

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 2022

Project reference	DARNV007
Project title	Farming with Alternative Pollinators for Increased Biodiversity and Smallholder Incomes
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Zimbabwe
Lead partner	Action Against Hunger (AAH)
Partner(s)	Nutrition Action Zimbabwe (NAZ)
Project leader	Admire Mukorera
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	https://twitter.com/ACF_Zim/status/1544220364976308225

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).

1. Improved performance of main crops and MHEP due to FAP methodology

1.1 Identification and sensitization of communities and farmers	Completed.
1.2 Baseline situational assessment and participatory analysis about biodiversity, land degradation, agriculture, poverty	Completed. Findings gave a good indication about local perceptions and knowledge about biodiversity/natural resource management, agriculture and poverty issues to be considered when undertaking training and awareness for FAP and future related programming
1.3. Identification of main crops, Marketable Habitat Enhancement Plants (MHEPs), potential pollinators to be attracted, agreement about field layouts	Completed. 3 possible field layouts were agreed for the 2 seasons (winter May-Aug, summer Sep-Apr). Layouts can be revised and information expanded according to learnings on main crops, MHEPs, pollinators in 1 st and 2 nd cropping cycle.
1.4. and 1.5 Setting up of fifty (50) FAP plots and (30) Control plots	Completed.
1.6. and 1.7	Not yet started. See <i>unexpected developments below.</i>

2. Increased wild pollinator diversity in and around FAP plots

2.1 Participatory assessment of traditional knowledge about natural resources and ecosystems, agriculture, pollinators and crops.	Ongoing. Relevant issues have been identified in the assessment (e.g., recognized importance of cultural norms and sanctions to overuse of resources, but incomprehension of those in everyday practice). Some topics will be further deepened in discussions with project participants to arrive at a better understanding of local perceptions and knowledge about key issues relevant for FAP implementation
2.2. Awareness raising about pollinator conservation	Ongoing. Awareness about practices threatening pollinator survival has been raised in trainings and community assessments and will continue throughout the project. Radio sessions and messaging through bulk SMS will start after the 1 st cropping cycle.

2.3. and 2.4	Not yet started: See <i>unexpected developments below</i> .
3. Increased capacity of farmers, AAH, NAZ, Agritex, EA and key stakeholders to deliver biodiversity-poverty reduction outcomes	
3.1. Development of FAP training manual	Ongoing. A draft manual has been developed for the first training of NAZ/Agritex staff and lead farmers. The manual will be reviewed based on the learnings from the 1 st cropping cycle and adopted for the utilization of field staff.
3.2. Training of fifty (50) FAP farmers and thirty (30) control farmers on good agricultural practices.	Ongoing. 50 FAP farmers and 30 control farmers were trained with match funding from BHA. Refresher trainings are conducted through lead farmers with Agritex and NAZ field staff providing extension services support to farmers on an ongoing basis.
3.3. Training of ten (10) NAZ and Agritex officers and fifty (50) FAP farmers on pollinators/FAP	Ongoing. 6 NAZ staff, 16 Agritex officers and 4 lead farmers have been trained on FAP. The training has been cascaded to 50 FAP farmers. A refresher training will be conducted after farmers have tested FAP during the 1 st cropping cycle.
3.4. Monthly visits to FAP plots by NAZ and Agritex officers to advise and encourage farmers to follow the FAP methodology	Ongoing. NAZ and Agritex visit and advise farmers on the establishment of FAP plots and will continue advising during the cropping cycle.
3.5. Bi-monthly visits to control plots to follow up and advise on the 'usual' good agricultural practices for the main crop.	Ongoing. NAZ and Agritex visit and advise farmers in the establishment of control plots and will continue advising during the cropping cycle.
3.6. Quarterly exchange visits	Not yet started: See <i>unexpected developments below</i> .
4. Key stakeholders are engaged with the innovation to assess the potential to scale up if successful	
4.1. Identification of and networking with stakeholders	Ongoing. Exchanges have been initiated with organizations and networks such as 'Participatory Ecological Land Use Management' (PELUM), 'Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre' (FPC), 'Zimbabwe Association for the Practice and Promotion of Agroecology' (ZAPPA) and others. Players on policy and funding level will be contacted now with the commencement of the 1 st cropping cycle on the ground.
4.2. Participation and presentation of FAP approach in regular working groups and sector meetings	Ongoing. The FAP approach has been presented by the project team during a pollinator symposium organized by the Agricultural College and attended by different players involved in similar topics (23 rd Aug). More presentations and outreach are planned once the 1 st cropping cycle commences.
4.3. Organize at least four (4) field visits with interested stakeholders to learn from FAP plots and methodology,	Not yet commenced. This will commence once the 1 st cropping cycle has been completed and farmers can share their experiences with stakeholders.
4.4 and 4.5	Not yet commenced.
4.6. Production and sharing of monthly update/newsletter	Ongoing. A project brief has been developed and shared as 1 st update. The subsequent update is in progress.
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.	
<p>a. The processes of getting clearance for the project were delayed:</p> <p>- In the Province where the project is being implemented, a new project requires approval and clearance from the Provincial authorities first and then at district level. The process of acquiring the provincial clearance took longer than anticipated. There were also delays in getting the clearance at district level as the project was integrated with an on-going project. Despite the challenges, the issues were resolved and implementation permission was granted. These administrative processes, consequently resulted in the delay of the roll-out of the subsequent project activities such training in FAP, selection of FAP layouts, as well as establishment of gardens, and subsequent procurement of seeds.</p>	

b. Very high temperatures have affected germination of seeds (green pepper, mustard rape and coriander) for FAP and crop plots and delayed transplanting. The project has reacted and procured seedlings for green pepper, mustard rape. Coriander is more difficult to source, so efforts are currently underway to find available supply or revert to an alternative MHEP instead of coriander.

c. Demand for high facilitation allowances by Agritex extension staff in Gokwe South, has led to the project not receiving maximum support from the extension staff. The project team has been capacitating and empowering lead farmers to be able to monitor and collect required data, which was originally designed to be done by Agritex. As other projects in the district are paying high facilitation allowances to the extension officers, our project is not getting the support we expected. The situation has been further compounded by an increase in the number of government-led programs being rolled out before the onset of the rain, which will be prioritised by Agritex staff over our project.

d. Election campaigns affecting project implementation as communities must attend rallies and meetings. This has led rescheduling of project activities, such as trainings, field visits etc.

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 No

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.

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

We are planning to submit a Change Request for a no-cost extension to be able to properly implement all activities and complete the 3rd cropping cycle as foreseen in the original workplan. Full details to be provided in the Change Request form.

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. 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**