

## 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>	DPLUS181
<b>Project title</b>	East Caicos Wilderness Area: Protecting Caribbean's largest uninhabited island
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Turks & Caicos Islands
<b>Lead partner</b>	RSPB
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Turks & Caicos National Trust (TNCT), Marine Conservation Society (MCS)
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Charlie Butt</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	<i>31 October 2022; HYR1</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<i>n/a</i>

**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).**

*This report reflects implementation between 01 July - 30 Sept 2022 (3 months)*

A project launch meeting was held prior to project start in late June 2022. All project partners and most contractors involved in the project development stage were in attendance and provided input. The objective of the meeting was to bring the project team together to introduce roles and responsibilities for the project and review implementation timetable and activities. Subsequently, we have reviewed and updated the implementation timetable and project activities to ensure clear roles and responsibilities are included to support project delivery.

RSPB Project Officer, Joe Jeffcoate has been brought on board to support the project coordination and delivery whilst Simon Busuttill has been recruited to RSPB as the Operations Manager, seconded to TCNT and will take up the role as East Caicos project manager based in TCI.

Monthly meetings have taken place between RSPB and MCS to develop methodology for the CVM and between RSPB and TCNT to develop working relationships and relevant job descriptions for the two posts.

We have developed a monitoring and evaluation plan and a project SharePoint has been developed which will store project documents including project monitoring updates.

Crucial to the success of the project is the recruitment of two positions to provide effective community engagement and site management support. RSPB and partners TCNT/MCS have worked in close collaboration to develop job descriptions and advertisements for these positions. As of late September, the posts were advertised across TCI particularly in South Caicos and on TNCT social media channels. We expect to have successfully recruited for both these positions before the end of Q3.

We are in the process of subcontracting partners MCS and TCNT.

**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.**

TCNT have recently experienced a high turnover of experienced staff. Although those staff were not expected to be heavily involved in the first year of this project, the additional administrative burden of recruitment within TCNT – as well as that of the two roles for this project - has bought additional demands and stretch to TCNT capacity.

Though we do still believe targeting recruitment in South Caicos to be the right approach, we are aware of the challenges associated with a limited pool of candidates. We intend to address this by supporting TCNT host a convening of South Caicos Community members in Oct / Nov 2022 with a view to recruiting from interested local parties. We anticipate this approach to be successful. However, should any difficulties arise recruiting, we will further promote the role across the Turks & Caicos Islands, which could delay delivery of community engagement activities under Output 1.

We have reviewed the project logframe and will be submitting a logframe change request and updated implementation plan before end of Q3 2022 which will consider the above.

**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: N/a

**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?**

We are concerned that

- I. the recent fall in the value of the pound against the dollar and
- II. significant inflation in TCI

combined will have an impact on the project.

**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**