



**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: 31<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com) including your project ref in the subject line.**

<b>Project reference</b>	IWT108
<b>Project title</b>	Demand reduction and behaviour change along China's parrot supply chains
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	China, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	TRAFFIC International
<b>Partner(s)</b>	ReCTrad (the Network of Traditional Rulers for the Sustainable Management of Ecosystems in Central Africa) Wildlife Conservation Department (China CITES Management Authority, CITES MA) China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) China Timber & Wood Products Distribution Association (CTWPDA)
<b>Project leader</b>	Ling XU
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	30 October 2024 (HYR1)
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	N/A

**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.

During this reporting period, informed by the findings of the African Grey Parrot (AGP) consumer survey and value chain research, the project team has focused its efforts on developing Social Behaviour Change (SBC) campaign materials. These materials are aimed at consumers of AGP and other endangered African parrot species. Furthermore, the CSR guide was presented to timber companies at the Annual Conference of China Timber and Wood Products Distribution Association (CTWPDA). The project's monthly catch-up meetings have been regularly set for the third Thursday of each month.

The progress under each Output is reported as below.

*Output 1. By June 2023, profiles, motivations and behaviour of African Grey Parrot (AGP) and other endangered African parrot owners in China and actors along value chain of illegal AGP trade in Cameroon and DRC are understood.*

Activities 1.1-1.7 were completed in Y1 & 2. As a follow-up, TRAFFIC has also carried out the following activities during this reporting period. This was to more strategically disseminate research findings and help the creative agency gain a comprehensive understanding of consumer profiles, motivations and behaviours, of AGP.

- The key findings from the AGP consumer report were shared with the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) and the China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) on 5 September 2024. The presentation was highly praised by the attendees, who felt that the report holds significant guidance for their future management of trade in exotic pets, particularly parrots.
- Following internal discussions and feedback from the meeting with NFGA and CWCA, the AGP consumer report has been condensed into a simplified version (Annexes 1 and 2). This streamlined report will be published on the TRAFFIC website and promoted on TRAFFIC China's social media platforms in the coming quarter.

Activity 1.8 A summary analysis of the monthly survey data collected in this reporting period, in conjunction with prior data, has yielded in a preliminary online monitoring analysis report (Annex 3). Given limitations of the data available, such as price for African parrot species beyond the AGP, the AGP was singled out for analysis to a comparative examination. Key findings include:

- Out of all the target species advertisements observed (n=148), AGPs have the highest representation in advertising (60.1%), followed by the Senegal Parrots at 39.9%. In contrast, in the last reporting period, the numbers were n=228, with 83.2% for AGPs and 12.8% for Senegal Parrots.
- The AGPs available for sale are mostly juveniles, constituting 82% of the total, with females making up 55% of the offerings.
- The average price of AGPs was CNY 7,421, marking a 15% increase from the previous reporting period's average of CNY 6,465, which spanned from October 2023 to March 2024. The price of AGPs reached a low of CNY 5,000 in April 2024, then rebounded and peaked at CNY 9,681 by August of this year. The price surge is likely attributable to the commencement of the 'Whitelist' pilot programme in Henan Province in May 2024, as per the discussion held during the meeting with the NFGA and CWCA on 5 September 2024.
- Guangdong, Henan, Shandong, Fujian, and Zhejiang are identified as the top five provinces with the highest number of IP addresses associated with advertisers. Henan Province has the highest count of sellers, while Guangdong Province has the most buyers.
- Baidu remains the largest online platform for advertising African parrots, followed by Kuaishou and Xiaohongshu. Douyin, Xianyu, and WeChat have been earmarked for future monthly monitoring due to the presence of illicit advertisements on these platforms.

*Output 2. By December 2024, demand reduction on AGP and other endangered African parrots have been achieved by behaviour change campaign*

Activity 2.1: Following Output 1, the campaign concepts were initially drafted by the creative agency and underwent successive refinements through discussions on 16 May, 14 June, and 23 August 2024. These collaborative discussions led to the development of four concepts, which were then winnowed to three final options during an internal screening on 20 September (Annexes 5 and 6). Taking into account the policy situation on the 'whitelist' of exotic pets that was discussed at the meeting with NFGA and CWCA experts on 5 September 2024 (refer to Section 2), a forthcoming in-person meeting with NFGA and CWCA has been scheduled to review the three concepts and identify the most viable for further development. Given the complicated review and approval procedures, an amendment to the sub-contract with the creative agency was signed on 30 September 2024, extending the design deadline from 30 September to 31 December 2024. Regarding in-person events for pet cafe business owners, potential collaborating partners have been identified, comprising the CWCA, the China Animal Agriculture Association (CAAA), the Chinese Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), and the China Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Association (CIQA). Engagement with these partners is projected for the next quarter. Insights gleaned from online information and offline pet market surveys (supported by other projects) indicate that pet cafes, a burgeoning emerging sector in China and globally, remain a relatively niche market, with parrot-themed venues being particularly affected and many having shut down or transitioned to different ventures in the wake of the pandemic. Consequently, the target audience for in-person events is being reevaluated to potentially encompass a broader spectrum of "pet-related businesses," including pet shops and animal interaction facilities.

Activities 2.2 and 2.3: No activity planned in this reporting period.

*Output 3. By end of 2024, a corporate engagement and behaviour change campaign is in place targeting Chinese nationals likely to be involved in poaching and trafficking AGP and other endangered parrots in Cameroon and DRC*

Activities 3.1-3.4: Leveraging the expertise of the SBC Expert Group, a draft of the CSR guide was developed during the previous reporting period. The Guide specifically outlines the engagement of CTWPDA's member companies in making public commitments to support the conservation of AGPs and other endangered species, as well as to eradicate the illegal acquisition, trafficking, and consumption of those species. The final version (Annex 7) was then completed and introduced by TRAFFIC at the CTWPDA's "14th Global Timber & Wood Products Conference and International Workshop on Building Sustainable Wood Supply Chains", held in Rizhao, Shandong Province on 6 September 2024, with 71 companies attending (Annexes 8-11). Due to the scheduling adjustments in the NORAD project, which provides matching funds for this project, the CSR guide training initially planned for CTWPDA member companies in Cameroon and the DRC has been rescheduled to occur in China, targeting Chinese timber companies with investments in Central Africa. An additional training session will be delivered at the 2024 CTWPDA International Sustainable Hardwood Conference in Huzhou, Zhejiang Province on 15 November. In conjunction with this, there will be an in-depth interview (co-funded by NORAD project) with selected timber companies to explore the potential barriers and challenges they face in implementing the guide, aiming to enhancing its adoption and effectiveness across the industry.

In addition, TRAFFIC Central Africa (TCAF) has persisted in gathering data pertaining to AGPs in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which will be incorporated into the forthcoming CSR training for CTWPDA's member companies under this Output. For instance, their research identified that Cameroon issued its forestry and wildlife law on 24 July 2024 (Annex 4). Article 173 stipulates that the killing, capture, detention, and commercialization of fully protected species, including African grey parrots, is punishable by imprisonment from 15 to 20 years and fines ranging from USD 33,000 to 83,000 (GBP 25,338-63,727). Moreover, this legislation introduces an incentive mechanism for local communities that support the fight against IWT by allocating them a portion of the fines collected. This incentive is expected to significantly boost community involvement and backing for the conservation of flagship species, including AGPs. Local Chinese companies will become acutely aware of the heightened legal risks associated with their involvement in the illegal wildlife trade.

Activities 3.5 and 3.6 No activity planned in this reporting period.

*Output 4. By December 2025, disseminate campaign outcome and lessons learned from the project to relevant stakeholders nationally, regionally and globally*

Activity 4.1 No activity planned in this reporting period.

## **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 most recent draft of the NFGA's "Scope of the Special Marking System for Terrestrial Wild Animals and Their Products"—commonly referred to as the "Whitelist" policy—has listed 14 live wild animal species, including the AGP, under the category of "captive-bred species for pets". Currently open for public consultation, the policy has not yet been officially promulgated. The CWCA's Deputy Secretary-General, former Director of Animal Division, Wildlife Conservation Department of the NFGA, explained that the policy's release is uncertain and could potentially be delayed beyond 2025, with a pilot program currently being tested in Henan Province to assess potential policy efficiency.

Potential Impact on Project Strategy: The new policy would likely require a more profound understanding among consumers of legality and traceability processes. If the AGP is included in the Whitelist, the campaign will reach out to consumers who might inadvertently purchase AGPs sourced illegally.

To navigate these uncertainties, TRAFFIC sought expert opinions from the NFGA and CWCA on 5 September 2024, concerning the progress of the Whitelist and the pilot program. TRAFFIC also presented a communication strategy that aligns with CITES' five-step demand reduction framework (authored by TRAFFIC and adopted by the Parties at CITES CoP19), focusing on legality, legal alternatives, and authentication risks, considering both the scenarios of AGP's inclusion and exclusion from the Whitelist. Different communication tactics were discussed for each scenario, with recommendations to emphasize the characteristics of illegal trade and methods to avoid unlawful activities until the whitelist is released.

Following the consultation feedback, TRAFFIC has collaborated with the creative agency to develop preliminary design concepts, and a design extension amendment has been signed, addressing policy uncertainties and ensuring the campaign remains on track (refer to Activity 2.1).

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

Discussed with NIRAS:	<b>No</b>
Formal Change Request submitted:	<b>No</b>
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	<b>No</b>
Change Request reference if known: <i>If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome</i>	

**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?**  
No.

**6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report.** Please provide the comment and then your response. If you have already provided a response, please confirm when.

*Comment 1: Engagement of communities in Cameroon and DRC could be better captured in the influencing plan. Whilst it is clear how their insights have been included in the assessment to date, it is unclear how they will be included in operationalisation of the demand reduction campaign.*

While the demand reduction campaign primarily targets Chinese AGP consumers within China and our current budget does not allow for direct field engagement with local communities in Cameroon and the DRC, we remain dedicated to gathering insights through desktop research and dialogues with relevant local stakeholders, including policy updates, trade trends, export quotas, and local community involvement to bolster our campaign and drive project progress. Cameroon's newly enacted forestry and wildlife law encompassing an incentive mechanism for local communities will aid in the fight against IWT by allocating a portion of the fines collected to local communities, which is anticipated to substantially increase their engagement and support for the conservation of flagship species, including AGPs.

*Comment 2: Given that the SBC campaign has not yet been finalised, is it still realistic to expect demand reduction by December 2024 as per Output 2? Consider revising logframe.*

Given the current trajectory of the project, we remain committed to our goal of launching the behaviour change campaign by December 2024, as originally scheduled. Should the finalization of our messaging be impeded by protracted government review procedures or unforeseen circumstances, we are prepared to submit a change request by the end of December 2024. This request will address both technical adjustments, specifically the revision of the logframe, and financial considerations, including the carry forward of funds.

## Checklist for submission

<b>For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024)</b>	
Have you <b>responded to any additional feedback</b> (other than caveats) received in the letter you received to say your application was successful which requested response at HYR (including safeguarding points)?	
If not already submitted, have you attached your <b>risk register</b> ?	
<b>For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024)</b>	
Have you responded to <b>feedback from your latest Annual Report Review</b> ?	√
<b>For All Projects</b>	
Include your <b>project reference</b> in the subject line of submission email.	√
Submit to <a href="mailto:BCFs-Report@niras.com">BCFs-Report@niras.com</a> .	√
Have you reported against the most <b>up to date information for your project</b> ?	√
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	√