



**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	IWT136
Project title	Tackling wild meat demand, supply and trade in Western Equatoria
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	South Sudan
Lead Organisation	Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
Partner(s)	South Sudan Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT) encompassing the Wildlife Service (WLS) Caritas-Austria
Project leader	Michelle Moeller
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 October 2024 HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	www.fauna-flora.org/countries/south-sudan

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).

Outcome: Evidence-based solutions to reduce the use of wild meat, together with stronger law enforcement capacity, systems, and transboundary networks, reduce IWT and contribute to poverty reduction in Western Equatoria.

Activity 0.1: Ongoing. A project inception meeting was held between Caritas Austria (Country Manager, Finance Manager, and Project Manager) and FFI (Country Manager/IWT Project Lead and Technical Specialist, Governance, Equity, and Rights) on Tuesday, 27 August. On Friday, 6 September, an initial project steering committee meeting took place at the South Sudan WLS Office in Yambio with the State Director, Deputy State Director, Director for Protected Areas, and Administrator for Western Equatoria, as well as FFI (Project Lead/Country Manager, Technical Specialist Governance, Equity, & Rights, and Grants & Operations Manager) and Caritas Austria (Country Manager and Finance Manager) to finalise the Year 1 project workplan. This included incorporating social safeguards and human-rights training into the workplan agreed by all project partners.

Activity 0.2: Ongoing. Recruitment of four Zande-speaking enumerators, two of whom supported implementation of IWTEV002 is complete.

Activity 0.3-0.6: Planned for future reporting periods

Output 1: Sustainable livelihoods provide viable income sources and protein alternatives to 150 households and, supported by behaviour change messaging, contribute to reducing the rates of wild meat hunting and selling

Activity 1.1: Ongoing. The survey methodology for focus group discussions and gender-sensitive assessments has been developed and agreed upon with partners. Enumerators are currently undergoing training on the focus group discussion methodology

Activity 1.6: Ongoing. A Zande- and Arabic-speaking consultant from the Western Equatoria community has been identified to develop and deliver behaviour change messaging, which is currently in progress.

Activity 1.2-1.5 and 1.7-1.9: Planned for future reporting periods.

Output 2: Capacity and systems to monitor and adaptively manage IWT and confiscate/seize wild animal products are in place and operational in the Wildlife Service within all counties of Western Equatoria, informed by up-to-date knowledge of place networks and trade dynamics.

Activity 2.1: Ongoing. Rugged smartphones have been procured for county offices to enhance data collection and ensure data integrity, facilitating the centralisation of IWT data from all counties into a single database. Additionally, internet for the IWT Project Office was procured to improve project effectiveness.

Activity 2.2: Ongoing. A capacity assessment (report in draft) was conducted in each WLS county office to identify training needs for upcoming data collection protocol training. Based on these assessments, a specific number of WLS officers were selected to participate in training workshops scheduled for November 2024, to be facilitated by Fauna & Flora's technical consultant. These trained officers will subsequently train their colleagues.

Activity 2.3: Ongoing. Motorbikes were procured for key locations where trained officers are implementing IWT project activities and for the WLS IWT core team.

Activity 2.4: Ongoing. Capacity assessments were conducted in each WLS county office to identify training needs for data collection protocol training.

Activities 2.5-2.7: Planned for future reporting periods.

Activity 2.8: Ongoing. Laptops have been procured to improve data management for the project.

Output 3: Increased interagency collaboration between the Wildlife Service, other law enforcement agencies, and the judiciary within Western Equatoria and South Sudan, and with relevant counterparts in DRC, improves understanding of transboundary IWT.

Activity 3.1: Ongoing. Initial sensitisation meetings with relevant local and national WLS stakeholders are being held to secure permissions and clearances for an upcoming transboundary forum with DRC counterparts, scheduled for Q3 December 2024.

Activity 3.4: Ongoing. A sensitisation meeting with Yambio state-level WLS has been conducted to begin planning the introductory interagency IWT forum, to be held in Q3.

Activities 3.2-3.3 and 3.5-3.6: Planned for future reporting periods.

Output 4: Project learning and recommendations are documented and shared with key national and regional stakeholders.

Activity 4.3: Ongoing: Meetings were held with the Minister of Local Government and the Western Equatoria State Governor on 30 September and 1 October 2024, alongside project partners – the Wildlife Service – to discuss our partnership's work.

Activities 4.1-2 and 4.4-4.5: Planned for future reporting periods.

Indicators - M&E

Monitoring of project activities will commence in Q3. An M&E plan is currently under development with project partners, including the monitoring of risks, assumptions, and compliance. Due to the

delayed project start, not all baselines have been established by this mid-year reporting mark and will be completed by the end of Year 1.

Assumptions

Civil unrest in South Sudan does not hinder project implementation:

During Q2, there were occurrences of civil unrest in project activity areas. With the appropriate systems in place, Fauna & Flora successfully navigated and managed these risks and will continue to apply these systems going forward into Q3.

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 intended start date for the project was 1 May 2024. Formal notification of funding was received on 27 June 2024, and following institutional-level negotiations of grant agreement terms and conditions, a revised start date of 1 August 2024 was agreed. The Grant Acceptance Form was signed on 19 August 2024. This delay has shortened the overall timeframe for delivery, necessitating a re-planning of the Year 1 workplan, and as a result, this report reflects approximately nine weeks of active implementation. Inception planning was incorporated into the original workplan, which has allowed flexibility in accommodating these delays, and we are confident that all Year 1 activities will be completed by year-end.

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

Formal Change Request submitted:

Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

Yes

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*

Reference: N0283

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)?

No Estimated underspend:

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. 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.

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.	X
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	N/A

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.	N/A
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For All Projects

Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	X
Submit to BCF-Reports@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
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