



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



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	DARNV012
Project title	The Banjinala Initiative for private investment in re-greening Madagascar
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Madagascar
Lead Organisation	INDRI, Initiative for Development, ecological Restoration and Innovation
Partner(s)	
Project leader	Jean-Philippe Palasi
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	2024/10/27, HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	https://indri.solutions/

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 last 6 months have seen great progress in the development of the strategy and charter. We have organised 4 workshops (one in the capital and 3 in the regions), which have seen a strong mobilisation of stakeholders and in particular the private sector:

- Workshop in Fort-Dauphin, September 19, 2024
- Workshop in Ambanja, July 25, 2024
- Workshop in Antananarivo with key players, July 5, 2024
- Workshop in Tamatave, June 13, 2024

These activities enabled the document to be enriched and refined on the basis of contributions from the various workshops held in the field. All the results of the consultations and these 4 workshops have been incorporated into the document.

At the request of the stakeholders, the strategy and the charter have been integrated into a single document, and the strategy has been structured into 5 strategic

areas:

- Agro-ecological, terrestrial and marine sectors
- Carbon projects
- Ecological cooking solutions
- Ecotourism
- Reforestation and ecological restoration projects

In addition, the stakeholders have identified 3 horizontal areas of work that have also been incorporated into the strategy:

- Financing, incentives and support for profitability
- Improving the business climate
- Strengthening applied research

At this stage, we can see that this strategy has mobilised a great deal of interest and hope in Madagascar. Over the next few months, the strategy will need to be further refined, a final version published and advocacy efforts undertaken,

which will involve already-identified multipliers as well as collaboration with the Economic Development Board of Madagascar (EDBM).

Now that the site has been online for a few months, we have been able to obtain some useful feedback from certain stakeholders. Stakeholders find the site very useful and promising, and it meets a real need to find key documents and stakeholders by region in terms of conservation in Madagascar more easily. The Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development has also shown a great deal of interest, and discussions are underway about working together on databases to maximise the impact of our actions.

Based on feedback, we have recently improved INDRICConnect by refining the filtering systems to optimise the search for documents and actors, while automating the uploading of documents. These changes make it easier to add resources and improve the user experience thanks to an optimised interface, making INDRICConnect accessible on smartphones and computers with intuitive navigation.

In terms of content, we were able to identify over 400 documents. After a case-by-case assessment, 283 were selected as relevant and integrated into the site. We have also added new players, bringing the total number of players listed to 79.

The next steps are to further enhance the database and to launch it publicly, with a communication campaign to promote it to the stakeholders concerned.

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.

Overall, the Banjinala project is progressing as planned, and the objectives have been achieved, thanks in particular to the strong mobilisation of stakeholders and partners.

However, in order to take into account all the inputs received in Antananarivo and in the regions, and to respond as effectively as possible to the interest expressed by the MEDD, we have decided to slightly postpone the launch of the strategy and INDRICConnect (as we indicated by email in September). This time is also being used to optimise the INDRICConnect interface on the basis of feedback. The launch of the strategy and INDRICConnect will be the subject of a group event which is now imminent (we plan to hold it in the last week of November).

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

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 ☒

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?

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.

1. Evaluator's general assessment :

- The project has progressed well with good preparation of activities and significant stakeholder involvement. The project succeeded in mobilising 158 organisations, including 60 private companies, through strategic partnerships.*
- The INDRICConnect initiative was finalised and published as planned, generating a great deal of interest. However, more time is needed to develop and refine the library.*
- Stakeholders are well engaged and the project shows good potential to achieve its objectives.*

2. Recommendations for future reports and activities :

- Develop a risk register for the remaining implementation of the project (this includes risk management related to natural disasters such as the hurricane in Nosy Be).*

=> This risk register has been developed. See appendix.

- Create an activity tracking tool to monitor project implementation against agreed indicators and milestones.*

=> In recent months INDRI has put in place an integrated monitoring tool for the various activities supported by different donors. This was set up with the support of the NGO Maliasili. We are not in a position to share the entire schedule, which is quite large and goes beyond Banjinala, but a screenshot is attached.

- Provide formal training for the person responsible for protection, to better manage the aspects of security and respect for the rights of the people involved in the project.*

=> The team being fully mobilised delivering on-going activities, a specific training was not possible yet. However, 3 of our staff are currently benefiting from an ambitious leadership training over one year, the Madagascar Environment Leadership Program (MELP), in which these aspects are covered.

- Develop a section on advocacy tools and methods for the national strategy, given their importance in achieving the project's objectives.*

=> In September 2024, we held a specific brainstorm session with key leaders from the private sector and key influencers, to determine what will be the key steps in terms of advocacy. We identified the Economic Development Board of Madagascar (EDBM) as the key institution that can translate this strategy into national policy, and we established a strategy to engage this institution. Essentially, that strategy will rely on a few key influencers approaching EDBM and facilitating the process. These influencers have already given their agreement for this push. They are :

- Adrian Levrel, head of INSUCO Madagascar**
- Caroll Razafimahaleo, former environmental adviser, Sahanala**
- François-Xavier Mayer, Administrator at the Tourism Confederation of Madagascar**
- Barijaona Ramaholimihaso, Deputy Director, Banque BNI**

The evaluator also recommends continuing to include tailor-made approaches for engaging businesses, strengthening post-workshop data collection for a more in-depth analysis of long-term impacts, and creating an internal tool to monitor the implementation of activities in relation to the project's indicators and logical framework.

=> These comments have been taken into account. As regards the tool for monitoring the implementation of activities, this is the system mentioned above, a screenshot of which is provided in the appendix.

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.	
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?	
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.	