

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	DARCC023
Project title	Bolstering Príncipe's resilience to marine plastics through strengthened community capacity
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Príncipe Island, São Tomé and Príncipe
Lead partner	Fundação Príncipe
Partner(s)	Technical consultant Dr. Emily Duncan
Project leader	Estrela Matilde
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR1 (31 st October 2023)
Project website/blog/social media	www.fundacaoprincipe.org / Fundacaoprincipe @FundaPrincipe

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

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.

This project commenced on 1st April 2023 so this report covers the period up to the end of September 2023 (n = 6 months). Activities during this period primarily focused on developing monitoring capacity, as well as engaging key stakeholders and government partners in project initiatives. Technical consultant on marine plastic pollution Dr. Emily Duncan (ED) spent two weeks in-country during August-September working directly with Fundação Príncipe (FP) staff.

The following section provides a more detailed breakdown of the activities completed under each project output to date:

Output 1. Local stakeholders (FP, government, coastguard, communities) have increased capacity and capability to monitor plastic pollution at beaches, in-water and river mouths and knowledge of marine plastic pollution distribution across Príncipe

Training and capacity workshops for local stakeholders and more members of the FP team have been conducted on the established beach monitoring methodology (**activity 1.1**) (22 people). In addition, FP team members Estrela Matilde and Belzamiel Umbelina alongside technical consultant ED were involved in the successful publication of beach plastic pollution data entitled "Plastic pollution on remote islands: A baseline study of Príncipe, Gulf of Guinea" published in Marine Environmental Research in September 2023.

Further classification tools for collected beach plastic pollution e.g. origins and brands of plastic bottles. Using the established methodology (Ryan *et al.* 2019), photographs of each plastic bottle

with branding can be used try to trace the origin whether they are land based from the African continent or from ships present within the Gulf of Guinea (**activity 1.3**). Further guides for in-water classification for plastic pieces recovered is currently being translated into Portuguese for guidance and training for the FP team. During technical consultant (ED) in visit in August-September 2023 training and capacity building for the core FP team and FP marine guard's teams on in-water sampling (**activity 1.2**) and active participation into developing the methodology and trialling the plastic trawl equipment (5 people). The in-water methodology has now been decided e.g. 10 minute trawls and specific datasheet has now been created for the use by the FP team. Following this consultation consultations with technical consultant ED and the FP team 6 in-water and river mouth sites (1x1km squared) were identified and decided upon (Fig 1.) from a previous participatory map from fisher interviews about sightings of marine turtle foraging and resting activities (**activity 1.4**). These are equally spread in different coastal directions, river mouth sites and also important marine turtle nesting beaches. Moving forward in-water monitoring will now be planned to occur monthly as the established beach monitoring also occurs around the island of Príncipe.

Output 2. There is a centralised reporting mechanism for local stakeholders to record ingestion/entanglement events and marine turtle interactions in Príncipe

The FP team has been liaising with technical consultant (ED) for material in which to learn about the current knowledge of the impact of plastic pollution on marine turtles. A public presentation was conducted (14/09/2023; 26 attendees) where FP staff Belzamiel and Jormicilesa on the plastic pollution and marine turtles for theoretical training for the wider FP team and local stakeholders (**activity 2.1**). Due to a lack of stranded marine turtle occurrences since the project commenced in April 2023 a physical training workshop on necropsy methodology and sample analysis for plastic ingestion therefore a theoretical marine turtle stranding sampling protocol will be drafted for the FP team and local stakeholder's investigations (**activity 2.2**). Samples will can be taken at any time of a stranding occurrence and be stored for physical training on ED's next visit to the island. In order to understand the current level of marine turtle entanglement around the island and behaviour around discarding fishing nets a survey is currently being prepared for all fishing communities ready for implementation (**activity 2.3**).

Output 3. The local communities are empowered to monitor, and have increased awareness of, the issue of plastic pollution via the deployment of citizen science tools and knowledge exchange presentations

A unique 'list' on the citizen science app Marine Debris Tracker (MDT) has now been set-up for Fundação Príncipe specifically. The FP team worked with ED to translate a list of litter items into local names and also add new items to the existing MDT list that were identified from previous beach plastic pollution studies for Príncipe Island. ED conducted technical training on how to use the app with FP staff (Fig 2.) Subsequently, the FP team launched a campaign in each community (Abade, Burra, Campanha, Hospital Velho & Santo António praia) called "Jovens pelo planeta" in the local community focal groups (e.g. teenagers & young adults aged: Admar Barros: 22; Deise Davide: 16; Daniel Gonçalves: 16; Jerciley dos Anjos: 17 and Said Costa: 18) to invite them to take part in being a citizen science monitor of the beaches within their community for litter using the app (**activity 3.1**). Now five youngsters have been chosen and training has now begun with the chosen "Jovens pelo planeta" youngsters by FP staff. They have been given a brief presentation of the project, been presented the guidelines and have been shown how to use the smartphone and the application MDT. Next FP team will visit each young person from each community for practical beach monitoring methodology and define the location of the transect (100 metres) etc.

Fisheries Director was taken out on in-water sampling activity (**activity 3.3**), as well as the Coast Guard team, to understand the methodology and support the planning and meetings with local fisher groups to provide training in the use of citizen science tools to monitor in-water plastics and entanglement events.

Output 4. Young women and mothers at risk have established enterprises supported by the “Plastic Re-use Hub” which generate alternative income streams and improve local livelihoods

During this period, 3 meetings were held with 5 women, which are now the main team that will manage the Plastic Re-use hub. This initial group of 5 women will manage the contact and the integration of further members, especially targeting young mothers and women who are unemployed. On the first meeting (5 women), the idea of the Women’s Hub was presented, and the group collectively discussed on the possible functional ways to run the hub. The group voted on Anilta as the person which will the leader of the group. Anilta is a seamstress who won a previously run FP competition, with the development of a reusable diaper. In the other meetings, the group met the new designated space for the hub to plan the layout of the space and evaluate furniture needs.

The space for the Hub has been made available for the group. All the equipment and materials have now been ordered, however, due to transport issues and delays, the materials have arrived on the island yet. A MoU is now being developed with the group with their responsibilities and outcomes clearly outlined, which allow them to start using the space and receive all the materials when they arrive.

During the series of meetings, the group was also introduced to Adnei Tavares, the consultant and specialist on finance training which will support the group and their business developments. This allowed the consultant to assess their needs and skill levels which aided in proposing a budget for their training and capacity. Because the machinery and equipment will only arrive on the island in November, the training and workshops to use the equipment will only happen during November. During the month of October, November and December, the group will receive the trainings on business management. Some members of the group were already involved in the business management training done during with Whitley Awards project, with the 5 plastic business ideas already piloted by FP.

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.

Unfortunately, the FP team faced some medical issues since the project commenced, and as key project staff members, that created some delays with project activities. However, these delays have not had considerable impacts for the project as we managed to have other FP staff members stepping in ensuring the implementation of the activities.

Belzamiel suffered a car accident in May 2023. Fortunately, was not seriously injured, however we did lose our marine vehicle and Belzemiell had to be in São Tomé Island for a couple of months to do all the medical examinations and monitoring. We managed to secure the relevant activities despite this accident, so there was no substantial impact on the project.

Currently we have Jormicilesa absent in maternity leave, however, we did manage to hire another biologist to join our team and replace her during her absence and, we hope, to enhance our team.

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

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: [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: £

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?

No.

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**