

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 2023

Project reference	28-007
Project title	Building smart seed systems for biodiversity, livelihoods and resilient restoration
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cameroon
Lead partner	Bioversity International as part of the Alliance of Bioversity-CIAT
Partner(s)	Ministry of Forest and Wildlife (MINFOF); Actions pour la Biodiversité et Gestion des Terroirs) (ABIOGeT); Promotion de l'Ecotourisme, Encadrement des Couches Vulnérables et autres Minorités (PEM); Asaah Fonyam and Angwi Foundation (AFAF); University of Yaounde 1 (Yaounde 1); University of Aberdeen (UoA)
Project leader	<i>EKUE Marius Rodrigue Mensah</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR 3 (April 2023 to October 2023)</i>
Project website/blog/social media	-

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).

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

Output 2. Seed collectors, nurseries, seed centers, and the government stakeholders gain the capacity to document, verify, and track the performance and quality of valuable tree species native to Cameroon

Activity 2.2. Elaboration of training manuals adapted to local context.

Training materials on the use of the seed collection and documentation app (MyGeoTree Collector) and nursery management app (MyGeoTree Nursery) were developed and are currently being used to train seeds collectors, nurseries managers, and local communities. We are collecting feedback from the users for improvements.

In addition, we have also elaborated a protocol and are used it with 400 stakeholders (in West, South and North regions of Cameroun) to document systematically local knowledge on agroforestry practices of the priority tree species for the project; and to identify the capacity building needs of stakeholders. We are currently finishing the elaboration of agroforestry modules that will used to built capacity of nurseries managers in November 2023.

We are on track to integrate all feedbacks and knowledge collected above to produce training and extension manuals adapted for different users (seeds collectors, nurseries managers and seed centers, students) to scale the use of the apps at the end of 2023.

Activity 2.3. Seed collectors, nursery workers, and forestry department managers have started using the SeedIT app to record data about tree seeds collected in project sites

So far, we have documented the use of the seed collector app (MyGeoTree Collector) 300 times and the nursery management app (MyGeoTree Nursery app) 100 times by stakeholders trained since march 2023. The more people knows the applications, the more they are interested in using them.

Activity 2.4. Build capacities of 1000 new stakeholders to use the SeedIT mobile app to record and track seed quality.

We have already conducted 30 training sessions and trained a total of 750 stakeholders for the use of the MyGeoTree applications. Following initial trainings with national stakeholders in Yaounde, we have decentralised the trainings to the local levels involving community and/or communal forestry associations, city councils, local NGOs, farmers, and even indigenous community (Baka) in the natural distribution areas where our native priority tree species occurs. Trainings are continuing and we will reach the target of 1000 stakeholders by December 2023.

We have also plan to build and enhance capacity of nurseries managers registered under MyGeTree Nursery on agroforestry practices of the priority tree for the project. Elaborate agroforestry training modules based on the capacity need assessments of beneficiaries, the priority species, and the regions (West, South and North regions of Cameroon)

Output 3.

The capacity of key stakeholders to manage increased planting and survival of priority species in the future is enhanced

Activity 3.1. Stakeholders (forestry department, seed collectors, community nurseries, small FGR agri-businesses) use recommendations from the provenancing strategy to restore new sites

200 stakeholders trained for MyGeoTree apps have already started using it to document seeds collection.

We are documenting the use of the diversity for restoration (D4R) tool to select tree species and seed sources during new tree planting activities in Cameroun by different stakeholders.

Since stakeholders were trained on how to use the D4R tool and interpret recommendations' of the provenancing strategy this year, we will likely see more applications during the tree planting season of 2024.

Activity 3.2. Nursery managers, managers of seed collections, seed centers, and forestry department personnel have improved their capacity to manage increased planting and survival of priority species via (i) technical assistance and mentoring from the project and (ii) a written protocol for management of native FGR.

We are currently distributing 15 000 seed collection bags to seed collectors trained with MyGeoTree Collector app. The seed collectors will collect and document seeds from the 70+ priority tree species for the project for us. Seeds collected will be sent to a network of nurseries registered on MyGeoTree Nursery to produce seedlings. The performance of the seedlings in nurseries will be monitored and reported next year.

Output 4. Increase in livelihoods for smallholder tree farmers, local seed businesses, seed cooperatives, and community nurseries driven by increasing Government demand for, and largescale procurement of, bulk quantities of high quality, native tree species seed to fulfil urgent national restoration commitments.

Activity 4.2. Stakeholders (forestry department, seed collectors, nursery managers, small FGR agri-businesses, community nurseries) use the SeedIT app's verification of quality function to negotiate better prices for FGR along existing value chains

We are currently setting up a platform to connect seeds suppliers and users using the MyGeoTree application and will report about it next year.

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.

None

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:

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

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 2024) Yes?

<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £</p>
<p>4c. 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.</p>
<p>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</p>
<p>None</p>

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, 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.

All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS 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**