

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	<i>This should be the project reference provided in your offer paperwork and not your application number</i> 29-009 / DIR28S2\1073
Project title	<i>Empowering Cabo Verde communities towards responsible practices in artisanal fisheries</i>
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	<i>Cabo Verde</i>
Lead partner	<i>BirdLife International</i>
Partner(s)	<i>Biosfera, Associação Projecto Vitó (APV), Associação Projeto Biodiversidade (APB), Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds (SPEA), University of Oxford (UO)</i>
Project leader	<i>Tabea Zwimpfer</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR2</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.

Governance

The project governance structure is made up of a highly cohesive and dedicated coordination team that works closely with partners to provide support and address challenges proactively. The coordination team is led by a BirdLife International project manager who holds monthly meetings with project implementing partners and is supported by a dedicated team of experts from BirdLife. Additionally, a scientific expert committee (SEC) has been established in June 2023 to support the project. The main aim of the SEC is to support the implementation of conservation projects in Cabo Verde through the provision of scientific insights, data analyses, experiences, comprehensive reviews, and advice. The SEC meets quarterly, with the first meeting already held this year and the second one scheduled for November 2023. Furthermore, there is a steering committee that convenes annually to assess the progress made throughout the year, review workplans, identify challenges, and define the next steps. To further strengthen the governance framework, various working groups (Data collection and management, Labelling, Engagement with fishing communities / Guardians of the Sea (GOS), and Social and behaviour change) have been established and are regularly convened to facilitate in-depth discussions, monitoring, and evaluation of specific project aspects, thereby ensuring adherence to project objectives and outputs. In addition to the regular meetings, additional avenues of communication as needed are used to ensure progress towards the project's objectives.

Implementing projects actions

Output 1: Increased conservation capacity built amongst 3 civil society organizations and 170 Guardians of the Sea (GOS) members; including behaviour change, sustainable fisheries labelling, and voluntary stewardship.

- Several training sessions were held across different islands in Cabo Verde, including São Vicente, Sal, Fogo, and Brava, to provide local fishermen (GOS) with essential skills and knowledge in various areas, including data collection, first aid, fisheries legislation, fish conservation, financial literacy, freediving techniques, sea turtle and seabird bycatch, safe handling techniques and marine pollution, among others.
- Amid a notable surge in enrolment in the GOS program, the active participation of more than 130 fishermen across the project-covered islands underscores the program's expanding influence. These fishermen have received various trainings, as mentioned above, and are already actively contributing to the monitoring of marine megafauna, facilitated through the dedicated support of partner NGOs.
- Partners with data provided by GOS relating to the monitoring of marine megafauna, encompassing sightings, bycatch, and species caught, among others are populating the established database. Moreover, continuous data collection efforts include tracking of accidental catches and other information during artisanal fishing activities, contributes to the database.
 - o These initial data collection efforts from the GOS are expected to enable more and more significant analysis informing mitigation measures to be adopted and implemented, with aiming at improving fishing practices and reducing bycatch impact, particularly on seabirds and sea turtles.
- The GOS brand and communication strategy is being finalized for approval and implementation, led by the Fundação Maio Biodiversidade – FMB (Maio Biodiversity Foundation) as part of a national initiative.
- Regarding the behaviour change component - The recruitment of the Behaviour Change Coordinator kicked off the work to collect data through the administration of questionnaires on behavioural changes, involving qualitative and quantitative social science research to subsequently design messages, identify and prioritize target audiences, trusted influencers, communication channels, and drivers of change. The questionnaire is set to be administered to a group of 935 fishermen, encompassing the six target islands of the project. Questionnaire administration has begun on Fogo and Brava islands and is set to continue on other designated target islands.

Output 2: A pilot participatory local labelling scheme for sustainable fisheries is implemented by fisheries value chain stakeholders (fishers, fishmongers, restaurants, and consumers) in six islands (Sal, São Vicente, Santo Antão, São Nicolau, Fogo, and Brava).

- As part of the development of the labelling process, Biosfera and the BirdLife team held crucial exchanges with partners and particularly with the three governmental entities involved in fisheries management, including the Institute of the Sea (IMar), the National Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DNPA) and the General Fisheries Inspection (IGP). Furthermore, the Institute for Quality Management and Intellectual Property (IGQPI), acting as the product, process and service certification body, is also integrated in this process, supporting all steps and labelling standards. During the meetings some important procedural aspects were clarified, and relationships are strengthened to ensure a smooth and coordinated approach going forward. A two-pronged approach to move the labelling work forward was suggested which will be implemented in the coming months.
 - o The first process is the development of a normative document for the labelling of restaurants some of which have already been identified and contacted on this matter. The aim is to establish a set of criteria that these restaurants must meet to receive a sustainability label. Biosfera, along with other project partners, will undertake this task at a national level. Leveraging their existing experience and strategy, Biosfera, in collaboration with other project partners, plans to promptly create a foundational document to facilitate this process.
 - o Secondly, a normative document for a labelling process for fishing products is to be developed. This task will be led by IGQPI, with the support of a technical committee already established comprising IMar, DNPA, and IGP. The document will encompass the necessary regulations and standards for labelling, subject to analysis and validation by the committee. Simultaneously, it will be open for public feedback through a consultation process. Although participation or adherence is primarily voluntary, the document's provisions might become obligatory if incorporated into national legislation.
- In addition, our partners are actively meeting and engaging all relevant stakeholders, including fishmongers, fishermen, and restaurant owners with the aim of introducing and raising awareness

about the project, in particular emphasizing the vital role of their active participation in the sustainable fishing labelling process.

Output 3: Bycatch mitigation measures, including safe release, protecting seabirds and sea turtles and that do not adversely affect other vulnerable species (sharks, rays) are deployed by 600 artisanal fishers around 6 islands and show a 25% reduction of estimated total bycatch of seabirds (compared to Y1 baseline), and 50% of fishers safely release captured seabirds and turtles by Y3 Q3.

- An online training on safe release and handling of seabirds and sea turtles in accidental captures was held by the BirdLife Team in September 2023. Around 42 people participated, including fishermen and technical staff of the two Cabo Verde conservation projects – Empowering Cabo Verde communities towards responsible practices in artisanal fisheries (APV, APB, and Biosfera), and Conserving Cabo Verde Seabird project (BiosCV and Lantuna).
- SPEA is currently developing and adapting a comprehensive safe handling guide to provide vital support to project partners. These guides will be shared with the SEC for their valuable input and insights in the coming weeks. Furthermore, the project team is actively organizing an in-person training session, supported by SPEA, aimed at fostering continuous capacity building among partners.
- According to the data collected and compiled by the GOS with support from partners, there were 53 accidental captures, with seabirds accounting for 52%, sharks for 39%, sea turtles for 9%, and rays for less than 1% of the total cases. Species captured are mainly Red-billed Tropicbird, Cabo Verde Shearwater and loggerhead turtle.
- Through several fishing boats equipped with GPS in the Fogo and Brava regions, tracking data has been collected. These datasets, when combined with data from GOS program, aiding in the analysis and development of measures to reduce bycatch.
 - o Other efforts are being made including additional GPS devices have been acquired to be deployed in the artisanal fishing vessels soon, thus covering all targeted sites.
- Furthermore, APV participates for the first time in the "fishing inspection nucleus" currently existing in the Fogo and Brava region to understand the challenges of monitoring fishing activities in this region. The nucleus is coordinated by local fisheries inspectors and has the participation of the Coast Guard, Maritime and Port Institute and the Maritime Police.
- Bycatch mitigation measures have been identified and equipment has been purchased. Trial protocols will soon be developed and implemented. The results combined with the recommendations of the sea threats study will inform on the most effective measures.

Output 4: Knowledge on nature and extent of interactions between seabirds and sea turtles in artisanal fisheries is improved and informs bycatch mitigation policies and solutions being used by artisanal fishers in Cabo Verde and in the wider West Africa region by EoP.

- The Terms of reference (TORs) for the contracting of scientific input to conduct a study on the interactions between seabirds, sea turtles, and artisanal fisheries in Cabo Verde islands have been finalised and the recruitment process launched. In the upcoming weeks, the evaluating of the proposals will be conducted to determine the subsequent steps for the aforementioned study.
- **The SEC was established** and held a first meeting during which project updates were provided, co-chairing mechanism were established, the year 1 SEC timeline was validated, upcoming consultancy work was reviewed and project updates and upcoming new projects in Cabo Verde were presented. Subsequently the two TORs previously mentioned were shared for their review and feedback.
- NGO partners are actively engaged in conducting communication and awareness campaigns through diverse channels, such as community radios, local television, and social media, to introduce and educate fishing communities on the project's objectives and sustainable fishing practices.
- Sea turtle monitoring, carried out from June to October, alongside regular monitoring of all eight seabird species in Cabo Verde, has been consistently maintained. The final reports to be completed in the coming weeks of the different monitoring campaigns will provide concrete data to inform the gains and challenges encountered.
- An abstract was developed by BirdLife International on bycatch including in Cabo Verde which was accepted to be presented at the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem Scientific Symposium organized by FAO in Bissau at the end of November 2023.

Output 5: At least 70% (n=370) of pilot participatory sustainable fisheries labelling scheme participants (260 people, ~35% women) directly benefit from a 10% increase in income (compared to baseline) by joining the scheme and co-create livelihood benefits, shared amongst the

communities for approx.1,200 people with increasing equitability across genders.

- Project partners focused on strengthening the organizational structures of fishermen and fishmonger associations. In Sal, a group of 53 fish sellers, including 44 women and 9 men, were actively involved in the formation of a fish sellers' association. Biosfera in São Vicente collaborates with Fishing Associations (FAs) using SWOT analyses to plan various community interventions, including training programs, support for fish processing and valorisation, among other. Lomba Tantum cooperative on Brava Island was supported for an exchange event in Fogo involving fishing associations, cooperatives, and related institutions.

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.

Challenges and potential impacts

The project faces a challenge related to delays in the labelling process, which directly impacts the timely implementation of related project activities. Under the updates for Output 2, a detailed suggestion was put forward, outlining a two-pronged approach to propel the advancement of the labelling process. The development of a roadmap and the momentum, which was created through various meetings with the relevant entities including in person in the past month will be capitalized on to push relevant advancements forward in the coming months. The proposed two-pronged approach involves altering the activity schedule slightly; however, with the newly developed roadmap for this process progress on this will be ensured.

Lessons learnt

- In terms of the labelling process, the close exchange with partners about the expectations and concepts relevant to the process highlighted the importance of clear definitions of concepts and processes especially regarding terms such as certification and labelling. Certain terms and processes are being understood differently by various entities as well as depending on the context and it can therefore not be assumed that there is a common understanding and clarity on such concepts. Therefore, a lesson learnt is that terms need to be clearly defined to avoid misunderstanding and assumptions among different entities.
- To support data standardization and avoid difficulties experienced by GOS members in collecting data, Biosfera started applying the approach of placing an onboard observer alongside the fisherman to support their efforts and continuously build capacities. The observers serve as practical and technical support to assist fishermen in applying the knowledge acquired during the workshops including to fill out the self-reporting, incident and sighting forms, perform safe handling and release of species accidentally caught, and collect fish data (species collected, size, weight, bycatch species captured), among others.
- In Sal APB conducted experiments with the use of small recorders among GOS, aiding in information collection, particularly for fishermen with limited education, which was identified as a challenge in completing self-reporting forms.

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:

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?

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**