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	*DARCC020*
Project title	Improved decision making through citizen science data
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Kenya
Lead partner	Tropical Biology Association (TBA)
Partner(s)	Kenya Bird Map (KBM) Nigerian Bird Atlas Project (NiBAP)
Project leader	Anthony Kuria
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	*31 October 2023, HYR1*
Project website/blog/social media	*https://tropical-biology.org/specialist-course/citizen-science/*

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.

We held an online project launch on the 19th April 2023, and by 30th September 2023, we have:

a) Hired 4 data analysts (or modellers), one being female, whom we will work with to analyse citizen science bird data for our policy briefs and communications pieces. Two analysts are Kenyans and two are Nigerians.
 - We advertised widely for the data analysts through our (TBA, KBA, and NiBAP) networks – and on the TBA's website (See https://tropical-biology.org/data-analysts-wanted/)
 - The 2 Nigerians selected have signed contracts and will be starting their assignment on 1 November 2023
 - Contracting for the Kenyans in on-going and they are also expected to start their engagement on 1 November 2023.

b) Agreed dates and content for course1 (we plan to run 2 courses under this project) to take place from 4th to 8th December 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.
 - Course1 will focus on "Citizen science data analysis and interpretation, and communicating results". See https://tropical-biology.org/citizen-science-course/ for course announcement and call for applications.
 - We've drafted course1's training programme outlining topics to be covered, learning outcomes, and teaching methods to use.

- We've identified potential teachers, and guest speakers, and final invitations were sent (written or verbal) in Oct 2023.
- We propose to run a follow up online data analysis bootcamp (focusing on R programme) for course1 graduates in 2024Q1, and have identified *Academic Data Analysts* as the training partner.

c) Selected a technical developer of the online platform
- We held a joint engagement meeting with the developer on 10th Aug 2023 that discussed the assignment. This, and follow up email engagements, led to drafting of assignment's work package (see link below), and final plan on the design, layout and content of the tool.

- The contracting process is on-going with the tool developer expected to start the assignment on 1 November 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.

a) Change in project staff. The project manager for the Kenya Bird Map(partner) left and was replaced. The TBA's Nairobi office Programme Coordinator left and we are currently conducting interviews.
b) We learnt that the capacity among citizen science managers to carry out data analysis in R is low – and to avoid spending the entire first course teaching R, we have added in a new element to enhance our capacity building by:
   i) providing training in R programme for data analysis. We thus propose an online bootcamp on R for at least 10 trainees from the first course on data analysis and communicating citizen science results. We propose partnering with the Academic Data Analysts providing the trained managers on-going support beyond the current grant.

   The bootcamp will be an additional activity to happen in 2024Q1.

   ii) Replacing the project's 'symposiums' (schedule for 2024Q3) with several targeted stakeholders "in situ meetings" with key decision makers in government and the conservation communities in Kenya and Nigeria. This approach with strengthen project ownership and expect project reach. Already, we have received inquiries from citizen science projects (other than birds) wanting to integrate birds as part of their work, or to learn from the project's experience.

c) Unforeseen skyrocketing increases in airfares. The current global economic situations have resulted in significant increases in airfare of between 36% and 49% compared with when we budgeted for this grant. For Nigeria-Kenya flights, for instance. we budgeted at UKP700 per flight. The actual flights costs (as of 30 Sept 2023) were UKP1,385 representing a 49% increase.

   We are managing these cost increases for 2023 (for example by changing the venue of the course to outside of the capital and using costs saved to pay for the airfares increase).

   We expect similar airfare increases in 2024 that will impact our travel budget for the second training course planned 2024Q1.

   We therefore request a realignment of our 2024 budget. We will save budget by not holding the symposium – because the in-situ meetings that will replace the symposium will

cost less. We propose to use the difference to cover the increased costs of travel to the second course.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?
Discussed with NIRAS: yes (2a above)/No (to 2b and 2c above)
Formal Change Request submitted: Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance   Yes
Change request reference if known:

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

Actual spend: £ ▉▉▉▉

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2024)?

Yes ☐   **No** ☒   Estimated underspend: £

4c. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

We seek guidance from BCF on how we can officially request a realignment of our 2024 budget (see 2 here) and replace the project's 'symposiums' with 'in-situ meetings and engagements (see TBA response to reviewers).

Please note: Any <u>planned</u> 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. **<u>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</u>**