

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	28-028
Project title	Pairing community conservation areas with sustainable aquaculture in Lake Victoria
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Kenya
Lead partner	Conservation International Foundation
Partner(s)	Fauna & Flora, Pathfinder International, Victory Farms Limited Liability Company
Project leader	Leonard Akwany
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR3
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.conservation.org/projects/conservation-international-ventures-llc/community-conservation-in-lake-victoria

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).

The following activities were undertaken during the reporting period to contribute to the **governance, implementation, and management of the CCA Agreements (Output 1, Activity 1.7, 1.9, 1.11, 1.12):**

- Operationalization of a Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system for the Community Conservation Areas (CCAs), starting with a training with the Beach Management Units (BMUs), which included two components: (1) physical demarcation of the CCAs and (2) monitoring and enforcement of the CCAs through boat patrols. In addition to the training, the MSC also includes on-going monitoring of the CCAs four times per week by a monitoring sub-committee of the BMUs.
- During the week of 9-12 August, the project hosted a participatory workshop with 49 participants (31 males, 18 females), drawn from targeted BMUs and associated fisherfolk communities. During the workshop participants undertook a review and ratification of the Conservation Plan for the CCA sites, agreeing on strategic conservation actions and responsibilities attached to various organs of the BMUs and other stakeholders.
- From 25-30 August 2023, 34 farmers (21 females, 13 males) participated in an Integrated Farm Planning session, which included zoning of the riparian areas.
- On 4 September 2023 the official launch of the CCAs took place, which included a reintroduction of the *Oreochromis esculentus* in established CCAs. The launch was attended by the 10 BMUs, government and fisheries stakeholders, as well as project partners. The meeting included commitments by attendees to jointly work together in the areas of monitoring and surveillance, establishing more CCAs and the enforcement of appropriate fishing gear/methods. The meeting had print and radio media coverage of the event

[\(https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/nyanza/2023-09-05-restocking-of-endangered-tilapia-species-starts-in-lake-victoria/\)](https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/nyanza/2023-09-05-restocking-of-endangered-tilapia-species-starts-in-lake-victoria/)

- Awareness-raising activities during the project period included the following: Sponsorship of the local Ukula and Roo Football Teams' balls and uniforms, with conservation messages and logos, to create awareness on the importance of the conservation of CCAs and associated fish breeding areas. The project also used other various social network platforms in its awareness-raising campaign, including the BMUs assembly, chief meetings and interest groups meetings (such as farmers and women groups), to reach 126 persons (64 males and 62 females).

The following progress was made to further enrich **Livelihood & Gender Activities within the project (Output 1; Activity 1.10)**:

- Over the week of 29 July-4 August, 36 women from several **female empowerment groups** attended a few days of sessions led by Pathfinder International (PI). These sessions focused on: supporting in the management of the groups (meetings, minute-keeping, governance, etc.), participation in a learning-exchange with other similar Savings & Loans Programs, appraisals and guidance of the different female-led enterprises, a thorough review of Gender Policies within the BMUs and ensured adherence to policies, participation in an Exposure Meeting at the county level, where women from various female empowerment groups discuss gender-related topics, including advocacy, etc.
- On August 3, Seed funding (KES 100,000) was awarded to two of the groups, based on their preparedness and readiness to scale-up their small businesses/enterprises, which was followed by business counseling offered by a small business expert from PI.
- Overall, these groups are an integral part of the BMUs and are necessary for the on-going success of the CCAs, through their participation and support.

The following activities were undertaken during the period, as a part of **developing and identifying next steps for a Sustainable Finance Plan (Output 2, Activity 2.3, 2.5)**:

- Over the week of 19-23 August 2023, the project facilitated a workshop focused on the sustainable financing of the BMUs/CCAs through a Sustainable Finance Plan. The workshop included 50 participants (34 males, 16 females) from targeted fisherfolk communities and BMUs and included in-depth discussions on the difference financing options which could be pursued, including public, private, and internally generated funds. Some identified sources for future public funding include national, county and locally sourced government funding. A significant part of having access to some of this public funding will be to advocate for inclusion of fisheries priorities and funding into the local County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP). With private entities, a significant contribution that could be made to finance the BMUs/CCAs would be through in-kind donations (i.e., support provided by Victory Farms in restocking of CCAs with native fish species, provision of boats for patrol and monitoring, provision of materials for physical demarcation, capacity building on income generating activities for BMUs). Internal sources of funding that were also identified during the workshop include approaches such as membership fees, penalties on illegal fishers, landing fees, and income generating activities.

The project continues to make progress towards **developing a draft guidance for influencing the broader sustainable aquaculture sector (Output 3; Activity 3.1)**, by continuing its on-going work in gathering best practices, collaborating with aquaculture enterprises and communities, literature and case study reviews, one-on-one consultations with strategic players, learning exchanges on practical case studies, and exploring strategic areas for nurturing sustainable aquaculture and enabling environments.

The project also made progress towards the **development of a white paper (Output 4; Activity 4.1)**, which will include recommendations for strengthening enabling conditions for the establishment, enforcement, and resourcing of aquatic CCA. This was facilitated through one-on-one consultations with various stakeholders, including: Kenya Fisheries Service, Kenya

Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, Beach Management Units, County Governments Fisheries Office, and Aquaculture Farms on Aquatic CCAs., as well as learnings from the OECMs space including recommendations from Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework on OECMs related target and triggered initiatives and databases.

In addition to the output specific activities above, there were several **field engagement visits** during the period with the UK Embassy, including project visits from the British High Commissioner’s Regional Advisor, John Manyolo, and the Environment and Biodiversity Officer at the British High Commission, Anita Siro. CI also participated in a Darwin Initiative Workshop led by Ben Yexley, the Darwin Initiative Lead at UK’s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), in addition to attending the Lake Region Blue Economy Multi-agency Action Plan (MAP) Technical Committee Workshop.

Field reports and photos from the above activities are all available upon request.

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 project has been met with an increasing interest from stakeholders, including the County Government of Homabay, fisherfolk Communities, and the 12 surrounding BMUs. These stakeholders are interested in establishing their own CCAs in Sindo Bay for fish breeding and restocking of native fish species. Although this is positive overall, as these expectations are growing and, within the current project as designed and budgeted, the project may not be able to adequately meet them. This is not so much a risk to the current project as it is to the relationship between the project proponents and the broader local stakeholder base with whom we rely on for long-term success in the area.

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 No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes No

Change request reference if known: N/A

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 No Estimated underspend: £

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.

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.**

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?

Related to the financial procedures of this fund, the project is deeply involved in the local community and, as with any community-based project, there are numerous factors which contribute to changes in the timeline of project expenditures within a given fiscal year/quarter and this can often require additional time to be reconciled, communicated, and realigned within the budget. This has been, and will continue to be, an ongoing challenge given the financial structure of this fund, and the limited timeframe that the project has to request movement between financial periods.

In addition, fluctuating currency has also added a further challenge in the financial procedures related to this grant, as it is difficult to anticipate the changes in the budget that will be needed due to currency conversion fluctuations.

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**