



**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	<i>IWTEV020</i>
Project title	Combatting Illegal Fishing: Designing Evidence-based Interventions in Gulf of Honduras
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Belize, Guatemala, Honduras
Lead Organisation	Wildlife Conservation Society
Partner(s)	
Project leader	<i>Nicole Auil Gomez</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>October 31st 2024 HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>Belize.wcs.org</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 start date was August 1st, 2024, therefore the project is in the preliminary stages. WCS recently submitted signed award papers and is in the process of submitting a financial claim request and as well as a change request. This change request will modify the start and end date, the log frame and various risk framework documents, including an updated risk register, the Change map and issue log.

The 3-country program (Belize, Guatemala and Honduras) staff have met twice in the first two months for kick off meetings discussing the project details, GAF documents and compliance necessary for the project. An additional planning meeting was done to discuss the project deliverables, timeline, adjustments and next steps moving the project forward. WCS Guatemala and Honduras are currently in the process of developing subaward agreements with partners for the implementation of community surveys. WCS Belize team is working on financial

submission claims, and activity 1.1 Literature review, with academic documents on file and documents shared from Honduras and Guatemala team.

WCS Belize Project Co-Manager Yamira Novelo Fuentes recently gave a presentation in Guatemala to members of the Trination Alliance for the Conservation of the Gulf of Honduras (TRIGOH), as well as fishers' association from Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. The presentation aimed to bring awareness of this award detailing the project scope, background and objectives for the Gulf of Honduras. Additionally, Mrs. Novelo Fuentes spoke on the importance of standardizing the project survey implementation across the three countries, and WCS interest to gain additional stakeholders' feedback and collaboration to understand the threats of the GOH. The workshop also provided a medium for WCS to understand some of the current supplementary livelihood initiatives, threats, and challenges faced by fishers from all three countries. At the two-day event, Mrs. Novelo Fuentes had opportunities for discussion with fishers, government representatives, and other NGO's from the project site.

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.

Issues that arose in the last 2 months include:

1. We will continue to monitor this issue closely and are awaiting confirmation from another organization to file a change request. This has also delayed the submission of the updated Change Map as we are waiting to identify a new sub-awardee.
2. Because of the delays in the award notice, the project start date was postponed from May 1st, 2024, to August 1st, 2024. GAF documents still list the project end date as 31 October 2025. Originally, the project was scheduled for 18 months, but the reduction of 3 months will moderately impact the timeline, necessitating the expedited completion of deliverables. WCS will include an adjustment to the project end date in the Change Request to ensure effective and efficient delivery of 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/ **No**

Formal Change Request submitted:

Yes/ **No**

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

Yes/ No

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** ☐ Estimated underspend:

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.

N/A

Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1 st 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 ?	Yes
For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1 st 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.	Yes
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	Yes
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	Yes
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	Yes

Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.
--

Yes
