

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

Project reference	29-020
Project title	<u>Strengthening community capacity for evidence-based forest restoration in Indonesia</u>
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Indonesia
Lead partner	UKCEH Edinburgh
Partner(s)	Plan Vivo, Fauna & Flora International, KKI Warsi, University of Kent, BRIN
Project leader	<i>Dr Lindsay F Banin</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>In development</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).

Our project began on 1st June 2022, initiated through a virtual kick-off meeting for the project team. We have since held monthly project-level meetings online, and smaller meetings focusing on narrower topics (i.e. landscape-specific restoration interventions; spatial prioritisation data and workflow; socio-economic monitoring). We subsequently had a full project meeting with all project partners in Indonesia in September 2022 once international travel was feasible. This gave us the opportunity to strengthen our collaborative relationships by getting to know the broader teams better, defining roles within the project and understanding how the partner organisations operate. The visit included a project workshop to discuss methods and the implementation plan in finer detail. Crucially, the trip included visits to the restoration field sites to better understand the ecological and social conditions within which the restoration projects are operating. We were able to meet the local communities involved in the restoration and hear first-hand their motivations and challenges for forest restoration and conservation. Project partners also coordinated opportunities to meet with other district and sub-district level stakeholders who were interested in our project and we were able to gain useful understanding of how different stakeholders interact in the focal landscapes. We scoped opportunities for sharing resources and yielding greater benefits from the project. Here we outline progress towards our four Outputs within our implementation plan.

Output 1 Restoration planning: As mentioned above we have held the kick-off and stakeholder meetings (Activity 1.1). We have started collating datasets and planning the workflows for the province-level spatial prioritisation (1.2) - this is not complete as was scheduled in our implementation plan (see Section 2 below) but we anticipate that these will be completed within the next half-year. Community engagement and discussions have begun so that restoration activities are guided by community aspirations (1.3) and we are well-placed to host the community consultations and community management plans will be developed in the coming two quarters, as planned (1.4). Following our reconnaissance visits to the field sites in September, in-country teams are currently planning ground-surveys to refine the landscape-level spatial planning, with the support of remotely sensed data, and defining restoration approaches (e.g. planting versus natural

regeneration). Our conversations with communities are helping to guide the restoration management training needs for Year 2 (1.5).

Output 2 Restoration implementation: Nursery areas are established in both landscapes, and seedlings have been provided by Watershed Management in Bengkulu (2.1.2) whilst provision of seedlings is under negotiation in Aceh (2.1.1), taking into account species availability and seed quality. Once the restoration areas have been delimited and management plans have been co-designed and co-agreed with local communities, baseline surveys and planting can commence.

Output 3 Restoration monitoring: During our field visits and ongoing meetings, we have been discussing our baseline survey designs. This has taken slightly longer than anticipated, but it is critical to get this right so that we ensure ongoing monitoring is appropriate for demonstrating project impact. Nonetheless, we are on track to conduct the baseline surveys in Yr 1 Q4 or Yr 2 Q1 as planned (3.2). We have discussed some aspects of the design of the mobile monitoring application and have distributed a user's survey to capture some initial information on app functionality (3.1). We will design features for the capture of monitoring data in line with the proposed baseline and on-going monitoring methods, and at that point we will extend the needs assessment to broader users so the app could be used beyond the project team in the future.

Output 4 Restoration income generation: Together the cost-benefit analysis (4.1) and market analysis (4.2) help to assess the feasibility of generating income for local communities through restoration activities. The methodological framework has been established for the cost-benefit and market analyses and data collection is currently ongoing drawing on project data, literature review and stakeholder interviews. Through our discussions we have identified three key areas for development of Plan Vivo methodologies for the purposes of restoration (4.4); (i) quantifying and valuing assisted natural regeneration, (ii) methodologies for enhancements through planting individual trees, (iii) biodiversity certificates and how these combine with existing carbon methodology. The most viable option will also be influenced by the payments for ecosystem services outcomes (i.e. restoration/ biodiversity/ carbon) that will be delivered through management on the ground. Plan Vivo is currently piloting and undertaking a stakeholder consultation regarding a new biodiversity standard (Plan Vivo Nature) and the additional aspects of restoration methodology are under way through this Darwin project. Partners (KKI Warsi and FFI) in this project are poised to develop their "Project Idea Notes" (an introductory presentation of the concept of their project areas for generating payments for ecosystem services) (4.5). Partners (Plan Vivo) coordinated a training session through The Landscapes and Livelihoods Group (TLLG) to build capacity in the FFI and KKI Warsi teams to conduct the participatory well-being assessments which form part of the project M&E, and baseline assessments will soon be conducted. Partners continue to track the Indonesian government position on PES and are reviewing the recently published carbon regulations (PMLHK 21/2022).

Our project activities are therefore broadly on track for the first two quarters of this project and we are really pleased with the progress. In addition, two PhD studentships affiliated with the project are currently being advertised through the NERC-funded ARIES and E4 doctoral training partnerships, for recruitment in 2023.

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.

Unexpected developments: Due to personnel changes at University of Kent we needed to recruit a new Research Associate (which has now successfully been done), which slightly delayed some spatial prioritisation work in Output 1. An opportunity also arose to leverage additional funding support through UKRI which will fund the RA for 6 months, with the condition that the funding be used by March 2023. To make use of this will require moving the Darwin funding to Yr 2. We have already submitted a change request and hope this will be possible to maintain the RA's involvement further into the project lifetime.

Lessons learned: Visiting the restoration sites helped us to better understand the local land-uses and governance structures. This also helped to clarify what 'restoration' means to different stakeholders and the areas that might be available for different restoration interventions, including natural forest recovery, planting of natural forest species, planting of multi-purpose tree species,

more diverse agroforestry and opportunities for avoided degradation and deforestation. We have enabled us to review our Outcome level indicators.

We learned that foreigner access to the field sites must be planned well in advance. Bureaucratic systems have been rapidly changing as a result of Covid travel restrictions and then borders re-opening. Much of the fieldwork will be conducted by in-country teams so this should not be problematic for project progress but will be important for any foreign students participating. Processes for gender inclusion may require local tailoring because of differing societal norms in our two focal landscapes, Aceh and Bengkulu.

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: Yes/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

Change request reference if known: [Not yet 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?

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**