



**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	IWT108
Project title	Demand reduction and behaviour change along China's parrot supply chains
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	China, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
Lead Organisation	TRAFFIC International
Partner(s)	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)
Project Leader	Ling XU [REDACTED]
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 October 2025 (HYR1)
Project website/blog/social media	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).

Activities 1.1-1.7 were completed in Y1 & 2. During the current reporting period, a simplified version of the full *African Gray Parrot (AGP) Consumer Survey Report* was officially published on the TRAFFIC website ([link](#)), enhancing accessibility and facilitating broader dissemination of the research findings.

Activity 1.8 A summary analysis of the monthly survey data collected in this reporting period, combined with previously gathered data, has produced a preliminary online monitoring analysis report (Annex 1). The data indicate that the online AGP trade is dominated by seller-initiated advertisements, which account for more than 80% of all posts. Market prices exhibit clear stratification: adult AGPs average CNY [REDACTED] (~ [REDACTED]), 24% higher than juveniles, which average CNY [REDACTED] (~ [REDACTED]). Females command CNY [REDACTED]

(~ [REDACTED]), compared to CNY [REDACTED] (~ [REDACTED]) for males – though this gender-based price differential is based on a limited sample of only ten advertisements that specified sex. A parallel market exists for species identification cards issued by provincial-level authorities, which are traded separately at prices ranging from CNY [REDACTED] to CNY [REDACTED] (~ [REDACTED]) and serve to certify legal origin. Comprehensive packages that include full documentation exceed CNY [REDACTED] (over [REDACTED]), whereas birds priced below CNY [REDACTED] (under £550) typically exhibit visible physical defects.

Geographically, trade activity is concentrated primarily in Shandong, Guangdong, and Fujian provinces, with Henan province notably dropping out of the top five for the first time. The majority of transactions (81%) remain local and conducted face-to-face. Consumer demand continues to centre on birds valued for high-intelligence and vocal mimicry capabilities, a preference potentially amplified by social media content. Nevertheless, recent coordinated multi-agency law enforcement operations, which resulted in seizures and a landmark conviction, have generated a tangible deterrent effect across both physical and digital marketplaces (Annex 1).

Activities 2.1 and 2.2: TRAFFIC implemented a series of SBC communications targeting high-risk consumers in China and Chinese employees linked to range countries of AGPs and other endangered African parrots in Africa. This campaign employed a comprehensive targeting strategy that integrated Douyin's robust big data analytics with behaviour insights of the target audience obtained from the AGP consumer survey research and online monitoring data (Annex 3). Upon finalising platform-specific pre-launch refinements to the AGP SBC video (Annex 2), the campaign was officially rolled out in May on Douyin. Douyin is the primary short video platform where surveyed African parrot owners and intenders research online acquisitions. According to qualitative research, it is regarded as the most trusted source because its creators are experienced keepers.

The online campaign, conducted over four consecutive rounds from May to August, successfully reached 1.6 million targeted Chinese consumers, with a total of 13 exposures per user. It generated a total of 20,906,842 impressions and achieved outstanding click-through rates (CTRs) of 4.01%-9.31%, which consistently surpassed the industry benchmark for NGO campaigns (2.56%-7.55%) on the platform during the same period. This performance can be attributed to rigorously defined audience profiling and systematic pre-testing of messaging with sample groups (Annex 3). The other effects of the campaign are currently being collected through the post-campaign evaluation.

In collaboration with the China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA), three offline workshops have been scheduled for November in Beijing (6th), Shanghai (13th) and Xi'an (date TBC). These sessions will be co-hosted with local wildlife conservation departments to ensure the participation of key stakeholders from the local parrot pet trade. During the workshops, key campaign messages, e.g., AGP SBC video will be introduced to encourage participants to consider adopting more sustainable business and consumption practices.

Activity 2.3: The post-campaign evaluation will combine online surveys via Douyin with interviews involving SBC experts and key stakeholders such as consumers, traders, law enforcement officials and policy makers. Following extensive coordination with the Douyin platform, the feasibility of deploying the online questionnaire has been formally confirmed. An experienced evaluation specialist has been appointed and will work closely with the project team to finalise the assessment approach, with the final evaluation report expected to be delivered by the end of December 2025.

Activities 3.1-3.5: In partnership with the China Timber & Wood Products Distribution Association (CTWPDA), in-depth interviews were conducted with 24 timber companies to assess their awareness, attitudes, and implementation practices related to the Code of Conduct (CoC) and CSR Guide (Annex 4). The analysis followed a two-stream approach: one evaluating CoC awareness and operational barriers (Annex 5), and the other examining CSR perceptions and adoption challenges (Annex 6). An adaption of Activity 3.4, the interviews shifted the original focus—in-person dialogues between African communities and Chinese companies—to address the implementation of the CoC and CSR Guide by Chinese timber companies in AGP range states. This approach yielded 20 additional feedback responses, 11 of which came from companies with operations in Cameroon or the DRC (Annex 4). Preliminary findings confirmed that timber companies exhibit sound awareness of core CoC and CSR topics, yet significant gaps between knowledge and practice. These results not only demonstrate effective sector engagement but also underscore the need for advanced operational guidance to support the adoption of responsible practices. TRAFFIC will continue to identify and pursue online and offline opportunities to promote implementation among CTWPDA member companies.

On International Biodiversity Day, TRAFFIC co-organised a workshop titled "Enhancing Capacity for Wildlife Conservation and Sustainable Industry Development" in Guangzhou with CTWPDA and three other industry associations. CTWPDA Vice-President Shen Wei delivered a keynote analysing tropical timber trends and underlining legal compliance. A parallel roundtable with more than 30 timber companies identified supply chain challenges and CSR tools for responsible sourcing. The event culminated in a joint pledge against illegal wildlife trade (IWT), including AGPs, committing to legal compliance, capacity, and public outreach to combat IWT and promote sustainable practices ([the PR link](#)).

Complementary to Activity 2.1 and 2.2, a campaign was launched in August targeting 130,000 Chinese employees linked to range countries of AGPs and other endangered African parrots in Africa. This campaign generated 765,164 impressions with a CTR of 2.80%, which also surpassed the industry benchmark for NGO campaigns (2.10%) (Annex 3).

From 29 July to 3 August, TRAFFIC co-organised a workshop in Kinshasa with the Lukuru Foundation, aimed at drafting a ministerial order to prohibit the capture, possession, transport and trade of AGP and Red-capped Green Parrot (*Poicephalus gularis*) across the DRC. The Red-capped Green Parrot, listed in CITES Appendix II, can be legally traded in the DRC under an annual CITES-set quota of 450 live specimens. Although not currently considered threatened, participants raised concerns that the species could be used in illegal trade networks to launder specimens of the fully protected AGP. Despite these concerns, the species was ultimately excluded from the draft decree, though close monitoring of its legal trade was recommended. The workshop culminated in the official signing by the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of a national *arrêté* (law), which criminalises the trafficking of AGPs across the DRC (Annex 7).

Activity 3.6: The evaluation of compliance advocacy initiatives for Chinese timber companies will integrate questionnaire responses from Activities 3.3 and 3.4 with data from the second survey next quarter. This mixed-method approach will measure changes in awareness, attitudes, and self-reported behaviour, providing a comprehensive assessment of initiative effectiveness.

Activity 4.1-4.3 The AGP consumer research findings have been shared with IFAW, which is consolidating existing research on Chinese exotic pet consumers to establish baselines and protocols for evaluating the impact of interventions under the EU-Guard Demand Reduction Alliance project ([link](#)). In addition, the AGP project results will be presented at two TRAFFIC side events—*Demand Reduction* and *Live Animal Trade* during the CITES CoP20 in Samarkand in November and December. Subject to approval of the short-term change request, two webinars targeting public and private sector stakeholders are planned between January and March 2026.

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.

During this reporting period, online monitoring by TRAFFIC revealed a short video featuring a vocalising AGP, published via an official Xinhua News Agency Douyin account in June 2025 and quickly reaching a wide audience. The post was taken down after TRAFFIC's formal outreach. Nonetheless, fragmented management among official accounts resulted in the same video being reposted by another government-affiliated account, where it remains live. Further, various private and institutional accounts continue to circulate similar AGP material, potentially increasing consumer interest and countering species conservation initiatives. In light of these external influences, the campaign introduced two supplementary rounds in July and August. These variables will be integrated into the post-campaign evaluation to isolate campaign-specific effects. The additional two campaign rounds have delayed project implementation, shifting the project-level evaluation, summarisation, and knowledge-sharing activities beyond the original end date (31 December 2025). A change request will therefore be submitted to formally extend the project timeline by three months.

In response to the reviewer's comment on the annual report—"Due to the move away from local dialogue, it is unclear whether Indicator 3.5 (SBC campaign has reached 50% of high-risk Chinese employees in Cameroon and the DRC through CTWPDA member companies and social media user tags) will be

achieved"—the project has taken corrective actions during this reporting period. In addition to delivering the online campaign to targeted Chinese employees in Africa on Douyin, TRAFFIC engaged with CTWPDA to plan the implementation of Activity 3.4: "Hold joint discussions between Chinese companies and local community representatives on the implementation of the CSR Guide and Code of Conduct," originally scheduled for early November in Africa. However, due to a typhoon that struck Macau in late September, CTWPDA's previously scheduled timber conference in Macau was cancelled, and related meetings were subsequently relocated to mainland China. As a result, the Africa-based activity had to be postponed to mid-December. This delay will consequently defer the evaluation of CSR programme outcomes in Africa. Furthermore, given the new national law enacted in the DRC prohibiting the capture, possession, transport, and trade of AGPs, it has become imperative to roll out corresponding campaigns in the DRC and neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, targeting local communities and investors—including employees of Chinese companies. To ensure adequate time for the implementation of these activities, we will submit a request for a three-month no-cost extension.

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:	No
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 2025 – 30 September 2025)

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 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

No.

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.

No.

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.

Comment 1: The project might urgently consider whether a short no cost extension (if allowed) would help to complete and consolidate activities and planning for any follow up actions.

Based on the project implementation over the past six months, a Change Request for a 3-month no-cost extension will be submitted together with this half-year report to ensure the successful completion of project activities and the achievement of established objectives and impacts.

Comment 3. Despite a number of improvements there are still some outstanding details concerning the project indicators and means of verification which could be considered for small changes (see Section 9)

Please refer to Annex A for our response to the feedback on Section 9 of the Annual Report.

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