

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	<i>DARCC025</i>
Project title	Building local capacity to protect national marine biodiversity (BAIT)
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cabo Verde
Lead partner	University of Aveiro
Partner(s)	University of Plymouth, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Biosfera, UNICV - Universidade de Cabo Verde, UTA - Universidade Técnica do Atlântico, Biosfera
Project leader	Teresa Amaro
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	
Project website/blog/social media	<i>https://www.cesam-la.pt/teresaamaro/</i>

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

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

Camera system

Given the significant delay in signing the consortium agreement, the camera system has not been completed, although a prototype was successfully deployed in Plymouth (UK) to test a preliminary system on a small vessel. UoP, as the lead on the drop camera system, is now liaising with engineers to develop the BAIT system.

Training resources

A series of videos have been filmed to guide trainees on the set-up and deployment of the camera system.

BIIGLE 2.0 is a web-based annotation platform. A practical guide covering uploading images to the BIIGLE server, how to annotate images and how to download results has been developed by members of the UoP team (available here:

<https://zenodo.org/records/7728927#.ZBgS9XbMKUI>).

A series of quarto documents, a markdown equivalent to make R coding interfaces more user-friendly, is currently in development. The documents will outline how to calculate diversity metrics (univariate and multivariate) from the BIIGLE outputs, and how to map these on bathymetry/other environmental datasets. Resources rely solely on R/R Studio, an open-access software.

Identification of fieldwork trainees (including MSc & knowledge exchange fellows)

One MSc scholarship has been advertised with UNICV. Members of the project team responsible for the identification of knowledge exchange fellows (KEFs) from other eligible countries have met to discuss the requirements and criteria to assess KEF applications has been agreed.

Community engagement and outreach programme

A meeting has been done to discuss who and how the BAIT project will address the local community.

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.

The project start was significantly delayed resulting in BAIT being awarded on June 16th 2023, 3.5 months after the proposed project start date. The delay did not hinder the development of training resources as per the above, but it did mean engineers could not be contracted to build the BAIT camera system.

Given the camera systems are still under development, the proposed fieldwork season of November 2023 is unachievable. However, scheduling the first fieldwork session early on in the project allowed us the flexibility to delay this to Q1 2024 (represented in the implementation table) without significantly negatively impacting the overall project timeline as other concurrent activities (e.g. annual project conference) can also be shifted back. We do not anticipate this will impact the budget.

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/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

Change request reference if known:

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

Actual spend: £ 0

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?

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**