

## 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 2022**

<b>Project reference</b>	DARNV004
<b>Project title</b>	Introducing research-informed conservation agreements for forest restoration in Anjouan, Comoros
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Comoros
<b>Lead partner</b>	Bangor University
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Dahari, University of Oxford
<b>Project leader</b>	Hugh Doulton
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	HYR1
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/DahariComores">www.facebook.com/DahariComores</a> <a href="https://www.twitter.com/DahariComores">www.twitter.com/DahariComores</a>

**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).**

The project has kept to the implementation timetable in all respects during the first six months, with activities programmed for this period completed or underway as planned.

The analysis of the pilot conservation agreements scheme which conserves Livingstone's flying fox roost sites (Output 1) was led by Dr Edwin Pynegar (Bangor) with the support of Dahari staff. Interviews were organised with all seven beneficiaries of the pilot scheme with the goal of evaluating their understanding of the program as well as its costs and benefits to them. Interviews were also undertaken with five members of Dahari staff closely associated with the scheme (two scheme designers and three implementers), as well as a representative from the partner Bat Conservation International.

Key findings are that six out of seven beneficiaries had a clear understanding of the scheme's functioning and objectives. All beneficiaries claim to have respected the conditions of the program and land use intensity was consistently reported as reduced in conserved parcels which contain the roost sites. One respondent was entirely positive about the program, stating that he would not change any aspects of it and that he would like to see the agreements' duration extended to ten years, and several respondents stated that they benefited from the materials and training provided by Dahari as well as the per diems provided when researchers visit. Many reported that their neighbours were jealous that they were participating in the scheme.

However, while the scheme represents additional conservation, it also represented a significant cost for most of the participants. Six out of the seven felt that they had found themselves at least somewhat disadvantaged by not being able to farm in conserved areas, which was particularly costly to those with relatively small areas of land. The participants provided a number of suggestions as to how the scheme could be modified. A report is available.

A legal consultant, Dr Said Mahamoudou, with a PhD and further experience in Comorian land tenure assessments was recruited from the faculty of law at the University of the Comoros to

lead the land tenure review (Activity 2.3). The terms of reference are under development for work to start in November.

Mapping layers and data were collated to support identification of priority areas for rollout (Activity 2.4). Further data collection was undertaken regarding water sources and rivers to support development of a water prioritisation layer, as well as recalculation of river and stream locations and catchment boundaries derived from a fine-scale digital elevation model.

A student from the University of Copenhagen was recruited under the supervision of Prof Jonas Geldmann to support development of the rollout plan (Activity 2.5) and the impact assessment for the scheme.

Dahari are in the final stages of a process with a foundation to secure significant funding that would underpin the scheme until the end of 2025 (Activity 3.5).

One member of Dahari staff was trained in semi-structured interviewing as part of the assessment of the pilot scheme, and the whole Dahari team have been trained in conservation agreements approach through two workshops (Activity 5.1). Wider training needs for the delivery of the project are currently being assessed.

A University of the Comoros student is undertaking a study with Dahari and the support of Bat Conservation International on GPS tagging of Livingstone's flying fox (Activity 5.2). The results of this work will identify key feeding sites to be fed into prioritisation of areas to integrate into the conservation agreements scheme.

Prof Julia Jones (Bangor) and Prof Owen Lewis (Oxford) will be in the Comoros on a first supervision mission from October 24th to November 1st to ensure that everything is well prepared for the second half of the year.

**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.**

No problems or unexpected development over the first six months. No anticipated changes to budget or timetable at this stage.

**3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS-LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance N/A

Change request reference if known:

**4a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?**

Yes  No  Estimated underspend: £

**4b. 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.**

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

No. Everything has started smoothly.

**If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), 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.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with NIRAS-LTS International 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**