



Darwin Initiative: Final Report

To be completed with reference to the “Writing a Darwin/IWT Report” Information Note:
(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/reporting-forms-change-request-forms-and-terms-and-conditions/>).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum** of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes)

Darwin Project Information

Project reference	26-001
Project title	Community livelihood and capacity support for securing Zimbabwe’s wetland biodiversity.
Country(ies)	Zimbabwe
Lead organisation	BirdLife Zimbabwe
Partner institution(s)	Chikukwa Ecological Land Use Community Trust (CELUCT), Zimbabwe AIDS Prevention Project- Regai Dzive Shiri (ZAPP-RDS) Trust, BirdLife International (BLI), Environmental Management Agency (EMA)
Darwin grant value	GBP295,610.00
Start/end dates of project	1 June 2019 to 31 March 2022
Project leader’s name	Togarasei Fakarayi
Project website/blog/social media	www.birdlifezimbabwe.org , https://www.facebook.com/BirdLifeZimbabwe twitter: @birdlifezim
Report author(s) and date	Togarasei Fakarayi, Fadzai Matsvimbo, Samuel Chimbarara, Proud Mazambara, Abel Mugwati; 25 June 2022

1 Project Summary

The Driefontein Grasslands is a Ramsar site and an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) that supports globally threatened bird species. It is the only remaining landscape in the country, where the three globally threatened (grassland specialists) Grey Crowned Crane (EN), Wattled Crane (VU) and Secretary Bird (VU) exist in the same area. The Driefontein Grasslands is characterised by a network of wetlands that provide habitat for biodiversity, cranes and important ecosystem services for the rural communities living in this area. Local communities have become increasingly dependent on the wetlands in this IBA. Despite rich biodiversity, Driefontein Grasslands has been under increasing pressure from anthropogenic activities that include wetland degradation through unsustainable agricultural practices, uncontrolled fires, and overgrazing. Areas where subsistence farming is taking place experienced increasing pressure on wetlands resulting in habitat loss for cranes. Poverty has been the main driver of habitat degradation in Driefontein Grasslands. The local communities in this biodiversity-rich area have limited resources to engage in alternative livelihood activities. Subsistence agriculture is the main activity practiced by rural communities in this IBA even though most of the land is not suitable for cultivation and most crops frequently fail. Local villagers also have limited capacity to engage in effective biodiversity monitoring. Balancing biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods is a

priority for securing the future of globally threatened species in this IBA. In 2010, BirdLife Zimbabwe (BLZ) developed a Crane Conservation Action Plan where most of these problems were identified. These problems were also identified through engagement with communities by BLZ between 2010 and 2018. An Environmental Management Plan for Driefontein Grasslands developed by Environmental Management Agency (EMA) in 2017 identified similar conservation challenges. This project provides options for alternative livelihoods to help reduce human pressure on wetlands while strengthening capacity of communities to manage land sustainably. The project sought to demonstrate viability of income generating livelihoods (bee keeping, poultry and pig production) that are not wetland dependent, while improving wetland habitats of globally threatened biodiversity for the benefit of people and biodiversity.

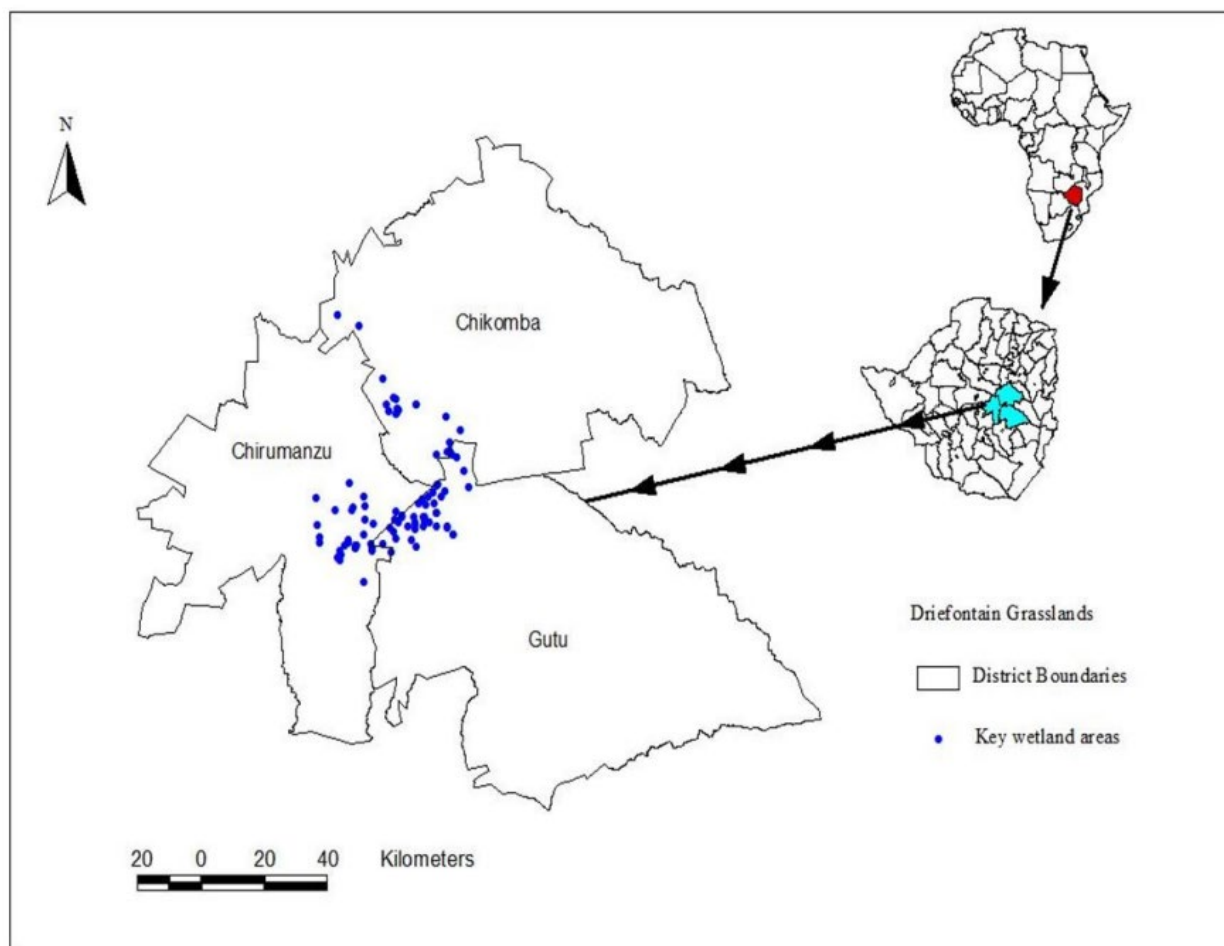


Fig.1. Location of Driefontein Grasslands

2 Project Partnerships

The project was implemented in partnership with CELUCT, ZAPP-RDS, EMA and BLI, with BirdLife Zimbabwe (BLZ) was the Lead organisation. One of stakeholders, Gutu Rural District Council (RDC) also provided significant contribution to this project. During project design, partners provided technical input to the development of project document where roles and responsibilities of each partner was defined. ZAPP-RDS was responsible for facilitating poultry and piggery project activities and creating market linkages for the poultry and piggery products. The role of CELUCT in the project was to support implementation of bee keeping including facilitating trainings in bee keeping and setting up of beehives. EMA provided technical assistance in wetland and fire management trainings, involved in community engagement on wetland biodiversity conservation, and provided a leading role in coordinating district and national wetlands committee meetings. EMA as a regulatory authority has vast experience on wetland and fire management. This was integrated well in this project. The regulatory authority brought national attention to the project through the media publicity. BLI was instrumental in providing guidance during project planning, implementation as well as sharing lessons learnt. The partners participated in the development of this final report.

During project implementation, the partners were engaged prior to implementation of activities and guidance was provided by BLZ, ensuring that they are on target in delivering their activities in the project. Over the three-year project period there has been shared knowledge among partners during project implementation. BirdLife Zimbabwe has also been instrumental in developing capacity of the local partners during project implementation. The partners got opportunity to learn especially through joint trainings and biodiversity monitoring activities. The joint implementation of some of the project activities brought a great impact on the ground through the diversified and converging ideas. This includes a joint [Leadership training](#) conducted by BLZ, ZAPP RDS and EMA

BirdLife Zimbabwe also worked closely with CELUCT on a bee keeping monitoring activities on the ground. Community engagement and habitat monitoring activities were done jointly with EMA and Gutu RDC. The collaboration was key especially where sensitive issues were also tackled during the process. BLZ, EMA, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) and local communities jointly conducted crane surveys during the project period.

Partnership and collaboration during the project brought in shared knowledge and skills. Engagement of partners during project implementation has been essential in maintaining partnership and ensuring achievement of the project targets. There was frequent communication with partners during the project, that helped track the project targets. In addition to partners engagement in the project, there was also support from other stakeholders in the project.

Major achievements in this partnership during the project include successful education and awareness on sustainable wetland management, fire management, establishment of three alternative livelihoods, stakeholder engagement on wetland biodiversity conservation at local, district and national levels, and sharing of lessons learnt from the project. Key lessons learnt from the partnership include the complementary role played by all partners in project implementation, sharing of new knowledge and ideas on cross cutting socio-economic and environmental issues affecting communities, and knowledge transfer across partners. Linkages between biodiversity conservation and community livelihood improvement was among the important lessons learnt. Diversified ideas from all the project partners brought in great strength in this collaboration. All project partners learnt from each other. For instance, BLZ and EMA shared knowledge on wetland biodiversity conservation, CELUCT brought in knowledge on bee keeping and value addition, while ZAPP-RDS brought some lessons on implementing group community livelihood projects and small-scale business entrepreneurship. The engagement of stakeholders at district and national level was significant due to a strong effort and voice on wetland biodiversity and community livelihood improvement issues brought in by the partners. This has led to successful delivery of this project.

BirdLife Zimbabwe and the partners managed to bring in the expertise from other key institutions such as the wildlife department, Forestry department, Agricultural department, and Women Affairs department. This enabled new and shared knowledge for advancing work of this project. In addition, BLZ brought in International Crane Foundation research associates who assisted with bioassessment of the aquatic resources within the Driefontein Grasslands ([Bioassessment Report](#)). The assessment was supporting wetland restoration work that took place during the project building up baseline data of aquatic resources at key wetland sites in the Driefontein Grasslands. The community representatives were directly involved in biodiversity monitoring activities working with BLZ, the government departments and other stakeholders who take part in the field activities. Relationship between communities and different stakeholders was strengthened during the project. The British High Commissions in Zimbabwe was issued with an [invitation](#) to the end of project and national workshop on lessons learnt.

Beyond project, the partners will maintain the relationship. BirdLife Zimbabwe has already built long-term working relationship with environmental and local authority departments. BLZ is partner in BLI, and this relationship is maintained. Good working and collaborative relationship established by BLZ with CELUCT and ZAPP-RDS will be maintained. There is great potential to collaborating with these partners in Driefontein Grasslands and other IBAs in the future.

3 Project Achievements

3.1 Outputs

Output 1

There was a significant improvement of wetland management in the Driefontein Grasslands because of this project. A coordinated approach for effective wetland management in this Ramsar site was realised with active participation of local communities, government, and civil society organisations. The maps showing key wetland sites ([wetland map](#)) and crane sightings developed and updated during the project period provide baseline data on wetlands. This data guides local decisions on wetland management. The wetland areas in the core crane breeding and foraging areas mapped in 2019 and updated in 2020, 2021 and 2022 captured data on crane sightings over the three years, guiding current and future programming for wetland biodiversity conservation in the Driefontein Grasslands. An area covering a total of 58,802.61 hectares was mapped. The maps show land cover categories of wetlands, grasslands, cultivated lands and forestry and crane distribution across this core area.

Active participation of local communities and stakeholders in wetland biodiversity conservation during this project was a positive development where co-management of the site was adopted for improved biodiversity conservation. Joint ground [surveys](#) of cranes conducted with key stakeholders established crane distribution and breeding data that help guide local decisions on sustainable wetland management. The local communities also gained skills in crane counting and monitoring, a development that also strengthened relationship for the co-existence of cranes and people.

The consultative meetings with District Environmental Officers and the local authorities initiated in 2019 paved way for the agreement on modalities for adhering to avoidance of cultivation of sensitive wetland areas. Local communities jointly engaged by BLZ, the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and Gutu RDC in 2020 formed part of follow-up to these consultative meetings. The process was successful and resulted in the development of local Environmental By-laws. These are measures put in place to protect wetlands and regulate human activities on sensitive parts of the wetlands ([Chinyaure By-laws](#), [Daviot By-Laws](#), [Markdale By-Laws](#), [Shashe By-Laws](#)).

The [wetland](#) and [fire](#) management trainings jointly facilitated by BLZ and EMA improved knowledge on habitat management among local communities. Eight separate trainings in wetland management were conducted with the four target villages where at least 172 people comprising of 109 females and 63 males were trained. There was active participation of local communities in sustainable wetland conservation. The four target villages were involved in wetland biodiversity conservation. In addition, at least four other non-livelihood beneficiary communities also got involved in sustainable wetland management through protecting seeps in their villages. Building of local capacity in sustainable wetland management yielded positive results in terms of bringing villagers into action as far as wetland management is concerned. Participatory wetland restoration that took place contributed to improved management of wetland habitats as main sources (seeps and soaks) of wetlands were protected. This approach also built a sense of ownership among local villagers who actively participated in this process. Following the trainings in wetland management, the target villages of Shashe, Markdale, Daviot and Chinyaure took a lead in identifying and protecting sensitive wetland sites (seeps). A total of 17 wetland sites covering at least 60 hectares were protected. Local Environmental By-laws developed ensured long term management and conservation of wetlands in the target villages. The By-laws developed by local villagers' guide management of wetlands at local level. Re-colonisation of more than 75% of the restored wetland sites is a positive pointer of improved habitat and indicator for increasing breeding pairs of cranes. At least 15 active breeding pairs recorded already indicated a positive change as compared to the 2018 baseline where less than 10 pairs were recorded. This represents a 50% increase in the number of breeding pairs during the project. The protected wetlands are monitored by local villagers with the support of By-laws that provide guidance in the management of such areas in the core area of the Driefontein Grasslands. This forms more than 10% of wetlands with improved management as compared to a baseline of 2018 where only 5 sites were under better management.

Eight one-day long joint trainings on fire management conducted by BLZ and EMA had a total of 180 people trained (98 females and 82 males). The participants to this training included boys and girls (19-25 years) constituted at least 15% of the total people trained. The outcome of the fire management trainings was construction of fireguards to prevent spread of fire in the Driefontein Grasslands. [Fireguards](#) constructed by local villagers had a combined total length of at least 33 km long in total with a 9m width in Shashe (7.6), Chinyaure (14.4km), Daviot (5km) and Markdale (6 km). Firefighting equipment in the form of fire beaters and fire knapsack provided were helpful in putting off fires where an outbreak occurs. There was a reduction of fires (by at least 40 % as compared to 2018 baseline) across the core foraging and breeding area within the Driefontein Grasslands. The quality of breeding habitat sites improved due to a reduction of fires in the area. A reduction in fires also contributed to an increase of breeding habitats and breeding pairs during this project.

Crane monitoring and ground surveys of cranes conducted during the period recorded an increase in the breeding pairs of cranes. Two ground surveys of cranes were conducted each year during the project period. In addition, main ground surveys, local communities through monitoring teams established continue monitor the cranes including breeding pairs and provide sighting data of birds to BLZ. Eleven of the 15 breeding sites recorded successful breeding by both Grey Crowned and Wattled Cranes. These 11 successful breeding pairs (5 Wattled Crane and 6 Grey Crowned Cranes) produced chicks in 2020 and 2021.

A total of 33 people (12 females and 21 males) from the four target villages and two nearby villages were trained in IBA monitoring between 2019 and 2021 ([IBA training report](#)). The people trained included the youth who constituted 53%. They are involved in site monitoring using the IBA monitoring framework, contributing to monitoring data through citizen science ([Completed IBA monitoring form](#)). Improved knowledge on the application of IBA monitoring framework and establishment of IBA monitoring teams formed the main output of the training. The first IBA monitoring forms completed by these teams of local custodians were received by BLZ in December 2020 and January 2021.

Output 2:

A baseline survey and vulnerability assessment on household incomes conducted in Driefontein Grasslands in the first year of the project identified sources of livelihoods and incomes for the rural villages in the project area. This survey carried out by BLZ and CELUCT with input from ZAPP-RDS across the four target communities also confirmed loss of livestock by communities due to outbreak of a tick-borne disease (Theileriosis) between 2018 and 2019 that killed cattle. This was part of sources of livelihood lost by communities. An average monthly household income of less than USD50 per month was recorded for most of the villagers.

The three alternative livelihood options established at Shashe, Chinyaure, Daviot and Markdale Villages have been adopted by local villagers, benefitting at least 190 households in the Driefontein Grasslands. The IGAs beneficiaries include orphans (9%), people living with disability (10%), and other vulnerable households (19%) such as female headed households, the household taking care of the sick and elderly people ([Chinyaure Bee keeping Beneficiaries](#), [Daviot Piggery Beneficiaries](#), [Markdale Poultry Beneficiaries](#), [Shashe Poultry Beneficiaries](#)). These livelihoods improved lives of communities through income generation and enhanced resilience of the families to changing climate and environments.

Trainings on IGAs successfully conducted at four target villages developed knowledge and skills among the rural villagers in Driefontein for running and managing alternative livelihoods. The villagers at Shashe and Markdale trained by ZAPP-RDS in poultry production in 2019 and 2020 gained practical skills for poultry production ([Training reports](#), [Markdale Training report](#)). A total of 45 villagers comprising of 23 females and 22 males were trained at Shashe. At Markdale a total of 42 villagers (23 females and 19 males) were trained. Training in pig production conducted at Daviot Village trained a total of 42 people (23 females and 19 males). Women constituted the greatest percentage (at least 50%) of the trained villagers. Follow-up refresher meetings conducted by ZAPP-RDS with assistance of BLZ in 2021 strengthened skills and knowledge among the target villagers. During trainings and meetings vulnerable people who included people living with disability participated in the IGAs trainings. The local communities adopted the livelihood activities where income is being generated. Sales of 200 and 100 broilers (@USD6

per chicken) for Shashe and Markdale groups respectively are being realised for every 6-8 weeks. A total of 90 and 40 households are benefitting from poultry and piggery activities respectively. The communities benefitted in the form cash dividends, kitchen utensils and groceries ([Poultry proceeds](#), [Groceries bought from money raised from poultry](#)). A total of USD1, 901 was generated from piggery production, and the other income generated was ploughed back to production. Additional income also generated from the nutrition gardens around the poultry and piggery project sites help improve livelihoods. Through trainings in financial literacy, villagers have adopted the asset building concept where individual households (at least 15) are also producing broilers at their homestead thus enhancing income and helping the group to secure bigger markets. This is a pointer for transformation to alternative livelihood sources by the rural villagers in the Driefontein Grasslands.

Three two-day trainings on bee keeping conducted by CELUCT in Chinyaure Community in 2019, 2020 and 2021 developed new knowledge and skills on bee keeping among local villagers. The trainings were facilitated by CELUCT with assistance from BLZ. The first training on bee keeping conducted in September 2019 and developed capacity in bee keeping of 95 people. These comprised of 53 women and 42 men who became beekeepers and looking after the miombo woodlands where bee keeping is taking place. The second training ([Bee keeping training report](#)) conducted in December 2019 was attended by a total of 84 people (45 females, 39 males) and third training conducted in February 2020 was attended by 68 villagers (36 females and 32 males). Women constituted more than 50% of participants from these trainings. Three follow-up monitoring meetings with the beekeepers conducted by CELUCT in 2021 and early 2022 strengthened skills, knowledge among the villagers, and provide further guidance to run bee keeping as a business. The project ensured active participation of women in processes of bee keeping ([women participation-Bee keeping](#)). The villagers (68 households) adopted beekeeping project as a small-scale business. Two bee apiaries each with a total of 322 bee hives were established ([One of the bee apiaries in Chinyaure](#)). More than 80 beehives have been colonised with a harvest of 2,048 kg raw honey generated income.

A total of 37 people from the four target villages have gone through a one-day training on small scale business enterprise and marketing. People selected for this training also trained other people at their respecting groups as well as taking a leading role in running the IGAs as small-scale businesses. Business plans for the pig and poultry production developed for the livelihood activities provide guidance for running the IGAs ([Business plan](#)). The Poultry groups (Shashe and Markdale) registered with the Zimbabwe Poultry Association (ZPA) and Daviot piggery group registered with the Pig Producers Association (PPAZ) of Zimbabwe have access to marketing information. These groups gained access to market linkages and benefit the technical advice through information shared regularly with them. Regular updates on stockfeed, markets and livestock health technical advice are communicated to these poultry and piggery groups in Driefontein Grasslands.

Paddocks to control grazing were established at Shashe, Chinyaure and Markdale Villages. A total area of 1,950 ha covered by these paddocks support grazing lands for the livestock. Inside the paddocks are some of the seeps that are protected with improved grazing land sustained by the wetland ecosystem.

Output 3

The project managed to promote mainstreaming of the implementation of Driefontein Environmental Management Plan (EMP) into government and civil society operation strategies for the benefit of communities and biodiversity conservation. Awareness about the Driefontein EMP was raised across the three districts of Chikomba, Chirumanzu and Gutu that share the Driefontein Grasslands Ramsar site. Three meetings organised jointly by BLZ and EMA conducted with each district influenced mainstreaming of the Driefontein EMP into district plans ([District meeting report-Chikomba](#)). Engagements done during district meetings brought together government and civil society stakeholders' where strategies for mainstreaming Driefontein EMP were discussed, action plans developed and adopted at district level ([District meeting report - Chirumanzu](#), [District meeting report - Gutu](#)). The senior district Officials who included the District Development Coordinator and Senior members of the District Councils visited the wetlands site where they appreciated a need for action to improve wetland conservation in the Driefontein

Ramsar site. In addition, traditional leaders, District Environmental Officers, Gender and Women Affairs department and environmental civil society organisations were successfully engaged during the district meetings. The meetings deliberations underscored a need for positive actions towards wetland biodiversity conservation and enhanced coordination towards environmental management at district level. The subject of wetland biodiversity conservation was well received by the various district stakeholders. Findings from the meetings indicated that most people had limited knowledge of threatened birds and wetlands habitats as well as knowledge on the role of wetland ecosystems in climate change regulation. After the engagements, most government and civil society stakeholders who participated in meetings expressed great appreciation to conservation of wetlands and indicator wetland flagship bird species. Most stakeholders indicated potential for developing an ecotourism project in the Driefontein Grasslands. Stakeholders also expressed great support to the biodiversity conservation and community livelihood model implemented by BLZ and its partners as it recognised the community needs in addressing biodiversity conservation. This aligns with the district development plans that feed into Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 1(2021-2025) (NDS1), a step towards attaining vision 2030.

Participation of BLZ in Gutu Rural District Council environmental committee meetings held in July 2020, September 2021 and March 2022 created opportunity for knowledge transfer on the Driefontein EMP and project model. This project provided input to the environmental resolutions at district level, influencing mainstreaming of wetland conservation strategies in the Driefontein EMP into district plans.

These meetings became innovation platforms as stakeholders brainstormed and came-up with new ways of tackling the threats to wetlands.

Engagements at national level was done through the National Wetlands Committee meetings. Key measures for the implementation of the Driefontein EMP set up was the use of the district structures for ground implementation of wetland conservation activities coordinated by the Environmental Management Agency. The project contributed to the influence for the development of national wetlands guidelines spearheaded by the environmental department. Input provided by BLZ and its stakeholders to the development of these guidelines was guided and informed by the outcome of this project.

One of the key problems encountered was delays in holding national and district meetings during covid-19. At national level, a virtual meeting was organised and successfully conducted. At district level, holding virtual meeting was not possible as some stakeholders had no access to internet when working from home. However, when physical meetings resumed, BLZ and EMA managed to organise these meetings. This was possible due to willingness of stakeholders to participate in these meetings.

Output 4

The lessons learnt in integrated wetland management for livelihood and biodiversity from this project was shared widely at national and regional levels. These lessons shared through national television, radio and print media have reached millions of people across the country. In 2021 and 2022, the subject of wetland conservation and livelihood improvement was shared during and soon after World Wetlands Day commemorations of 2 February. This draws attention of most people across the country and the region. Short documentaries produced also raised awareness about the Driefontein Grasslands and share some important lessons on wetland management by communities and ongoing interventions to save wetlands ([video of interventions](#)).

The meetings conducted at both district and national levels with government and civil society stakeholders formed part of lessons learnt sharing ([presentation material](#)). Feedback received from stakeholders on pertinent issues emerged from the project was positive. The lessons learnt sharing through meetings was a development that took the profile of wetland biodiversity conservation integrated into sustainable community livelihood to higher platforms at both district and national levels. The lessons learnt from this project have been integrated into government and civil society organisations operational strategies through adoption by the stakeholders. Furthermore, stakeholders also got opportunity to provide input into the lessons learnt during

these meetings. The input gathered was integrated into a lesson learned booklet that was developed by BirdLife Zimbabwe for the stakeholders and the development partners.

An article about this project developed in September 2021 and published online in the BirdLife Zimbabwe's Newsletter the Babbler (issue 162) shared information about project interventions in the Driefontein Grasslands. A significant number of people in Zimbabwe and beyond were reached through this Babbler article. A scientific paper capturing some lessons developed during the project is awaiting printing and expected to reach many scientists and conservation practitioners across the world ([scientific paper](#)).

Lessons learnt booklets developed are expected to reach local, district and national stakeholders. The Good Practice Handbook developed will share some lessons learnt, reaching out to at least 100 people. The learning and exchange visit to Njovo wetlands reached out to more than 80 people who participated and exchanged ideas on wetland management and sustainable livelihoods. A total of 32 villagers, 6 district stakeholders and one provincial stakeholder participated in the lessons learnt sharing exchange visit ([Learning and exchange visit report](#)). The lessons learnt mainly on wetland management, water harvesting, bee keeping, poultry and horticultural activities were also informative to district decision makers. This helped to influence local environmental decisions. The knowledge transfer by Driefontein community and stakeholders to Njovo communities on integrating wetland biodiversity and community livelihoods was well received by Njovo stakeholders.

The national workshop on lessons learnt conducted in March 2022 and attended by 23 people was successful ([Lessons learnt workshop report](#)). Lessons learnt from this project were shared with 11 stakeholders who participated in the meeting.

3.2 Outcome

The alternative income-generating activities established in the core crane breeding and foraging area of the Driefontein Grasslands were adopted by the four target villages of Chinyaure, Daviot, Markdale and Shashe (evidence provided in section 3.1). The income-generating project activities namely poultry and [pig](#) production, and bee keeping were successfully established in the Driefontein Grasslands ([End of project evaluation report](#)). These IGAs have improved livelihood of communities in terms of sending their children to school, household utensils, groceries, and food from the nutrition gardens (evidence provided in section 3.1). The project put in place poultry and piggery infrastructure where the communities have also added nutrition gardens to fully utilise available water and manure from poultry and pig to horticulture at the livelihood sites that are located outside wetlands ([integrated poultry and horticulture](#)). Additional income generated from the nutrition gardens further improves livelihood of the communities as well as demonstrated good agricultural practises outside wetlands. At least 190 households are benefiting from the income generating activities with more than 50% of beneficiaries being women (evidence provided in section 3.1). There was motivation among villagers in the Driefontein Grasslands who became actively involved in wetland biodiversity conservation monitoring resulting from the livelihood benefits realised by the communities.

The capacity building in sustainable wetland management, fire management and IBA monitoring conducted with villagers improved hands on skills in wetland biodiversity conservation (evidence in section 3.1) Following the capacity building, local villagers took a lead in identifying and protecting main sources of wetlands (seeps) that has improved wetlands in the Driefontein Grasslands. Most villagers stopped wetland cultivation and started practising sustainable activities following the education and training during the project. This resulted in a reduction of pressure on wetlands due to behaviour change and adoption of alternative livelihoods. An area of more than 60ha of protected wetlands is managed by the local communities responded positively and provided ecosystem benefits to communities in the form of water provisioning for livestock and improving grazing for cattle, sheep and goats ([downstream of one of the restored wetlands](#)). The protected wetlands also provide conducive breeding sites for cranes, thereby supporting conservation of threatened bird species in the Driefontein Grasslands. 15 out of 17 of the protected sensitive wetland sites were colonised by the breeding pairs of either Grey crowned Cranes or the Wattled Cranes ([one of the restored wetland sites recolonised by cranes](#)). In addition, distribution of crane sightings including breeding pairs indicates improved management of wetland habitats in the area ([Crane sightings distribution map](#)). This was a pointer for improving

biodiversity following the project interventions. An increase of the number of breeding pairs from 10 to 15 pairs as compared to 2018 baseline indicated positive response of wetlands to improved management practices within the Driefontein Grasslands.

Citizen science among local people enhanced through the IBA monitoring trainings (evidence provided in section 3.1) enable active participation of communities in IBA monitoring. The villagers contributed biodiversity monitoring data through the IBA monitoring framework (evidence provided in section 3.1), adding their voice to the body of scientific knowledge that also informs policy decisions. Active participation of government, civil society stakeholders and communities in trainings and lessons learnt sharing workshops and meetings contributed to a success in mainstreaming the Driefontein EMP into local plans (evidence provided in section 3.1). The stakeholders reached and engaged during the project include a Member of Parliament engaged at district and community level where lessons from this project were shared with him. The project model was well received by the stakeholders, and it is building into the ongoing conservation and developmental programmes from district to national level and national level. The lessons and information gathered from this project also fed into the Ramsar Information Sheet for Zimbabwe updated in early 2022 with active participation and input from BirdLife Zimbabwe.

3.3 Monitoring of assumptions

Outcome Assumptions

Assumption 1: Government field extension officers remain committed in providing field technical assistance required by the communities on livelihood initiatives and site monitoring.

Comments

There has been active participation of government field extension officers in carrying out our activities during the project. These included participation of Officers from the local authority, an agency responsible for environment, agricultural and forestry departments. They played a role of providing technical assistance required by the communities especially on poultry, piggery and bee keeping activities. EMA has been very instrumental in providing technical assistance in site monitoring. The assumption on government commitment to providing technical assistance to this project therefore remained true.

Assumption 2: Income generating activities remain viable with no unforeseen setbacks

Comments

With regards to income generating activities, covid-19 challenges created a setback on this aspect. There were restrictions in terms of access to markets due to lock downs across the country hence the assumption changed. The project met these changes through focusing on local markets that enabled sales to take place. The poultry groups worked with a manageable scale of production. Demand for food (pork, chicken) is still there supporting the IGAs as viable alternatives.

Assumption 3: Extreme drought conditions are not experienced during the project to the extent of affecting water levels including IGAs.

Comments

Dry spells have been experienced during the first year of the project and had negative effects on bee colonies. This slowed down the bee keeping income generation activity. Effective monitoring of the bee keeping activities took place to ensure that the available bee colonies will be captured for the bee keeping in the second and third years of the project. In 2020-2021 season, the Driefontein area received normal to above normal rains. With regards to wetlands, they recharged well in the last raining season and the assumption still holds true ([restored wetland](#)). The above normal rains demonstrated the need to have alternative livelihoods as the fields/gardens within or close to wetlands were flooded with no viable produce.

Output Assumptions

Output 1 Assumption: People are willing to invest part of their time and adopt use of technology in species and habitat monitoring.

Comments: There were no changes to this assumption during the project. Local villagers actively participated in species and habitat monitoring especially through IBA monitoring and participatory crane surveys. Members of the community that took part in the crane surveys were taught how to use GPS units to record locations.

Output 2 Assumption: Willingness of women to take a leading role in biodiversity monitoring and livelihood business enterprise.

Comments: There has been active participation of women in both livelihood and biodiversity monitoring, hence there were no changes to this assumption. In 2020, 37% of participants of the IBA training were women ([women participation in poultry](#), [women and youth participation in IBA training](#)). All committees for the livelihood initiatives have mixed gender (men and women). The livelihood groups at Markdale and Daviot Villages were led by women. Women also took a leading role in managing one of the bee apiaries in Chinyure Village.

Output 3 Assumption: Stakeholders at national level are willing to participate in Driefontein EMP implementation meetings.

Comments: The national level stakeholders were engaged and participated in the National Wetlands Committee meetings where implementation of the Driefontein EMP was discussed, and guidance provided.

Output 4 Assumption: SSG members have interest for exchange and learning visit.

Comments: There were no changes to this assumption. The exchange and learning visit conducted in March 2022 was oversubscribed with SSG members participated, adopted skills and knowledge gained from this exchange and learning visit ([Participant list exchange visit](#)).

3.4 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty alleviation

Project Impact: Driefontein Grasslands Ramsar site in Zimbabwe is managed to enhance community livelihoods and conserve wetland habitat for endangered biodiversity informing wider wetland management in Zimbabwe and beyond.

Contribution of project to higher-level impact on biodiversity

The project managed to connect people living in Driefontein Grasslands and biodiversity. It effectively contributed towards attaining higher-level impact on biodiversity conservation through capacity building of local villagers, participatory monitoring of biodiversity, habitat restoration, and stakeholder engagement. The capacity building conducted during the project developed hands-on experience among rural villagers on improving biodiversity conservation. Currently more than 190 villagers are actively involved in wetland biodiversity management and engage in environmental-friendly practices for the benefit of ecosystems, people, and biodiversity. The communities have realised benefits from biodiversity following new knowledge and skills gained from the trainings (evidence provided in section 3.1). Enhanced citizen science resulted in active participation of 33 villagers in IBA monitoring contributing current data on cranes sightings, threats, habitat condition and conservation interventions that are taking place (evidence provided in section 3.1). A network of local custodians established across key wetland areas play a significant role in contributing to current and future data of crane sightings. Training of local people conducted in Driefontein Grasslands improved skills among local custodians who are actively participating in crane conservation.

The protected wetlands and conservation measures put in place in the form of By-laws at site level contribute to improved management of the wetland sites (evidence provided in section 3.1). Recolonisation of 15 restored wetland sites is an indication of positive response of wetland habitat to improved management by the communities. This contributes towards improved biodiversity conservation. At district level, there was attention on the need for wetland conservation drawn by the stakeholders. The three districts that are sharing the Driefontein Ramsar site are already mainstreaming wetlands into district plans ([Opening remarks at District](#)

[meeting- Chikomba](#)). Participation of traditional chiefs at meetings that were jointly organised by BLZ and EMA at district level is an indication of commitment of high-level leadership at community level into wetland biodiversity conservation.

Data on crane census established from the 6 ground surveys conducted during the project provide information that guide current and future conservation of wetland biodiversity in the Driefontein Grasslands. The firefighting teams established, and supply of firefighting equipment are crucial in habitat protection for improved biodiversity ([firefighting equipment](#)).

The project contributed to the implementation of the District Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) in that the action plan requires the Local Authority to mainstream wetland conservation in all developmental issues hence the project implementation went a long way in ensuring sustainable utilisation and conservation of wetlands.

Contribution of project to higher-level impact on human development and well-being (poverty alleviation).

The project has improved the lives of the families of project beneficiaries by offering alternative sources of livelihoods which include poultry production, piggery and apiculture that has enhanced income and resilience for families, a development that has seen caregivers being better able to meet the immediate needs of children in their care such as school fees, food and the cost of medical appointments. Beside income, the villagers are getting cheap protein source from chicken meat which has also helped to improve the nutrition for these families through share out at each production cycle. Community members are also accessing broilers near their homes and increasing the size of business of the local customers. Sharing of groceries and household utensils (proceeds from the livelihood) has been a development that motivated the group members and enhance group cohesion (evidence provided in section 3.1). The groceries and utensils improved wellbeing of the beneficiaries.

Through trainings in financial literacy, families have adopted the asset building concept where group members are also producing broilers at their homestead thus enhancing income and helping the group to secure bigger markets as they sell their products as a group and benefit from economies of scale to transport their produce to distant markets. Group has been capacitated with skills to produce own farm feeds thus reducing cost of buying stock feed.

The communities from Markdale and Daviot Villages are benefitting from nutrition gardens established on site, improving their nutrition and income for the communities. These are contributing towards poverty alleviation. Out grower schemes on poultry production realised at Shashe and Markdale is another pointer for adoption of the project model at household level and increasing sources of income for poverty alleviation. The knowledge gained from this project has also contributed to human development in terms of running small-scale business enterprises.

4 Contribution to Darwin Initiative Programme Objectives

4.1 Contribution to Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

The SDGs relevant to this project are SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). There was an investment in inclusive and sustainable rural transformation through livelihood infrastructure development and resources provided under this project. While poverty is often the main driver of food insecurity and malnutrition, hunger and malnutrition also result in the inability to escape poverty. This project contributed to the delivery of these three SDGs through the establishment of the income generating projects for the rural communities living in Driefontein Grasslands. The alternative sources of income established have promoted prosperity, advance food security and nutrition among the rural communities in the Driefontein Grasslands. The IGAs are delivering direct income, employment opportunities at a small scale and environmental benefits. Environmentally friendly agricultural activities and alternative sources of income established are key in eradicating hunger. These investments targeted at rural people are needed not only to ensure no one is left behind, but also to unlock the catalytic role that inclusive rural transformation has been shown to play in reducing and eradicating poverty and hunger. The communities adopted these alternative livelihoods that help improve food securing thereby reducing hunger. This project has increased levels of both direct and

indirect investment to the Driefontein rural villagers as well as strengthening their own capacity to invest.

These communities have already attained assets from the income generating activities and there is potential to attain more assets, thereby reducing poverty among villagers. Through this project the small holder subsistence farmers in Driefontein have been connected to markets integrated into dynamic supply chains to maximise impact on SDG 1 and 2.

The linkages of community livelihood improvement with sustainable wetland management reduced pressure on wetlands. This contributed to attainment of Goal 15. Furthermore, community and stakeholder involvement in wetland biodiversity conservation contributed to improved management of biodiversity. Capacity building conducted during the project also contributes to Goal 15. There was a reduction of threats such as fires, wetland cultivation in this IBA due to enhanced awareness and training in crane and wetland conservation.

4.2 Project support to the Conventions or Treaties (e.g. CBD, Nagoya Protocol, ITPGRFA, CITES, Ramsar, CMS, UNFCCC)

The project contributed to meeting Aichi target 10 of the CBD that promotes prevention of the loss of known threatened species and improve and sustain conservation status of these species particularly of those most in decline or endangered species by 2020. This project supported conservation of the Grey Crowned Cranes (an endangered bird species), Wattled Crane (Vulnerable), the Secretary Bird (Endangered) as well as many other 'Specially Protected Bird' species under the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975. Sustainable wetland management promoted in this project and community empowerment and engagement in biodiversity conservation support improvement of critical habitats in the Driefontein Grasslands landscape that are used by threatened species.

This project contributed to the objectives of the CBD under articles 6, 8 and 13. At national level, the project contributed to implementation of the Zimbabwe's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) developed under the framework of the CBD. The Zimbabwe NBSAP 2014 promotes the integration of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in sectoral plans and programmes. This project contributed to achievement of National Biodiversity Targets 1, 3, 12, 13 and 16 of the NBSAP through capacity building of communities in biodiversity conservation, enhancing citizen science, and support of community-based enterprises.

Under the Ramsar Convention, this project supported implementation of the Driefontein Environmental Management Plan, a plan that was developed to support implementation of this Convention. The districts and national engagement on wetland management and biodiversity conservation contributed to meeting obligations of the Ramsar Convention.

4.3 Project support to poverty alleviation

The three income generating project activities namely poultry, bee keeping, and pig production contributed to improved livelihoods of communities in the Driefontein Grasslands. The community members from Chinyaure, Daviot, Markdale and Shashe villages in Driefontein Grasslands were empowered with skills on alternative sources of livelihoods that are improving the lives of the project members by enhancing household food security, income, nutrition as well as creating employment for the local community overtime. The participation of the women in the project has seen women occupying leadership position and this has helped address gender disparities. Women are also contributing to the wellbeing of their families through income from the project as well as building self-esteem as a result increased economic opportunities from the project proceeds. The income generated benefited communities in the form of cash, groceries, kitchen utensils, meat, and honey (evidence provided in section 3.1). The project beneficiaries included people living with disability, female headed households, and the households taking care of elderly and sick people (evidence in section 3.1). The beneficiaries are using part of the income to pay school fees for their children, buy food and other basic needs.

4.4 Gender equality

Direct gender impacts

This project has included women, men, boys and girls, and people living with disability in the fire, wetland management, IGA and IBA monitoring trainings. Women have also assumed leadership

positions during the project. For instance, the main Group Coordinator at Markdale Village is a woman and is also seconded by a woman. At both Shashe and Markdale Villages, women also held positions of treasurer where they were empowered in financial management. In Chinyaure bee keeping activities, women also have strong positions of vice chairpersons and secretary. There has been active participation of women in apiary monitoring (evidence provided in section 3.1) where women gained skills in bee keeping. Before the project, such activities were dominantly contacted by men. More than 50% of livelihood beneficiaries are women.

Training on financial literacy and enterprise skills training has helped the women to identify potential income generating activities within their environment a development that has seen women venturing into side-line projects such as market gardening and poultry keeping which has increased household income for these families. Active participation of young boys and girls, men, and women in IBA monitoring ([IBA training participants-Daviot and Markdale](#)) wetland restoration activities ([different gender groups in wetland identification](#)), and fire management was a pointer to gender balance in this project.

Project beneficiaries included people living with disability and Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC), widowed, and elderly. During community meetings informal discussions conducted with people living with disability and OVC helped to capture their views that were then incorporated into project programming. Women were also given space to discuss during meetings to ensuring that they put across their views freely. Women participated in all the project activities during the project with good representation in the project structures at each group.

4.5 Programme indicators

- **Did the project lead to greater representation of local poor people in management structures of biodiversity?**

Yes, the local poor people were directly involved in management structures of biodiversity. The villagers from the four target villages formed Local Conservation Groups (voluntary community members) who are recognised and work closely with the environmental government departments and civil society organisations in driving biodiversity conservation agenda in the Driefontein Grasslands.

- **Were any management plans for biodiversity developed and were these formally accepted?**

By-laws developed by the local communities' form part of the management plans for wetland biodiversity conservation. These were formally presented at district level and endorsed by the district authorities. They became effective on 23 September 2021 and implemented at site level.

- **Were they participatory in nature or were they 'top-down'? How well represented are the local poor including women, in any proposed management structures?**

The Poultry, Piggery and Bee keeping groups have committees in place that are helping to run the project. These committees are made up of the local rural villagers who are benefiting from the project. Women are represented in these committees and their voices are respected.

- **How did the project positively influence household (HH) income and how many HHs saw an increase?**

The three alternative livelihoods established, add on in the form of nutrition gardens and out grower schemes set up have increased household incomes. A total of 190 HHs have their income increased because of this project.

- **How much did their HH income increase (e.g. x% above baseline, x% above national average)? How was this measured?**

The HHs incomes from poultry and bee keeping increased by at least 50% as compared to 2018 baseline. Percentage increase of income generated from piggery is still below 50% compared to 2018 baseline. The livelihood data was collected during project monitoring.

4.6 Transfer of knowledge

This project transferred knowledge through district and notational wetlands committee meetings conducted with stakeholders. New knowledge generated from this project was shared with stakeholders who were mainly environmental practitioners and decision makers. The knowledge shared through media (national television and radio) reaching out to millions of people. There was also local-local knowledge sharing among communities that helped improved local decisions by the communities. Through exchange visit, knowledge was also transferred to different communities and stakeholders.

4.7 Capacity building

BLZ staff has been invited and present the project at national wetlands committee meetings as well as provide expertise on sustainable management of Ramsar sites. BLZ also exhibited and actively participated at the National World Wetlands Day commemoration in February 2022.

5 Sustainability and Legacy

Wetland protection, especially for water provisioning. After some of the wetland seeps were protected and restored, water flowed abundantly. Given how rains have been erratic in the last few seasons, the local people are likely to look after the same wetlands to secure water availability.

The local government stakeholders will continue providing technical support to the communities' post funding. These stakeholders have been involved during implementation of this project and, therefore, they will continue building up the project. Birdlife Zimbabwe will continue to work with the Local Conservation Groups, government stakeholders and other civil society organisation in mobilizing more resources to scale-up this project. A steering committee established will continue to oversee the project and provide technical guidance.

Three closes out meetings conducted with communities using the technical support visit approach at each project site emphasizing on the project close out by end of March 2022, project plan on optimum scale of production, market mapping in the context of covid and continued interaction with their producers' associations as well as interacting line ministries would ensure sustainability of the project after close out. The ongoing income generating activities will continue empowering communities, positioning them to a strong voice in biodiversity conservation. Booklets on lessons learnt and good management practice produced will continue provide guidance beyond project funding and form part of project sustainability.

The planned exit strategy is still valid. Involvement of all key stakeholders from national to local level strengthened this year indicate stakeholder support beyond project period. Empowering of local communities who include Local Conservation Groups during this project ensures a sustained legacy of the project outcome.

6 Lessons learned

The partnerships and collaboration during the project implementation resulted in shared skills and knowledge that were required for the delivery of this project. However, ensuring a smooth interface among partners and cultivating partnership take time. It would be nice to have some

training sessions for all partners to strengthen relationships, develop knowledge, enhance skills among staff and strengthen programming in the project in line with changing environments. It must also be noted that building and strengthening partnerships is time intensive, which was not fully included in the project planning. This is one area that may need more time set aside in subsequent projects

Involvement of key stakeholders at all stages of project implementation has been key steps to ensuring success of this project. Throughout its implementation, the project involved key stakeholders at both planning and implementation of the project. Two local government departments act as the backbone of the project at all levels. Establishing good governance among community groups, ensuring transparency, accountability and building capacity of villagers with active participation of women is one of the important lessons learned. It is essential to have functioning committees within the groups who spearhead project activities including post project funding. The committee should work closely with the other structural arrangements with the community for harmonisation of environmental and developmental programmes in the entire area.

Engagement of district stakeholders in mainstreaming Driefontein Environmental Management Plan (EMP) into district plans was crucial in driving the wetland biodiversity conservation agenda at district level. Most stakeholders expressed interest in wetland conservation. However, organising various field visits to the wetland areas would have exposed most of the district stakeholders to challenges faced and potential opportunities at the project site, to inform decision at district level.

The project needs a constant monitoring and evaluation of activities, progress and review work plans and impact.

Community ownership and commitment was enhanced through their activity involvement of the villagers from the early stages of planning and project implementation. Women and youth groups played an important role in planning and knowledge transfer. Involving people living with disability has been an important aspect of empowering disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of people in wetland biodiversity conservation.

Project activities for livelihood improvements play a key role in connecting people and biodiversity. Upon realising benefits from livelihoods, there was motivation among most villagers who took an active role in reducing threats such as fires, wetland cultivation and direct disturbances to biodiversity. However, running a business venture as a group in a community need a lot of time. There is also a need to manage the crisis of expectations. Women led group at Markdale Village was excellent indicating the active role of women in small-scale business management and biodiversity conservation. Creating partnerships between the private sector and the communities would be much helpful in commercialising the livelihood ventures to realise great income from these interventions

Awareness raising and consistent community engagement has been successful in enlisting communities to agree to protect sensitive wetlands. Positive response realised from the initial protected sites motivated other villagers to come onboard to protection of sensitive wetlands. They realised the benefits in the form of water provisioning and good grazing lands resulted from the downstream of a protected land. Through knowledge and skills transfer on biodiversity conservation of wetlands, the communities of Shashe, Chinyaure, Daviot and Markdale have managed to establish a sustainable co-existence between land for agriculture and the globally threatened species through venturing in alternative sources of sustainable livelihoods.

In terms of capacity development, the fact that various women, men, boys and girls have been trained in wetland and fire management, poultry and pig production, bee keeping and IBA monitoring, and many people participated in project activities is in itself an incredible legacy into the future. Capacity building and community involvement in decision making process in project implementation ensures members taking ownership of the project. For example, Shashe and Markdale projects have managed to produce more than 17 cycles of broiler during the project which clear evidence of buy in and ownership of the project.

Addressing rural poverty and environmental degradation require a holistic, multidisciplinary approach and understanding of gender to achieve successful sustained results. In this project conservation efforts promoted active participation of women in both livelihood and wetland

conservation. Efforts in this project have also recognised and emphasised on the link between wetland biodiversity conservation and community livelihood improvement. This created direct effects on the ability of rural men and women to pursue alternative livelihoods and reducing dependency on wetlands. However, future conservation programmes should continue put great emphasis on the nexus between biodiversity conservation and community livelihood improvement to ensure long-term biodiversity conservation with diverse benefits to society.

6.1 Monitoring and evaluation

This project was implemented as per the initial design. There were minor changes on shifting delivery of the project target without necessarily changing the project design and targets. The monitoring and evaluation of the project was guided by the project log frame as per initial design. The use of log frame indicators in monitoring the project was useful to project Lead and the partners. The M & E system was applied as per plan where feedback on this project was drawn based on vertical and horizontal indicators. Through the M & E system the partners, stakeholders and communities were able to get feedback about the project as well as forming part of the resource persons during the M & E process. Flow of information from all sides was helpful in establishing useful feedback in this project.

External project evaluation was conducted, and a report produced. Key findings from the external evaluation include the success of the project in delivering both biodiversity and community livelihood targets. Information gathered during the external evaluation revealed active participation of women in the project. The report also acknowledged the partnership among civil society organisations, government stakeholders and communities leading to the delivery of the project. However, the report noted under staff in this project considering the deliverables of the project. Post project funding, the external evaluation report emphasised on the need to continuous support of government extension officers working with Site Support Group in Driefontein to help provide technical expertise and monitor project activities. The report also recommended for the need to scaling-up the livelihood activities to other non-beneficiary villages.

6.2 Actions taken in response to annual report reviews

The project team has responded to all the issues raised in the reviews of our annual report. The feedback from the reviewers was shared and discussed with partners and other key stakeholders. This was helpful as it informed the project implementation. Only few issues that sought further details were raised by the reviewers. These issues raised were addressed in the next annual reports and/or the final report as indicated by the reviewers.

7 Darwin identity

The Darwin Initiative logo was used on a banner developed for the project. This banner has been used in several meetings and events including the national World Wetlands Day commemoration and the national lessons learnt workshop conducted in Harare ([Participants-lessons learnt workshop](#)). The Darwin Initiative logo was also used on the participant lists for community, district, and national wetlands committee meetings, on PowerPoint presentations and billboards at project sites ([Billboard](#)). This helped publicise and promoted the Darwin Initiative projects.

During the project, the Darwin Initiative funded project in Driefontein Grasslands was recognised as a distinct project as it was the only project lead by BirdLife Zimbabwe in this Ramsar site. Most stakeholders and community beneficiary had a good understanding of the Darwin Initiative as it was acknowledged by BirdLife Zimbabwe during meetings. Use of social media by BLZ (Facebook, twitter) in sharing project information was effective and Darwin Initiative was tagged.

8 Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery

COVID-19 caused delays of some activities especially during the lockdowns. There were limited movements, and gatherings were banned during strict COVID-19 measures in the country. This delays some meetings scheduled during that time. The pandemic had a negative impact on the market for livelihood products. The market chain was affected during COVID-19.

In response, the project implementers secured authorisation for travel when COVID-19 restricted measures were relaxed. The work plan was adjusted in such that non-human interaction activities such as site monitoring, species surveys were prioritised whereas activities that involves meetings were adjusted to a later date. With regards to market, the poultry groups were asked to scale down their production and produce what was absorbed by the market during that time. The villagers adopted some coping mechanism strategies that included reducing the scale of production as a means to reduce production cost, staggered production based on market driven demand were some of the measures that the group employed as coping mechanism.

The project staff were encouraged to be vaccinated and most of them were vaccinated. All project staff were required to adhere to government COVID-19 guidelines that include social distancing, masking, and use of sanitisers. When meeting with project beneficiaries these guidelines were followed to ensure healthy and safety of the people. Online meetings among project staff conducted help to move work forward. One of the national wetlands committee meetings was also conducted online as a way of ensuring progress of the project during COVID-19. Some of these new ways of working such as virtual meetings will continue post COVID-19 pandemic. However, this can only apply to few stakeholders who have access to internet.

9 Finance and administration

9.1 Project expenditure

Project spend (indicative) since last annual report	2021/22 Grant (£)	2021/22 Total actual Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)	██████	██████	0	
Consultancy costs	██████	██████	1	
Overhead Costs	██████	██████	0	
Travel and subsistence	██████	██████	5.9	
Operating Costs	██████	██████	-8	
Capital items (see below)	████	████	10	
Others (see below)	██████	██████	2.2	
TOTAL		68270		

Staff employed (Name and position)	Cost (£)
Togarasei Fakarayi (Project Leader)	██████
Fadzai Matsvimbo (Project Assistant)	██████
Sylvia Muzavazi (Finance and administration)	██████
Langton Machando (Field Officer)	██████
Samuel Chimbarara (Bee Keeping coordinator)	██████

Abel Mugwati (Coordinator-pig and poultry)	████
Geja Roosjen Fall (Local engagement support and lessons learnt)	████
TOTAL	████

Capital items – description	Capital items – cost (£)
Fire Beaters	████
TOTAL	████

Other items – description	Other items – cost (£)
Bank charges	████
Articles, Booklets, print media on lessons learnt	████
Production of a Good Practise Handbook	████
TOTAL	████

9.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Source of funding for project lifetime	Total (£)
RSPB and BLZ support to staff costs for Togarasei Fakarayi	████
RSPB and BLZ support to staff costs for Fadzai Matsvimbo	████
RSPB support to staff costs for Sylvia Muzavazi	████
RSBP support to staff costs for Julia Pierini	████
ZAPP-RDS Staff costs to Abel Mugwati	████

CELUCT staff costs to Samuel Chimbarara		██████
EMA staff costs for Proud Mazambara		██████
BLI staff costs		██████
Netherland Embassy small grant project		██████
BirdLife Zimbabwe		██████
TOTAL		██████

Source of funding for additional work after project lifetime	Total (£)
International Crane Foundation	██████
VBN	██████
BirdLife Zimbabwe	██████
TOTAL	██████

9.3 Value for Money

The project had staff with diversified experience and expertise. The partnership with other local government department stakeholders on the ground also brought in additional expertise. This help to minimise hired experts in the project hence keeping costs of hired professional low. The hired professional in this project were engaged locally, and this keep the costs low.

Most of the materials for the construction of fowl runs and pigsty were sourced at local towns (Chivhu and Gutu) close to the project site. This helped to reduce transportation costs to carry materials from the supplier to the project site. The service of borehole drilling and solar fittings were sourced from one supplier. A comparative analysis of the service and supplies prior to engagement of this supplier was done. Engagement a single supplier for this work helped to cut off transportation costs as materials were transported in bulk for the three sites where borehole installation took place. Materials like poles for paddock restoration were purchased locally cutting off some transportation costs.

10 OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for the Darwin Secretariat to publish the content of this section.

The Driefontein Grasslands, a Ramsar site and an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) supports globally threatened bird species. It is the only remaining landscape in the country, where the three globally threatened (grassland specialists) Grey Crowned Crane (EN), Wattled Crane (VU) and Secretary Bird (EN) exist in the same area. Despite rich biodiversity, Driefontein Grasslands was under increasing pressure from anthropogenic activities that include wetland degradation through unsustainable agricultural practices, uncontrolled fires, and overgrazing.

Interventions through a Darwin funded project implemented in the Driefontein Grasslands Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) and Ramsar site led by BirdLife Zimbabwe has promoted wetland biodiversity conservation and human livelihood improvement. The project model linked wetland biodiversity conservation and community livelihoods with active participation of women and youth. There was transformation from unsustainable land use practices to sustainable practices for poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation. Three alternative livelihoods in the form of poultry, piggery and beekeeping helped rural villagers living in biodiversity-rich generate income from these environmentally friendly and sustainable livelihoods. These alternative livelihoods integrated well with crane and wetland conservation contributed to poverty reduction. Adoption of alternative and environmentally friendly livelihoods by local communities reduces degradation of wetlands critical for globally threatened biodiversity, supporting livelihoods, species conservation and environmental management plan implementation. There was positive biodiversity and ecosystem benefits realised in the form of water provisioning and increasing number of breeding pairs for cranes. Citizen science built among local communities and stakeholders during the project enabled active participation of local communities, government and civil society stakeholders in biodiversity monitoring, wetland ecosystem restoration, and local decision making on environmental issues. The project also contributed to implementation of the Driefontein EMP and District Local Environmental Action Plans. Lessons learned from this project provide guidance to current and future programming in wetland biodiversity conservation for globally threatened biodiversity and poverty reduction. These lessons also informed local and national decisions for improved wetland management.

Photos.

Annex 1

Annex 2