

## 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: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

<b>Project reference</b>	DARCC003
<b>Project title</b>	Build capacity and capability to regulate hunting and protect biodiversity
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Sao Tomé e Príncipe
<b>Lead partner</b>	BirdLife International
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Forest and Biodiversity Directorate of Sao Tomé and Príncipe (DFB), Plataforma de Turismo Responsável e Sustentável (PTRS), Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes Research Unit of the Faculty of Sciences, University of Lisbon (CE3C), Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources – InBIO Associate Laboratory (CIBIO)
<b>Project leader</b>	Bárbara Campos
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	HYR2
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	BirdLife - Sao Tomé Office social media pages where news from the project is shared:  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/umSingularTesouroaProteger">https://www.facebook.com/umSingularTesouroaProteger</a> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/obo_ovyo/">https://www.instagram.com/obo_ovyo/</a>

### **Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable**

At **Output 1** level, during S1 Year 2, 15 Change Agents/Hunting Protectors trained in Year 1 worked on mobilising and engaging community members and hunters from their districts for the community awareness sessions, hunter training and exhibition of the theatre play (1.1.). As well as being involved in preparing both activities, they were part of their implementation, seeing their knowledge and communication skills strengthened. In addition to the 40h of training provided in Year 1, with their involvement in hunter education, the Hunt Protectors received an additional 31h of training, totalling 71h (activities 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5). This 31-hour ecology and species management training was given at the district level, with 5 sessions taking place. The Hunting Protectors are engaged on an ongoing basis. The WhatsApp group created for coordination purposes continues to be used. All the guidance and support materials (ToR, methodological descriptions, surveys, training materials, pedagogical materials, etc., including the script for the "Obô Sêbedô" theatre) were produced under the supervision of the academic partners (activity 1.2.) and will be Annexed to the Annual Report.

Within the framework of **Output 2**, and during 10 district sessions in S1 year 2, 249 community members (hunters, community leaders, hunting product processors/cooks, etc.) were sensitised and consulted on hunting and the ecology and conservation of species (activity 2.3.), and around

775 people watched and took part in the theatre play "Obô Sébedô" (Knower of the Forest, in local Creole). To ensure that the information transmitted was better understood, the communication materials developed and produced by the project (activity 2.1.), such as the poster on hunting, were disseminated. In addition to being produced, premiered in the capital of São Tomé and replicated in 2 communities, the play "Obô Sébedô" was also recorded in "soap opera" format for future dissemination on the national TV channel, 1 video of the "hunting dance" was developed, produced and posted on TikTok, and BirdLife supported the further replication of the play in 3 more communities, to ensure equal geographical distribution of the theatre's reach. During the CPLP Sustainability Fair (25-27 October), the government-led organisation of the event proposed that RaizArte replicate the play on site, allowing it to demonstrate its capacity, and for BirdLife and the other implementing partners to publicise the project. A mini-documentary on hunting in São Tomé and Príncipe was produced, and the first cut was delivered on 17 October 2023.

In addition to the efforts to increase the reach of the project's activities, 11 Facebook posts from the "Obô Ovyô" communication campaign were published, reaching 3,725 accounts; 1 video of the hunting dance/TikTok was posted on the RaizArte page, registering 1,091 views.

All the communication materials/products also worked as communication supports for the Hunting Protectors, who were able to use them independently to pass on key messages about the conservation and management of game species.

Teams from a GEF/UNDP funded project, the NGO Oikos and the company Agripalma (SOCFIN) were also involved through their presence at the performance and/or in the de-briefing session of the activity (activity 2.4.). By the first week of November 2023, a formal restitution will be made to the following entities: DFB, PTRS, DGAAC, AMP, OIKOS, Biodiversity Project (UNDP), Ecuador Project, TRI Project (FAO), Agripalma, and EIM.

About **Output 3** and the involvement, consultation and training of hunters and institutional agents, in S1 year 2, 5 district training sessions were held on the ecology, conservation and management of species, reaching a total of 75 hunters and 31 hours of training (activities 3.2. and 3.3.). Based on the information gathered during the awareness-raising sessions mentioned in Output 1 and the data in Year 1, the communities where endemic bird hunting takes place most intensively were selected. The pre-and post-training surveys reveal very positive results regarding the impact of this activity.

As mentioned in Output 2, Hunting Protectors were crucial in mobilising and involving community members, especially hunters, in the awareness-raising and training/consultation activities (activity 3.1). During the awareness-raising activities, a list of expressions of interest for the subsequent action (hunter training/consultation) was made available, and interested participants registered their motivation. Knowing the community members well, the Protectors encouraged this registration. This initiative worked very well, as it made the hunters feel part of a joint initiative, in which not only BirdLife and PTRS work in unison but also the DFB itself, which will take on the role of supervisory body. The registered hunters contacted the Protectors several times to confirm the training date, confirming their interest. Social safeguard risks were ensured, and the contact details of 2 team representatives were made available from the start of the training for any complaints or grievances.

In addition to the 75 hunters involved in the training, 3 DFB institutional agents oversee and accompany all the project's actions. The team has agreed that a debriefing session of the training for hunters will take place with the national authorities to present and discuss hunters' recommendations to the current hunting regulation, developing the roadmap for improvement to be presented in January 2024. The broad participation of institutional agents (DFB and DGAAC) will be ensured. DFB's participation is also guaranteed in applying surveys to hunters (to be carried out at the end of October/November 2023).

As for **Output 4**, in S1 year 2, the survey to be applied to hunters (activity 4.1.) was finalised and submitted to the DFB and the National Statistics Institute (INE) for validation. All the technical

and logistical preparation was ensured, and the team discussed and validated the application's methodological description. Additional training in good survey application practices and social data collection methods was given to 11 people (4 Hunting Protectors, 3 DFB technicians, 3 BirdLife technicians and 1 PTRS technician) to guarantee the aptitude of an essential core for carrying out the activity. The training was recorded so that it could be replicated with other Protectors, and good practices could be refreshed before the launch of each district survey. Together with the observations gathered during community awareness-raising and hunter training, the analysis and assessment of hunters' needs will thus be complete.

This semester, a call for tenders was also launched to implement a consultancy aimed at "developing and implementing an entrepreneurship mentoring programme for endemic bird hunters", with the deadline for submitting applications being 31 September 2023. The evaluation of the applications received is underway. At the same time, the criteria for access to the mentoring programme and the receipt of micro-grants are being fine-tuned with the team (activity 4.2.). Once the surveys have been carried out, they will be analysed with the support of the technical advisory team (activity 4.3.) along the lines of what was done for community awareness-raising and hunter training/consultation.

The reports on all activities have been duly produced to promote the recording and capitalisation of the project's efforts, thus leading the team to its primary objective - drawing up the roadmap for improving the hunting regulations. When finalised, the activity reports are shared with all the project partners (activity 4.4.). Following the coordination mechanisms established between the teams (local and extended), meetings are held to validate all the products and documents produced. The same will be done with the proposal for a roadmap to improve hunting regulations, which will be subject to broader validation at the institutional level (activity 4.5.).

During S1 2023, and following the findings made in the field, in addition to the interest of more hunters in becoming Hunting Protectors, being involved in training on ecology and species management, and being willing to organise themselves into groups representing the activity formally, the project team brainstormed the following repetition of the hunters' training to the authorities, an outline will be drawn up.

Equal participation of both genders was promoted in all the activities, but since men practise hunting, the hunter training sessions were not attended by women. Female participation was noticeable in the community presentations of the theatre plays (47% of participants), and partly (23%) in the community awareness-raising activities. The current president of the PTRS is also a woman.

**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.**

During this semester, the fuel crisis in June 2023 was unexpected. This event led to difficulty accessing fuel at the pumps and rising prices for transport and fuel, which made it difficult to transport the team to the communities to carry out community sensitisations and mobilise community members themselves. The team tried to overcome these obstacles by monitoring fuel sales at the pumps and making the best use of the limited resource.

On 1 June, VAT began to be applied (at 15% on a normal basis), replacing the 5% consumption tax. This transition led to growing inflation and uncontrolled pricing of goods and services, which impacted project spending. However, each project's implementing organisation's expenses remain within the established budget limits and no material change is anticipated. The project team will plan ahead for any potential impact requiring a change in methodology or outputs.

**3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with NIRAS:	N/A
Formal Change Request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	N/A
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)?**

No  Estimated underspend: £ 0

**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?**

Nothing to report.

**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](mailto: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**