

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	30-009
Project title	Developing sustainable sea moss farming methods in Saint Lucia
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Saint Lucia, (W.I.)
Lead partner	Fauna & Flora
Partner(s)	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries, Food Security and Rural Development: Fisheries Department, Saint Lucia National Trust
Project leader	<i>Adams Toussaint</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>N/A</i>

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.

The following are notable activities that were implemented during this reporting period (with corresponding standard indicator numbers in square brackets).

Activity X.1 Project Steering committee (PSC) focal point persons have been nominated by the following project partners: Fauna & Flora, The Ministry of Sustainable Development: GEF South East Coast Project (GEF-SECP), Department of Fisheries, Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund (SLNCF), Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT), Export Saint Lucia, Praslin Seamoss Farmers Association and Eau Piquant Seamoss farmers Association.

Activity X.2 A project inception workshop hosted by Fauna & Flora on September 5th 2023 was convened with project partners. Discussion focussed on project execution arrangements, the workplan, logframe, stakeholder engagement plan and reporting requirements (14 agencies represented, with attendees comprising 10 men and 16 women).

DI-B05

Activity 1.1. A desk-based review of current drivers of biodiversity loss was completed, which included collation of existing data gathered by other projects operating in the same project area, such as the, Department of Fisheries, GEF-SECP. Additionally, multiple stakeholder discussions generated information on the impacts of sea moss farming on critical marine habitat, including seagrass beds and mangrove forests, along with user conflicts, tenure and

rights within the marine space, and recommended methods of sea moss farming. These included a workshop organized in collaboration with the SLNCF Biodiversity and Protected Area Management (BIOPAMA) project on August 22nd (5 agencies, attendees comprising 38 men and 8 women) and August 23rd 2023 (14 agencies, attendees comprising 11 men and 8 women), as well as the Fauna & Flora hosted stakeholder consultation workshop [DI-B05, DI-A04].

Activity 1.2 Permanent monitoring stations for water quality and biodiversity monitoring are currently being discussed with project partners. Information gathered from previous monitoring activities conducted by partner organizations will supplement the final locations and goals of monitoring. Partner organizations (SECP, Department of Fisheries, SLNT and SLNCF) will submit all published or relevant work through the existing Government of Saint Lucia (GOSL) National Environmental Information System, where information from various ministries and other private organizations can be accessed. Strong relationships have been built between organizations implementing related projects, which will streamline future information sharing.

Activity 1.4 A locally appropriate and sustainable sea moss farming method, namely the use of floating rafts made of bamboo or PVC tubes, has been identified. This was based on a desk-based review of current techniques and learnings from previous trials implemented by the Japanese Development Cooperation and the Department of Fisheries. The method has proven to be climate-smart and resilient to loss of farm infrastructure in storm events, while reducing associated turtle entanglement, coastal deforestation and plastic pollution. This farming method has received the support of sea moss farmers and other relevant stakeholders during trials. Fauna & Flora is collaborating with the Department of Fisheries to develop a list of materials for procurement to initiate this method in the project area.

Activity 2.1 A stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) has been drafted, drawing on information from stakeholder meetings and established engagement plans from partner organizations. The SEP has identified roughly 40 stakeholder groups and individuals relevant to the project. A grievance mechanism has also been outlined, however specific channels for filing grievances will be decided in the upcoming period by the PSC.

Activity 3.1 A Knowledge/Attitudes/Practices (KAP) survey methodology is in draft and will be discussed with partner agencies for execution soon.

Activity 3.3 A training needs assessment has been drafted and will be implemented alongside future sea moss farmer-specific workshops.

- GIS maps of critical marine habitats were developed for Point Sable Environmental Area (PSEPA), providing critical materials for participatory mapping processes and an evidence base for decision-making on site suitability for sustainable sea moss farming. The marine habitat maps will be used to inform future Darwin project implementation.

- Fauna & Flora convened a stakeholder consultation workshop on September 28th (19 agencies and attendees comprising 21 men and 8 women) for 1) participatory mapping of different resource uses in the marine portion of PSEPA, 2) identification of key problems (including areas of conflict between resource users), 3) potential solutions, and 4) self-assessment of extent of habitat degradation by sea moss farmers and other stakeholders. [DI-B05].

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.

We observed an absence of women nominated on the PSC. The breakaway of women from the Praslin Sea Moss Farmers Association to form the Praslin Women in Sea Moss group is a new issue and unexpected development that the project has encountered. This new women's association needs to be incorporated into the stakeholder engagement plan, to facilitate women's participation in the PSC and project implementation. It will be necessary to understand the issues that catalysed the genesis of the Praslin Women in Sea Moss Association, and to assess the gender dynamics in the Eau Piquant Sea Moss Farmers Association.

The lack of participation of sea moss farmers that are not members of associations is seemingly an indication of an alienation of a section of the sea moss farming community. This is impacting on the *number of people with increased participation in local communities / local management organisations* [DI-B05]. Therefore, activities under output 2, will need stronger stakeholder analysis and monitoring to ensure effective participation and reduce disenfranchisement in the sea moss community.

Finally, the recruitment of the project coordinator has been delayed. We have been recruiting for multiple roles in our Caribbean programme, and recruitment in the region has proven challenging, with a lengthy process needed to find staff who fulfil the necessary criteria. Recruitment processes have also been affected by core capacity gaps at organisational level. However, the project coordinator has now been offered to a suitable candidate, and we have brought in temporary capacity to support the Saint Lucia Project Manager during this period until the Project Coordinator has started.

The absence of the coordinator has inevitably had significant impacts on implementation of activities, and we anticipate that the funds for this position will not be fully spent within the year. In order to minimise the underspend, we will submit a financial change request separate to this Half Year report, outlining proposed reallocations of funding.

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 (A financial change request will be submitted subsequent to this report)

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: £ [REDACTED]

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: [REDACTED]

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

<p>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>N/A</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**