



**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	DPLUS207
Project title	Empowering and preparing Cayman's Sister Island's to tackle invasive mammals
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cayman Islands
Lead Organisation	RSPB
Partner(s)	Department of Environment, National Trust for the Cayman Islands
Project leader	<i>Joe Jeffcoate</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>31st Oct 2024, HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.facebook.com/CaymanSisterIslandsInvasiveSpecies/ <i>(to be updated to reflect this project)</i>

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 project has progressed well in this reporting period. We held a launch meeting with all partners in June 2024 building on lessons learned from DPLUS128. This included sessions to develop key messages for our comms strategy, a stakeholder identification/analysis session and we developed our project risk framework (provided alongside this report).

Following a successful tender process, we have awarded Robinson Holdsworth Conservation Trust with the contract to complete the non-target impact trials and develop the operational plan for the Little Cayman feral cat eradication. Preparations for their visit to complete these trials are well underway and is expected to take place in January 2025.

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) has advertised and recruited for the Biosecurity & Community Engagement post for Little Cayman (indicator 1.1). Tamara Doyle, a

<p>previous resident of Little Cayman with well-established links to the community, is expected to start in due course following confirmation of relevant work permit (see section 2).</p> <p>NTCI staff, accompanied by RSPB project lead, spent time with various domestic cat owners on both Little Cayman and Cayman Brac to assess interest in, and to gather details for, the indoor cat enclosure trials. There is significant interest in these trials, and we have already gained valuable insight from pet owners currently maintaining indoor cats on the Sister Islands.</p> <p>Further feral cat control operations will take place as necessary following annual spotlight surveys, particularly on Little Cayman. C.88% of the population was removed over the last 2 years and, as yet, there does not appear to be a significant bounce back of feral cats, therefore future control operations are to be informed by spotlight surveys to ensure the population is sufficiently suppressed until the eradication can take place, post-project end.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	
<p>Tenders received for the non-target impact trials/operational planning were more expensive than originally budgeted. Robinson Holdsworth Conservation Trust were the successful bid and were able to provide some flexibility in their quote, however we will need to submit a change request to accommodate these higher costs via adjustment of budget categories. It will not impact the scope of the project as DoE are able to provide additional match-funding for equipment costs and there are no challenges expected as per timetable at this stage.</p> <p>Recruitment of the Little Cayman Biosecurity and Community Engagement Officer, though completed quickly, is facing some hurdles in obtaining the appropriate work permit. We did however expect this recruitment and work permit process to take time and planned for the post to be on-island by October 2024, but we are slightly behind. This does leave us with some small challenges in implementation as this post is critical to the community engagement on Little Cayman, however other NTCI staff (Community Engagement Officer on Cayman Brac and Environmental Programmes Manager) will be able to take this on in the interim.</p>	
<p>3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</p>	
Discussed with NIRAS:	No
Formal Change Request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	No
<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>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)</p> <p>Actual spend:</p>
<p>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)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>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.</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?

N/A

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.

It is noted that you intend to make requests for new posts to the Cayman Islands Government: it is possible they may not be agreed. Please ensure this is included in your risk register; This was included as an assumption risk in our logframe and is also now included in our risk register. The Director of DoE is aware of this project output and will work to include this role in the next government budget round.

While recognising the sensitivities around the work, especially that proposed for Cayman Brac, it is noted that there are some significant risks to agreement with animal welfare organisations; This has been a focus of discussions, particularly at the project launch meeting in June, whereby Cayman Islands Humane Society (CIHS) were identified as a priority stakeholder. We have proactively engaged CIHS throughout the project's development and have maintained, particularly through NTCI, a positive and ongoing line of communication. Management of/engagement with other animal welfare organisations is included in our risk register and is being proactively managed.

The logframe could be strengthened:

Consider if natural events should be added as an assumption to the Outcome section of the logframe; We feel the most appropriate level for this assumption is at the output level and did not want to repeat assumptions too often in the logframe. However, it is noted as a significant risk and is included in our risk register with partners well experienced in managing work plans around hurricane season.

Not all indicators are timebound (e.g., 0.5) and some indicators could be SMARTer (e.g. be specific in your measures rather than simply saying "increased awareness" or "increased technical expertise"). Indicator 0.5 timeline is to be completed by end of project. We will review other indicators as necessary and include any amendments in the forthcoming change request as mentioned in section 2.

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

X

HYP (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 ?	X
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.	n/a
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	X
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	X
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 ?	X
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	X