

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

Note: 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 2022

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| Project reference | 25-007 |
| Project title | Protecting Yap's biodiversity and livelihoods through invasive alien species removal |
| Country(ies)/territory(ies) | Federated States of Micronesia |
| Lead partner | Island Conservation |
| Partner(s) | Ulithi Falalop Community Action Program (UFCAP) One People One Reef (OPOR) |
| Project leader | Tommy Hall |
| Report date and number (e.g. HYR1) | April 2022 – Sep 2022 (HYR 5) |
| Project website/blog/social media | www.islandconservation.org www.onepeopleonereef.org |

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

As the COVID crisis has evolved and travel restrictions continued to drop off throughout 2022, the project partnership began tentatively making plans to resume the rodent eradication and island restoration project at Ulithi Atoll in 2023. In August 2022, the Federated States of Micronesia and Yap state finally opened their borders and flights slowly came online. This change spurred the partnership's decision to aim to re-initiate the rodent eradication in 2023 by resuming community outreach in December 2022. We are delighted to report that we are now on track to achieve our project deliverables as detailed in our project implementation timetable.

With travel reinstated, our lead partner at UFCAP has been able to travel freely between Yap and Ulithi and has begun discussions with community leaders about resuming work. The community on Ulithi is excited for this project to finally get underway after a tough three years of isolation and repeated delays. In August and September, we focused on reviewing and updating our project timeline and identifying resource and logistical needs over the coming months. Our current objective is to have all necessary recourses in place for the rodent eradication on Ulithi by March 2023. Field preparations will begin as soon as possible thereafter, with the rodent eradication taking place in March/April 2023. The monitor lizard removal will commence immediately following the completion of the rat eradication operation. Both the rodent and monitor lizard eradications will be led by local field teams with Island Conservation managing and advising teams both in person and remotely (thanks to satellite internet infrastructure on Ulithi which is coming online soon). We are confident that this hybrid approach will allow for the most efficient use of resources to effectively manage the project while also building capacity for locally led island restoration work.

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.

As travel resumed on Yap and Ulithi and we restarted conversations with community partners, once significant priority emerged for the local residents: the need to complete religious ceremonies (e.g., funerals) that have been long-delayed due to COVID. Religious ceremonies on Ulithi typically require fuel, boats, and boat operators for inter-island transport. Resources on Ulithi are more limited than before COVID and these and other community activities will be forced to compete for said resources. The partnership is sensitive to these needs and recognizes that we need to be prepared to accommodate the community's priorities as we progress with the implementation. We are currently evaluating funding opportunities to purchase a new boat for the community that will reduce competition for current resources. We are also tracking the community's priorities in the lead up to implementation in March 2023.

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

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

4a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

4b. If yes, then you need to 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 if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

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

No.

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS-LTS International through a Change Request. Please **DO NOT** send these in the same email.**

Please send your **completed report** by email to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**