

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus

Half Year Report

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 2-3 pages** in length.

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 2024

Please note all projects that were active before 1 October 2024 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	30-003
Project title	Developing a sustainable model for human-elephant coexistence in Thailand
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Thailand
Lead Organisation	Zoological Society of London
Partner(s)	Human Elephant Voices Network
Project leader	May Moe Wah
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	humanelephantvoices.org

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

Output 1: Systematic review and best-practice guide

To address limited Thai and English literature on HEC mitigation, we are compiling additional data on various tools' implementation, costs, monitoring and evaluation, strengths, weaknesses, and guidelines. This information is gathered through surveys, targeted interviews with 35 stakeholders, and planned focus groups to provide ten in-depth case studies. This participatory approach ensures the best-practice guide meets the needs of communities, subdistrict governments, and decision-makers. Drafting is set to complete by Year 2, with partner feedback in Year 3, and publication by project end.

Regional meetings have been held in Kui Buri National Park, Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai, and Eastern Forest complexes, with progress in supporting decentralized elephant management. For instance, the Nong Ped subdistrict government in Kanchanaburi has taken on fence maintenance between Salakpra National Park and nearby communities. Building on this success, ZSL and HEVN are conducting training for three communities in Than To subdistrict in southern Thailand. Additionally, DNP-supported workshops trained community-led Elephant Rapid Response Units (ERRUs) in Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai, fostering collaboration among

conflicting communities. To standardize ERRU procedures nationwide, HEVN and ZSL are seeking funding for guidelines and training materials.

Output 2: Feasibility assessment of HEC Insurance

We have developed a report on HEC insurance in Thailand, covering a situational assessment, international HWC insurance case studies, and local compensation schemes. This report will be presented at a multi-stakeholder forum on November 13, where 40–50 participants—including DNP, government agencies, the Office for Insurance Commission, financial institutions, and industry representatives—will discuss feasible insurance models. Forum outputs include reviewing current schemes, clarifying roles, and forming a task force to develop an HEC insurance framework. To co-develop solutions to HEC with the private sector, ZSL and HEVN engaged the Thai Sugar Millers Cooperative, which has shown interest in collaborative approaches. Meetings and participatory mapping with three factories and farmers are being scheduled to develop actionable solutions, such as supporting HEC mitigation methods and insurance. ZSL is also interviewing HEC-affected farmers to assess the financial impact and determine premium affordability. Following delays in questionnaire approval, 64 farmers in Dong Phraya Yen-Khao Yai and Kaeng Krachan National Park have been interviewed, with completion expected by January 2024. This data will inform risk and premium calculations.

Output 3: Suitability Assessment of Alternative Crops

In Kanchanaburi Province, focus groups with 374 participants (13% minority groups, 41% women) highlighted challenges and potential strategies for agroforestry interventions. Current crops like cassava, maize, rubber, and sugarcane are profitable but vulnerable to elephant raids, leading to potential crop loss. Primary challenges to agroforestry adoption include water scarcity, land tenure insecurity, factory indebtedness, and limited market access. Market linkages, post-harvest infrastructure, and organic fertilizers could mitigate these issues while enhancing income stability. Feedback meetings are scheduled for late 2024. Using agroclimatic data and financial modeling, the team identified pepper, pomelo, and coffee as viable crops for HEC resilience. A value chain analysis (VCA) on coffee at the Thong Pha Phum site has been completed, with a brief report on pomelo and pepper VCA.

Output 4: Establishment of Coffee Chang Yim Group

The Coffee Chang Yim group, formed in May 2024 with 35 members, is finalizing registration, enabling access to funding and markets. Training workshops held from July to September covered Fine Robusta processing and distribution of coffee processing equipment. Consumer surveys in June 2024 indicated a preference for Yeast- and Natural-processed coffee, informing harvest plans. Coffee samples were sent monthly for cupping, aiming to inspire farmers to enhance quality. To reduce reliance on middlemen, direct sales channels with cafes and roasters are in development.

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.

Output 1 Challenges:

Due to delays in scheduling regional meetings—stemming from internal political shifts and slow communication with regional partners—we adjusted our regional engagement approach. We have added smaller, frequent workshops with key groups (e.g., ERNs, DNP, and local government) to co-develop the best-practice guide and support regional priorities throughout the year. Annual meetings are now focused on broader knowledge-sharing. These adjustments ensure regular follow-up without impacting project outcomes or budget.

Output 4 Challenges:

During coffee farmer engagement, we faced several challenges:

- **Low participation in cupping events:** Farmers were more focused on pricing, without understanding value-adding processes. We've organized workshops to bridge this gap.

- **Scarcity of coffee in the market:** Market shortages and price contract promoted production of quantity over quality. We're developing niche markets for quality-focused farmers and connecting them to premium buyers to incentivise growing specialty coffee.
- **Overconfidence in quality:** Farmers overestimating coffee uniqueness led to buyer disappointment. Benchmarking training and comparative tastings are being implemented to train farmers in benchmarking against industry standards.
- **Confusion about grading:** Misunderstandings about coffee grading hindered effective product positioning. Educational materials and workshops will clarify grading.

Other Challenges:

Following ZSL's project manager's resignation in July 2024, we requested and received approval for a replacement. Indicators were revised to meet Darwin Initiative standards, with an upcoming change request planned for Q3.

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 (Personnel)
Change Request reference if known: <i>If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome</i>	

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)

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 2025)?

Yes **No**

4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should 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 to your project 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?

6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report. If your project was subject to an Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment please use this space to comment on any changes to international human rights risks, and to address any additional mitigations outlined in your offer letters. Please provide the comment and then your response. If you have already provided a response, please confirm when.

Comment 2: *The project aims to conduct a country-wide systematic review of all human-elephant conflict (HEC) mitigation projects in Thailand (activity 1.2). However, it is unclear whether this will be a systematic review or a traditional literature review, as no pre-defined protocol outlining the research question, criteria for study selection, search strategy, data extraction methods, or assessment criteria has been mentioned. [...] Please clarify. It is also unclear if the review will include peer-reviewed articles.*

To clarify the methods of the systematic review, two project staff, trained in systematic methods by the Collaboration for Environmental Evidence, are leading our review on HEC mitigation in Thailand. With only four English-language peer-reviewed articles were obtained from across 6 databases, we are supplementing with data from Thai published literature, NGO grant reports, and targeted surveys with agencies and stakeholders to map mitigation methods and evaluate effectiveness. We will standardize qualitative survey data to measure perceived effectiveness while quantitative studies will serve as case studies.

Comment 5: *The project is considering removing Activities 2.6 and 2.7 due to delays and complexities in establishing a pilot within the project timeframe. Please provide an explanation if this decision would impact or may have consequences on the project's overall Outcome*

Output 2 aims to assess the role and feasibility of HEC insurance in Thailand. As evidenced by other pilots in Kenya and Sri Lanka, insurance schemes require substantial investment and stakeholder collaboration to ensure cost-effectiveness, stakeholder buy-in, and poverty reduction. We are engaging diverse stakeholders to evaluate existing schemes and potential models including national public-private schemes, community-led microinsurance, and enhanced compensation programs. By end of Year 2, we aim to identify a viable model with demonstrated stakeholder support and clear benefits to farmer livelihoods. Year 3 will focus on advancing this model, aiming to design a pilot and promote launch for at least one province if stakeholder buy-in is sufficient. This participatory approach is designed to support human-elephant coexistence and ensure sustainability of the model.

Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to any additional feedback (other than caveats) received in the letter you received to say your application was successful which requested response at HYR (including safeguarding points)? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	yes
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	n/a
For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1st April 2024)	
Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	yes
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	

Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project?	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	