

## 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>	DAREX006
<b>Project title</b>	Increasing ecological and socio-economic resilience of Upper-Ewaso Ng'iro North Ecosystem
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Kenya
<b>Lead partner</b>	Fauna & Flora
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Mount Kenya Trust, Mount Kenya Ewaso Water Partnership, OI Pejeta Conservancy, Laikipia Conservancies Association, Northern Rangelands Trust
<b>Project leader</b>	Serah Munguti
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	31 October 2023 HYR1
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	

**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.

**Output 1: Habitat restoration, reduced fuelwood use, equitable water-demand regulation and sharing, and climate-resilient cropland management, increases quantity and quality of dry-season river flows, and improves soil, rangeland, and forest habitat health.**

- **Activity 1.1:** Mapping undertaken for forest restoration sites through computer-based mapping and field work/ground truthing. Effectively, dry and wet season Land Use Land Cover maps developed (**Annex 1**) and areas that require active and natural regeneration identified (**Annex 2**). Formal requests to engage in restoration actions in parts of the gazetted Mount Kenya forest sent to Kenya Forest Service (KFS) (**Annex 3**) and a verbal authorization granted to proceed with the restoration actions whilst waiting for written authorization which is expected in 2024 once the government reviews the ban on activities in forest areas.
- **Activity 1.2:** A needs assessments conducted for 6 Community Forest groups (Boma Yetu, Environmental conservation Self Help Group, Siriman Community-Based Organisation, Kieni Kia Ndege (120 people: 70%W, 30%M). A comprehensive training manual on tree nursery establishment and management developed (**Annex 4**) and 3 nursery groups of 20 participants each (70% women, 30% Male) trained on best practises for setting up nurseries and managing and maintaining tree nurseries (**Annex 5**).
- **Activity 1.3:** 5 Community Forest Associations (CFAs) to undergo fire training identified and procurement of equipment in progress.

- **Activity 1.4:** The household questionnaire for establishing baselines on livelihood interventions (see activity 2.1) including questions to measure household energy needs developed.
- **Activity 1.6:** 370Ha of degraded land within Mount Kenya ecosystem identified for active forest restoration. Tree planting is planned for Q3.
- **Activity 1.8:** Mount Kenya Trust engaged Lewa Wildlife Conservancy to support in Ecological Monitoring training for rangers, tree monitors and Community Forest Associations (CFA) to equip them with M&E skills for both actively and naturally regenerated lands (**Annex 6**). Procurement of 2 motorbikes to support monitors done (**Annex 7**).

**Output 2: Climate-resilient, nature-based solutions, sustainable land, pasture and water management practices, and improved market linkages, increase wellbeing for 2,906 farming, agropastoral and pastoral households / c.14,530 people (at least 40% women)**

- **Activity 2.1:** Beneficiary selection ongoing by project partners (OI Pejeta Conservancy (OPC), Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) and Mount Kenya Ewaso Water Partnership (MKEWP), applying the agreed beneficiary selection criteria (**Annex 8**). Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) meetings held for Board and community members from 4 community conservancies (Maiyanat/Makurian, Shulumai/Kurikuri, Il Ngwesi and Lekurruki). A total of 719 people (422 M, 297 F) engaged from selected conservancies to benefit from 4 water pans in Year 1 with NRT leading ground implementation (**Annex 9**). Inception meetings held with 21 Water Resources User Associations (WRUAs) (146 people: 38F, 108M) and 3 county governments (**Annex 10**). Sensitization meetings held and participatory tools for beneficiary selection agreed with all project partners (**Annex 11**). Tools to establish social baselines/household questionnaire (**Annex 12**) and Climate Vulnerability Capacity Analysis (CVCA) tool adapted from Care Kenya and customized for the project (**Annex 13**). The field surveys are scheduled for Q3.
- **Activity 2.4:** The Terms of Reference for a consultant to develop a training manual for the Training of Trainers (ToTs) developed (**Annex 14**) and the consultant engaged. The actual development of the manual is scheduled for Q3 and Q4.
- **Activity 2.6:** 2 sensitization meetings reaching 49 community members (29M and 20F) from established self-help groups drawn from 2 WRUAs (Likii and Ngarenythyn) conducted on the water harvesting technologies, efficient water uses at the household level, and how to leverage on seed funds and revolving funds available in the project through EMUSACCO (**Annex 15**).

**Output 3: Conservation CBOs (6 WRUAs and 5 CFAs) and local civic organizations (MKEWP, OPC, LCA, NRT, and MKT) have the capacity and capability to jointly, equitably, and sustainably manage natural resources.**

- **Activity 3.7:** From the inception meetings reported under Output 2 (activity 2.1) above, the WRUAs have started dialogues within their community water projects with an aim of developing joint MOU to construct two common water intakes. Two river channels falling within 2 WRUAs (Likii and Teleswani) have been proposed to have Common water intakes constructed. Discussions are ongoing for consensus building.

**Output 4: The value of project outcomes, (biodiversity conservation, human-wildlife co-existence, economic productivity, water security, climate resilience), is evidenced and ready to be scaled up, through local stakeholder commitment and larger-scale investment.**

- The Terms of Reference for the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) developed (**Annex 16**) and briefing meetings with National Government offices and the three county governments of Meru, Nyeri and Laikipia (**Annex 17-19**) held. Consequently, a multi-stakeholder project implementation committee constituted bringing together representatives of National Governments (Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and Water Resource Authority); three county governments of Meru, Nyeri and Laikipia, Private sector (Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and project implementing partners with Fauna & Flora as the Secretary. The inaugural PIC was held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023, where Water Resources Authority was elected Chair for year 1 (**Annex 20**)

- Fauna & Flora is part of a technical team led by Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry towards review the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) to align to Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (K-M GBF) as adopted in December 2022. Initial workshop was held on 7-11<sup>th</sup> August 2023 (**Annex 20**) with outputs including developing NBSAP review road map (**Annex 21**). These efforts are expected to enhance biodiversity conservation efforts by contributing to shaping Kenya biodiversity goals and targets to be achieved by 2030.

**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.**

- Implementation of activities under OI Pejeta Conservancy has been delayed due to institutional issues that were communicated to Darwin. Fauna & Flora has withheld the signing of the sub-award until approval is received from Darwin. The partner has however been involved in Fauna & Flora-led activities including a physical project inception meeting and project implementation committee meetings. We submitted a change request to move part of OPC's budget to year 2, based on revised timeliness where activity implementation starts in November 2023. If this is delayed (as it depends on there being approval to disburse funds to OPC), we will reforecast and submit another change request before 31 December 2023.
- Implementation of activities under Laikipia Conservancies Association (LCA) are on hold as there were budget revisions which required a change request to be approved. LCA has undertaken internal planning to proceed and complete year 1 activities within timelines as soon as the approval is received.
- On July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the National Government suspended all activities in forests, including the use of TELIS (Trees Establishment and Livelihood Improvement Scheme), a crucial technique for achieving active regeneration. These developments have delayed and reduced the window for preparation and planting even though the onset of the rains is here. To advance these, Mount Kenya Trust met Kenya Forest Service and have been given verbal approval to proceed with restoration actions as earlier planned, pending a written approval to be given in 2024 once the government reviews the ban. The delays however have no impact on originally planned timelines and budgets.

**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	No, awaiting feedback from NIRAS
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?**

**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**