

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 2023

Project reference	IWT100
Project title	Stemming Illegal Wildlife Trade & Enhancing Community Livelihoods in Zimbabwe
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Zimbabwe
Lead partner	Savé Valley Conservancy
Partner(s)	Anti-Poaching Tracking Specialists (ATS)
Project leader	Nicky Gripper
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	April 2023 – September 2023 Half Year Report 1
Project website/blog/social media	www.savevalleyconservancy.org https://www.facebook.com/savevalleyconservancy/

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).

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.

As per our submitted Change Request 1 which requested for an extension of the project end date by twelve months as a result of delays in getting the project off the ground, due to the challenges we experienced in the recruitment of a qualified Community Liaison Manager (CLM) for this project and the acquisition of an ideal car for use by the CLM. As the project is hinged upon the CLM being on the ground, effective work started in August and below is the progress made up to September 2023.

The Project has achieved the following progress as per the revised Project Plan:

- The CLM managed to have meetings with all the relevant stakeholders which play a role in this project. The CLM had individual meetings with all the Savé Valley Conservancy (SVC) Members to outline how the project will impact them and how they are expected to make their contribution going forward. The CLM had personal meetings with the surrounding communities' traditional leaders (Chiefs) who head the various communities surrounding the SVC from which the female rangers and women to be involved in mending the fence will be drawn from and outlined the project purpose and focus, and the intended benefits the communities will derive from the project. Meetings with the three Rural District Councils (RDCs) which have jurisdiction over communities that surround the SVC, to appraise them of the project and its deliverables. At these meetings with the

RDCs, the Project Coordinator and the CLM agreed with the RDCs for the preparation and sign-off of Memorandum of Understanding to have a well-documented action plan, on how the RDCs and SVC will collaborate to ensure that the project's deliverables are achieved, and key being the reduction of the illegal wildlife trade, which has a direct benefit to the SVC with regards to increase in game numbers and the improvement in the various communities' livelihoods. Thus, buy-in is now sort and they are fully on-board and want to see this project succeed. A meeting was held with Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) Regional Manager in charge of the province which SVC operates under as they are the major custodians of the animals in the country. They were quite impressed with the project brief and proffered some guidance. The CLM met the Anti-Poaching and Tracking Specialists (ATS) Director, who will be responsible for the training of the female rangers to strategise on how the recruitment, selection, and training will be done, and how the rangers would be expected to operate within the SVC ranger unit spectrum. Its pleasing to note that all stakeholders are fully onboard and are eager and geared to see the project take-off and bring the desired outcomes to the benefit of all.

- The CLM, with the help of the Anti-Poaching Unit (ATS) Director, SVC Members, the Chiefs and Rural District Councils managed to identify six priority areas to focus with key fence stretch areas that require repairing to be able to cut on illegal wildlife trade.
- The CLM in collaboration with the ATS Director, Rural District Councils, the communities and SVC Members have managed to document Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) baselines, against which the project's progress and its effectiveness will be measured against, as we monitor and evaluate as the project rolls out.
- The CLM also in collaboration with the ATS Director, Rural District Councils, the communities and SVC Members are now in the process of coming up with HWC mitigation measures to ensure a reduction in HWC going forward. This process is on track and is now about 60% complete. The idea is not to force measures upon the communities, but to engage them in a participatory approach in coming up with the measures, so that they have ownership of the process and be invested in the project.
- The ATS Director, the CLM and the Project Coordinator designed and drafted the rangers' terms of reference which details how the rangers will be operating.

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.

As indicated earlier, we had notable problems with the recruitment of a qualified CLM and the vehicle procurement for use by the CLM, as documented in our submitted Change Request 1 and 2, to cover the project timeline and the budgetary adjustments going forward. As explained in the Change Request 1, the major impact is on the project timeline which will overlap with an additional twelve months, though the budget will not be affected, but was merely readjusted to factor the project's twelve-month delay in completion. The project activities, thus delayed to take-off, but we are glad to report that we are now on-track as per our readjusted Project Plan and with every activity running as envisaged and hope to accomplish the project's deliverables as indicated in the logframe.

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 for both Change Requests (1 & 2)

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

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?

Just to inform you that our CEO Harry Idensohn left the organisation and we now have a new Project Leader in Nicky Gripper who took over from Harry. In a way this has managed to address some concerns that were raised in the report with regards to gender balance in the Project Board. This now has been rectified with the coming on board of Nicky.

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**