

Second Quarter Project Report

Project Title: Evidence-Based Mitigation of Human–Elephant Conflict in Mbire District
Reporting Period: 01 July – 30 September 2025
Submitted by: Evangelista Vambe, Project Lead
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1. Executive Summary

The second quarter marked the transition from groundwork to practical implementation. Activities focused on preparing land, training farmers, distributing resources, and initiating chili-based interventions in Ward 2. The first chili buffer zones were successfully established, accompanied by community workshops on chili bomb preparation and sustainable farming practices. The project also procured high-quality chili seeds and engaged identified community leaders who will lead farmer groups, ensuring coordination and sustainability. Early signs indicate strong community participation and positive attitudes toward the interventions.

2. Key Achievements This Quarter

Activity	Description	Status
Land preparation	20 plots identified and prepared for chili cultivation in Ward 2, with soil tests confirming suitability.	Completed
Farmer training	Conducted three training sessions (approx. 75 farmers, with 45% women participants) covering organic pest control, crop rotation, efficient irrigation, and soil management.	Completed
Seed & resource distribution	Procured and distributed chili seeds, organic fertilizers, and basic tools to 60 participating households. Distribution was monitored to ensure transparency and inclusivity.	Completed
Chili bomb workshops	Two workshops conducted with 40 farmers to demonstrate safe preparation and use of chili bombs as elephant deterrents. Local authorities provided oversight.	Completed
Monitoring of chili buffers	Established initial buffer zones with 15 households planting chili around vulnerable crop fields. Regular visits were conducted to provide technical guidance.	In Progress

Activity	Description	Status
Community leadership	Identified and oriented 5 local leaders to coordinate farmer groups, support training follow-ups, and ensure accountability in implementation.	Completed
Community mapping updates	Updated conflict hotspot maps based on new farmer reports and elephant corridor observations.	In Progress

3. Challenges Encountered & Mitigation

Challenge	Mitigation Strategy
Delayed rains affecting germination	Promoted early irrigation methods and mulching to conserve soil moisture.
Limited farmer experience with chili	Extended training through farmer-to-farmer learning groups, supported by local facilitators.
High demand exceeding available seeds	Prioritized most affected households in Ward 2 and developed plan to scale in Q3 with new inputs.

4. Priorities for Next Quarter (Q3: October–December 2025)

- Monitor chili growth and document crop performance.
 - Scale chili buffer zones to an additional 20 households.
 - Conduct follow-up chili bomb workshops and evaluate effectiveness of first deployments.
 - Collect detailed HEC incident data before/after chili planting to track impact.
 - Strengthen farmer groups under identified leaders and provide leadership/record-keeping training.
 - Initiate discussions with local cooperatives for potential chili market linkages.
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5. Reflections and Lessons Learned

- Strong participation by women shows the value of inclusive approaches in livelihood-focused conservation projects.
- Combining chili farming with hands-on deterrent training (chili bombs) enhances farmer confidence and ownership.

- Identifying and empowering local leaders early builds accountability and long-term sustainability.
 - Regular technical support is critical in the early stages of chili farming to prevent dropouts.
 - Transparent resource procurement and distribution builds trust and credibility within the community.
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6. Conclusion

Quarter 2 delivered a successful transition from planning to field-level implementation. With farmer training, resource distribution, procurement of chili seeds, and the first chili buffer zones established, the project has taken significant steps toward reducing human-elephant conflict in Mbire District. The orientation of community leaders has further strengthened ownership and local capacity. The groundwork laid in this quarter will be crucial for scaling activities, monitoring effectiveness, and linking conservation outcomes to sustainable community livelihoods in the coming months.