

Third Quarter Project Report

Project Title: Evidence-Based Mitigation of Human–Elephant Conflict in Mbire District

Reporting Period: 01 October – 31 December 2025

Submitted by: Evangelista Vambe, Project Lead

Date Submitted: 31 December 2025

1. Executive Summary

The third quarter focused on consolidating field implementation through the transplanted of chili seedlings to participating farms and strengthening the economic sustainability of the intervention. Chili seedlings were successfully transplanted from nurseries to farm plots and are generally performing well, demonstrating good establishment and farmer adherence to recommended agronomic practices.

The project also benefited from additional chili seeds donated by well-wishers, presenting an opportunity to expand planting. However, excessive rainfall led to the loss of these additional seeds shortly after planting. Despite this climatic challenge, a major achievement during the quarter was the successful linkage of participating farmers with potential markets for Bird’s Eye chili, reinforcing the livelihood incentives associated with chili-based human–elephant conflict mitigation.

2. Key Achievements This Quarter

Activity	Description	Status
Seedling transplantation	Chili seedlings were transplanted from nurseries to participating farms in Ward 2. Most plots show healthy establishment and strong early growth.	Completed
Crop performance monitoring	Regular field visits were conducted to assess chili survival rates, plant vigor, and farmer compliance with recommended practices.	In Progress
Additional seed mobilization	Extra chili seeds were received from well-wishers, creating an opportunity for expansion beyond planned plots.	Completed
Market linkages	Farmers were successfully linked with potential buyers for Bird’s Eye chili, strengthening incentives for long-term participation.	Completed
Farmer engagement & support	Continued technical support provided through local leaders and extension-style visits to reinforce good crop management.	In Progress

3. Challenges Encountered and Mitigation Measures

Challenge	Mitigation Strategy
Heavy rains washing away newly planted seeds	Farmers were advised on improved planting timing, soil bunding, and drainage techniques to reduce future losses.
Climate variability affecting planting schedules	Promoted staggered planting and improved nursery management to reduce risk.
Limited capacity to immediately replace lost seeds	Focused efforts on protecting and optimizing performance of successfully transplanted seedlings.

4. Progress Toward Human–Elephant Conflict Mitigation

- Established chili buffers continue to serve as deterrent barriers around vulnerable crop fields.
 - Farmers report increased confidence in using chili-based approaches as both a deterrent and income-generating crop.
 - Market linkages have enhanced farmer commitment to maintaining chili buffers beyond the project period.
-

5. Reflections and Lessons Learned

- Early transplantation success demonstrates the importance of hands-on technical guidance and timely field support.
 - Climate-related risks remain a key factor; adaptive planting strategies are essential for resilience.
 - Market access significantly increases farmer motivation and strengthens the sustainability of conservation-based interventions.
 - External support from well-wishers highlights strong community and stakeholder interest, even though weather-related losses require improved risk management.
-

6. Priorities for the Next Quarter (Q4: January–March 2026)

- Continue monitoring chili growth, flowering, and yield potential.
- Document human–elephant conflict incidents to assess deterrent effectiveness during peak crop periods.
- Support farmers in preparing for harvest, post-harvest handling, and quality standards for Bird’s Eye chili markets.

- Strengthen collective marketing approaches through farmer groups and local leadership structures.
 - Explore options for irrigation support and climate-resilient practices to reduce weather-related losses.
-

7. Conclusion

Despite challenges posed by heavy rainfall, the third quarter demonstrated solid progress in strengthening chili-based human–elephant conflict mitigation in Mbire District. Successful seedling transplantation, positive crop performance, and the establishment of market linkages for Bird’s Eye chili represent important milestones. These achievements reinforce the dual conservation and livelihood objectives of the project and provide a strong foundation for continued implementation, learning, and scaling in subsequent quarters.