

## 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: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

<b>Project reference</b>	27-004
<b>Project title</b>	Building future resilience for communities and wildlife in Ambondrobe
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Madagascar
<b>Lead partner</b>	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable, ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche (MAP), Groupe de Semi-Direct de Madagascar (GSDM), Graine de Vie (GDF), Marie Stopes Madagascar (MSM)
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Chris Ransom (formerly Jeff Dawson)</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	<i>HYR3 31st October 2022</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<i><a href="https://www.durrell.org/conservation/">https://www.durrell.org/conservation/</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/durrellwildlife">https://twitter.com/durrellwildlife</a></i>

**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).**

**Outcome monitoring activities**

0.1: Completed Y1. Next activity planned in Y3.

0.2: Monthly monitoring surveys of *Ardeola idae* (Malagasy pond heron) were carried out in Lake Ambondrobe (January: 244; February: 240; March: 270; April: 103; May: 25; June: 29; July: 14; August: 17 and September: 34). In Apr – Sept 22, 06 follow-ups were carried out (1 per month; 2 in Ambondrobe and 1 in each of the 4 wetlands). The Rere turtle survey is planned for Oct 22.

0.3 This activity is expected to take place in the 4th quarter.

**Output 1. Improved community engagement reduces negative impacts on and is actively restoring lake and forest habitat by 2023.**

1.1: From Apr – Sept 22, a total of 444 patrol days involving 468 people (3,107 men/day) covering 2043.38 km were carried out. Patrolling efforts and results are improving due to 'SmartMobile', which is easy to use by patrollers; the involvement of the villages of Ampanarena and Ankilizato in patrolling since March; as well as the close monitoring of the local Protected Area Monitoring Committee (KMMFA) by the Durrell team. Since June, 35 fire points have been detected and extinguished by the patrols.

1.2: Monthly meetings between field teams and patrol groups continue in each village. From Apr – Sept 22, meetings were based on sharing information, organising patrols to cover the Aire Protégé et Site Ramsar Complexe Lac et Forêt Ambondrobe (APCLFA) areas and solving problems related to environmental protection. Regarding the latter, Durrell's team, with the local community, is still looking for additional firefighting solutions such as: raising awareness and firefighting training of the local community with the participation of 267 people in the 07 Fokontany (July and August); distribution of food to each Fokontany (rice, beans, onions, oil, tomatoes); and materials (fire bat, water bag). Mixed patrols with forces will be organised in October to detect criminals in the APCLFA. There was also a quarterly meeting between the Director of Environment and Sustainable Development (DREDD) team, the Durrell team and the patrol groups in 07 Villages to sensitise the local population on the fight against fires and

land clearing, capacity building of the local patrollers from the KMMFA, and capacity building on law enforcement at the PA level (Protected Area law, zones of use and Noyau Dur core area, fire use).

1.3: Analysis of SMART patrol data continues as planned. Monthly reports have been produced and are submitted with this report. Please note: these reports are confidential as they contain patrol data.

1.4: Reports covering April-June 2022 have been distributed to partners (DREDD, Commune, Fokontany and VOI) and reports for July-September are in progress.

1.5: Refresher training for Ambondrobe patrollers on the use of SMARTmobile is planned for Oct – early Nov 22.

1.6: An area of 7Ha was restored with reed phragmites with the participation of 51 people for 09 days in August. The community will continue restoration after water levels drop, as some of the lakes are deep.

1.7: An area of 3Ha of water hyacinth was cleaned by 40 people for 10 days in July. Training on making compost from water hyacinths was carried out for 06 people from the village of Ankaivo.

1.8: Six new nurseries were created in September (Aboalimena – 1, Ankaivo – 4, Belobaka – 1). Six nurserymen were selected and trained on the establishment and maintenance of a nursery in August by the COKETES project, through The Peregrine Fund. In total, 14 indigenous species from the Menabe region and 78,000 seedlings were potted in 78 beds.

1.9: Annual tree planting is expected to take place Jan – Feb 2023, harvesting begins in Dec 22.

1.10: Monitoring of the reforestation area was undertaken in collaboration with DREDD Menabe in Jul 22. Survival rates per site were 17.16% for Aboalimena, 10.94% for Ankaivo and 17.9% for Belobaka villages. This very low survival rate is due to fires in the reforestation areas in June and July, which ravaged a reforestation area of about 13 ha, despite the existence of firebreaks.

### **Output 2: Nature-friendly food production improves food security, nutrition and income for over 350 households while also reducing harmful environmental impacts by 2023.**

Completed activities: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3.

2.4: During this last project period, four (04) additional Farmer Field School (FFS) groups were created with 75 new members (including 42 women) in the four farmers' FFS sites.

2.5 & 2.6: From Apr – Jun, 5 FFS groups with 198 members (93 women) benefited from training on climate-smart agriculture (CSA) cultivation techniques (basic knowledge, sowing technique, row transplanting, biological control). In July, 02 FFS groups of 40 people (23 women) were trained on biological control and 02 other FFS groups of 26 people were trained on compost making, biological treatment and harvesting techniques. The 4 new FFS groups have established CSA crops with a total area of 18.75ha. Seeds were distributed to these groups (438kg of peanuts, 375kg of maize, 150kg of black-eyed peas, and 710 sachets of vegetable seeds). 11 follow-ups with 11 FFS groups were carried out on their plots. An official handover of small-scale agricultural equipment to the Community Forest Management Associations (VOIs) took place in July, assisted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (DRAE), of equipment intended for the FFS groups but managed by VOIs (2 winnowers, 6 threshers, 5 hullers, 8 weeders, 15 sprayers).

2.7: In the last quarter, 01 school vegetable garden was set-up at EPP Andimaky with a total surface area of 6 hectares. The community teachers (FRAM) were trained and supervised in CSA market gardening techniques (soil preparation and establishment of beds; crop maintenance; and biological treatment) and received market gardening seeds and equipment (watering can and string). They carried out the first collection of products with a quantity of 2 bowls/day of all crops and sold them at the market.

2.8: 07 evaluation workshops and 02 crop yield data collections for the 2021-2022 agricultural season were carried out in 07 FFS groups in Ankilizato (rice wet season: 2.8 tonnes/Ha and peanut off-season: 1.8 tonnes/Ha), Ankaivo (beans off-season: 0.8 tonnes/Ha), Aboalimena North and Aboalimena South (peanut season: 1.6 tonnes/Ha). The representative of DRAE at the district level participated in the field assessment of crop yields (including rice, peanuts and beans). A total of 91.25 ha were cultivated using CSA techniques for the 2021-2022 field season.

### **Output 3. Sustainable financial tools are developed for 9 villages and reach at least 270 individual members (60% of which are women) by 2023.**

Completed activities: 3.1, 3.2.

3.3: Five Durrell staff (2 agricultural technicians, 2 Ambondrobe and APMA staff, and 1 Ambondrobe site manager) received refresher training on the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) approach, and financial education, in Jul 22.

3.4: 03 VSLA groups of 63 members (including 30 women) from year 1 and 07 other groups from year 2 of 127 members (including 95 women) received refresher training on the objectives, expected results of VSLA and techniques for conducting weekly meetings. Six group secretaries received refresher training based on their practices during the first cycle.

3.5: Two exchange meetings were held between old and new VSLA groups on good practices and lessons learned with 118 participants, 88 of whom were women. 4 groups moving on to the second cycle were supervised during their weekly meetings and accompanied during the sharing of their funds at the end of the first cycle. These 04 groups of the 2nd cycle have already started their savings. 15 VSLA

groups (incl. 4 groups in the 2nd cycle) were supported on techniques for recording savings and filling in a cash journal.

3.6: Following awareness-raising, exchange visits between the existing VSLA groups of the same Fokontany and the success of the activities undertaken by the members of the existing groups (market gardening, sale of t-shirts and sarongs), 11 new VSLA groups with 217 members (incl. 143 women) were created in 07 villages (Andimaky, Ampanarena, Ankilizato, Aboalimena Avaratsy, Belobaka, Ambaravarantany, Ankirijy). They received equipment and were trained on VSLA modules. To date, the VSLA approach is operational in 9 villages in Aboalimena and Andimaky (Aboalimena Sud, Aboalimena Nord, Ankirijy, Ankaivo, Belobaka, Ambaravaratany, Andimaky Ampasy, Ampanarena and Ankilizato).

3.7: Two beneficiaries of the FFS group and a member of a women's association participated in the FIER-MADA national economic and rural fair in Aug 22 to present agricultural products from Ambondrobe.

3.8: The identification and analysis of value chains in Ambondrobe has already been carried out and development of these value chains is planned for the second half of Y3.

**Output 4: 1000 households in Ambondrobe have access to reproductive health support by 2023 to make choices concerning family size and household wellbeing.**

Completed activities: 4.1.

4.2: 09 information and sensitisation meetings in the 09 community villages were conducted by community health workers (CHWs) to involve the community in family planning initiatives.

4.3: 18 mass awareness-raising meetings were held in 16 fokontany of the rural commune of Aboalimena and Andimaky by Durrell staff.

4.4: Two visits were made by Marie Stopes Madagascar (MSM) staff in collaboration with the CHWs to the nine villages. A total of 215 women received family planning services in the nine villages (183 implants and 32 intrauterine devices).

4.5: A refresher course was organised for 16 community health workers (including 7 women) working around Ambondrobe village.

4.6: Two reports on the two visits to family planning services in the nine villages were produced by MSM.

**Output 5. Improving local governance and community cohesion through increased transparency and social events increases community participation of development initiatives and local associations.**

Completed activities: 5.1, 5.5, 5.6

5.2: For the revitalisation of VOIs, the establishment of the terms of reference and revitalisation curriculum is underway.

5.3: For this revitalisation, the trainees will be made up of members of the board, representatives of different associations (FFS, VSLA, KMMFA, etc.), respecting the gender approach.

5.4: Planned for the second half of Y3.

5.7: For the two VOI offices still to be built, 80% of the work has been completed, with the roof remaining for one and the walls for the other.

5.8: Local associations in seven villages held five meetings per month, regarding encouragement to contribute to environmental protection, association coordination, information sharing and problem solving.

5.9: Football competitions are planned for October 2022.

**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.**

Security problems in the region have intensified, with attacks by bandits (Dahalo) becoming more frequent and violent in the villages. In view of this, the team has arranged for military escorts in the intervention areas and organised the assignment of project staff in groups, especially at the inter-site level. It was decided to stay in the village from 4pm, arranging activities to reduce the risks. However, this slowed the implementation of some activities and increased project costs. The local community reconciliation, led by the district and the authorities, has brought stability and cohesion to the community.

**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](mailto: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**