



**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: 31<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com) including your project ref in the subject line.**

<b>Project reference</b>	<b>DPR9S2\1018</b>
<b>Project title</b>	Bathymetry, and seafloor habitats within Ascension Island's nearshore waters
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Ascension Island
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	British Geological Survey
<b>Partner(s)</b>	AIG/UKHO
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Rhys Cooper</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	<i>HYR 3</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="http://www.bgs.ac.uk">www.bgs.ac.uk</a> <a href="https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/bgs-completes-first-mapping-expedition-to-ascensionisland/">https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/bgs-completes-first-mapping-expedition-to-ascensionisland/</a> <a href="https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/in-photos-marine-surveying-a-remote-volcanic-island/">https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/in-photos-marine-surveying-a-remote-volcanic-island/</a>

**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.

<p>BGS have submitted all survey data &amp; report to the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) who have confirmed it is a IHO Order 1a survey suitable for use in chart production (email 30/9/24).</p> <p>BGS have submitted a draft of all final map outputs and report to the Ascension Island Government Conservation Department for review. This includes seabed substrate, geomorphology and habitat maps. Sent 9<sup>th</sup> October 24. Feedback requested by end of November 24.</p> <p>BGS are currently planning the final trip in January or February 2025 to deliver the final outputs and provide training in their use and modification as required.</p> <p>BGS staff presented initial findings at the International Conference on Seafloor Landforms, Processes and Evolution, Lipari 1-2 July 2024.</p>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p>For various reasons (see previous change requests), BGS will have an underspend on non-pay. We have spent a great deal of time (April – Sept 24) trying to identify a way to add value to the project by improved seafloor sampling and the use of an Autonomous Surface Vessel (ASV). The inherent difficulties of operating in remote Ascension and water access issues make this impossible and we will not be claiming for the full budget. The reduction will be about 16k.</p>	
<p><b>3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</b></p>	
Discussed with NIRAS:	Yes
Formal Change Request submitted:	No – advised by Eilidh (email dated 28/08/24) that we just need to declare in actual final claim. No change request required
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes
<p>Change Request reference if known: <i>If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome</i></p>	

<p><b>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)</b></p> <p><b>Actual spend:</b></p>
<p><b>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)?</b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully.</b> Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.</p>

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?**

No

**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.

Copies of all final outputs will be provided with final report once checked and approved by all partners – this process is now fairly advanced.

We are waiting on UKHO providing official receipt and validation certificate of survey data.

## Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024)	
Have you <b>responded to any additional feedback</b> (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 <b>risk register</b> ?	
For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024)	
Have you responded to <b>feedback from your latest Annual Report Review</b> ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	Yes
For All Projects	
Include your <b>project reference</b> in the subject line of submission email.	Yes
Submit to <a href="mailto:BCFs-Report@niras.com">BCFs-Report@niras.com</a> .	Yes
Have you <b>clearly highlighted any confidential information</b> within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	Yes
Have you reported against the most <b>up to date information for your project</b> ?	Yes
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	Yes

