development of a Ranger Competence Framework and SOPs (Activity 4.01).

Output 5 progressed by actively supporting the implementation of Taobuid Community Conservation Plan (Activity 5.01), developing an Socio-Agro Ecosystem assessment framework (Activity 5.04), and launching a grant mechanism supporting Indigenous-led initiatives on habitat protection and food security (Activity 5.07). A permaculture maintenance manual was finalized and a permaculture design course conducted for MIBNP-PAMO (Activity 5.03).

Overall, the project activities remain on track, with some progressing ahead of schedule, while a few being slightly delayed. All activities are expected to achieve their planned Year 2 targets.

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.

Possible new threats to tamaraw from Trans-Mindoro Road: The proposed - and already started, in spite of missing permissions - Trans-Mindoro Road Project of the Philippine Department of Public Works and Highways poses serious threats to tamaraw areas in Inner Mindoro, including habitat loss, increased poaching, and consequently species decline. To address this, the project team, led by the Output 1 Coordinator, is finalizing a draft DENR memorandum with support from project partners to jointly recommend the denial of the approval of the Environmental Compliance Certificate by DENR, which would prevent further construction and stop the project. Additional intervention points are being explored.

Possible non-renewal of TCPO special extra fund 2026: A planned discontinuation of a funding top-up to DENR's Tamaraw Conservation Program Office (TCPO) in 2026 may cause a 25% staff decrease at this key partner organization, limiting training reach, risking loss of personnel trained by our project, and possibly delaying activities requiring TCPO participation. This is a potential - if likely - future challenge which we are monitoring. However, no significant adjustments of the project are currently anticipated even if the budget is indeed reduced.

Coordination with DENR-implemented UNDP project: A significant challenge has been coordinating the project's and project partners' workplan with the UNDP-supported Mindoro Biodiversity Corridor Project, which is implemented through DENR and consultants. To ensure

complementarity and avoid duplication, we have conducted alignment workshops with stakeholders and implementing partners throughout the year. This has been largely effective.	
3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?	
Discussed with NIRAS:	No
Formal Change Request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	N. a.
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.

<p>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)</p> <p>Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]</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 2026)?</p> <p>No Estimated underspend: £ 0</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.</p>
<p>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</p> <p>Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk</p>
<p>Recruitment delays: The position of Output 2 Coordinator is not filled yet, despite repeated reposting and review, because of the scarcity of relevant candidates in Mindoro (or willing to move there). This adds to the workload on the existing staff and has necessitated changes to roles within the team. In addition, we are still looking for a habitat management and restoration consultant to assist in the activity 5.02 (Habitat Management and Restoration Plan). We are now advertising this position internationally. These delays are not critical yet.</p>
<p>6. Project risk management</p>

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.

We have submitted no OSJA but a risk register, an updated version of which we submit with this report.

Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) was added to the list of project risks in the updated Risk Register [REDACTED]. The other risks listed in the original project proposal remain the same since the start of the project. The SEAH risk management includes actions to prevent and respond to any form of exploitation or abuse, such as training, awareness sessions, and clear reporting mechanisms for staff, partners, and community members.

6b. Have any concerns or allegations relating to sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment been reported in the past 6 months?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Suspensions or allegations related to safeguarding concerns should be reported to ODA.Safeguarding@defra.gov.uk

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.

[REDACTED]