



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



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

Half-Year Report

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2025

Project reference	<i>IWT: 121</i>
Project title	Living with Wildlife: Improving Livelihoods in the Mole Ecological Landscape.
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Ghana
Lead Organisation	Nature and Development Foundation (NDF)
Partner(s)	Mole National Park (MNP), C.K.Tedam University of Technology and Applied Science (CKT – UTAS)
Project Leader	<i>Mustapha Kaluwe Seidu</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>https://ndfwestafrica.org/living-with-wildlife-improving-livelihoods-in-the-mole-ecological-landscape/</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).

During the reporting period, the project made significant progress across livelihood, conservation education, and governance components in both the Chakali-Sungmaalu and MWK CREMAs.

Shea Roller Technology: A total of 80 women (from Buller 1 & 2 and Mugu communities) were trained and equipped with shea rollers, protective boots, gloves, and basins for safe and efficient nut collection. The assumption that women would embrace the new technology held true as beneficiaries who were trained earlier have adopted the rollers enthusiastically, reporting higher quantities collected and fewer injuries or fatigue from bending. The report on the training is attached as Annex_1.

Beekeeping and Honey Harvesting: Within the reporting period, the project conducted harvesting of 185 colonized hives under supervision from CKT-UTAS. Communities recorded an average yield of 2 gallons of honey per hive, generating GHS 350 per gallon in sales. Harvesting distribution span across five communities within the 2 CREMAs. Attached as annex 2 is the report on the Honey harvesting.

Rodent Farming Monitoring: Monitoring visits were conducted to 40 rodent beneficiaries with participation from CREMA executives, District Veterinary Officers, and CKT-UTAS. Some rodents were found ill due to weather variations and hygiene issues. Veterinary officers treated the animals and trained beneficiaries in basic disease management. Although targets were previously achieved, monitoring revealed that some farmers are not maintaining a commercial orientation and are partially threatening the sustainability assumption. Annex 3 is a report on the rodent monitoring.

Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs): The project monitored 8 VSLA groups across 6 communities within the two CREMAs (Mugu, Dabozesi, Motigu, Tiisa, Klonjon, and Dolisa). All groups

are active, meeting regularly, and showing consistent savings. However, proper record-keeping emerged as a gap for some groups. The assumption that communities would participate enthusiastically holds true, as more groups are formed (8 instead of 6 initially planned). Refresher training on financial literacy is scheduled for the next quarter. Annex 4 is a report on VSLA visits.

Agroforestry and Seedling Distribution: A Nursery monitoring was carried out, and it confirmed healthy seedlings and readiness for transplanting. A total of 16,140 seedlings (cashew, mango, dawadawa, mahogany, and rosewood) were distributed to 120 farmers across 6 communities, to be planted over an area of about 145.69 hectares. Annex 5 is a photo sheet of the seedlings.

With the collaboration of the district agricultural extension and fire service officers farmers received training on agroforestry management, bushfire prevention, and crop raiding mitigation. Assumptions held true as the farmers were receptive, actively engaged, and adopted new crop types beyond traditional practices. Annex 6 is a report on the training.

Market Linkages for Shea: NDF facilitated direct market linkages between CREMAs and a shea buyer who is currently purchasing nuts from women collectors in both CREMAs. This is ongoing and expected to improve income outcomes.

CREMA Executive Training: The second phase of CREMA executive training was held at Mole National Park with participation from 40 executives. Training focused on leadership, CREMA governance, and gender mainstreaming in natural resource management. The assumption of leadership commitment held true, as all invitees attended and participated actively. Annex 7 is the training report.

Wildlife Clubs and Conservation Education: All 10 beneficiary schools were visited to monitor the wildlife clubs and conduct conservation education sessions. A total of 1,584 students (883 males, 701 females) were reached. Awareness focused on the wildlife close season (August–December 2025) and the importance of species protection. The assumption that teachers and pupils would engage remains valid, with strong enthusiasm observed in all schools. Annex 8 is a report on the visit.

Overall, the project remains on track, demonstrating strong community ownership, gender inclusion, and sustainable livelihood outcomes. Monitoring systems are functional and responsive. The upcoming quarters will focus on strengthening income tracking, market linkages, and data documentation to support endline evaluation and scaling.

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 the period, the project encountered minor challenges, including rodent health issues due to weather changes and hygiene lapses, as well as weak record-keeping among some VSLA groups. These were promptly addressed through veterinary support, refresher mentoring, and plans are underway for additional financial literacy sessions. But this did not affect activity sequencing or the budget or timeline.

Overall, these experiences have strengthened the project's adaptive management and learning systems. Field monitoring reinforced that community demand for livelihoods remains strong, and that timely mentoring and collaboration with local partners are essential for sustaining motivation, data quality, and long-term impact.

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 2025 – 30 September 2025)

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 2026)?

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.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No major issues have been encountered during the period save for minor delays occasionally to responses. Overall, collaboration and support from the BCF Secretariat remain good.

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.

The project does not present any significant Overseas Security and Justice (OSJ) risks. Activities are implemented within peaceful and cooperative communities in the Mole Ecological Landscape in Ghana, with no reported security or justice concerns.

6b. Have any concerns or allegations relating to sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment been reported in the past 6 months?

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.

The project was scored as GESI-Sensitive in the most recent assessment. Of the five feedback points received, one did not require a response, while three are to be addressed in the next Annual Report.