



**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 2025

Please note all projects that were active before 1st October 2025 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 2025 – September 2025 Half Year Report 3
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).

The period under review marked a pivotal phase for the IWT100 Project, distinguished by significant advancements in data-driven decision-making and operational achievements in both security and community engagement. Female Community Rangers (FCRs) now effectively utilise Blackview phones linked to the Earthranger platform, resulting in a substantial increase in the volume and quality of field data. This includes georeferenced patrol tracks, wildlife sightings, and records of Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) and potential Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) signs. This formalized data gathering provides the Centralised Anti-Poaching Unit (CAPU) with a dynamic, real-time operating picture and allows for precise year-over-year comparisons of critical metrics, such as poaching pressure shifts and HWC recurrence rates.

FCRs displayed strong commitment, significantly boosting CAPU's effective patrol hours, focusing strategically on the conservancy-community interface and fence lines. The introduction of the "Female Ranger of the Month" award has further incentivised commitment and professionalism. Leveraging their strong community relationships, the rangers established a reliable informant network without needing financial incentives. This intelligence-led approach

proved highly effective, culminating in the arrest of a major bush meat syndicate in a Mkwesine hotspot, successfully denting poaching activities. Additionally, fence monitors dramatically improved the security of the SVC boundary through regular patrols and timely reporting of fence damage.

The FCRs actively drove transformative change through engagement and education. They trained local community members in non-lethal HWC mitigation measures, including noise/light deterrence, predator-proof kraal construction, and the use of organic methods like chilli fences to deter elephants. Awareness campaigns, often in collaboration with stakeholders at community gatherings, successfully enhanced knowledge of conservation and the detrimental effects of IWT. Furthermore, the project fostered the creation of school conservation clubs, establishing a crucial long-term sustainability mechanism for instilling conservation virtues in children.

While detailed economic reporting is ongoing, early results indicate livelihoods are improving. The combined impact of effective HWC mitigation and fence monitoring has secured key assets, such as, livestock and crop areas, providing a stable foundation for livelihood activities. This is particularly evident in the Savuli area, where previously abandoned farmland, once ravaged by herbivores, is now actively farmed again, signalling significant progress towards the project's goals.

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.

N/A

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement? N/A

Discussed with NIRAS:

Yes/ No **No**

Formal Change Request submitted:

Yes/ No **No**

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

Yes/ No **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* **N/A**

Guidance for Section 4: The information you provide in this section will be used by Defra to review the financial status of projects. This review will identify projects at random for spot checks on financial management and will include requests for evidence of the actual spend information provided below. Please ensure the figures you provide are as accurate as possible and that you have the evidence to support it. You do not need to provide it now.

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)

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 2026)?

Yes ☐ No ☒ Estimated underspend: £

4c. If you expect an 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, and not later than 31st December. 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 BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk

None

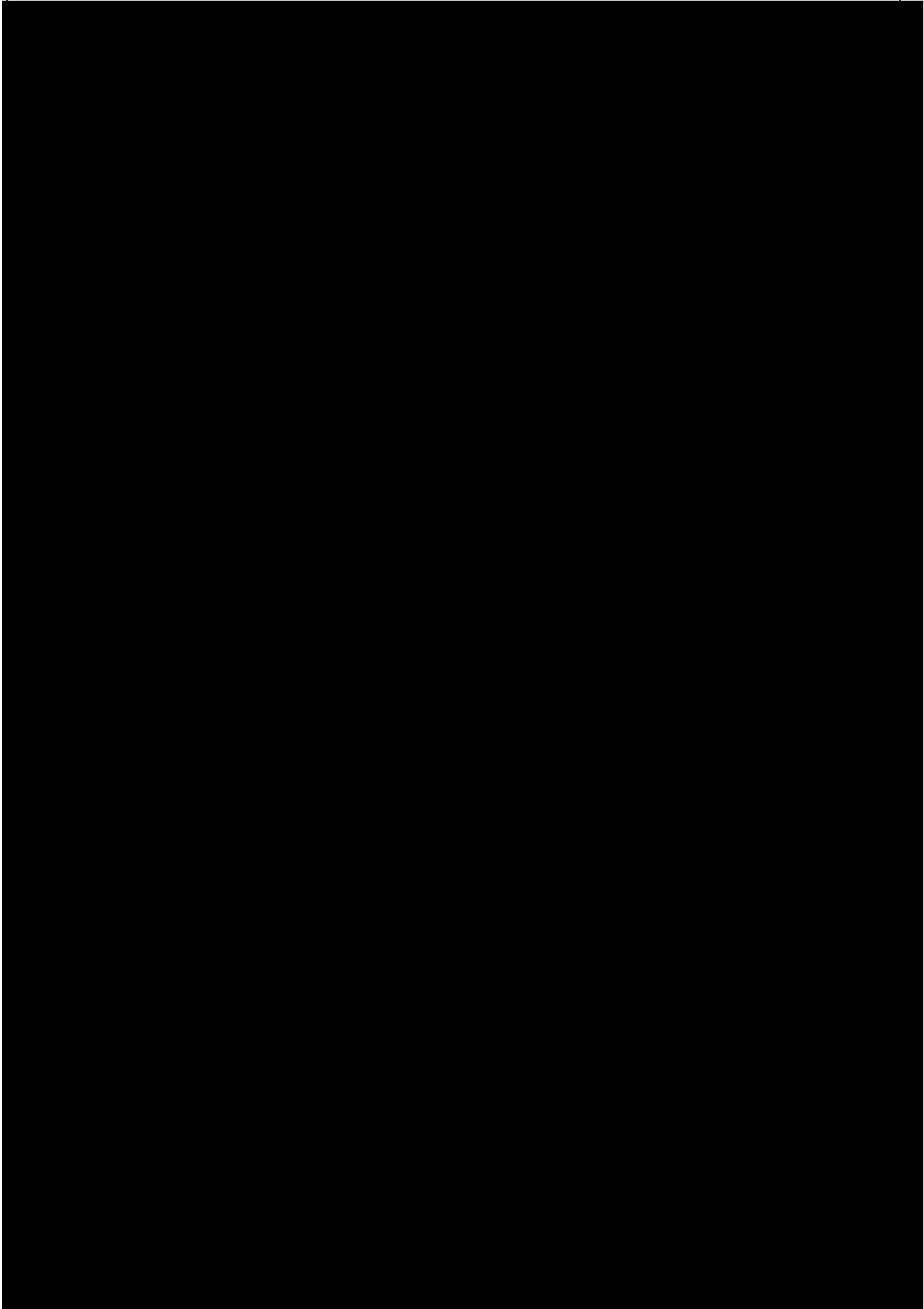
6. Project risk management

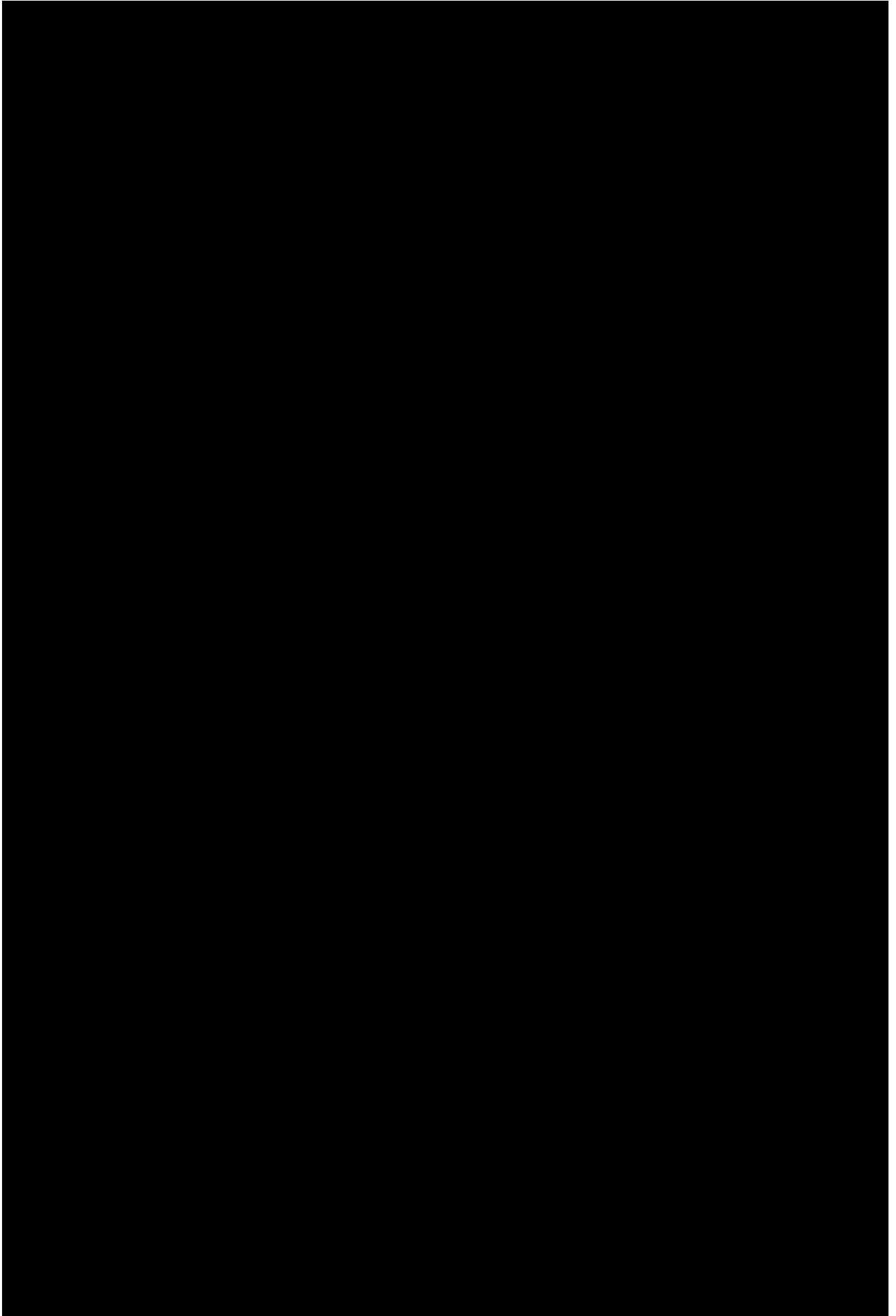
6a. If your project has an Overseas Security and Justice assessment, please provide an update on any related risks, and any special conditions in your award paperwork if relevant for your project.

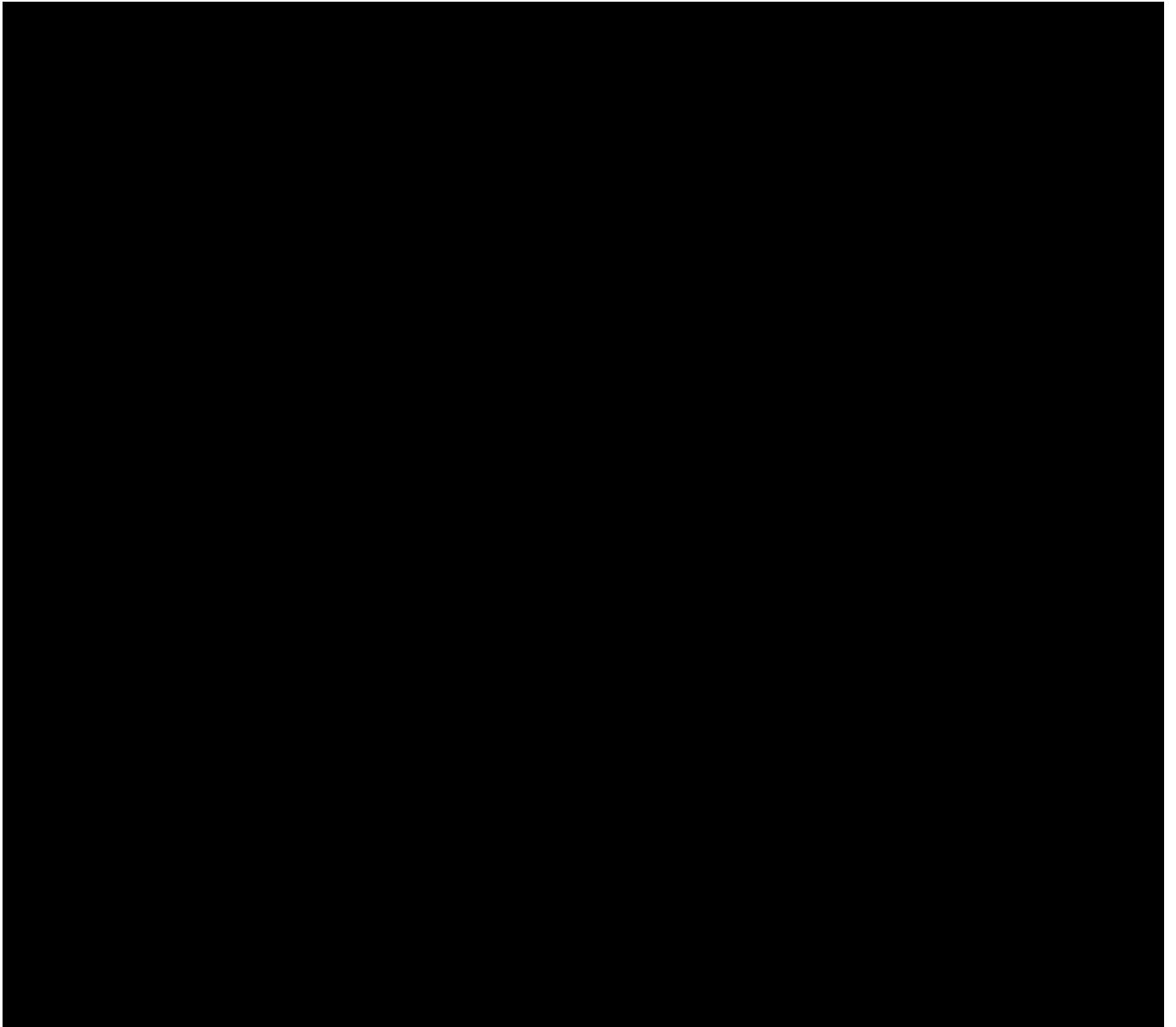
None

7. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent Annual Report. As a reminder, all projects that were

scored as 'Not Yet Sensitive' in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment of their latest Annual Report should demonstrate how they are meeting the minimum GESI-Sensitive standard.







Checklist for submission

Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, and annexe other requested materials as appropriate.	YES
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	YES
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website? Highlighted in RED	YES
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	NOTED
Submit to BCF-Reports@niras.com	NOTED
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	NOTED