

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

Note: 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 2023

Project reference	DARNV006
Project title	Replenishing Bolivia's Water Footprint: Scaling Watershed Conservation through Public-Private Partnerships
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Bolivia
Lead partner	Natura Bolivia Foundation
Partner(s)	Coca Cola Bolivia, (CEJIS) Center for Legal Studies and Social Research, Cuencas Sustentables Ltd
Project leader	Nigel Asquith
Report date and number	HYR2 October 31 st 2023
Project website/blog/social media	www.naturabolivia.org

Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

As reported in our Annual Report March, we had previously advanced on Output 1: ***The technical, legal, and financial pathway to implement a green/grey infrastructure public private partnership model for water access and sustainable watershed management is designed***, with activities 1.1.1. to 1.2.4. undertaken as programmed. These activities were undertaken in a series of one-on-one meetings with municipal authorities and technicians and finalized in a 4-day workshop that discussed the details of the new “innovation” version of the Watershed model. We then visited individual municipalities of El Trigal, Villa Serrano, Comarapa, Saipina, Tomina, Pampagrande, San Ignacio de Velasco, Vallegrande, Samaipata and Quirusillas to complete activities 1.3.1. - 1.3.6.

We had thus successfully advanced on three of the Output 1 indicators namely:

- 1.1. The financial and technical model is designed, and its logic and implementation feasibility confirmed by municipal technicians.**
- 1.2. The legal pathway for municipal investment in watershed conservation is designed and verified.**
- 1.3. Three municipalities commit to investing in pilot green/grey infrastructure projects.**

These indicators were successfully completed, so in this reporting period we focused on Indicators:

- 2.1. Three water access systems (the grey infrastructure of tanks, dams, pipes etc.) are built (by December 2023), and**
- 3.1. 4000 hectares of watershed forests are protected from agriculture and cattle through fencing and/or compensation payments to owners (by December 2023)**

Between April and September 2023, we thus completed the following activities:

- 2.1.1. Build grey infrastructure systems (pipes, dams, tanks, chlorinators/purifiers etc.)
- 2.1.2. Deliver functioning water access system to community members and municipal officials
- 2.1.3. Municipal governments reimburse project for funds expended in construction.
- 3.1.1. Present and discuss watershed conservation agreement model with landowners and community members.

2.1.1. Build grey infrastructure systems (pipes, dams, tanks, chlorinators/purifiers etc.):

We have completed the building of grey infrastructure in three municipalities, Trigal, Tomina and Villa Serrano. These projects comprised: 1) improvement of the Trigal water system through the installation of 1650 metres of pipes and two storage tanks and 2) the renovation and expansion of the Fuerte RUA community drinking water system 3) the installation of a water metering system for the town of Villa Serrano. The cost of the grey infrastructure components of these projects were £45,287, £6,870 and £90,360 respectively, which were covered by a loan from project partner Cuencas Sustentables. We are currently negotiating new projects in Tomina, El Torno and Moro Moro municipalities and expect to initiate them in Q3 2023-2024.

2.1.2. Deliver functioning water access system to community members and municipal officials.

The new water systems in Trigal and Tomina were delivered to the Municipal authorities and officially accepted, benefiting a total of 285 families. The Villa Serrano project, which will benefit 1450 families, is still being completed so has not yet been delivered to the local authorities.

2.1.3. Municipal governments reimburse project for funds expended in construction.

On June 14th the Tomina municipal government made its final payment to reimburse the £6870 we had spent on the project. This payment covered all materials, and manual labour. The Municipality of Trigal has made two reimbursement payments so far, the most recent on August 28th, totalling £19,700 and covering 40% of the cost of the project. However, neither of these reimbursement programmes are designed to cover project management costs, nor the costs of project development. For these costs we are depending on the Darwin grant. Although the successful reimbursement payments show that the project is on the right track, a clear conclusion is that we are not yet incorporating full economic costing into the programme. This is something we will improve on in the future.

3.1.1. Present and discuss watershed conservation agreement model with landowners and community members.

As part of each project, the local authorities and 42 families in upstream communities agreed to sign conservation agreements and/or commit to close off and conserve their watersheds. The areas of forest to be conserved comprise 913 hectares in Trigal, 377 hectares in Tomina, and 1230 hectares in Villa Serrano. The direct costs of conservation of the “green infrastructure” in addition to the cost of the grey infrastructure in each watershed were £3,304, £0 and £3,776 respectively, paid for with a loan from project partner Cuencas Sustentables which will be reimbursed by the local authorities.

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.

We have not encountered any notable problems or unexpected developments. However, one of our major methodological lessons is that the deductive problem-solving approach we had outlined in our proposal – i.e., do some research, develop a model and then apply it in the field – was inappropriate. Rather, we learned that we needed to apply inductive logic: collect empirical data by completing a series of projects, and then develop a model based on the successes and failures of these field experiences.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?	
Discussed with NIRAS:	n/a
Formal Change Request submitted:	n/a
Received confirmation of change acceptance	n/a
Change request reference if known:	

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)	
Actual spend: £ ██████████	
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 2024)?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £
4c. If yes, then you need to 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. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes 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 BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?	
No	

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but should also be raised with NIRAS through a Change Request. Please DO NOT send these in the same email.

Please send your **completed report by email to BCF-Reports@niras.com**. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**

The Annual Report Review asked us to provide a response to the following question:

“The most important comment on this AR is that it lacks detail on how the project has gathered information and moved through its workplan. Whilst we do not expect all of the information collected to be reported in the AR, we do expect some insight on key information points and evidence of how they have led to decisions/actions that contribute towards delivering against the logframe. In subsequent ARs, it should be clearer what information the project team have gathered, what the outcomes of activities were, and clearer evidence should be provided regarding their completion”.

It is correct that according to our log frame, we expected to “gather information” by reading and undertaking studies and surveys and would thus by now would have been able to provide “insight on key information points and evidence of how they have led to decisions/actions that contribute towards delivering against the logframe”.

However, as we noted in the Annual report, *“After initial analyses we concluded that the only way to efficiently assess logic and implementation feasibility was to undertake ... real-life designs”.*

In other words, we concluded that undertaking legal analyses and feasibility studies that gathered general information to build a conceptual model would not actually work: a deductive analytic approach, going from general premises to specific conclusions would not serve our purposes.

Rather, we have adopted an inductive analytic approach. Rather than developing our model through a general hypothesis, we will instead complete six to ten projects, and from these experiences inductively develop our general model.

We will expect to be able to apply this general model widely after the Darwin project is completed, but we will only be able to describe it at the end of year 2 – not at the end of year 1, which we would have been able to do if we had followed a deductive analytic approach.

The net result of this – to answer the reviewers concerns – is that last year we simply did not have the key information the reviewer would have liked to see. We are collecting this information now -- by doing the projects – and will present the model and the steps and learning we undertook to design it, at the end of the project in our next AR.