

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 2024

Please note all projects that were active before 1 October 2024 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

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

Project reference	DIR29IN-1114
Project title	A new tool for advancing locally led conservation
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Nepal, Philippines, Uganda, Kenya
Lead Organisation	International Institute for Environment and Development
Partner(s)	RECOTFC Nepal, Bukidnon University, Philippines CORDIO, Kenya Makerere University, Uganda
Project leader	Phil Franks
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.iied.org/sage-gt-for-enhancing-power-indigenous-peoples-local-communities-area-based-conservation

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 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.

The table below and plan in annex 1 indicate that while all year one activities were completed in year 1, they were running three months behind schedule by March 2024. Note that activities 3.3-3.5 are funded by the German donor GIZ.

Nonetheless the first round of field testing of the new tool completed in March 2024 - now called SAGE-GT - was very successful, generating a great deal of feedback, including how the tool might be further improved, which took three more months than expected to process with the country partners and draft a detailed users' guide for round 2 (submitted with this report). Thus, completion of the second round of field testing is delayed to mid-November. The tool has also benefitted from ongoing use of the related SAGE tool under Darwin project DIR30EX-1099

and is now more advanced than SAGE, notably in terms of affirmative action to level the playing field between Indigenous Peoples and local communities and government agencies.

The longer than planned tool development process has undoubtedly enabled partners to have more influence in shaping the tool and will produce a higher quality tool but now presents us with a problem in terms of delivering all project outcomes by March 2025. For this reason, we are now requesting a no-cost extension of six months to the end of September 2025. More details of the justification are included in our change request.

In summary the main achievements of this last six months are a strong tool development process engaging all partners, producing a comprehensive user', manual for the tool, and planning and starting the second round of field testing. An additional output is the development of web-pages for the tool see: <https://www.iied.org/sage-gt-for-enhancing-power-indigenous-peoples-local-communities-area-based-conservation>

	Activity	Update
1.1-1.4	Round one of field testing the SAGE-GT tool	All completed in year 1, although delayed by three months.
1.5	Developing users manual for round two of field testing	Completion delayed by 6 months from December 2023 to June 2024
2.1	Planning for round two of field testing	Completion delayed by 6 months from December 2023 to June 2024
2.2	Round two of field testing	Postponed by 4.5 months from April-June to August- mid November. Nepal completed on Sept 16 th . Uganda to be completed Nov 6 th , Philippines Nov 13 th and Kenya Nov 15 th ,
2.3	Workshop of the governance type task force – now elevated to a formal task Force on IUCNs WCPA and CEESP commissions	Postponed by 9 months to March 2025
2.4	Users manual and training package for the tool	Postponed by 9 months to start in January 2025 and be completed by June 2025
2.5	Develop roll-out strategy and secure some funding for it	Postponed by 6 months to start in January 2025 and be completed by September 2025
3.1	Applied research on impact pathways and enabling conditions	Postponed by 9 months to start in October 2024 and be completed by March 2025
3.2	Prepare IIED working paper	Postponed by 9 months to start in January 2025 and be completed by June 2025.
3.3	Communications plan for the World Conservation Congress in October 2025	Postponed by 6 months to be completed by March 2025
3.4	WCPA publication on governance type	Scoping study completed in September 2024. Now on hold
3.5	Policy brief on why IP&LC-led conservation needs attention to governance quality & type	Postponed by 3 months to end of March 2025
3.6	World Conservation Congress	Congress postponed to October 2025

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 explained in our previous annual report, delays in the first year were primarily due to the process of developing the analytical framework for the tool (indicators in five dimensions of power balance and typology of power balance) breaking new ground and thus having more iterations of drafts and review than expected, and competing demands of other elements of IIEDs engagement in supporting implementation of the 30x30 target of the Global Biodiversity Framework, including the submission of a Darwin Extra proposal, now approved.

Again, in the first half of year 2, the process of reflecting on the experience of the first round of pilots, and generating consensus amongst partners on the improvements to be made, has taken us longer than expected. This is an important learning point from the project and largely positive in that it is indicative of strong partner engagement in an inclusive innovation process. Presumably this is quite a common with Darwin Innovation projects.

As indicated in section 4b, we expect the project to have a modest underspend by March 2025 and thus adequate funding to cover the proposed no cost extension. However, without this additional six months, activities 2.4, 2.5 and 3.2 and their respective outputs cannot be completed within the original 2 year life of project, though all being well, completed post project at IIEDs cost. On the positive side, the proposed 6 month extension will bridge the project to the World Conservation Congress in October 2025 which is an excellent platform for launching the new SAGE-GT tool.

In terms of M&E indicators we remain confident that all targets will be achieved albeit by September rather than March 2025. All in all, despite the delays, we are very pleased with the progress of the project and are seeing high levels of interest beyond the project partners.

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/ No
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes/ No
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes/ No

Change Request reference if known: *If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome*

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)

Actual spend: £ XXXXXXXXXX

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 ☒ No ☐ Estimated underspend: £

4c. If you expect and 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. 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 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. If your project was subject to an Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment please use this space to comment on any changes to international human rights risks, and to address any additional mitigations outlined in your offer letters. Please provide the comment and then your response. If you have already provided a response, please confirm when.

Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to any additional feedback (other than caveats) received in the letter you received to say your application was successful which requested response at HYR (including safeguarding points)? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	
For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	Yes
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	N/A
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	