

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 2022

Project reference	IWT099
Project title	Securing Chitwan-Sindhuli Green Corridor; strengthening community stewardship and law enforcement
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Nepal
Lead partner	Zoological Society of London
Partner(s)	Himalayan Nature and Mithila Wildlife Trust
Project leader	<i>Monica Wrobel/Bhagawan Raj Dahal</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>October 2022/HYR2</i>
Project website/blog/social media	

1. 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 project team have continued implementing second year activities as planned in the project document. In this reporting period, the majority of the activities planned for community members (Output 3 and 4) are completed. However due to the change in the leadership of Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), activities related to national and governmental authorities (Output 1 and 2) are rescheduled for coming quarters. The project team have briefed the new leader of DNPWC on the scope of the project and the progress made to date. The project also prioritized incorporating feedback on the annual report from the independent reviewer for which the periodic meetings and capacity enhancement events were organized for the partners. The detail of progress is as below:

Output 1: Intelligence-sharing and collaboration between national and transboundary law enforcement agencies to combat IWT is deepened, enabled through capacity building and technology improvement, resulting in actions taken along suspected trade routes and border points.

The South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) is coordinating national and transboundary governmental authorities to conduct national level workshops (Act 1.1 and 1.2) to document and address the existing gaps in national and transboundary intelligence sharing mechanism. Similarly, preparation is ongoing to conduct national level training of trainers (ToT) on wildlife part identification.

Output 2: Priority illegal wildlife trade routes through Nepal are identified, with LE agencies' enhanced understanding of wildlife crime hotspots and strengthened capacity, enabling the disruption of transnational wildlife crime.

In total, 22 investigation officers from 15 district forest offices (DFO) and 2 protected areas (PAs) from Province 1 were capacitated with TOT on the protocols for prosecution of wildlife criminals and crime scene investigation.

Output 3: Two Community Managed Pangolin Conservation Areas (CMPCAs) established within the Chitwan-Sindhuli corridor promote participatory pangolin conservation and protect pangolins and other traded species, reducing IWT at its source.

During this reporting period, two refresher training courses on forest patrolling and pangolin habitat monitoring were conducted for 48 Community Based Anti-Poaching Units (CBAPU)s members from four CBAPUs and 30 Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) members from four CFUGs (Act 3.6). The CBAPU and CMPCA members have conducted 32 monitoring sessions in the pangolin habitats of the project sites. (Act 3.6). During this reporting period, field equipment purchased in year 1 was distributed among CBAPUs members. CMPCAs in both sites conducted two quarterly meetings in each site with PA/DFO officials to share their monitoring observations (Act 3.9). To inform CMPCA members and wider communities on pangolin conservation within Chitwan-Sindhuli corridor, radio jingles on pangolin conservation and IWT control are being broadcast 5 times a day in each project site (Dhanusa and Makawanpur). In addition to this, 4 information boards and four wall paintings with pangolin conservation messages have been placed in strategic locations. Finally, four awareness-raising events were conducted in three schools across the project sites (Act 3.10).

Output 4: Vulnerable community members are accessing sustainable livelihood options, ensuring economic resiliency, reducing the economic drivers of poaching and IWT related activities.

The number of members of two inclusive women-led cooperatives established in year 1, have increased from 68 to 133 in this reporting period (Act 4.3). Of the additional 65 members, four are male and 61 are female. Likewise, 46 of them belong to indigenous and disadvantaged groups. With increased members, the project has supported by providing additional seed funding (NPR 1,401,280) making seed fund a total of NPR 3,136,145 (Act 4.5). A 7-day livestock rearing training course was conducted (Act 4.6) for 35 additional members at *Chetana Mahila Aayarjan Samuha*. Similarly, a refresher training on livestock rearing was conducted (Act 4.6) for 33 members at Aayamik aayaarjan bipanna barga mahila upasamiti. Three training sessions for capacity building within cooperative management and account keeping were also conducted for women-led cooperatives on both sides (Act 4.4). Further, an exposure visit was also conducted for 63 members at *Chetana Mahila Aayarjan Samuha* (Act 4.7). In total, 8 monthly meetings were conducted by the two women led cooperatives (Act 4.7).

Effective engagement and capacity enhancement of partners

- 1. Quarterly meeting with Partners:** ZSL Nepal organized three quarterly meetings with partners. ZSL conducted quarterly meetings with MWT on 4 Aug 2022 and HN/SAWEN on 17 Aug 2022. In these meetings, the partners provided quarterly progress updates and ZSL Nepal shared comments received on an annual report from an independent review. To address the comments received from the independent review, ZSL prepared a reporting template for partners and oriented partners on reporting requirements. In addition, a virtual meeting was organized among MWT, HN and SAWEN on 22 Sep 2022. In this meeting, partners shared a progress update on the second quarter and ZSL Nepal shared the reporting timeline for half yearly report.
- 2. Orientation on safeguard and financial compliance:** On 20 May 2022, an orientation session on environmental and social risk management was organized for 22 partners and stakeholders from IWT project sites. ZSL also organized a virtual orientation event (22 Sep 2022) on safeguarding and financial compliance for partners implementing the BCF funded project. ZSL is currently implementing two BCF projects (one DI main and one IWTCF main). Therefore, the orientation event was combined for all partners involved (Mithila Wildlife Trust and Himalayan Nature). SAWEN, a regional inter-governmental body who are helping us execute some activities were also invited. The partners had requested this orientation during the DI inception meeting and the IWTCF technical report's comment sharing meeting.

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.

The project was ready to implement output 1 and 2 during this reporting period as planned in the workplan, but a sudden change in leadership of DNPWC meant that more coordination to brief the project and activities to new leadership was required. As a result, the national and transboundary workshop planned for this reporting period is rescheduled for the second half of the year 2. However, this change will not affect overall budget and plan for year 2.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS-LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

4a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

4b. 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.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

None.

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), 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.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but should also be raised with NIRAS-LTS International 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**