

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	DARNV012
Project title	The Banjinala Initiative for private investment in re-greening Madagascar
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Madagascar
Lead partner	INDRI, Initiative for Development, ecological Restoration and Innovation
Partner(s)	
Project leader	Jean-Philippe Palasi
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	2023/10/27, HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	https://indri.solutions/

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.

Identification and mobilisation of private sector stakeholders

Since the start of the Banjinala initiative in April, INDRI has made good progress towards the goal of mobilising the private sector much more strongly in the wider efforts to regreen Madagascar, and in particular in the national initiative Alamino, which aims to mobilise expertise collective intelligence and advocacy to reverse the trend of forest loss in the country.

In particular, INDRI has launched a very promising partnership with the investment fund Miarakap. This fund initiated the Mitsiry program to challenge and strengthen the theory of change or “impact thesis” of various impact businesses in Madagascar. This program aims to support startups and small enterprises that aim for a triple bottom line. As part of this collaboration, INDRI conducted several activities.

Firstly, we conducted a field mission in the Anosy region, focusing on fostering much stronger links between honey production and forest conservation. This mission not only reinforced the impact thesis of a specific company (Ilanga Nature / Senteurs et Saveurs du Monde - SSM), but also led to the launch of a regional strategy between the honey sector and key conservation

players, such as Tropical Biodiversity & Social Enterprise (TBSE), Asity (local BirdLife partner) and Nitidae. This successful mission generated a lot of energy and enthusiasm among all involved, and further solidified our belief in the theory of change behind the Banjinala initiative.

Subsequently, we drew lessons from this field visit to organise a bootcamp for 10 startups, again in partnership with Mirakap. As part of this bootcamp, we challenged and strengthened the environmental and social impact thesis of these 10 companies, 8 of which were then selected to receive further financial and technical support from Mirakap. We will remain involved with the next steps alongside Mirakap, and these 10 companies have now also become members of the Banjinala and wider Alamino initiatives, where they are already playing an active role. Mirakap has also become a member of Banjinala.

INDRI has also started mentoring a company called Renala, that is one of the most promising in terms of impact on the ground in regions where precious ecosystems are on the brink. This is proving to be very promising as Renala is developing a range of products valuing sustainable non timber forest products in close partnership with vulnerable communities.

In the same spirit, INDRI recently participated in the Foire Internationale de Madagascar (FIM), a major annual get together for the private sector in Madagascar. This participation served as an additional activity to strengthen our engagement with private companies. Over the course of the four days of this fair, many private sector business leaders joined the Banjinala initiative. We also took this opportunity to organise a roundtable about lessons learned and good practices from the private sector in the field of reforestation. This was also an opportunity to promote the “10 principles for successful reforestation in Madagascar” developed by INDRI in 2022.

Banjinala has therefore taken a good start as the private sector component of our national Alamino initiative, which brings together approximately 200 stakeholders, including government authorities, civil society, local communities, NGOs and donor agencies, all involved in environmental efforts in Madagascar. Since the launch of Alamino, the private sector had been somewhat underrepresented. Through the current efforts supported by the Darwin Initiative, we are already successfully strengthening the presence of private sector companies, which not only enhances our overall impact and influence, but also brings innovative solutions that can benefit all stakeholders. Some of these companies have business models specifically designed to address unresolved ecological problems, including charcoal production, forest destruction, soil erosion, soil degradation caused by the use of harmful chemicals, etc.

At present, we have secured the participation of 24 private sector companies in the Banjinala initiative. Additionally, we have managed to involve industry associations like the Groupement des Entreprises de Madagascar (GEM), the Groupement des Entreprises Franches et Partenaires (GEFP) and the Confédération du Tourisme de Madagascar. The involvement of these two types of actors underscores the commitment and spirit of collaboration that prevail in the Banjinala initiative.

INDRIConnect :

In line with our commitment within the Banjinala initiative, we have also made progress on the development of the INDRIConnect tool, a collaborative online library created by the INDRI team with support from Sango Media agency. This platform has been designed to provide easy access to a vast pool of essential resources, including maps, analyses, guides, manuals, technical data,

and best practices, all related to reversing the trend of forest loss and land degradation in Madagascar.

In an effort to foster effective communication and closer collaboration among stakeholders, INDRICConnect also offers a private section accessible only to members of the Alamino and Banjinala initiatives. These members will be provided with personal login credentials to access this restricted area and upload content. This tool will be crucial to ensure that all relevant stakeholders in Madagascar have smooth access to the information they need. This may seem mundane, but it is crucial. Indeed, the environment community in Madagascar has generated a large pool of excellent documentation over the years, but it is very scattered and hard to access. This problem leads too many projects to start from scratch, which of course is not a driver of success.

Currently, INDRICConnect is in its final stages of development, and it already hosts 36 relevant documents in its online library, together with the details and presentation of 67 stakeholders. More will follow as we develop this tool.

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.

Over its first six months, the project has run its course without any notable challenge or unexpected development. Three specific points should nevertheless be mentioned.

1. Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy has left her position as Coordinator for Terrestrial Landscapes, to take a new position with IUCN. She remains strongly involved with INDRI as a cofounder and supporter.

Following her departure, it has been decided that she should be replaced by an internal promotion and a reallocation of roles, rather than through an external recruitment. The main coordination of Banjinala will now be undertaken by Linjasa Rakotomalala, with strong support from the Executive Director and colleagues.

In terms of budget implications, so far her departure has led us to spend less of the Banjinala budget than we had foreseen. However, moving forward, we are proposing to keep the same amount allocated to salaries under Banjinala, only with a certain redistribution of the allocations going to team members' salaries.

We have a solid team and we are confident that these changes will have no negative impact on the delivery of the activities planned under the Banjinala initiative.

2. Activities conducted over the past 6 months, although directly part of the planned activities within Banjinala, were in the end actually covered by Mirakap. That includes the mission in the Anosy region and the bootcamp. Therefore we have spent less than planned on activities, but this means we now have enhanced potential in terms of financial resources, for even stronger activities in the coming months.

3. You may notice an overspend of 33% on the budget line “capital equipment”. This is due to the fact that we recently acquired two computers, and by mistake both were imputed to our Darwin account, even though only one should have been. The second computer is for another project. We apologise for this technical error and we propose to correct it by transferring back to our Darwin account the amount corresponding to the second computer.

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:

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?

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**