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 2025

Please note all projects that were active before 1st October 2025 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

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

Project reference	31-004
Project title	Effectively tackling Human-Carnivore Conflicts through systematic approaches in Uganda
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Uganda
Lead Organisation	WWF UK
Partner(s)	WWF Uganda Country Office, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), WWF Kenya
Project Leader	Cath Lawson
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	N/A

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).

- Activity 0.1: Completed Y1.

OUTPUT 1: By the end of year 2, QECA ranger workforce has improved capacity to assess, develop and implement Human Carnivore Conflict mitigation and response actions

- Activities 1.1-3: Completed Y1.
- Activity 1.4: Train ranger supervisors/managers in the analysis and adaptive management planning of SMART data to improve management approaches and HCC responses: This activity was originally planned for Y1 but moved to Y2 (see AYR1 report). Implementation in Y2 has been delayed to ensure that training activities are responsive to institutional decisions by Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). UWA was an early adopter of SMART and has extended its use across its protected area network. More recently, UWA has made institutional commitments related to the use of EarthRanger. SMART and EarthRanger are complementary not competing tools and have recently announced a formal partnership (www.serca.org), but additional planning was needed to ensure that training activities are aligned with UWA's needs. Training activities will be completed within the remainder of Y2.
- Activity 1.5: Train rangers in First Respondent Training to ensure efficient response to HCC events in QECA: Training of 47 rangers (39M; 8F) was completed in Y1. Additional refresher training is planned for Y2. The curriculum for the refresher training is being further developed incorporating learning from first responder training activities that WWF has deployed in tiger landscapes.

OUTPUT 2: By the end of year 3, households affected by Human Carnivore Conflict in the QECA have improved income and capacity to reduce its impacts, thus removing the perceived need to kill carnivores in retaliation.

- Activity 2.1: Support community sensitisation on C2C approach (around holistic approaches, tolerance, shared responsibility and promotion of sustainable development): Sensitisation meetings were conducted with 80 community members (66M; 14F) in Y1. Additional refresher sensitisation meetings were held in Y2 as part of the HCC Action Plan workshop (see Activity 2.3; Annex 1) with 45 participants (33M; 12F). WWF-Uganda's Project Officer (Crispus Baguma) also attended WWF network training on the Conflict to Coexistence (C2C) approach (Annex 2), which further strengthened his capacity to support community engagement in the C2C approach.

- Activity 2.2: Conduct gender and inclusion analysis to inform development of action plans and identify actions to promote gender equality and social inclusion throughout the project: Completed Y1. Strategies identified in the gender and inclusion action plan (Annex 3) have been implemented (e.g. ensuring childcare provision to enable female participation in workshops), however, female representation has remained lower than hoped. Additional reflection, community engagement, and adaptive management to address this is planned for the remainder of Y2.

- Activity 2.3: Hold a workshop with communities to collaboratively develop an HCC Action Plan for at least 4 hotspot sites, based on findings from the rapid SAFE assessment: A workshop to develop the HCC Action Plans was held in August 2025 (Annex 1) with 45 participants (33M; 12F). During this workshop, community members in the four hotspot locations identified a range of potential actions related to addressing HCC, framed around: prevention, understanding interactions, monitoring, mitigation, policy and governance, and response. Community members then voted on possible activity options, and the most popular have been incorporated in resulting draft action plans (Annex 4) which are in the process of being refined / finalised to ensure viability and suitability through a stakeholder validation process.

- Activity 2.4: Train and equip communities in the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) to record HCC events and the efforts of response units and conservation and as 'First Respondents' for HCC events: First Responder training was conducted with 80 community members (66M;14W) in April 2025 (reported in AYR1 report). SMART training, targeting community scouts and reformed poacher groups, is planned to happen in the remainder of Y2, using the smartphones purchased under Activity 2.5.

- Activity 2.5: Support community patrols to monitor carnivores and potential conflict situations and report and respond to conflict events: Purchase of equipment to support community patrols was initiated in Y1 and has continued into the reporting period. Prior to distribution of this equipment, there has been a parallel process to build trust and understanding on the purpose and use of the equipment. Formal handover of the equipment will be undertaken in conjunction with UWA and completed before the end of Y2 Q3.

- Activity 2.6: Planned for Y3

- Activity 2.7: Support co-created livelihood initiatives (e.g. Southern Sector: coffee value addition, commercial crafts, community tourism; Northern Sector: briquette making from invasive plants, milk value addition, zero grazing programs and strengthening Cattle Infrastructure and Vet Services.): Possible livelihood initiatives were identified as part of the HCC Action Plan workshop (see Activity 2.3; Annex 1, 4) and are currently being reviewed / refined through a stakeholder validation process, with the aim of implementation beginning in November 2025. Given budget constraints, investments in livelihood initiatives will focus on communally owned and/or demonstration activities rather than investment at the level of individual household.

OUTPUT 3: By end of year 3, CBOs representing households affected by HCC in QECA have the capacity and opportunity to engage effectively with the UWA and local authorities

- Activity 3.1: Conduct baselines for CSOs/CBO Capacity Assessment; community engagement in integrated HCC; community awareness of rights and responsibilities; perception of effectiveness of authorities' responses to HCC: Baseline assessments, except for CBO organisational capacity, were completed in Y1. Some CBO organisational capacity baselines were collected in Y1, through an aligned project. The remaining baselines have

been collected in this reporting period (Annex 5). A change request (approved 22/10/25) has been submitted to focus CBO engagement at individual CBO level, rather than through CBO Hub structures as originally planned (see Question 2 for rationale), organisational capacity assessments and associated capacity building actions plans have therefore been completed for 10 CBOs.

- Activity 3.2-4: Some results reported in Y1. Additional activities planned for Y2 Q3/4.
- Activity 3.5: Support UWA to conduct biannual QECA Carnivore Conservation Alliance stakeholder partner meetings/ workshops to enable data harmonisation, ensure coherence of actions, leverage technical/financial support and enable adaptive management: A meeting was held between QECA Carnivore Conservation Stakeholders in Mweya in Y1 (March 2025). The next biannual meeting of this group was planned for September 2025 but has been delayed by key staff changes at UWA. New staff are now in post, and the meeting should be possible in Y2 Q3.
- Activity 3.6: Planned for Y3

Other activities:
- Training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH; Annex 6) was provided to project partners, including UWA's QECA Ecological Monitoring and Research Officer and QECA Species Warden, and a representative from Rubirizi District Local Government, delivered by WWF-UK's Head of Design Impact and Safeguarding. Work to further build capacity and streamline response / reporting processes is ongoing.

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.

Gender representation: A landscape wide GESI Action Plan had previously been developed under another project led by WWF Uganda prior to this project starting. Based on this, the WWF-Uganda Gender Officer worked with the project team to further develop a specific project level GESI Action Plan to inform project delivery (Annex 3). The actions identified in the action plan have been progressed, but it is recognised that gender representation has remained lower than hoped in project activities to date. While there are efforts to include women in conservation activities, deep-seated cultural norms and stereotypes still hinder progress. Additional reflection, community engagement, and adaptive management is planned for the remainder of Y2 seeking to further improve the meaningful engagement of women.

Livelihood support: Ongoing support to livelihood initiatives has required significant expectation management within target communities. At the outset, there was an expectation of direct livelihood support (purchase of agricultural inputs, infrastructure development, etc.) at the individual household level. Budget constraints do not allow for this level of investment, rather investments will focus on communally owned and/or demonstration activities. This has required additional community sensitisation but is anticipated to be a more sustainable approach over the long-term. This has not impacted the budget or timetable of project activities and will not impact the number of beneficiaries.

CBO Hubs: Through ongoing community engagement, it has become apparent that not all CBOs in the project area are linked to the two (North / South) CBO Hub structures. As such, engagement at the 'Hub' level, as originally envisaged, is not currently an effective means by which to engage all individual CBOs. Furthermore, the CBO leading the Hub structure in the South of the project area is not currently an effective Hub lead and needs replacement. Given the current context, direct engagement with the target CBOs, whilst in parallel encouraging CBO Hub registration and strengthening the CBO Hub structures, has been deemed a more effective approach and a change request to reflect this in the logframe (Output Indicator 3.1) has been submitted and approved. Whilst a consolidated CBO Hub may ultimately be a stronger voice in influencing UWA and local authorities, in the current context this would not be a fully representative voice. Through the proposed adaptive approach, the project will ensure that the views of all 10 CBOs are fairly represented, whilst also seeking to encourage movement towards

an effective Hub structure. We are confident this approach will still enable the other indicators under Output 3 to be achieved, and without impacting the budget or beneficiary numbers.

Staff changes: Changes in staff, both within WWF-UK / Uganda and Uganda Wildlife Authority, have impacted the rate of project implementation. Where these changes relate to key staff and / or have budget implications, the required change requests have been submitted. Changes in staff roles are beyond the control of the project but, where possible, interim solutions have been put in place to minimise impact on delivery and budget spend, and handovers have been completed to ensure a smooth transition.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:	No
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	**1.** Change request submitted 11/08/25 > approved 13/08/25 **2.** Change request submitted 30/09/25 > approved 21/10/25
Change Request reference if known: N/A	

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)

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 2026)?

Yes ☐   **No** ☒   Estimated underspend: £

4c. If you expect an 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, and not later than 31ˢᵗ December. 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 BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Suspicions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk

N/A

6. Project risk management

6a. If your project has an Overseas Security and Justice assessment, please provide an update on any related risks, and any special conditions in your award paperwork if relevant for your project.
N/A

7. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent Annual Report. As a reminder, all projects that were scored as 'Not Yet Sensitive' in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment of their latest Annual Report should demonstrate how they are meeting the minimum GESI-Sensitive standard.
Feedback on the AYR1 report was as follows: ***Submit revised MEL documents:*** *If not already approved, formally submit revised MEL plans and logframe to maintain alignment with grant requirements:* • *Update Output Indicator 2.1 timing: current logframe lists this as a Year 1 deliverable, but reporting and other documentation suggest it is planned for Year 2. Submit a change request, if necessary, as output-level changes require formal approval.* • *Incorporate logframe changes made in response to feedback and ensure these are reflected in the submitted version.* Revisions to the logframe, which respond to feedback previously provided and / or are adaptive responses to learning / stakeholder feedback during project implementation, were included in the change request submitted 30/09/25 (approved 21/10/25). A copy of the current agreed logframe with proposed changes in tracked changes (Annex 7) was attached to that change request.

Checklist for submission

Have you responded to **feedback from your latest Annual Report Review?** You should respond in section 6, and annexe other requested materials as appropriate.	X
Have you reported against the most **up to date information for your project?**	X
Have you **clearly highlighted any confidential information** within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	X
Include your **project reference** in the subject line of submission email.	X
Submit to **BCF-Reports@niras.com**	X
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	X