

## 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 2023**

<b>Project reference</b>	DPLUS189
<b>Project title</b>	Evaluating climate change risks to Patagonian and Antarctic toothfish
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
<b>Lead partner</b>	British Antarctic Survey
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Cefas and the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
<b>Project leader</b>	Rachel Cavanagh
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023 HYR1
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://www.bas.ac.uk/project/evaluating-climate-change-risks-to-patagonian-and-antarctic-toothfish/">https://www.bas.ac.uk/project/evaluating-climate-change-risks-to-patagonian-and-antarctic-toothfish/</a>

**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).**

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E 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.

This project commenced on the 1st of June 2023 (see Section 2). Therefore, this report summarises progress made between 1<sup>st</sup> of June and 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2023. In the Project Implementation Timetable, this period represents Q1 and part of Q2. Of the Outputs in the Project Implementation Timetable, only Output 1 contains activities (1.1-1.8) that took place in Q1 (or prior to Q1) and into Q2.

Output 1 is relevant environmental, biological and fishery information for toothfish synthesised, providing the basis for understanding toothfish sensitivity to environmental parameters. Prior to project commencement, the project post-doctoral research assistant was appointed successfully (activity 1.1). Public-facing project webpages were created to facilitate stakeholder/wider engagement with the project and a collaborative space in Microsoft Teams was established for the project team (activity 1.2). A kick-off workshop for the project team and stakeholders was organised (activity 1.3) and convened (activity 1.4), to launch the project, discuss the objectives and identify required information and sources for the project knowledge-base to synthesise relevant environmental, biological and fishery information for toothfish.

Several activities within Output 1 that are timetabled for Q2 have been completed and progress has been made on others. The kick-off workshop report has been finalised and published on the project webpage (activity 1.7). A paper "Evaluating climate change risks to Patagonian and Antarctic Toothfish" led by the Project Lead with co-authors from the project team was presented at the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources

(CCAMLR) Workshop on Climate Change in September 2023, forming a component of the Workshop Report which was submitted to CCAMLR's Scientific Committee, and was also discussed at CCAMLR's Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (activity 1.8). Progress has been made with sourcing and collating information into a useable format to establish the knowledge-base (activity 1.5). Information within the developing knowledge-base has begun to be synthesised, summarised and visualised (activity 1.6). For example, interactions between toothfish biological variables and environmental parameters have begun to be collated and summarised as an interactive network.

**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.**

The majority of the funding for this project is to employ a postdoctoral research assistant (PDRA) because the project requires an individual with the appropriate skills and expertise who can work on this full-time for two years to achieve the complex set of deliverables.

The timing of advertising, interviewing and appointment for the PDRA was unavoidably delayed by two months from Jan-Mar 2023 to Mar-May 2023.

Therefore, we successfully requested a 2-month delay to the original start (and end) date of this project. Hence the official start date was 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023.

**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: I think it is: CR22-156

**4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)**

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 2024)?**

Yes  **No**  Estimated underspend: ██████

**4c. 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.**

**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?**

N/A

**If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, 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.**

**All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with NIRAS 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**