

## Darwin Initiative Capability & Capacity Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":  
(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/information-notes/>).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes)

**Submission Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

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### Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	DARCC019
Project title	Building Government Capability and Capacity to Facilitate Human-Elephant Coexistence
Countries	Angola, Ethiopia, and Malawi
Lead Partner	The Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation
Project partner(s)	1. National Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas Angola (INBAC) 2. Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) 3. Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Malawi (DNPW)
Darwin Initiative grant value	£198,978.00
Start/end dates of project	01 April 2023 to 31 March 2025
Reporting period and number Annual Report	April 2023 – March 2024 Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Hugo [REDACTED], Technical Project Lead
Project website	<a href="https://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/">https://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/</a>
Report authors and date	Hugo [REDACTED] (Narrative) Harry [REDACTED] (Head of Finance) (Budget) Hailu [REDACTED] (NHFP Ethiopia) (Training reports) Alex [REDACTED] (NHFP Malawi) (Training report) Ndaona [REDACTED] (Manager Kasungu) (Training report) <b>10 April 2024</b>

### 1. Project summary

The rapid and ongoing loss of species and habitats requires concerted and coordinated action globally. Africa is the world's poorest continent with an exponential population growth that exerts enormous pressure on basic human needs. This, in turn, impacts land use, and, frequently due to lack of spatial planning, results in increasing fragmentation and degradation of wildlife habitats. Fragmentation of wildlife habitats is a major threat to global biodiversity and species distribution, first due to the isolation of protected areas, and second, in the case of elephants, increased fragmentation not only results in a decline of dispersal areas, but it disrupts movements via corridors and migration routes. Fragmentation and poor connectivity has not only resulted in significantly lowered resilience for elephant populations and all other migratory species,

especially under conditions of accelerating climate change, but also in an exponential increase of Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC). Increasing HEC throughout most of the African elephant range has led to insecurity and increased poverty for communities living with elephants, primarily due to crop raiding, destruction of property and the loss of human lives, which in turn led to negative attitudes towards conservation, and the loss of elephants due to retaliatory killings and poaching.

In the context of sustainable conservation of elephant populations and advancing human-elephant coexistence, it is evident that communities and wildlife authorities mandated to manage, mitigate, and prevent conflict will bear the brunt of this rapidly worsening problem. Neither wildlife authorities nor communities are adequately equipped to deal with this situation.

The EPIF believes that HEC solutions must be African-led, with leading roles fulfilled by African governments and their wildlife authority experts. Currently, these institutions' capability, capacity, and funding are entirely insufficient to deal with the colossal challenges of HEC, the impacts of climate change, and the complexities of land-use planning across elephant habitats.

The EPIF understands that African governments and their mandated wildlife authorities can turn the tide on HEC by providing the political will that is key for accountability and proactive decision-making to benefit both communities and elephants. However, this can only be achieved when adequately supported through targeted training, knowledge exchange, and cross-regional network development to raise the capacity of local experts to adequately manage HEC.

By investing directly in the capability and capacity of governments – that is, National HEC Focal Points (NHFPs) and other staff within the authorities responsible for human-wildlife conflict (HWC) and coexistence - we believe a more sustainable long-term impact may be achieved.

Without detailed information on conflict situations in areas affected by HEC, it is difficult to know what type of interventions are required. It is not only the social context that is important – that is conflicts between groups of people about the wildlife resource - but also the types of conflicts that are prevalent, how often they occur and where (frequencies and spatial distribution). Thus, a sound monitoring and evaluation (M&E) program is a prerequisite to tackling conflict. An M&E program provides a mechanism for continuing review and refinement through feedback for the adaptive management system. This mechanism should include ongoing compilation and review of data on HEC conflicts and community status in relation to these conflicts, as well as the data on the efforts taken to address these conflicts and build capacity in both wildlife authorities and communities, ideally facilitating coexistence. It is important to define both the spatial and temporal scales of monitoring activities.

As such, the project has a strong focus on increasing capability and capacity of wildlife authorities to monitor, analyse and report on HEC conflicts. This will enable them to develop locally suitable interventions and monitor changes in response to these.

The three project countries, Angola, Ethiopia and Malawi, are EPI member countries. The EPI Foundation has been working with each country for a number of years, in terms of development of their National Elephant Action Plans (NEAPs), each containing a chapter on HEC that describes the situation when the NEAP was developed, and by assisting them to place ivory stockpiles out of commercial use through our stockpile management system.

### **Target Sites by Project Country:**

**Angola:** Although a needs assessment was done during the scoping trip to Angola in November 2023, due to a recent change in management of the wildlife authorities (INBAC) and consequent delays in finalizing and signing the MoU between INBAC and EPIF, no target sites have as yet been selected.

**Ethiopia:** Babile Elephant Sanctuary, Chebera-Churchura, Gambella, Kafeta Shiraro and Omo National Parks, all containing viable elephant populations.

**Malawi:** Kasungu and Nyika National Parks, Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve and Thuma, Dedza-Salima Forest Reserves, all containing viable elephant populations.

## 2. Project stakeholders/ partners

Due to a military coup in Gabon, on 04 October 2023, a Change Request was submitted to drop Gabon as a target country. An updated Change Request was issued on 26 October 2023, which superseded the initial request and provided detail on reallocation of funds, moving from 4 to 3 target countries.

For the three remaining target countries, Angola, Ethiopia and Malawi, the main partners constitute the wildlife authorities and their respective ministries:

**Angola:** The National Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (INBAC), is a public institution within the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Angola and has legal, administrative, financial and patrimonial autonomy. Local stakeholders are INBAC management of the sites that will eventually be selected for this project, and local government.

**Ethiopia:** The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) is a public institution under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Local stakeholders are EWCA park management of the five selected sites, and local government of the respective National States where the sites are located.

**Malawi:** The Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Wildlife, is mandated to conserve, manage and regulate the use of wildlife resources in the Republic of Malawi. Local stakeholders are the Wildlife Action Group, responsible for managing Thuma and Dedza-Salima Forest Reserves under the Ministry of Forestry, DNPW park management of the three selected sites, and local government.

The first scoping trips to each of the target countries were in November (Angola), June (Ethiopia), and September 2023 (Malawi). They were undertaken with the objectives of discussing the project with the respective wildlife authorities, to support the nomination and appointment of a NHFP, and to carry out a needs assessment. For both Angola and Malawi the NHFP was nominated by their respective Ministers and consequently appointed by the wildlife authorities, whereas in Ethiopia, the NHFP was nominated and appointed by the Director General of EWCA, with the Ministry informed at a later stage. Partnerships and the appointment of focal points were more or less dictated by government protocol, while the needs assessments were done with wildlife authority management and other relevant stakeholders when required, resulting in tailored support packages for each of the mandated authorities. All main stakeholders were particularly interested in strengthening their capability and capacity for M&E, involving procurement of suitable equipment and training in the use of existing software packages as well as mobile devices to capture data in the field. In the case of Malawi, where they have been using an early version of SMART, the advanced training will focus on the latest release of the system. Ethiopia and Angola expressed interest in the use of EarthRanger for their monitoring program. For all three countries technical specialists will be contracted.

## 3. Project progress

Project DARCC019 was approved on 24 March 2023, and letters to the relevant Ministers of 3 target countries (Angola, Gabon, and Malawi) were formulated, discussed and dispatched on 17 April, 2 May and 3 May 2023 respectively. After a discussion with the Director General of EWCA it was decided to initiate the project, but to wait on seeking Ministerial approval until the political situation in the country had improved. To obtain Ministerial approval in each target country is a prerequisite to success, but precious time was lost due to a slow response from Angola, primarily due to a recent change in INBAC management, the situation in Ethiopia, and a military coup in Gabon. Ministerial approval for Malawi was received on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023.

### 3.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

#### Angola:

It took 5 months to obtain Ministerial approval for the project, to then organise the scoping trip to Angola, which took place between 12 - 17 November 2023 (**see Annex 6**). During this trip, meetings were held with the Minister, INBAC management and various local stakeholders

(including NGOs, community organisations, journalists, etc). The objectives of the trip were to confirm the official nomination and appointment of a National HEC Focal Point (NHFP) and to undertake a needs assessment with INBAC management and relevant stakeholders.

### **Ethiopia:**

The first scoping trip to Ethiopia was undertaken from 12 to 19 June 2023, with the objective of discussing the project with EWCA management and to nominate and appoint a NHFP. A NHFP was successfully nominated and appointed by the Director General of EWCA, and the way forward was discussed. The second trip to Ethiopia took place between 22 - 25 November 2023, with the objective of undertaking a needs assessment. The third trip to Ethiopia took place from 14 to 26 March 2024, with the objectives to carry out a workshop with all relevant stakeholders to set baselines for all types of HEC in the 5 target sites, procurement of equipment required for the monitoring system, and to discuss the launch of EarthRanger in Ethiopia with the Director General and the Board of EWCA and the Partnership Director EarthRanger (**see Annex 7**).

### **Malawi:**

Due to the holiday season and the availability of DNPW staff, the first scoping trip to Malawi was undertaken between 10 - 22 September 2023, to discuss the project with DNPW management in Lilongwe as well as with management of two main HEC hotspots, Kasungu National Park (DNPW) and Thuma/Dedza-Salima Forest Reserves, the latter managed by the Wildlife Action Group (WAG), but with DNPW officially being responsible for HEC mitigation. <https://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/post/malawi-s-elephants-5-decades-on>

The objectives of the Malawi visit were the nomination and official appointment of the NHFP, conduct a needs assessment for DNPW Headquarters in Lilongwe and the three sites under DNPW management, and the two forest reserves under WAG management, and hold meetings with several in-country stakeholders. The NHFP was nominated by the Minister and appointed by the Director of DNPW, and a needs assessment was done in 3 locations.

### **Activity 1.1.**

**In collaboration with respective governments in each of the three priority countries, identify well-placed, enthusiastic and motivated NHFPs, and seek their formal nomination and responsibilities.**

**Angola:** The NHFP was appointed by the Minister. An MoU between INBAC and the EPIF was drafted, but was not signed until April 1st 2024. As a result, all activities planned for Angola have been moved to the second project year.

**Ethiopia:** The NHFP was appointed by the Director of EWCA, with an MoU between EWCA and EPIF signed in November 2023. The objective of the MoU was to formalise the agreement between the EPIF and EWCA in implementing the Darwin project, including the appointment of the NHFP, capacity building and skills development, provision of equipment for monitoring purposes and capacity building support to mitigate HEC.

**Malawi:** The NHFP was nominated by the Minister and officially appointed by the Director DNPW in September 2023. An MoU between DNPW and EPIF was signed in November 2023. The objective of the MoU was to formalise the agreement between the EPIF and DNPW in implementing the Darwin project, including the appointment of the NHFP, capacity building and skills development, provision of equipment for monitoring purposes and capacity building support to mitigate HEC.

### **Activity 1.2.**

**In collaboration with the appropriate government institution (primarily wildlife authorities), identify NHFP needs in each EPI member state and develop a support package that will help build lasting technical capacity, confidence and a sound understanding of managing HEC.**

**Angola:** INBAC requested assistance with setting up the EarthRanger monitoring system, which includes purchase of relevant equipment and training of selected staff. Due to a recent change in INBAC management, and the resulting delay in signing the MoU, project implementation has been moved to the second project year.

**Ethiopia:** EWCA requested assistance with setting up the EarthRanger monitoring system for 6 target sites, including EWCA Headquarters, which includes procurement of relevant equipment and training by specialist consultants. Moreover, they also requested support with setting baselines for all HEC types in 5 target sites, as well as training in the use of relevant HEC mitigation techniques. The 2023 HEC data for the 5 selected sites, collected and analysed manually, were validated during a workshop that took place during the last week of March 2024, to set HEC baselines for each affected community (HEC hotspots) for each site separately (see **Annex 7**).

**Malawi:** DNPW primarily requested assistance with the upgrading of their SMART monitoring system, mobile devices to capture data in the field, and laptops to run the system. Moreover, they requested advanced training by a specialized consultant with regard to the use of the latest version of the SMART software, as well as on data collection, analysis, reporting and HEC mitigation techniques. The 2023 HEC data for 3 of 4 selected sites, those managed by DNPW, collected and analysed with the older version of SMART, will be used to set 2023 baselines for all types of conflict for each of the three sites separately.

### **Activity 1.3.**

#### **Training of the NHFP and other staff by specialist consultants.**

**Angola:** Because the MoU between EPIF and INBAC was not signed until April 1st 2024, implementation of activities was moved to the second project year.

**Ethiopia:** From 20 – 22 February 2024, the NHFP and another EWCA staff member attended a training-for-trainers in HEC mitigation techniques in Tsavo National Park, Kenya, organized by the Save the Elephants Coexistence Team, based on their latest HEC Toolkit (see **Annex 8**). From 11 to 14 March 2024, two EWCA staff attended the SMART Global Congress in Windhoek Namibia (see **Annex 9**). The SMART Global Congress was the first ever worldwide meeting for conservation practitioners using SMART. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in discussions and presentations on a range of conservation applications, receive training, and network with peers from more than 1,200 sites across over 100 countries. SMART has been integrated with EarthRanger to create a more powerful, end to end protected area management platform.

**Malawi:** From 20 – 22 February 2024, the NHFP attended a training-for-trainers in HEC mitigation techniques in Tsavo National Park, Kenya, organized by the Save the Elephants Coexistence Team, based on their latest HEC Toolkit (see **Annex 10**). From 11 to 14 March 2024, three DNPW staff members attended the SMART Global Congress in Windhoek Namibia (see above and see **Annex 11**). Moreover, in February 2024, the project provided transport and food support for a DNPW in-house refresher training for HWC staff and new recruits operating in sites managed by DNPW.

### **Activity 1.4.**

**In collaboration with partners, equip each NHFP with the necessary tools to enhance the quality and quantity of HEC information available to them, and, thus, to the EPI HEC Team.**

**Angola:** Due to the delays described above, equipment will be procured during the second project year.

**Ethiopia:** In March 2024, 5 laptops, several mobile devices and mobile data were procured for use by EWCA staff to operate EarthRanger at EWCA Headquarters, Babile Elephant Sanctuary, Chebera-Churchura, Gambella, Kafeta Shiraro and Omo National Parks.

**Malawi:** Six laptops, 7 mobile devices and a printer were procured for use by DNPW and WAG staff to operate the SMART monitoring system at DNPW HQ, Kasungu and Nyika National Parks, Vwaza Wildlife Reserve, and Thuma-Dedza/Salima Forest Reserves.

### **Activity 2.1.**

**Facilitate discussions with potential partners to help NHFPs explore and identify the most effective monitoring systems for HEC through available digital technology or alternative existing systems. Specialist consultants will deliver the training for the NHFP and other staff.**

**Angola:** INBAC showed interest in the EarthRanger monitoring system. However, due to the delays described above, as well as the change in management, their preferences may have changed, but training will take place during the second project year.

**Ethiopia:** EWCA opted for the use of the EarthRanger monitoring system. The relevant equipment was procured, and an exploratory meeting between the Partnership Director EarthRanger and the Director General and the Board of EWCA took place during the last week of March 2024 (see Annex 7). If agreed to launch EarthRanger in Ethiopia, training sessions are planned for July 2024.

**Malawi:** Because DNPW has been using an old version of SMART, they decided to go for an upgrade to the latest version. A specialist consultant was contracted to do an advanced SMART training for relevant DNPW and WAG staff from 22 to 26 April 2024. All of the equipment required to run the system was procured in January 2024.

### **Activity 2.2.**

**Invest in skills development for NHFPs, enabling basic reporting, management and monitoring of HEC, and best practice sharing and capacity building for management of HEC by the authorities responsible for wildlife management.**

**Angola:** Late 2023 to early 2024, a HEC Monitoring & Evaluation Framework manual was developed by EPIF that will be used to provide training to INBAC staff in terms of data analysis, reporting and use of the results as feedback for the adaptive management system once the monitoring system is up and running. Training in the use of EarthRanger (or alternatively SMART) is planned for the second year of the project.

**Ethiopia:** Late 2023 to early 2024, a HEC Monitoring & Evaluation Framework manual was developed by EPIF that will be used to provide training to EWCA staff once EarthRanger is up and running in the 6 selected sites, which includes HQ. Training in the use of EarthRanger is planned for July 2024.

**Malawi:** Late 2023 to early 2024, a HEC Monitoring & Evaluation Framework manual was developed by EPIF that will be used to provide training to DNPW staff once the updated SMART system is up and running in the 5 selected sites, which includes HQ. Advanced training in the use of the updated SMART system and data capture in the field will be done by a specialist consultant between 22 and 26 April 2024.

### **Activity 3.1.**

**Set up a HEC Focal Point Network, initially starting with the three priority countries, but in time expanding this to encompass all EPI member states.**

During the STE HEC mitigation training-for-trainers in Tsavo, Kenya in February 2024, a WhatsApp Group was set up to exchange information on HEC mitigation techniques and assisting those in need of advice. The STE Coexistence Team started this training-for-trainers early 2023, with monthly sessions attended by both NGO and government staff from all over

Africa, which includes the majority of EPI member countries. Because it will take years to set up the EPIF HEC Focal Point Network (HECFPN), the STE HEC network is a welcome and rapidly expanding, but nevertheless temporarily substitute for our HECFPN.

#### **Activity 4.1.**

#### **Provide basic equipment to each target country to enable them to mitigate local HEC problems.**

This activity cannot be implemented until the monitoring systems are up and running, staff has been trained and a flow of HEC data forms the basis of decisions made with regard to HEC mitigation interventions, which in turn need to be monitored to evaluate responses. This implies that this activity may be implemented during the last phase of the project. However, due to rampant inflation since this application was developed and submitted, and the resulting realignment of the budget, we had to economize on basic equipment in order to enable us to procure sufficient numbers of laptops and mobile devices to set up monitoring systems in each target country. After all, sound M&E systems provide the foundation of effective and efficient HEC management.

### **3.2 Progress towards project Outputs**

#### **Output 1:**

#### **Capable and capacitated NHFPs and other staff members in place with the authorities responsible for wildlife management in each of the three target countries.**

**Angola:** Due to the delays in project implementation, no INBAC staff were trained during the first year of the project.

**Ethiopia:** Two EWCA staff members, including NHFP, trained as trainers in the use of HEC mitigation techniques, to set up HEC mitigation training sessions for selected EWCA staff in the 5 target sites of Ethiopia. Two EWCA staff members, including NHFP, attended the SMART Global Congress, among others learning about integration of SMART with EarthRanger (**see Annexes 8 & 9**).

**Malawi:** NHFP trained as trainer in the use of HEC mitigation techniques, to set up HEC mitigation training sessions for selected DNPW staff in the 4 target sites of Malawi (**see Annex 10**). Three DNPW staff attended the SMART Congress, among others learning about the many new options of the latest release as well as integration of SMART and EarthRanger (**see Annex 11**).

**General:** Due to the numerous delays in project implementation, key training sessions with regard to the monitoring system as well as M&E capacity building are planned for the second project year. Consequently, we will not be using indicators of success for this Output until the final reporting stage.

#### **Output 2:**

#### **Monitoring systems in place and operated by capable staff with the authorities responsible for wildlife management in each of the three priority countries.**

Setting up monitoring systems as requested by the authorities of the 3 target countries, including training sessions, is planned for the second project year.

#### **Output 3:**

#### **HEC Focal Point Network (HFPN) in place.**

Because it will take years to set up the EPIF HEC Focal Point Network (HECFPN), the STE HEC network is a rapidly growing and welcome temporarily substitute for our HECFPN (see Activity 3.1 above).

## Output 4:

**HEC monitoring data is available at regular intervals and relevant local solutions are being implemented in each priority country.**

Not yet applicable.

### 3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Because we are in the process of setting 2023 baselines for 5 selected sites in Ethiopia (see [Annex 7](#)), and 3 selected sites in Malawi, those managed by DNPW, while project implementation has been delayed in Angola, it is too early to provide any evidence towards the project outcome.

### 3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

#### Assumptions:

**1. Suitable and motivated NHFPs and other staff available in each country.**

Comment: This assumption holds true for all three target countries.

**2. Management of the respective authorities responsible for wildlife management is cooperative.**

Comment: This assumption holds true for all three target countries, except that primarily due to management changes, project implementation has been delayed in Angola.

**3. No political obstacles.**

Comment: See comment 2 above.

**4. Suitable consultants can be found to conduct the training.**

Comment: This assumption holds true.

**5. The budget is sufficient to carry out all activities.**

Comment: Although since submission of this application inflation has been steep, realignment of the budget due to dropping Gabon as a target country has provided us with a budget that is more or less sufficiently high to carry out activities for three target countries.

**6. Transport is available with the authorities responsible for wildlife management.**

Comment: Although transport was available in all three target countries, it was not always in the proper condition to carry out the activities at hand, or, funds were lacking for fuel and periodic maintenance. However, during the realignment of the budget we set aside some funds for vehicle repairs and transport support to solve this matter.

### 3.5 Achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty reduction

Only partly due to all the delays and consequently a slow start of project implementation, but primarily due to the fact that setting up monitoring systems and building capacity of the wildlife authorities to first understand the intensity and scope of the problem prior to applying locally relevant solutions, is a long-term task with an enormous time lag between implementation and outcome, especially when this concerns an expected reduction in crop raiding incidents, destruction of property and human fatalities leading to improved livelihoods and reduced retaliatory killings of elephants, leading to improved biodiversity.

## 4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

See 3.5 above.



## 5. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

<p>Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board<sup>1</sup>.</p>	<p>Although we do not have a Project Board in place, day-to-day management of the project is the responsibility of the EPIF core HEC Team consisting of 4 members, 2 women and 2 men, in close collaboration with the management of the respective wildlife authorities. Because all activities are based on a needs assessment done with the management teams of the respective wildlife authorities, and when required included local stakeholders, each activity as well as the manner of implementation is determined locally.</p>
<p>Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women<sup>2</sup>.</p>	<p>Although wildlife management in Africa has been a predominantly male dominated space, these days more women sign up for field staff positions in each of our target countries. Moreover, the ministries under which the respective wildlife authorities operate are led by a strong and capable female Minister in all three countries.</p>

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
<b>Not yet sensitive</b>	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
<b>Sensitive</b>	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	X
<b>Empowering</b>	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	
<b>Transformative</b>	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

<sup>1</sup> A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

<sup>2</sup> Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

During the first year of project implementation, staff selected for the position of NHFP and for training purposes not only followed government protocol, but was also restricted to existing staff positions with the respective wildlife authorities, in all cases consisting of men. Although selection, nomination and appointment of NHFPs followed government protocols, with only men available for the position of focal point, with the exception of Ethiopia, they were nevertheless nominated and in the case of Angola even appointed by a female minister. Because the wildlife authorities of all three target countries operate under Ministries, each with a very strong and capable female Minister in charge, we are convinced that even wildlife management will undergo a rapid revolution with increasingly more women participating at all levels. Moreover, once this project has reached the stage where we deal with the communities affected by HEC, basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups will be addressed.

## 6. Monitoring and evaluation

EPIF has weekly staff meetings and bi-weekly HEC Team meetings, where every aspect of the project is discussed and documented. Moreover, several of our HEC Team members are in continuous contact with the respective wildlife authorities and relevant stakeholders. The current approach is working well as long as local politics are facilitating project implementation. In the extreme case of a military coup such as in Gabon, project implementation comes to an abrupt halt, while in the case of Angola, government proceedings have been slow due to management changes. Generally, working with government parties will frequently involve delays in project implementation.

Moreover, because of the considerable time lag between setting baselines for all indicators of success and contracting consultants, setting up monitoring systems and training staff of the respective wildlife authorities, and the resulting mitigation interventions that will eventually contribute to the project Outcome, it will not be until the final phase of the project that some success may be demonstrated. **Ideally, the project should be extended for at least another two years, not only to be able to determine trends in key indicators, but also to provide communities affected by HEC with locally relevant solutions to conflict, whether mediation between groups of people, or hands-on practical interventions to mitigate conflict, or a combination of both.**

Although the basic indicator framework has not changed, primarily because it more or less covers all that can be measured, the majority of the Darwin Standard Indicators were added during the reporting period (Change Request 2023). However, the same applies here, a considerable time lag between implementation and demonstrating success may be expected.

All of the previous M&E work done by our main partners has been shared with the EPIF team, mostly derived from manual analysis in Ethiopia and from an old version of SMART in Malawi. However, Angola has not yet decided which sites will be selected for project implementation, and because the wildlife authorities start from scratch when it comes to HEC monitoring, baselines will not be available for the first year of the project, but need to be determined during the second project year, making it impossible to determine trends in key indicators for this target country.

## 7. Lessons learnt

The military coup, such as in Gabon, came unexpected to all of us, including our contacts in the Ministry. However, major delays in project implementation were mostly due to a slow response by the respective Ministers. To facilitate smooth operations for future projects, it would be advisable to start seeking Ministerial approval prior to submitting the application.

Steep inflation, primarily due to sharply increased energy prices working their way through most of the value chains, was another problem that was only partially foreseen. This may be counteracted by increasing initial budgets for capital expenditure and transport, but thereby running the risk of being underspent and losing some of the funds. Consulting financial experts when developing new applications may somehow mitigate this risk.

## 8. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

NA

## 9. Risk Management

**Fiduciary:** Although it was foreseen that minor inflation was going to have a moderate impact on project implementation, the steep inflation levels that were observed after project submission, and the dropping of Gabon as a target country, necessitated a complete realignment of the budget. Although this resulted in the allocation of more resources towards the procurement of equipment required for monitoring HEC in the remaining three target countries, it may well be at the expense of procuring simple tools to mitigate HEC in communities affected by conflict in each of the sites selected.

**Delivery Chain:** The risk of funding government departments directly has been mitigated through the use of trustworthy local partners, who have been a great support in disbursement and accounting of funds.

**Insecurity & Politics:** Insecurity and politics unfavourable to project implementation occurred with the military coup in Gabon, with the result that Gabon was dropped as a target country.

**Appointment of NHFPs:** Although the nomination and appointment of the NHFPs in each of the 3 target countries primarily followed government protocols, each of the NHFPs appointed had been active in dealing with HWC/HEC for some years, and the EPIF project team considered their appointment both a logical and a welcome choice.

**Spatial Planning:** With all of the delays in project implementation, with some of the main activities planned for the second year, the concept of spatial planning has not yet been touched upon.

## 10. Sustainability and legacy

The relevant Ministries of the 3 target countries are very supportive of the project, and the same applies to all the relevant stakeholders in country. Moreover, during the first project year, 3 staff members of the wildlife authorities of Ethiopia and Malawi, which includes the two NHFPs, have been trained-as-trainers in HEC mitigation techniques in Tsavo Kenya, to organise HEC mitigation training sessions for selected sites in their own countries during the second project year. Furthermore, a total of 5 staff members of the respective wildlife authorities attended the SMART Global Congress, where they were exposed to all of the latest options for SMART as well as SMART integration with EarthRanger, knowledge they will be using in their own country, while building capacity by transferring this to colleagues. Once the monitoring systems are up and running, and all relevant staff have been trained in operating the systems and using the information to analyse and report on HEC data as feedback for the adaptive management system, this specific capacity will be transferred to other staff members and will therefore be sustained for extended periods.

However, as noted above, due to the long time lag between setting up operational monitoring systems and building staff capability and capacity, and being able to measure success in terms of locally relevant mitigation measures that reduce conflict, the duration of the project may be too short to measure significant results towards the project outcome.

## 11. Darwin Initiative identity

For each of the 3 target countries, Darwin Initiative funding was recognised and treated as a distinct project, either building on existing systems and skills, or starting from scratch such as in Ethiopia and Angola, but nevertheless a welcome and timely initiative. The Darwin Initiative project is well known to all relevant Ministries, all staff of the wildlife authorities and the majority of local stakeholders, primarily due to the seriousness of the problem it addresses, and for laying a solid foundation to tackle HEC.

During the first year, the Darwin Initiative project was publicised through widely circulated blogs, among others the first scoping trip to Malawi:

<https://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/post/malawi-s-elephants-5-decades-on>

Moreover, the NHFP for Malawi, Alex Chunga, was interviewed as a Friend of the Month:

<https://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/post/alex-chunga-friend-of-the-month>

as well as the NHFP for Ethiopia, Hailu Zerfu:

<https://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/post/hailu-zerfu>

All of the above were promoted on social media

## 12. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	Yes
Have any concerns been reported in the past 12 months	No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes: Andrew [REDACTED], Head of Operations [REDACTED]
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	No
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 0% (5) Planned: 100% (5)
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.  No safeguarding issues have been experienced by the organisation. However, we continue to monitor this as a priority across all projects. Especially given the nature and location of the EPIF's work, dealing with vulnerable communities in developing and fragile states.	
Please describe any community sensitisation that has taken place over the past 12 months; include topics covered and number of participants.  National HEC Focal Points will be travelling to various parts of the target countries (Angola, Ethiopia, and Malawi) and will be interacting with individuals and communities affected by human-elephant conflict and, possibly in the case of Ethiopia, recent armed conflict. These government-appointed Focal Points will need to remain cognisant of the experiences and context of the people in question.	
Have there been any concerns around Health, Safety and Security of your project over the past year? If yes, please outline how this was resolved.  No	

### 13. Project expenditure

**Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)**

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total Darwin Initiative Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				Within 10%
Consultancy costs				Within 10%
Overhead Costs				Within 10%
Travel and subsistence				Within 10%
Operating Costs				Long-overdue maintenance of single vehicle used by NHFP Malawi as indicated in budget. With Angola behind on implementation and Ethiopia not in need of vehicle maintenance, operating costs slightly underspent.
Capital items (see below)				Within 10%
Others (see below)				-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94,391</b>	<b>(94,391)</b>		

**Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)**

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			Government support NHFPs Salaries, allowances and transport
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)	NA	NA	NA

**14. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere**

NA

**15. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.**

NA

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

<b>File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)</b>	<b>File Name or File Location</b>	<b>Caption including description, country and credit</b>	<b>Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)</b>	<b>Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)</b>
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

## Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against Indicators of Success for Financial Year 2023-2024

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>Improved capacity within each of the three wildlife authorities to identify HEC problem areas, monitor the types and frequencies of conflict, and address these with locally relevant solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total number of HEC incidents per unit time per unit area.</li> <li>- Number of human fatalities per unit time per unit area.</li> <li>- Number of retaliatory killings of elephants per unit time per unit area</li> <li>- % of people in the target area willing to coexist with elephants.</li> <li>- Acreage of crops raided per unit time per unit area.</li> <li>- All of the above in relation to baseline set priorities.</li> </ul>	<p>Because we are still in the process of setting baselines, while the new monitoring systems are not yet operational, with staff training planned for the second project year, we are not yet able to report progress against any of the outcome indicators.</p>	<p>Key actions for the second project year are setting up monitoring systems in 3 target countries, and training selected staff in operating these systems as well as in analysis and reporting of results.</p>
<p><b>Output 1.</b></p> <p>Capable and capacitated NHFPs and other staff members in place with the authorities responsible for wildlife management in each of the three target countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of training sessions per target country.</li> <li>- Number of staff attending per target country.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Malawi:</b> Training-of-trainers session in Tsavo Kenya on HEC mitigation techniques. One DNPW staff member attended (NHFP) the training, and will organise HEC mitigation training sessions for DNPW staff in 4 selected sites in Malawi during the second project year.</p> <p>SMART Global Congress, with 3 DNPW staff members exposed to the latest SMART developments and integration of SMART with EarthRanger.</p> <p><b>Ethiopia:</b> Training-of-trainers session in Tsavo Kenya on HEC mitigation techniques. Two EWCA staff members attended (NHFP +), who will, during the second project year, organise HEC mitigation training sessions for EWCA staff in 5 selected sites.</p> <p>SMART Global Congress, with 2 EWCA staff members exposed to the latest SMART developments and integration of SMART with EarthRanger.</p> <p>Because the key training sessions on M&amp;E with regard to the monitoring systems introduced, laying the foundation for this project and expected outcome, are planned for the second project year, at this stage we are not yet able to report on indicators.</p>	
<p>Activity 1.1.</p>		<p>For two target countries a suitable candidate was nominated by their respective Ministers, and appointed</p>	<p>Although some capacity building has taken place, key training sessions will be those related to</p>

<p>In collaboration with respective governments in each of the three priority countries, identify well-placed, enthusiastic and motivated NHFPs, and seek their formal nomination and responsibilities.</p>	<p>by the Directors of DNPWS (Malawi) and INBAC (Angola). For Ethiopia, a suitable candidate was nominated and appointed by the Director General of EWCA.</p>	<p>M&amp;E, planned for the second project year.</p>
<p>Activity 1.2. In collaboration with the appropriate government institution (primarily wildlife authorities), identify NHFP needs in each EPI member state and develop a support package that will help build lasting technical capacity, confidence and a sound understanding of managing HEC.</p>	<p>For the three target countries, needs assessments were done in close collaboration with the wildlife authorities and relevant stakeholders and tailored support packages were developed.</p>	<p>Implement key activities, thereby laying the foundation of this project and expected outcome – that is setting up monitoring systems and provide relevant training by expert consultants.</p>
<p>Activity 1.3. Training of the NHFP and other staff by specialist consultants.</p>	<p><b>Malawi:</b> Training-of-trainers session in Tsavo Kenya on HEC mitigation techniques. One DNPW staff member attended (NHFP), who will organise HEC mitigation training sessions for DNPW staff in 4 selected sites of Malawi during the second project year.</p> <p>SMART Global Congress, with 3 DNPW staff members exposed to the latest SMART developments and integration of SMART with EarthRanger.</p> <p><b>Ethiopia:</b> Training-of-trainers session in Tsavo Kenya on HEC mitigation techniques. Two EWCA staff members attended (NHFP +), who will, during the second project year, organise HEC mitigation training sessions for EWCA staff in 5 selected sites.</p> <p>SMART Global Congress, with 2 EWCA staff members exposed to the latest SMART developments</p>	<p>See Activity 1.2.</p>



		and integration of SMART with EarthRanger.  Because the key training sessions on M&E, laying the foundation for this project and expected outcome, are planned for the second project year, at this stage we are not yet able to report on indicators.	
Activity 1.4.  In collaboration with partners, equip each NHFP with the necessary tools to enhance the quality and quantity of HEC information available to them, and, thus, to the EPI HEC Team.		For Malawi and Ethiopia, equipment to operate the monitoring systems and capture data in the field has been procured in January and March respectively.	For Angola, equipment will be procured during the second project year.
<b>Output 2.</b>  Monitoring systems in place and operated by capable staff with the authorities responsible for wildlife management in each of the three priority countries.	- Inventory of HEC problem areas available for each target country.  - First monitoring reports available.	Because the monitoring systems are not yet in place, while training sessions on M&E are planned for the second project year, we are not yet able to report on progress using indicators.	
Activity 2.1.  Facilitate discussions with potential partners to help NHFPs explore and identify the most effective monitoring systems for HEC through available digital technology or alternative existing systems. Specialist consultants will deliver the training for the NHFP and other staff.		<b>Malawi:</b> Discussion finalised and consultant to provide advance course in SMART contracted for April 2024.  <b>Ethiopia:</b> Discussions on the use of EarthRanger or an alternative system ongoing.  <b>Angola:</b> Expressed a wish to use EarthRanger, but with the most recent management change, SMART is still an option.	Set up operational systems and train relevant staff.
Activity 2.2.  Invest in skills development for NHFPs, enabling basic reporting, management and monitoring of HEC, and best practice sharing and capacity building for management of HEC by the authorities responsible for wildlife management.		This entails the last phase of the M&E training, planned for the second project year.	

<b>Output 3.</b> HEC Focal Point Network (HFPN) in place.	- Number of online meetings per unit time. - Number of HFPN reports circulated.	Not yet applicable	
Activity 3.1. Set up a HEC Focal Point Network, initially starting with the three priority countries, but in time expanding this to encompass all EPI member states.		Not yet applicable	
<b>Output 4.</b> HEC monitoring data is available at regular intervals and relevant local solutions are being implemented in each priority country.	- Number of monitoring reports per unit time. - Trends in different types of HEC for each target country.	Not yet applicable	
Activity 4.1. Provide basic equipment to each target country to enable them to mitigate local HEC problems.		Although some equipment will be bought eventually, this fully depends on the budget remaining.	

## Annex 2: Project's full current Indicators of Success as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

**Note:** Because the main training sessions on M&E (systems, operations, analysis and reporting) that eventually provide the foundation of sound HEC management in all three target countries are planned for the second project year, while we are still in the process of setting baselines for the vast majority of indicators, at this stage we are not yet able to report on the specific project indicators provided below.

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification
<b>Outcome:</b> Improved capacity within each of the three wildlife authorities to identify HEC problem areas, monitor the types and frequencies of conflict, and address these with locally relevant solutions.	- Total number of HEC incidents per unit time per unit area. - Number of human fatalities per unit time per unit area. - Number of retaliatory killings of elephants per unit time per unit area - % of people in the target area willing to coexist with elephants. - Acreage of crops raided per unit time per unit area.	Monitoring reports after the baselines have been determined

	- All of the above in relation to baseline set priorities.	
<b>Output 1</b> Capable and capacitated NHFPs and other staff members in place with the authorities responsible for wildlife management in each of the three target countries.	1.1 Number of training sessions per target country. 1.2 Number of staff attending per target country.	1.1 Reports/List of participants/Photographic evidence 1.2 See above
<b>Output 2</b> Monitoring systems in place and operated by capable staff with the authorities responsible for wildlife management in each of the three priority countries.	2.1 Inventory of HEC problem areas available for each target country. 2.2 First monitoring reports available.	2.1 Reports/maps available 2.2 Reports available
<b>Output 3</b> HEC Focal Point Network (HFPN) in place.	3.1 Number of online meetings per unit time. 3.2 Number of HFPN reports circulated.	3.1 Reports available 3.2 Reports available
<b>Output 4</b> HEC monitoring data is available at regular intervals and relevant local solutions are being implemented in each priority country.	4.1 Number of monitoring reports per unit time. 4.2 Trends in different types of HEC for each target country.	4.1 Reports 4.2 Reports available
<b>Activities</b> (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)		
Activity 1.1. In collaboration with respective governments in each of the three priority countries, identify well-placed, enthusiastic and motivated NHFPs, and seek their formal nomination and responsibilities.		
Activity 1.2. In collaboration with the appropriate government institution (primarily wildlife authorities), identify NHFP needs in each EPI member state and develop a support package that will help build lasting technical capacity, confidence and a sound understanding of managing HEC.		
Activity 1.3. Training of the NHFP and other staff by specialist consultants		
Activity 1.4. In collaboration with partners, equip each NHFP with the necessary tools to enhance the quality and quantity of HEC information available to them, and, thus, to the EPI HEC Team.		

Activity 2.1.

Facilitate discussions with potential partners to help NHFPs explore and identify the most effective monitoring systems for HEC through available digital technology or alternative existing systems. Specialist consultants will deliver the training for the NHFP and other staff.

Activity 2.2.

Invest in skills development for NHFPs, enabling basic reporting, management and monitoring of HEC, and best practice sharing and capacity building for management of HEC by the authorities responsible for wildlife management.

Activity 3.1.

Set up a HEC Focal Point Network, initially starting with the three priority countries, but in time expanding this to encompass all EPI member states.

Activity 4.1.

Provide basic equipment to each target country to enable them to mitigate local HEC problems.

**Important Assumptions**

1. Suitable and motivated NHFPs and other staff available in each country ([Assumption holds true](#)).
2. Management of the respective authorities responsible for wildlife management is cooperative ([Assumption holds true](#)).
3. No political obstacles ([Except for Gabon, assumption holds true](#)).
4. Suitable consultants can be found to conduct the training ([Assumption holds true](#)).
5. The budget is sufficient to carry out all activities ([After realignment of the budget this assumption holds true for most of the activities planned](#)).
6. Transport is available with the authorities responsible for wildlife management ([Assumption holds true](#)).

## Annex 3: Standard Indicators

### Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-A01	Number of people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training	Number of staff from the wildlife authorities as well as relevant local stakeholders of the 3 target countries combined who completed training on HEC mitigation techniques, operating monitoring systems, and analysis and reporting on HEC data.	People (Proportion)	-HEC Mitigation  -M&E System	3  5				NYK  NYK
DI-A03	Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of project.	Number of wildlife authorities and local stakeholder organisations trained in the above (DI-A01)	Number of organisations	Wildlife authority	2				NYK
DI-A04	Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 months after training.	Number of wildlife authority and stakeholder staff of 3 target countries combined reporting applying new skills and knowledge 6 months after training.	People	Training typology	Not yet Applicable				
DI-D02	Number of people whose disaster/climate resilience has been improved.	Number of households/people of communities in selected sites effected by HEC reporting improved food security due to fewer HEC incidences.	People/Households of effected communities	Income improvement, therefore disaster/climate resilience, water and food security, health Gender,	Not yet Applicable				

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
				<b>Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat.</b>					
DI-D04	Stabilised/ improved species population (relative abundance/ distribution) within the project area.	Trend in elephant population size in selected sites of 3 target countries combined	% Increase	Elephant population	Not yet Applicable				
DI-D11	Number of people benefitting from improved sustainable agriculture practices and are more resilient to weather shocks and climate trends.	See DI-D02	People/ households of effected communities	Gender; Age Group.	Not yet Applicable				
DI-D15	Net change in incidences of human wildlife conflict.	Trend in total number of HEC incidences per target country	Number	Conflict	Not yet Applicable				
DI-D16	Number of households reporting improved livelihoods.	See DI-D02	Households effected communities	As measured through household surveys, livelihood metric (income, education, health etc.).	Not yet Applicable				
DI-D18	Drivers of biodiversity loss assessed to have been reduced or removed.	Trend in elephant numbers, numbers killed (illegal and retaliatory)	Number of assessments	Drivers: illegal killing of species  Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat.	Not yet Applicable				
<b>DI-E03</b>	<b>Status of Threatened Species (DEFRA KPI)</b>	See DI-D04/D18	<b>Numbers trend,</b>	<b>Elephants</b>	Not yet Applicable				

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
			Numbers killed						

- To use the knowledge such as wildlife crime script or HWC script in order to remain proactive in the effort to combat wildlife crimes and other conservation challenges such as Human-Wildlife Conflict.
- Promotion of Technology Transfer. The importance of promoting technology transfer and capacity building cannot be overemphasized. There is need to expand partnerships with organizations which are championing various conservation technologies such as real time camera traps and others in-order to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology.

## 10. Conclusion

The Smart Global Congress 2024 provided a platform for stakeholders to come together and explore innovative solutions to pressing global conservation challenges. The event highlighted key insights, innovations, and commitments made by participants to strengthen conservation efforts globally. The forum was one of its kind that fostered collaboration and drive the positive change by harnessing the power of technology, promoting sustainable development and embracing the international community to work together towards building a more resilient and equitable future for all.

## 11. Acknowledgement

We sincerely thank the Darwin Initiative for the financial support rendered through the EPI Foundation for our travel and stay in Namibia. Again, we also thank DNPW leadership for the nomination of our names to be part of this important Global Congress.

Report Compiled by:  
Ndaona Kumanga  
Parks and Wildlife Officer

## Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the <b>correct template</b> (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and <b>deleted the blue guidance text</b> before submission?	x
<b>Is the report less than 10MB?</b> If so, please email to <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a> putting the project number in the Subject line.	x
<b>Is your report more than 10MB?</b> If so, please discuss with <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a> about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	x
<b>Have you included means of verification?</b> You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	x
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 15)?	x
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	x
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	x
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	