



**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	IWT111
Project title	Reducing IWT through Strengthening Livelihoods and Law Enforcement: Ruaha-Rungwa, Tanzania
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Tanzania
Lead Organisation	Southern Tanzania Elephant Program
Partner(s)	Rungwa-Kizigo-Muhesi Game Reserves, MBOMIPA WMA
Project leader	<i>Trevor Jones</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR3</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>www.stelephants.or.tz</i>

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.

1.1 Conducting orientation and sensitization meetings with partners and at village and sub-village level for the establishment of VSLAs, beekeeping and poultry health interventions

- Completed in Y1-Y2.

1.2 Establish and train 20 Village Savings and Loan Associations (25 members per VSLA) with 500 members in 10 villages

- 47 VSLAs (1,024 members; 43% women and 40% youth) are currently operational in 13 villages. Two VSLAs (42 members; 42% women and 26% youth) out of these 47 were formed in Year 3 (21 formed in Y2, 24 formed in Y1).

1.3 Establish poultry health intervention trial with 100 participants in 5 villages

- In Year 2, we completed a year-long Newcastle disease trial with households in Rungwa and Doroto villages around Rungwa and Muhesi Game Reserves. In the reporting period, we distributed and administered the third and fourth rounds of the Newcastle disease vaccine to >1200 chickens in 70 households (all VSLA members; women manage poultry in 64% of households) in villages around MBOMIPA WMA. We continued to monitor the impact of vaccination on chicken health.

1.4 Provide 200 beehives and beekeeping training to 100 beekeepers in 5 villages

- We procured and distributed 460 hives in Year 1. In the reporting period, we distributed 12 bee suits, 12 pairs of boots, 6 smokers and 12 soft brushes to 102 farmers (37% women) in 4 villages around MBOMIPA WMA.

1.5 Ongoing-capacity-building and monitoring of livelihood interventions by community-based team

- We worked closely with our community-based team of 14 local elephant monitors and provided follow-up training and coaching to enable them to monitor and manage livelihood activities with farmer's groups in their village and conduct outreach with fellow community members. LEMs successfully and independently managed 4 VSLA share-out meetings during the reporting period.

2.1 Provide vehicle for increasing human-wildlife conflict response capacity to RKM GR, together with training on effective use of vehicle for HWC response

- Completed in Y1.

2.2 Enable HWC response by MBOMIPA VGS and RKM GR Rangers through fuel provision

- 2,300 litres of fuel were provided to MBOMIPA WMA for HWC and protection activities. VGS responded to 82 HEC incidents during the reporting period, helping to move elephants away from farms and villages and back into the WMA.
- 6,246 litres of fuel were provided for protection and HWC response to Rungwa, Kizigo and Muhesi Game Reserves (including via matched funding). Between April and September 2024, RKM GR responded to 98 incidents.

2.3 Train 32 RKM Rangers and 16 MBOMIPA VGS in safety around elephants and more effective elephant deterrent techniques.

- 9 rangers/VGS from MBOMIPA WMA, adjacent village land, and TAWA (11% women) were trained on elephant behaviour and safety around elephants by experts from Kichaka Expeditions Environmental Program in Year 3.

2.4 Local Elephant Monitors (LEMs) conduct one-on-one training for 3000 community members at home and at farms on elephant behaviour and safety around elephants

- From April to September 2024, LEMs conducted one-to-one training with 2,507 community members (1064 [39% women] through home-based film screenings using tablets and 1443 [45% women] through one-on-one discussions).

2.5 Conduct wide-scale education and outreach programs (Tembo Cup Football Tournament)

- Two Tembo Cups were conducted during July-August in villages around Muhesi and Kizigo Game Reserves. 22,952 people attended matches, 15,587 students were reached through school training, and 7,059 (28% women) attended film nights.

Output 3

3.1 Install upgraded radio communications system in MBOMIPA WMA and provide all VGS teams and aircraft with InReach devices for real-time location tracking

- We have procured two analogue repeaters, solar panels, and their associated items. A radio technician currently working with our team is analysing the line of sight for suitable spots to erect masts and install the radio system, which will be integrated with the existing VGS handheld radios. We expect to complete this during the October-December 2024 period.

3.2 Train 40 MBOMIPA VGS (6 women) in radio operation and patrol data collection using the EarthRanger mobile application, and InReach devices for real-time tracking

- STEP will train 40 MBOMIPA WMA VGS (30% women) between January and March 2024 on radio operation, patrol data collection using the EarthRanger mobile application, and InReach devices for real-time tracking. Once the radio system is in place, all VGS will receive training to improve their patrol efficiency within the WMA.

3.3 Conduct real-time tracking of aerial and ground patrol teams in Control Room and coordinate VGS mobilizations in response to illegal activity alerts

- We have established a Control Room equipped with satellite internet for real-time monitoring of MBOMIPA WMA VGS using the EarthRanger (ER) system. The Control Room includes a large screen, a laptop computer, and will soon be fitted with a VHF radio to enhance VGS coordination. STEP has trained a dedicated radio room operator who is skilled in using ER and coordinating radio communications. This setup will enable real-time monitoring and coordination of VGS activities. Once the radio system is fully installed, it will further improve VGS mobilisation in response to illegal activity alerts.

3.4 Monitoring, analysis, and reporting of aerial and ground patrols using the EarthRanger System

- Real-time monitoring of aerial and ground patrols using the EarthRanger (ER) system is being done, with the pilot team and VGS patrol teams using InReach devices to track their patrols which are monitored in the Control Room. The ER system is being used to support analysis of patrol routes, illegal activities, and patrol effectiveness. Once the radio communications infrastructure is in place, we will be able to optimize the use of EarthRanger for real-time mobilization of teams in response to detected threats.

Output 4

4.1 Train 5 RKM GR rangers and 2 MBOMIPA VGS (2 women) to become aerial observers

- In Year 2, eight MBOMIPA VGS members (three women) were trained to become aerial observers. No RKM GR rangers have been trained yet during the project period, but aerial patrols in RKM GR are being done with rangers previously trained as aerial observers and with observers from MBOMIPA WMA.

4.2 Conduct 60 hours of aerial surveillance per year in coordination with rapid response ranger and VGS ground teams

- Between April and September, we conducted 156.8 hours of aerial patrols in MBOMIPA WMA, RUNAPA, and RKM GRs.

4.3 Enable 23 days of strategic patrols by 4 Village Game Scout (VGS) teams every month in MBOMIPA WMA

- In MBOMIPA WMA, Village Game Scouts (VGS) carried out 488 days of foot patrols, covering a total distance of 5146.1 km during the reporting period. They also conducted 94 days of vehicle patrols, spanning 2649.2 km.

4.4 Train 8 MBOMIPA VGS (3 women) in basic tactical anti-poaching skills with PAMS Foundation.

- Completed in Year 2.

4.5 Generate ground and aerial patrol maps and trend analysis reports for protected area managers

- Between April and September 2024, the STEP Protection team produced maps and delivered five monthly ground patrol reports to the MBOMIPA WMA managers. These

maps and reports based on aerial patrol data were generated and distributed to the relevant protected area management teams.

4.6 Conduct refresher training for 39 VGS and 14 RKM GR rangers in human rights, pre arrest and post-arrest procedures

- We facilitated training to newly elected members of the MBOMIPA WMA protection committee (6 members, 1 woman) and 25 newly recruited VGS (16 men, 9 women) on patrolling techniques and the importance of adhering to the code of conduct and human rights throughout patrol operations and activities, ensuring all VGS adopted and implemented these rights during their patrols.

4.7 Support MBOMIPA WMA VGS to provide witness testimony in court cases

- During the reporting period, VGS filed six court cases related to the illegal wildlife trade and the possession of government trophies. Additionally, in the ongoing case involving the apprehension of three poachers who were found illegally in the WMA with a firearm, VGS were facilitated to provide witness testimony in court. In this case, the Iringa District Magistrate Court declared the defendants guilty on two charges: illegal entry into a protected area and illegal possession of a firearm. Subsequently, the defendants were fined by the court.

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.

NA.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:

Yes/ No

Formal Change Request submitted:

Yes/ No

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

Yes/ 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*

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?

NA.

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.

We did not receive reviewer feedback on our Year 2 annual report that required a response at the half-year report.

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.	NA
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	X
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	X

Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	X (text highlighted in grey)
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project?	X
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	X