



**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>	IWT116
<b>Project title</b>	Equipping southwest Indian Ocean countries to combat illegal shark trade
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Mozambique; Tanzania
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Mozambican National Oceanographic Institute (InOM); Tanzania Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA); Dr Rima Jabado, UAE; Dr Demian Chapman, Mote Marine Laboratories, United States; Stellenbosch University, South Africa
<b>Project leader</b>	Rhett Bennett
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	HYR3
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	

**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.

This report covers April – September 2024. We believe that our M&E systems remain appropriate.

Activity 1.2b: This new Year 3 activity (as per approved change request in January 2024) is now complete. A shark and ray species identification training session led by Dr Rima Jabado (project partner) took place in Maputo, Mozambique from 8–9 July 2024, using the revised global CITES shark and ray identification guides that were completed in June 2024. 25 inspectors from the National Institute for Fish Inspection (INIP) from Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala, Nampula, Zambézia and Cabo Delgado provinces, and a technician from the Natural History Museum in Maputo, were present during the training, in addition to several WCS staff.

Activity 1.7: This activity is complete in Tanzania, where a WhatsApp group has been created that includes fisheries officers, government data collectors, fisheries directors, customs agents, and WCS staff experienced in shark and ray species identification. This app is used frequently to assist with timely identification of shark and ray products. In Mozambique, the operation of the WhatsApp communication platform was presented to INIP inspectors at the species identification workshop (Activity 1.2b) to outline how the communication platform will work and to receive feedback on the initiative from the attendees. Terms of Reference have been sent to the INIP Director and we are awaiting their approval to launch the WhatsApp group in the final quarter of 2024.

Activity 1.7b: This new Y3 activity (as per approved change request in January 2024) is scheduled for November 2024. Approximately 40 participants from various institutions will attend the training, including the National Administration of Conservation Areas, Police for Coastal and Inland Waters, Police for the Protection of Natural Resources and the Environment, National Criminal Investigation Service, Customs, Mozambique Wildlife Alliance, environmental prosecutors, State agents involved in the legal aspects of marine resource management, and field officers and inspectors responsible for monitoring and enforcement activities related to the capture and trade of sharks and rays.

Activity 2.1: Coastal fisheries catch surveys are still ongoing at 9 sites in Tanzania and 9 sites in Mozambique, with data collectors continuing to collect tissue samples from selected species for genetic barcoding. Data are recorded on mobile phones, and automatically uploaded to a database. Species IDs are verified intermittently by two experts to ensure that the correct species names are allocated to each individual shark or ray recorded. Data recorded up to the end of 2023 for both countries is now being prepared for publication in a scientific journal.

Activity 2.1b: Our field technicians conducted semi-structured and informal fisher interviews at Beira in Sofala province, central Mozambique (in addition to the rapid catch surveys under Activity 2.1) and were able to collect an incredible amount of information on fisheries, auctions of landed products, product value chains, legal and illegal activities, and fisher perceptions of management, among other things. We had anticipated conducting informal fisher surveys in at least 3 sites in Mozambique to provide information on fishery dynamics, and other aspects, using unspent funds from year 2 catch surveys. Our field technician was scheduled to survey at Govuro (Inhambane province in southern Mozambique), however this trip was postponed due to bad weather, followed by presidential elections which have inhibited some of the planned work. However, we anticipate completing this activity in at least one site before the end of the project.

Activity 4.1: Community engagement continued at Zalala beach in Mozambique, with another field visit from 11–28 June 2024 to collect additional information and continue the engagement with the community. During this visit, a marine wildlife bycatch reduction expert from the WCS Global Conservation Program joined the Mozambique team to assess the situation at Zalala. Recommendations from this visit were to obtain more detailed data on shark and ray catches in bottom-set gillnets including on the geographical locations at which different species are caught, disaggregated by life history stages of those species. This could be accomplished by collecting information on the location (using a GPS or GPS enabled smart phone), species composition and size class of shark and ray catches and take voucher photographs of the different species

caught. This information could then be used to identify hotspots for potentially establishing temporal or spatial gear restrictions. For reducing shark and ray catches, the bycatch mitigation expert recommended testing the use of LED lights on bottom-set gillnets. A further recommendation was to conduct a study on the relative economic value of shark and ray catches in bottom-set gillnets in the waters offshore of Zalala Beach to better understand what type of incentives may be needed to compensate fishers, as well as the fishing boat owners, for the loss of income from reduced shark and ray catches.

Activity 4.2: This activity is on schedule. A formal selection process to find a suitable lawyer to assess the regulations has been undertaken through the National Fisheries Administration (ADNAP) in Mozambique, and a candidate selected. A contract is currently being drafted, after which a framework of recommendations will be produced on the management measures needed for the country to ensure the best management and conservation of sharks and rays. Proposals for the necessary institutional arrangements will be drawn up, including mechanisms for coordination between the various players involved in the process of marketing CITES species, in the third quarter of 2024.

**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.**

Field activities for certain activities were delayed due to tropical storms, but this should not affect overall implementation.

There were also national presidential elections in October, which caused a lengthy period leading up to elections during which no activities could be planned. Therefore, some activities were undertaken earlier, and others were slightly delayed. All should be completed by the end of the project, as planned.

**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: *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.

N/A

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, thank you.

**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.

Not applicable. Our previous annual report feedback was to give further details on gender equality in the final report. We will do so in our final report at the end of this year.

## Checklist for submission

### For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 – see section 6

### For All Projects

Include your **project reference** in the subject line of submission email.

Yes

Submit to [BCFs-Report@niras.com](mailto:BCFs-Report@niras.com).

Yes

Have you **clearly highlighted any confidential information** within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?

N/A

Have you reported against the most **up to date information for your project**?

Yes

Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.

N/A