



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



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	DARCC054
Project title	Developing capacity for forest restoration in Africa
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Uganda
Lead Organisation	Tropical Biology Association
Partner(s)	Kabale University
Project Leader	Rosie Trevelyan
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR2 02 October 2025
Project website/blog/social media	https://tropical-biology.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).

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) 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

- 1.1 Meetings to discuss the design content of the second field course reviewed the recommendations from course one and incorporated them into planning/ design of second course.
- 1.3 the field course materials have been shared with the Kabale University partners
- 1.8 field course content has been developed (informed also by meetings in 1.1).
- 1.9 Because we received 400 applicants for the first course and over 48 of these were high enough quality & suitability to take part in the course, we offered places to 20 Applicants from the first round and the course re-advertisement has begun for the remaining places.
- 1.10 Arrangement of course logistics are in progress and on schedule
- 1.11 The second restoration field course will take place in Q4

Output 2 MSc units

2.5 adoption of Forest Restoration units into MSc in Environment and Natural Resources and the newly accredited MSc in Ecology and Conservation Biology has occurred.

2.7 Recruited 16 students for the MSc in Environment and Natural Resources and expect at 50% of them to select the new Forest Restoration units. Recruitment of students to the MSc in Ecology and Conservation Biology is on track

Output 3 TOT

3.4 Tot workshop learning outcomes and materials agreed and will be produced in Q3

3.5 Logistics have been finalised for the TOT that will now take place in Q4

Output 0 Project management

0.1 Coordination meetings have been held quarterly by zoom

0.3 M&E framework is being adapted based on our experience of year 1 and on the reviewer's comments on the annual report

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.

We will run the second field course in Q4- following the same timing as we did for the first field course since this is a better time to be based in the Field station.

Both the TOT workshop and the field course have been moved timeline in our workplan to Q4, updated workplan reflecting this is attached to email with this report - this does not change our planned claims for Yr2, but does reflect why we have not spent as much as originally budgeted by mid-year point.

We had mistakenly split the audit budget sum █████ 50/50 over the 2 years. We submitted a formal financial change request and it was accepted from Defra (ref no. below)

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

Change Request reference if known: █████

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?

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

No

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

6b. Have any concerns or allegations relating to sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment been reported in the past 6 months?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please provide further information, ensuring no sensitive data is included within responses.

Suspensions or allegations related to safeguarding concerns should be reported to ODA.Safeguarding@defra.gov.uk

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.

All project staff have now undertaken SEAH training and we have appointed safeguarding focal points 1 in Uganda [REDACTED] and 1 in UK [REDACTED]. We reviewed our existing safeguarding policy & procedures and have added specific instructions for course participants.

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.	Yes
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	Yes
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	N/A
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	
Submit to BCF-Reports@niras.com	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	