

First Quarter Project Report

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

Reporting Period: 01 April – 30 June 2025

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1. Executive Summary

This report outlines progress during the first quarter of the project. This period was dedicated to groundwork—establishing institutional partnerships, initiating field protocols, conducting baseline assessments, and identifying ecological and social hotspots. Preliminary community engagement and mapping exercises were successfully completed, setting the stage for the core activity implementation Quarter 2.

2. Key Achievements This Quarter

Activity	Description	Status
District-level stakeholder engagement	There was successful stakeholder engagement. The project received formal approval from the Rural District Council in the form of a letter to proceed with implementation. Bilateral meetings were held with the Local Authority administration and their specialized wildlife departments. Key insights were collected that inform project planning and implementation.	Completed
Conflict hotspot scoping	Identified Wards 1, 2, 10, 11 & 12 as HEC priority areas. An in-depth assessment was done in collaboration with the local Authority- Mbire RDC to select the most suitable implementation ward. Considerations were made on resource availability, past interventions and HWC incidents.	Completed
Field data collection	Conducted GPS-based mapping of elephant corridors in Ward 2. Key informant interviews were also done with ward-based rangers, and villagers impacted by HWC.	Completed
Preliminary analysis	Drafting a working HEC hotspot map for Mbire District	In Progress
Intervention planning	Conceptualization of chilli bomb training and production	In Progress

3. Challenges Encountered

Challenge	Mitigation Strategy
Limited bee occupancy in existing beehive deterrents	Focusing and scaling up the Chilli intervention activities

Technical limitations of chili bomb deployment	Sourcing training and expert input for safe, effective application, with the district's authorities support
Poor road networks and costly vehicle hire	Identify affordable off-road vehicle hire services

4. Priorities for Next Quarter (Q2: July–September 2025)

- Land Preparation : Identify and prepare suitable plots for chili cultivation in ward 2.
- Farmer Training on Sustainable Cultivation Techniques: The team will provide training sessions for farmers on sustainable practices, such as organic pest control, crop rotation, water-efficient irrigation methods, and organic fertilization to promote soil health.
- Distribution of Seeds and Resources : We will supply quality chili seeds and necessary agricultural inputs (such as organic fertilizers and tools) to participating farmers, ensuring equitable distribution and accessibility.
- Workshops on how to make chilli bombs

7. Reflections and Lessons Learned

- Early and respectful engagement with local leaders significantly enhances cooperation and transparency.
- Participatory methods build trust and generate rich local insights that are essential for successful mitigation.
- A combination of ecological and social data is vital for prioritizing interventions and ensuring sustainability.