

## 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>	<a href="#">DARCC029</a>
<b>Project title</b>	Strengthening capacities for biodiversity management in Thailand's community forests
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Thailand
<b>Lead partner</b>	RECOFTC
<b>Partner(s)</b>	The Zoological Society London (ZSL)
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Warangkana Rattanarat</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	<i>HYR1</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	The project website is not yet available at this reporting period. It is expected to be finished by December 2023.

**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.

**Overall progress:**

The project was started its implementation in April 2023. This report covers the period of April to September 2023. According to the implementation plan of this 6 months duration, the project shall implement following activities.

1. Review and gap assessment of biodiversity elements within community forestry policies, regulations and procedures
2. Organise policy dialogue between the CF NET leaders and the CF National Policy Committee and related line agencies (Royal Forest Department) to propose national guidelines on biodiversity conservation for CF management
3. Initial rapid community assessment (including landscape mapping, biodiversity related capacity needs assessment, socioeconomic profile and documentation of existing CF fund structure and management practices) and community consultation (Day 1) and combined general biodiversity training for approx. 15 community members in each of 20 CFs (Day 2).
4. Develop simplified approaches and training materials for biodiversity survey methods at community forest level for incorporation within CF management plans (20 CFs in 10 provinces) by end of Y1Q2.
5. Community biodiversity monitors trained in biodiversity survey methods (1 training) (ca. 40 CF members, 40% women) in Y1 and Y2, and apply biodiversity survey outputs directly into CF management plan

Based on the above activities list, the project could actually implement as the table below.

Output	Progress
<b>1.Capabilities built for improved policies and systems</b>	
<b>Activities</b>	
1.1 Review and gap assessment of biodiversity elements within community forestry policies, regulations and procedures	<b>On Process 50%:</b> 1-day consultation meeting with relevant governmental units, CSOs and experts in biodiversity and community forest was conducted on 23 June 2023 with 23 participants attended. The key participants are from Zoological society of London (ZSL), Royal Forest Department, Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant conservation, Office of Natural Resources and Environment Policy and Planning, IUCN Thailand, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, WWF and other CSOs. The meeting could seek comments and suggestions from the participants on key issues and views regarding biodiversity situation in community forest (CF) context and key recommendations for strengthening the biodiversity issues in community forestry. The results of the meeting will be used for developing a review and gap assessment document.
1.4 Organise policy dialogue between the CF NET leaders and the CF National Policy Committee and related line agencies (Royal Forest Department) to propose national guidelines on biodiversity conservation for CF management	<b>Not yet realized:</b> This activity was postponed due to the delaying of policy review and gap assessment. It is also due to the ending of the term of the previous CF National Policy Committee. The appointment process had occurred during this reporting period. It is expected that the new CF National Policy Committee will be official announced in a few months after this.
<b>Output 2: Community level capacities for biodiversity assessment, monitoring and reporting</b>	
2.1 Initial rapid community assessment (including landscape mapping, biodiversity related capacity needs assessment, socioeconomic profile and documentation of existing CF fund structure and management practices) and community consultation (Day 1) and combined general biodiversity training for approx. 15 community members in each of 20 CFs (Day 2).	<b>Completed:</b> The workshop was conducted on 7-9 July 2023. There were 56 participants (14 female and 42 male) from 30 community forests from 10 provinces.  The project set up a title of this workshop and upcoming training processes as “CF Master” to give importance to the role of the participants, who have to join in several activities and deliver the field data collection throughout the project. This first workshop could generate understanding with the participants on importance of having data collection and biodiversity survey. They also learnt and practice using different survey tools for collecting capacity development needs assessment and community forest biodiversity information.
2.2 Develop simplified approaches and training materials for biodiversity survey methods at community forest	<b>On process 50% :</b> RECOFTC and ZSL could develop simplified methods and training materials for monitoring biodiversity in community forests, which was used in the 2.3 the biodiversity

level for incorporation within CF management plans (20 CFs in 10 provinces) by end of Y1Q2.	monitoring workshop. After the workshop was delivered, the project will develop a guidebook based on methods trained in the workshop.
2.3 Community biodiversity monitors trained in biodiversity survey methods (1 training) (ca. 40 CF members, 40% women) in Y1 and Y2, and apply biodiversity survey outputs directly into CF management plan	<p><b>Completed for Y1:</b> This is the second workshop of CF Master learning series. The 2.5-day workshop was successfully held during 25-27 August 2023 in Kanchanaburi Province. 53 participants (12 female and 41 male) from 30 community forests in 10 provinces attended the workshop.</p> <p>The participants learned to conduct the biodiversity survey and forest data collection, which will be inputs for developing community forest management plans (CFMPs).</p>

Regarding the project indicators, in this reporting period, we have confirmed that the original project indicators are still relevant to the context. For the Standard Indicator, we did not plan or discuss reporting against the indicators as the project applied and received approval in the Round 29, whereas the Standard Indicators are applied with the projects started after Round 30. However, we are open to adjusting our project indicators if the context changes in the future.

**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.**

Problems / lesson learnt	Impacts
1. Due to project decided to increase the number of pilot site from 20 to be 30 and also the number of key participants, RECOFTC and ZSL had to make some adjustment on budget to cover the increased costs. However, we see that increased number of community forests help synchronized the works that have been ongoing with these communities through other RECOFTC's initiatives. Hence, it can give a better result to the Darwin's Initiative as well.	Therefore, the budget and indicators have to be adjusted in order to fits with the activities.

**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
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes
Change request reference if known: We do not have the reference. But it was approved by email on 08/03/2023.	

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 Estimated underspend: £ [REDACTED]

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 other issue for this reporting period.

**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**