



**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	IWT100
Project title	Stemming Illegal Wildlife Trade & Enhancing Community Livelihoods in Zimbabwe
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Zimbabwe
Lead Organisation	Savé Valley Conservancy
Partner(s)	Anti-Poaching and Tracking Specialists (ATS)
Project leader	Nicola Gripper
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	April 2024 – September 2024 Half Year Report 2
Project website/blog/social media	www.savevalleyconservancy.org https://www.facebook.com/savevalleyconservancy/

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.

One of the cornerstone achievements in this period has been the successful completion of the second ranger training program in September. The training focussed on Earthranger training, Intelligence gathering and analysis, human and wildlife conflict reporting protocols, Intelligence reporting and reaction protocols. The training was augmented with practical field exercises aimed at enhancing the rangers' observational skills and operational readiness. Post-training evaluations will be assessed via reports as the rangers submit their daily data via the Earthranger platform to measure the rangers' competency levels against standard indicators.

Complementing the ranger training, a comprehensive first aid training was conducted for all rangers. This initiative was imperative as it aimed to equip the rangers with lifesaving skills that could be crucial during encounters with poachers or in the event of wildlife-related injuries. The

training included basic emergency response, trauma care, and first responder protocols. An initial assessment from field operations indicates that the knowledge gained has enhanced rangers' readiness to handle emergencies, thus increasing their resilience and capability in high-pressure situations.

To involve the local community in conservation initiatives, the Savé Valley Conservancy hosted an awareness campaign at the Checheche business centre, aimed at educating the public about the negative impacts of IWT. The campaign featured poems, drama, speeches from different stakeholders, and informational flyers that highlighted the ecological, economic, and social ramifications of wildlife trafficking. This event was witnessed by over 1,500 people on the day.

Using the M&E framework designed to assess the project's effectiveness against predefined standard indicators, most of our indicators are still relevant as noted: IWTCF-B10 – to date there has been a total of 8 arrests (linked to wildlife crime) facilitated by this project; IWTCF-D26 – The successful use of awareness campaigns involving all the relevant stakeholders has been an important tool that has impacted IWT in the surrounding communities; IWTCF-B06 – At least 12 criminal networks / trade routes have been mapped and identified because of the work of the female community rangers; IWTCF-B09 – To date the community rangers have accumulated 210 days of patrol in the project; IWTCF-B18 – A total of 53 intelligence reports have filtered through for management decisions on species protection; IWTCF-C05 – To date an estimated 7,000 people have been reached with the behaviour change message because of awareness campaigns and meetings conducted.

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 months from April to September brought difficult challenges, though most of them were successfully managed. The challenges primarily stemming from the drought that has wreaked havoc across the areas surrounding the Savé Valley Conservancy. Issues to do with deforestation for charcoal production have increased as people seek ways to earn a living, poaching of meat, and grass. The Human-Wildlife Conflict has also increased, with animals like elephants, which have been invading communities surrounding the SVC. Unfortunately, this has seen an increased number of problem animals shot by Zimbabwe National Parks in the period. These incidents have also heightened friction between the community and the female rangers, though this has been resolved through stakeholder engagements in the wildlife conservation sector, including ZPWMA and RDCs.

The implementation of non-lethal measures, such as noise and light deterrence, and good livestock management practices, have significantly reduced human-wildlife conflict. These measures, taught by the female community rangers, have had a positive impact on the communities, further strengthening our conservation efforts.

The impact of the drought on the project will be on the rangers working routine as they have to work twice as hard and having to cover more areas than usual on a day-to-day basis in gathering intel. There will be no impact on 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:

No

Formal Change Request submitted:

No

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

N/A

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 ☒

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?

NONE

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.

Responding to item 8 of our most recent annual report, with reference to the GESI context. This project was designed with input from Chiefs, traditional leaders, and other stakeholders who recognised that only men had been working and thus decided to empower women to transform livelihoods in communities, with the belief that by empowering a woman, you empower a nation. This has proven successful, as evidenced by the impact these female community rangers and fence monitors have had in their communities, where they are now regarded as beacons of light, inspiring girls to believe they, too, can do better and contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities.

Thus, the method to employing women was considered in light of the GESI background of these communities. In terms of selection, it considered underprivileged families, widows, those without parents, and so on in order to provide them with a good standard of living. We so consider that our GESI context is 'empowering'.

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 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 ?	
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.	
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	