

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2022

Project reference	IWT 103
Project title	Reducing Poverty and Illegal Trade Utilizing Bolivia's Charismatic Red-fronted Macaw
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Bolivia
Lead partner	Asociación Armonía
Partner(s)	Toro Toro Municipality SERNAP: Toro Toro National Park Government of Cochabamba
Project leader	Bennett Hennessey
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	01 April 2022 – 30 September 2022 Half Year Report 1
Project website/blog/social media	https://armoniabolivia.org/ https://twitter.com/armoniabolivia?lang=en https://www.facebook.com/armoniabolivia/

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).

- **Project Summary**

The project is well underway and on schedule. Armonia completed the Socioeconomic Baseline Study (Annex 1) which will be used as a reference to evaluate the impact of this program for 150 families within the project area. Three proposals have been developed to secure an economic increase of 150 families through the implementation of eco-tourism, beekeeping and eco-agriculture. The proposals presented by our consultants will be summarized in a manual and presented to all our stakeholders. Staff has been contracted to execute the specific actions of the tourism, beekeeping and agriculture proposal. Each proposal focusses on specific communities, carefully selected during our pre-evaluation, in order to have the highest positive impact while taking community interests into account. Environmental education products are being completed and a distribution and promotion strategy is being developed. Armonia contracted a communications expert to push our awareness activities and reach large numbers of people to halt the trafficking of wild species in Bolivia. Project pictures with description can be found in Annex 2.

- **Project Partnerships**

From April to July 2022, we accomplished to sign MOUs with our main allied institutions for the implementation of the project: the National Service of Protected Areas SERNAP (Annex 3), the Toro Toro National Park (Annex 4), and the Municipal Government of Toro Toro (Annex 5). Specific agreements were signed with the Cuñurani (Annex 6) and Río Caine (Annex 7) substations, and commitments were signed with 17 communities to agree on the execution of a joint work plan (Annex 8). In June, conversations began with the General Directorate of Biodiversity (DGB), Vice Ministry of Tourism, Governors of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and Potosí to work on disseminating antitrafficking information. Also, new partnerships were developed with the Departmental Education Service to work on formal environmental education documents.

- **Project Progress**

- **Education**

Armonia contracted an environmental education consultant to develop an environmental campaign strategy helping us to distribute all the materials we are currently developing and that have been completed. Apart from presentations conducted throughout the Toro Toro region at 13 different communities, we started presenting at strategic events to disseminate information about the Red-fronted Macaw Conservation needs (Santa Cruz Governors building – 50 attendants), conducting interviews, and publishing social media outputs in Spanish and English (Annex 9). We contracted a communications officer to execute the Education Strategy Plan.

The following progress was made:

- Educational book “Cautivos” (Captives) is printed and will be officially launched in November
- Macaw conservation and educational radio spots were developed in Quechua and Spanish. These will be launched in November: [Radio Spot Quechua Link](#) and [Radio Spot Spanish Link](#)
- Chapter 1 of the Red-fronted Macaw mini-series (4 chapters total) is receiving final adjustments: [Chapter1 Video Link](#)
- Antitrafficking banner used at presentations with slogan “We want to see them free!” created
- Workshop with 112 teachers was organized in September to include local input to complete the final updates of the education booklet for teachers

- **Tourism**

Armonia contracted Marcelo Arze (ex-Vice Minister of the National Tourism Department) who developed a tourism proposal that shows routes for specialized birders and the general birdwatching community, in order to increase local income of young people (men and women) at community and National Park level (Annex 10). With the development of an ecotourism route for two types of visitors, general and specialized, we will take advantage of the full potential the Toro Toro landscape (scenic landscapes of dramatic mountains, hills and the Caine River) has to offer while including already established infrastructures.

The following progress was made:

- Prospecting of four potential bird watching sites in July:
- Jala Jala Red-fronted Macaw breeding cliff at Cuñurani (develop lookout with blind)
- Swallows Waterfall in Calahuta
- Lookout over Rio Caine with scenic landscape (develop lookout with selfie attraction)
- Lookout “El Verdel” in Toro Toro with Bolivia’s deepest cliffs (infrastructure already in place but in urgent need for new signs and attractive information)
- Two routes were selected and detailed information as provide by Marcelo Arze. These routes have been included in the baseline Socioeconomic study to estimate local income potential.
- A detailed work plan for ecotourism (Annex 11) was developed
- Armonia contracted Rubí Yesenia Oliver to implement the tourism proposal
- Armonía participates with a Stand at the XI South American Bird Fair in Cuzco, October 29-30. Geraldine Avaroa will make contacts with international nature observation and birdwatching agencies to invite them to participate in a Fam Trip in February or June 2023.
- The training workshops are scheduled for December

- **Beekeeping & Eco-friendly Agriculture**

The production of honey and derivatives is one of the ecological activities that most favors the conservation of biodiversity. The project will provide beekeeping materials and hives in November to increase local income according the economic baseline study. In addition, an experiment with Melipona bees (native) will be developed in the natural forest of Jala Jala, where the largest nesting site of the Red-fronted Macaw is located.

Agriculture is the main economic activity of the communities settled along the Caine River. Producers use many agrochemicals to improve their yields, as a consequence they face resistant pests and depleted soils. The project will develop pilot experiment plots that will contribute to the gradual incorporation of sustainable organic farming with technical assistance in: pest control, agroforestry

and reduction in the use of firewood. This will be promoted and the ecofriendly products will be sold under a newly created Toro Toro brand.

The following progress was made:

- The ecofriendly agriculture proposal was completed by consultant Claudio Vazquez (Annex 9) focusing on benefitting 120 families with 4 lines of action: ecological pest control, agroforestry, use of gas ovens, and creation of the Toro Toro brand.
- The beekeeping proposal was developed by consultant Claudio Vazquez (Annex 12) which will benefit 30 families.
- Both proposals were developed in close consensus with the communities
- A detailed work plan for ecofriendly agriculture (Annex 13) and beekeeping (Annex 14) were developed
- Armonia contracted Agronomist Roger Soto to implement the agriculture proposal
- Armonia contracted beekeeper José Luis Calahuana to implement the beekeeping proposal
- In November all beekeeping and ecofriendly agriculture supplies will be delivered to the communities who take part in the experiments

○ **Improved Protection**

This component really starts with the implementation and distribution of the environmental education materials that aim to restore a friendly relationship between the Red-fronted Macaw and the producers. In November we will receive the final purchased materials from the USA and in November we will start training park rangers in monitoring Red-fronted Macaw nests (Red-fronted Macaw breeding season from November to May) with their new equipment. We are currently developing an application in KOBA to store all the gathered field monitoring data.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learned 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 national political context shows a division within the Movement for Socialism (MAS), Bolivia's current government party. This generates tension between sectors related to the current president Luis Arce and the opposition supporting the former president Evo Morales. This division is felt at a local level where the relationship between the Municipal Government (supporting Morales) and the Toro Toro National Park (supporting Arce) are becoming sour. Also, the relationship between sub-centrals is affected by the different political positions. Armonia organized a meeting with all sectors indicating that we work openly and transparently with all actors regardless political position as the Red-fronted Macaws do not recognize political barriers.

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:	Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes
Change request reference if known:	CR21-090

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

No

4b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.

The fluctuations in the current exchange rate significantly impacts the budget and adjustments will have to be made to prevent overspending. In accordance with IWT staff we will present a Change Request by November 2022.

1. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No

No