

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	DARNV009
Project title	Developing and testing a sustainability assessment framework for wildlife use
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Indonesia, South Africa, Tanzania
Lead partner	IIED
Partner(s)	TRAFFIC, Endangered Wildlife Trust, EPIC Biodiversity
Project leader	<i>Dilys Roe</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2, October 2023
Project website/blog/social media	https://iied.org/assessing-sustainability-wild-species-use

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).

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E 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.

As reported in our annual report, we were behind schedule with progress on this project due to the departure of a key member of the project team who was leading the bulk of the work connected to developing our draft framework of principles for assessing sustainability of wildlife use. Over the last 6 months, however, we have managed to make up for lost time and have had 3 meetings of our multidisciplinary expert group (MEG) as well as series of bilateral exchanges with experts related to specific dimensions of sustainability in order to review, refine and finalise our framework. We have now agreed on a framework that has 7 principles for each of our 5 dimensions of sustainability, plus 7 cross-cutting principles. The Framework is attached as an annex to this report.

In addition, and again in consultation with the MEG, we discussed and agreed on a scoring mechanism for the framework. To do this we reviewed a number of options provided by existing standards/assessment tools. In particular we were inspired by the newly developed (not yet released) South African Sustainable Wildlife Economy Standard – which scores principles against three levels of continuous improvement – and the Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool which allocates a score per principles and demonstrates how a PA is performing compared to a maximum possible score with provision for identifying areas for improvement. In the end we modelled our scoring mechanism on a combination of the two – adopting an Excel-based scoring sheet approach very similar to the METT but with scores reflecting levels of continuous improvement from 0 (bad practice) to 3 (exemplar practice). Developing the score sheet thus required developing 4 criteria for each principle with indicators

to signifying the relevant level of good or bad practice. The scoring tool is also attached as an annex for information.

Armed with the principles, the criteria and the scoring tool we are now ready to start field testing the framework. In addition to our planned field testing via TRAFFIC, EPIC and EWT field sites, one member of our MEG representing the organisation Wild Welfare has also offered to explore additional testing possibilities in zoos.

We have developed a background document to explain the project and the framework and this will be widely disseminated to encourage other non-project partners to experiment with the framework and also to provide feedback for us to refine both the framework and the approach.

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.

Problem: We found that iterative refinement of the framework of principles as well as the iterative development of the scoring criteria took FAR longer than we anticipated! As a result of many many back and forths with experts in the MEG we are confident we have a strong product but we hugely underestimated how time intensive this would be.

Opportunity: Three of the project partners - IIED, IUCN-SULi and TRAFFIC are members of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management – a network of 13 international organisations including the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions and UN agencies. Through the partnership we have been discussing the development of a new global initiative on “wild biodiversity economy” and the lead partner of the initiative – UNEP – has expressed interest in the 5D Framework being a core tool for the initiative. As such we have been successful in securing a small amount of additional funding from UNEP which will enable us to produce two open access journal articles to help with further promotion and dissemination of the framework.

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 No

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: £ [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 2024)?

Yes No 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?

We are still behind schedule based on our original workplan, however we do expect to be able to complete the testing of the framework over the next 4 months, still leaving time to refine and republish the framework by the end of the project. We plan to review the status of testing at the end of January 2024 and if necessary will discuss the possibility for a further no-cost extension to the project with BCF management. At the moment, however, we are optimistic that this will not be necessary.

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**