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**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 2024

Project reference	<i>IWTEV010</i>
Project title	Behaviour changes approaches to address belief-based use of vultures
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Senegal, The Gambia and Guinea Bissau
Lead partner	BirdLife International
Partner(s)	L'Association Nature-Communautés-Développement (NCD), Organization for the Defense and Development of Wetlands (OZDH) and West African Bird Study Association WABSA
Project leader	<i>Fadzai Matsvimbo</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>31 October 2024, (HYR2)</i>
Project website/blog/social media	

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).

The indicators for the project are still relevant. From the last reporting, the project assumptions still hold true.

Output 1: The drivers and influencers of belief-based use of vulture parts are determined by Y1 Q2 and inform the design of a pilot social marketing campaign.

Delayed. Highlights include:

- Surveys were conducted in four neighbourhoods of the city of Bissau and in Canchungo among two groups of traditional healers, 18 'jambacosses' (healers who practise traditional medicine based on ancestral spirits or on the spiritual force mediating between God and human beings) known in Guinea-Bissau as 'irā' - and 21 'muros' - healers who practise traditional medicine based on the Koran. Of those interviewed, 31 were men and 8 were women. The ages of those interviewed ranged from 33 to 89.
- In Guinea Bissau, 94% of respondents said they were aware of people using vulture parts. Most respondents (43.75%) said that men used vulture parts the most, compared with 28% of women. The reasons for using vulture parts were as follows; power gain (28% of responses), spiritual protection (24.6%), luck (19.3%), disease treatment (8.8%). The most used vulture parts are head with 35% of responses, followed by feathers with 25%, legs, 22.1%, bones 16.1%.
As for alternatives of vulture parts, 75.8% of respondents said they knew of them, while 24.2% (n=8) did not. About 55% (n=18) of the total respondents indicated that the roots and leaves of plants can be used in traditional healing without needing to use vulture parts and will produce the same effects, 21% (n=7) indicated that Quranic prayer is also an alternative without needing to use any animal.

- In Senegal, focus group discussions were conducted with traditional healers, youth associations and women's groups. The FDGs revealed that use of vulture parts use purposes related to trade, marriage and traditional medical care is well known, low knowledge on the of the ecological role played vultures in environmental and human health in the commune/villages. Plant-based alternatives available e.g for treating chronic hiccups instead of vulture feathers.

Output 2: Improved understanding of the role and value of vultures by consumers in 10 pilot communities and increased engagement of 35 traditional healers towards finding alternatives to vulture parts.

Delayed. Highlights include:

- In Guinea Bissau, 81% (n=29) of the 36 respondents said they were aware of the environmental impacts of using vulture parts, and 19% (n=7) were not aware of the environmental impacts of using vulture parts.
- In Guinea-Bissau, more than half of the respondents, 65% (n=20) out of a total of 31, maintain that vultures are very important in maintaining ecosystem health, 29% (n=9) consider them to be important, 3% (n=1) replied that they are of little importance in ecosystems and 3% (n=1) consider vultures to be of no importance to the ecosystem.
- In Senegal, workshop to share experiences on the use of plant-based alternatives conducted with traditional healers
- In Senegal meetings conducted across 8 villagers, reaching 101 potential customers within Economic Interest Groups
- The firm commitment of the First Deputy Mayor to help raise awareness among the population of the Commune of Diaobé-Kabendou.
- In Gambia a training workshop for 30 traditional healers on the herbal alternatives to vulture parts, was conducted, list of potential plant-based alternatives and uses generated.
- Mass sensitisation in Gambia via radio and mobile van reaching thousands of people
- - WABSA team (Gambia) visited Dobo and Sare Banno on, to monitor guinea fowl farming. The results were positive: the guinea fowl population is still increasing, there have only been two deaths, and the guinea fowl population has reproduced.

-Output 3 : Lessons are shared nationally and regionally and implementation of CITES

Decisions, the CMS Vulture MsAP and the Sub-Regional Action Plan addressing the direct persecution of vultures in West Africa.

On Target: Highlights: Include

- BirdLife Africa Vulture Forum conducted in July 2024, to promote collaboration and share lessons across the different regions.
- Project progress shared at the Council of African Partnership in September 2024, via presentations from Senegal and from Guinea-Bissau
- NCD conducted meeting with the CITES representative at to inform them of the project

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.

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
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance	No
Change request reference if known:	Not known

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 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**