



**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 2025**

**Please note all projects that were active before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 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>	IWT140: Community engagement against poaching and IWT in Sudurpaschhim Province, Nepal
<b>Project title</b>	Community engagement against poaching and IWT in Sudurpaschhim province
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Nepal
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	National Trust for Nature Conservation
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment, Sudurpaschhim Province (MoITFE), Community Development Center (CDC)
<b>Project Leader</b>	Dr. Naresh Subedi
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	30 October 2025 HYR2
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://ntnc.org.np/project/community-engagement-against-poaching-and-iwt-sudurpaschhim-province-nepal">https://ntnc.org.np/project/community-engagement-against-poaching-and-iwt-sudurpaschhim-province-nepal</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).**

*The numbering of the below activities is as per the numbering of the activities in the project workplan.*

*The activities 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9 that were dropped due to risk concerning sensitive information corresponds to activities 2.10, 2.11 and 2.12 in the workplan.*

**Output 1: Marginalized and IWT affected communities adopt alternative livelihood****Activity 1.6: Provide soft loans for alternative livelihood to target households through saving and credit groups**

Six savings and credit groups were provided with livelihood fund, amounting to £22,500 in the previous year. This was followed by a disbursement of £5,535 livelihood loans to nine target households of Kanchanpur district. This activity is continued on this reporting period, where additional 54 households have been provided with the soft loans. A total of NPR 25,34,000 (£15,584) worth of livelihood loans has been provided to 63 IWT and HWC-affected community members until this reporting period. The beneficiaries are engaged in various farm and off-farm income generating activities.

**Activity 1.8: Provide business start-up grant to trained youths (n = 120, £40,625 total value) (indicator 1.3, 1.4)**

A two months skilled-based training package was delivered to 60 targeted local youths in the previous year. From these training recipients, 26 individuals [REDACTED] were provided with business-start up grants of NPR 40,000 (£246) each (supporting documents S1-S3). Our income tracking database of the beneficiaries for last seven months suggested that each beneficiary on an average has earned NPR 4,000 per month since the project support. This is an additional income for the beneficiary households and expected to be increased in the coming days.

**Output 2: Increased knowledge and skills of frontline staff and improved coordination among law enforcement agencies****Activity 2.4: Organize periodic meetings of province-level WCCB (n = 10)**

The province-level WCCB (P-WCCB) was formally established in a multi-stakeholder workshop last year. The first P-WCCB coordination meeting was also organized following this event. In this reporting period, we supported to organize the second P-WCCB meeting (meeting minutes in S4; event photograph S5), engaging 28 authorities [REDACTED]. Province-level wildlife crime threats, recent trends and efforts to curb IWT and poaching were discussed. Efforts were made to strengthen coordination and cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

**Activity 2.6: Organize district-level WCCB coordination meetings (n = 25)**

Five district-level WCCB meetings were organized in Dadeldhura (1), Achham (1), Doti (1), Baitadi (1) and Kanchanpur (1) districts. Altogether, 51 district-level law enforcement agency authorities [REDACTED] attended these meetings. The attendees have distinct roles and responsibilities in wildlife crime control as provisioned by the Wildlife Crime Control Directives.

Key discussions and decisions made during these meetings:

- Make collaborative efforts to arrest the accused persons involved in forest and wildlife-related crimes
- Make joint efforts to minimize HWC (related to mega herbivores and carnivores)
- Control ongoing and potential encroachments on public land including forests
- Establish a mechanism for regular information exchange among concerned stakeholders about IWT and HWC
- Take preventative measures and conduct awareness programs in local communities regarding HWC

(please also refer to supporting materials: S6-S10).

**Activity 2.8: Provide support to maintain WCCB Secretariat IWT database and link with central WCCB database (n = 1)**

WCCB secretariat of Sudurpaschim province is being supported to maintain province-level WCCB database (S11 for details). The database is being currently cross verified by the concerned authorities.

**Output 3: Increased awareness level of local communities on poaching and IWT****Activity 3.2: Conduct 50 poaching/IWT sensitization workshops for target communities, including porters, seasonal labours, and traders benefitting 1,500 people**

Five sensitization workshops were conducted in project areas villages/settlements directly engaging 310 local community members [REDACTED]. The workshops focused on educating communities about the HWCx and IWT. Information were shared regarding the commonly traded species in Nepal, key provisions of NPWC Act, 2029, consequences of IWT, coexistence practices, HWC relief guidelines, and safety measures from potential problem causing animals, such as avoiding travelling alone into the forests, and reporting wildlife sightings and potential movements to the villagers (please also refer to S12 and S13).

**Activity 3.3: Broadcast a fortnightly radio program (52 episodes) focusing on generating conservation awareness and sensitizing the public on poaching/IWT issues (Indicator 3.4)**

Radio jingles on poaching and IWT is being broadcasted through four local FM stations. The key message is related to the cause, impact and consequences of poaching and IWT.

**Activity 3.4: Produce and disseminate poaching and IWT awareness materials (n = 5000 pamphlets, 2000 posters, 10 hoarding boards) (Indicator 3.3)**

A total of 2,500 conservation posters consisting message of poaching and IWT were printed and distributed to the project area communities and stakeholders. With last year's 2,500 posters printed, we have printed and distributed a total of 5,000 posters. All the awareness materials are printed in Nepali language to make it more useful for the target communities. Similarly, the hoarding boards were prepared and installed in the strategic locations. The hoarding boards also consisted the same information as that of the posters (photograph in S14).

**Activity 3.7: Organize behavioral change campaigns by change agents (n = 150) (Indicator 3.2)**

The 30 change agents trained last year are being mobilized to conducted behaviour change campaigns at various locations of the province. In this reporting period, 23 conservation education and awareness events/sessions (site-levels) were conducted in villages and schools, directly reaching 813 local men and women [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] The campaign focused on educating communities about the HWC relief guidelines, recognizing wildlife signs, understanding animal behaviour and safety measures from potential problem causing animals, and causes, impacts and consequences of poaching and IWT.

**Activity 3.9: Conduct anti-snare campaigns by change agents (Indicator 3.5)**

Local change agents conducted nine anti-snare campaigns across the province. These campaigns directly reached of 379 local men and women [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] As part of the initiative, the trained youths supported local community in identifying and removing traps from forest areas while raising awareness about the ecological and legal consequences of trap-setting. Until this reporting period, a total of five snares were recovered and handed over to the respective DFOs and PA authorities (details in S17 and S18).

**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.**

A nationwide protest in Nepal in September 2025 is of a great concern for us. In this new political context, we could not implement any of the project activities that were planned during the period. Nepal has also called election in January 2026. Since then, we expect possibility of delaying in project implementation as it is always problematic in reaching the actual project beneficiaries and meeting community demands in changing political dynamics. We faced challenges in selecting beneficiaries for IGA training packages to local youths. Since our project settlements are very small and thus selecting training beneficiaries from a small village is of very little value. We are consulting with the concerned authorities regarding this, and we agreed to broaden the scope and engage IWT and HWC-affected youths from the entire Sudurpaschhim province.

<p>Mobilization of seed funds from saving and credit groups also took longer time than expected. This is mostly because of the actual time taken for the beneficiaries to understand the new funding opportunity, legal instruments and processes. Now the fund mobilization becomes easier and will be more functional in the coming days.</p> <p>As of now the abovementioned issues do not have significant impact on budget and timeline and are manageable. However, we are uncertain about the political environment in the coming days. If any unavoidable environments created, we will communicate accordingly.</p>	
<p><b>3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</b></p>	
Discussed with NIRAS:	No
Formal Change Request submitted:	NA
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	NA
<p>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></p>	

**Guidance for Section 4:** The information you provide in this section will be used by Defra to review the financial status of projects. This review will identify projects at random for spot checks on financial management and will include requests for evidence of the actual spend information provided below. Please ensure the figures you provide are as accurate as possible and that you have the evidence to support it. You do not need to provide it now.

<p><b>4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)</b></p> <p>Actual spend: £ <span style="background-color: black; color: black;">[REDACTED]</span></p>
<p><b>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)?</b></p> <p><span style="background-color: black; color: black;">[REDACTED]</span></p>
<p><b>4c. If you expect an underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully.</b> Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.</p> <p><b>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 31<sup>st</sup> 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.</b></p> <p><b>Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.</b></p> <p><b>NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.</b></p>
<p><b>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</b></p> <p>Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to <a href="mailto:fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk">fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>6. Project risk management</b></p>

**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.**

[REDACTED]

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

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Suspicious or allegations related to safeguarding concerns should be reported to [ODA.Safeguarding@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ODA.Safeguarding@defra.gov.uk)

**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.**

GESI orientation was provided to the concerned community groups (forest user groups, buffer zone committees, saving and credit groups members) and behaviour change agents. We shared project-specific as well as country-led (by legal instruments) initiatives regarding GESI. The deliverables included participatory planning, GESI responsive decision making (inclusive, pre-informed, context-specific), governance, human rights, child rights and environmental safeguards. Practices of informed decision-making ensuring participation, roles and responsibilities to the target community members are established (for instance please refer S19).

[REDACTED]