





## **Darwin Initiative Main: Annual Report**

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note": (<a href="https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/information-notes-learning-notes-briefing-papers-and-reviews/">https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/information-notes-learning-notes-briefing-papers-and-reviews/</a> ).

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

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2023

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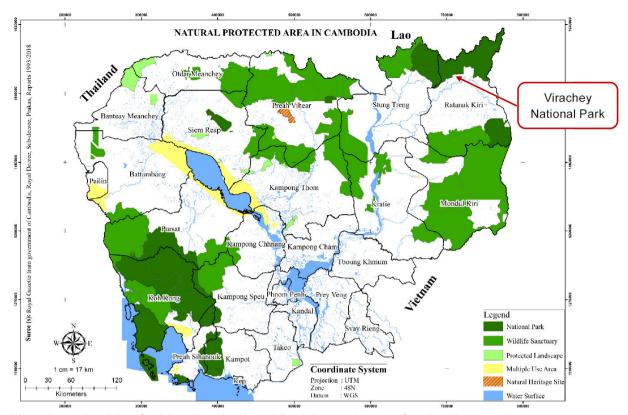
#### **Darwin Initiative Project Information**

Project reference	28-027
Project title	Strengthened livelihoods and conservation management in Virachey National Park
Country/ies	Cambodia
Lead Partner	Fauna & Flora
Project partner(s)	Cambodia Ministry of the Environment; local NGO Non- Timber Forest Product (NTFP) Organization
Darwin Initiative grant value	£497,244.00
Start/end dates of project	1 Dec 2021 to 30 June 2024
Reporting period (e.g. Apr	April 2022-March 2023
2022 – Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	Annual Report 2
Project Leader name	Garry Shea
Project website/blog/social media	
Report author(s) and date	Garry Allen Shea, 20 April 2023

## 1. Project summary

Virachey National Park (VNP) is one of Cambodia's largest protected areas at 3,325 sq. km, and one of only two ASEAN Heritage Parks in the country. Part of the Annamite range, it forms the core of a vast Cambodia-Lao/PDR-Vietnam forest landscape, one of the most biologically-important and endangered tropical forests in the world. It supports northern yellow-cheeked crested gibbon, clouded leopard, Asian elephant, dhole and Sunda pangolin, amongst other threatened wildlife, and is deeply connected with Indigenous Peoples' cultures and livelihoods.

Despite its biodiversity value, transboundary importance and carbon sink function, Virachey has received little conservation attention to date and is far from secure, with licensed rubber plantations operating within its boundaries, and accelerating development activities leading to land encroachment and deforestation, accelerating on its periphery. This is exacerbated by inadequate management and growing pressure from external actors. These pressures are leading to irreparable habitat loss, pushing local people towards unsustainable practices, and possibly increasing the risk of zoonotic disease transfer due to increasing nature/human interaction.



Map: Location Map for Virachev National Park in north-east Cambodia

A lack of zoning and management planning means that land use decisions disregard natural capital, and those engaging in unsustainable/illegal activities do so with relative impunity. Whilst there are five Community Protected Areas (CPAs), designated to support sustainable resource management, including the harvest of NTFPs, by local communities along the southern boundary of VNP, they require strengthened management and capacity to optimise their contribution to conservation and livelihoods. The indigenous communities manage the harvesting of the NTFPs, and have bylaws and fee systems for their collection and the Project is working with them to improve production and marketing. CPA members are also allowed to occasionally cut timber and poles in CPAs for personal use. This has led to a degradation of the natural forests within CPAs.

The indigenous communities have been marginalized from development in Cambodia, and many basic services are lacking or underdeveloped. This is especially true for education resulting in most adults being illiterate and only 40% of children having access to basic primary school education. With children not being in school, child marriage and child labour are still the norm for most children. FFI has engaged with the existing primary schools and has introduced an environmental education and eco-club programme to 7 primary schools (original target 4 schools). Children are sharing the conservation and environment messages from this program with their parents, using project posters and exercise books as reference materials. The aim is to get children involved in conservation and have them champion conservation within their communities. Since these educated children will become future leaders, this will have positive and long-term impacts on conservation both within the protected area and also the communal lands.

When Virachey National Park was declared, the indigenous people who were living inside VNP were moved to areas adjacent to VNP but outside the boundaries of VNP. The land allocated to these indigenous communities tended to be good agricultural land and allowed the indigenous peoples to continue their traditional agricultural practices while adopting new cash crop agriculture for improved incomes and livelihoods. The Government of Cambodia recognizes indigenous peoples, and has signed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The indigenous communities have, or are in the process of applying for communal land rights to their allocated lands. With more secure land rights, indigenous communities are investing in cash crop agriculture, mainly focused on high-value tree crops. The project is supporting the establishment of sustainable agroforestry systems combining principles of agroecology and climate-smart agriculture with traditional indigenous knowledge. Initially, this involves the establishment of seed orchards of clonal planting stock, which can be used by local indigenous communities to prepare their own high-quality, clonal planting stock. This will improve the quantity and quality of products produced, resulting in increased income and improved livelihoods for indigenous households,

Climate-change is affecting the climate in Cambodia with hotter and longer dry seasons, and growing season varying in rainfall during the wet season. There is a recognized need for climate-smart agriculture, and the use of agroforestry to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The project is providing training and technical support to indigenous farmers to adopt best climate-smart and agroecology practices.

## 2. Project stakeholders/ partners

Cambodia's Ministry of Environment (MoE) is a key partner, and the project is working closely with their central office in Phnom Penh as well as with its Provincial Department of Environment (PDoE) in Ratanakiri Province. FFI has an MOU with the MoE to cover conservation work throughout Cambodia, and a project-specific joint Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the Provincial Department of Environment in Ratanakiri Province. Under this Agreement, PDoE is providing the project with office space in its office complex in Banlung, Ratanakiri, and facilitates meetings and engagement with other key government stakeholders. This makes project coordination relatively easy, and has improved project implementation.

Under Output 1, FFI works in partnership with MoE and PDoE on the zonation and management planning process for VNP. The aim is an inclusive and participatory process involving all stakeholders. FFI also involves Park Rangers in biodiversity surveys carried out within VNP, and the results of all surveys are shared with MoE and PDoE. This contributes to capacity building for government staff.

As noted in the YR1 Annual Report, FFI dropped the original proposed local NGO partner (Save Cambodia Wildlife – SCW) due to potential integrity and corruption issues. FFI proposed to replace SCW by another local NGO (Non-Timber Forest Product Organization, or NTFPO), and this change has been approved by Darwin Initiative. Due diligence has been carried out for NTFP Organization, and a sub-contract agreement was signed between FFI and NTFP to cover the period 01 June 2022 to 30 June 2024.

NTFPO has the trust of local indigenous communities and have many on-going activities focused on indigenous rights, informal education, health, and livelihood initiatives. However, they require technical support from FFI for, baseline survey and gender analysis, CPA capacity building and planning, NTFP production and marketing, and sustainable agriculture and marketing. This is being provided by FFI's Conservation and Livelihood Team with monthly field visits by the Team (Technical Advisor, Livelihood Coordinator, and Community Engagement Lead). In addition, a Tree Crop and Nursery Technical Officer has been recruited and posted full-time to provide technical support for NTFPO for Outputs 2 and 3. The salaries for the Livelihood Coordinator, the Community Engagement Lead and Tree Crop and Nursery Technical Officer are not funded under this Darwin Project.

This process of changing the project's local partner has delayed implementation of some project activities and many of the planned Y1 activities were postponed until Y2, and some Y2 activities shifted to Y3. This was a significant but understandable delay given the circumstances, and explains the lack of implementation of planned Y1 activities and accelerated implementation during Y2.

The project engages with the local indigenous communities and their governance systems, both formal and informal, for activities under all three Outputs. This includes commune government, traditional indigenous chiefs, CPA committees and members, and other community groups, both men and women. Inclusive and participatory processes are designed to improve the knowledge and capacity of indigenous communities, and get them more involved in decision-making. Women have traditionally been marginalized from decision-

making, both within formal and traditional governance systems, and it is challenging and time-consuming to ensure inclusive and participatory processes that give women a voice and allow them to benefit equitably from project activities. FFI and partners have a strong commitment to bring about transformational changes especially for marginalized indigenous women.

The Technical Advisor for Conservation and Livelihoods (Livelihood Technical Advisor) is the budget holder for the Project, and is leading on reporting. In addition, the Technical Advisor has provided technical support for the design of the agroforestry and seed orchard systems for the project. Being experienced in market system assessments and development, the Technical Advisor is leading on market system activities for both NTFPs and agricultural commodities. The Livelihood Coordinator, an experienced agriculture and livelihood specialist, has provided technical support for NTFPO for the planning and implementation of NTFP and agricultural activities. The Community Engagement Lead developed the environmental education/eco-club programme, and prepared the posters and activity book for the programme and trained NTFPO staff and teachers to deliver the materials in 7 schools. The Tree Crop and Nursery Technical Officer works directly with NTFPO for the planning and implementation of activities, including the establishment of seed orchards, training of indigenous households in agroforestry and climate-smart-agriculture, field surveys for CPAs and mapping for NTFPs within CPAs, and organizing and supporting household surveys. This support has been documented and evidence provided in attachments.

## 3. Project progress

## 3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

### **Output 1 Activities:**

1.1 Conduct targeted biodiversity surveys, with participation from IPs, of wildlife and key habitats to provide the knowledge for an evidence-based zonation and management plan (Y1).

The project initiated a camera trap biodiversity survey from 1-30 March 2023. 66 camera traps were strategically deployed at 8 key areas across VNP (05) and BCC (03). The camera traps were deployed by a team of 42 participants consisting of 1 technical staff from MoE, 5 FFI technical biodiversity specialists, 15 local rangers and 21 indigenous people. The MoE will use the results of these survey to revise the existing boundary of VNP to include high-conservation value forests presently occurring in Biodiversity Conservation Corridors. The results of this survey will be available within July and will inform the ongoing zonation process.



A bat survey was carried out in VNP from 1 to 14 March 2023. The survey involved 11 nights of sampling effort using mist nets, harp traps and acoustic detectors in two areas: O'Yakim and Veal Thom. The field survey resulted in the live capture and release of 21 bat species arranged

in five families. These included two species which represent the first records for Cambodia: *Eudiscopus denticulus* and *Rhinolophus stheno*. Report is attached.

Siamese crocodile presence and habitat surveys was carried out from 15-22 March 2023 by two technical FFI staff, one MoE ranger and two community members from O'Chay. The survey covered approximately 42 Km along O'Chay and O'Chantong Rivers and tributaries. No crocodile signs/sightings were seen along the rivers and tributaries and no suitable habitats for crocodiles were recorded.

1.2 Disseminate results of biodiversity surveys to raise awareness and galvanise a sense of pride nationally, and to augment political will (Y1-Y2).

The results of biodiversity surveys have been shared with MoE and PDoE.

1.3 Conduct participatory zonation consultations with MoE, IPs and other stakeholders, to inform a zoning of VNP that fulfils conservation needs and IPs' sustainable resource use rights (Y1-Y2).

Waiting for engagement by MoE. MoE has to mobilize funds to participate in process.

1.4 Develop an evidence-based management plan in partnership with MoE, following best practice guidance and with input from indigenous communities (Y2-Y3).

Too early to prepare and finalize management plan.

## **Output 2 Activities:**

2.1 Assess current CPA management practices, customary institutions, land tenure and resource use needs within four CPAs in Ratanakiri Province (Y1).

These were assessed during the reporting period – Y2 and not Y1 (see 2. Project stakeholders/partners). The following is a summary of some key findings: The current CPA management plans were prepared in 2015. The management plans are for the period 2015-2019 and are therefore in need of updating. By-laws were also prepared to support the implementation of the management plans. The management plans allow for the extraction of timber by CPA members to meet personal household needs. Overtime, this has resulted in the degradation of the forest within CPAs. Thus, the management plan did not lead to sustainable forest management where extraction is limited by the growth rate of the timber in the forest. The management plans were successful in retaining productive malva nut trees, and effectively ended destructive harvesting practices for malva nut, such as the cutting of mature trees to get a season's crop of malva nut fruit.

There were also concerns about the inclusiveness of the governance system for CPAs and membership in the CPA. Membership requires the payment of a membership fee which discourages poorer households from becoming members. Also, men largely make up the CPA membership and the CPA committee with women having little or no voice in CPA decision-making. Because of this, many households were not aware of the potential benefits of CPAs both for present and future generations, and no voice in the management of the CPA. Illiterate women are especially marginalized and lack knowledge and information about CPAs and their management.

To address this, the project supported the CPA Committees and Village Chiefs in all four CPAs to build awareness of the importance of CPA to indigenous communities and carried out a successful registration of existing and new CPA members using new registration form. As a result, 2621 households have been registered as CPA Community Members. This represents the majority of indigenous households in CPA communities.

CPAs are part of VNP, and indigenous communities have use rights but not ownership or communal rights. The communal and individual rights of indigenous peoples to land is limited to their agricultural lands outside VNP.

The CPAs as presently managed cannot meet the resource needs of the indigenous peoples for timber and timber products. They do provide seasonal economic benefit for selected households from the collection and marketing of NTFP, such as malva nut and cobra mushrooms. There is a recognized need for the restoration of natural forests within CPA to increase the potential for sustainable incomes from NTFPs, ecotourism, and the marketing of carbon. The project is facilitating an inventory by indigenous youth to measure and map the location of malva nut trees, and cobra mushroom production sites.

2.2 Strengthen technical and organisational capacities of existing CPA Committees to update, implement and monitor existing management plans, and to engage in relevant decision-making (Y1-Y2).

FFI and partners carried out a participatory training needs assessment, with members of the CPA committee, to identify previous trainings and the needs of committee members for additional training. During the assessment, CPA committee members gave some consideration to the sustainable management and restoration of the CPAs for future long-term community benefits, but were mainly interested in management and fundraising training.

Gender inclusive workshops will be used in 2024 to build community-wide knowledge of CPAs and the potential benefits for present and future generations of indigenous people. Workshops will also promote the need for inclusion of women in the membership of CPAs and their Committees so that women benefit more equitably, with a meaningful voice in CPA decision-making.

In parallel with these workshops and trainings, aimed at capacity building for potential members and committee members, the project is carrying out field assessments of CPAs. During the reporting period, this has included the measurement and mapping of malva nut trees in the 4 CPAs. This will help guide future management and restoration plans for the CPAs.

2.3 Support the revision and monitoring of CPA management plans to ensure effectiveness and equitable distribution of risks/costs/benefits (Y2).

During the reporting period, the focus has been on reviewing existing CPA management plans and their effectiveness in guiding the sustainable management of CPAs (see 2.1), which have shown that the present management plans have not ensured effectiveness and equitable distribution of risks/costs/benefits. Therefore, there is a need to expand CPA membership to make it more inclusive, and also a need to revise the governance system (CPA committees) to make them more inclusive. As noted, the project supported the CPA Committees and Village Chiefs to build awareness of the importance of CPAs and organized registration for existing and new household members. As a result, 2621 households have been registered as CPA Community Members. This represented the majority of the households in indigenous communities with CPAs.

With more inclusive representation, the CPA management plans will be revised to ensure effectiveness and equitable distribution of risks/costs/benefits. The awareness process and gender inclusive workshops will take place during Y3 and management plans revised in Y4.

2.4 Train and support CPA members to conduct monthly forest community patrols to record, remove and discourage threats to wildlife, in line with CPA management plans (Y2-Y3).

At the present time, CPA committee members carry out patrols to record, remove and discourage threats to wildlife. This is done on a volunteer basis since CPA committees do not have funds to support patrols. Ideally, patrols would be carried out by trained community rangers with funding support from either the community/CPA or VNP. Members of the CPA committees coordinate their activities with Park Rangers who are present and active in and around the CPAs. Park Rangers are trained in carrying out patrols, and FFI and MoE provide on-going training as needed. The new revised CPA management plan should include a business plan which will fund patrolling activities. This is needed since present revenues are not adequate to support effective patrolling.

2.5 Deliver two gender-inclusive workshops per year per target community within CPAs on regulations in protected areas including cultural and scientific contextual components (Y1-Y3).

Gender-inclusive workshops were postponed to Y3 to allow for the sub-contracting of the replacement NGO and also to wait for the results of the CPA assessments (see 2. Project Partners). Thus, there will be 3 workshops for each CPA in Y3. The 3 workshops will focus on building community awareness and knowledge on the (1) importance of protected areas and associated wildlife, (2) potential importance of CPAs for present and future generations, and (3) preparing a community vision for the CPAs. The final series of workshops will take place in Y4, and will involve a community review of the draft revised CPA management plans.

2.6 Support 4 youth eco-clubs to take an active role in conservation stewardship within their communities through capacity building and local awareness events (Y1-Y3).

During Y2, FFI and NTFP prepared materials (posters, notebook with information and conservation games) for a school-based environmental education programme. The programme was implemented in 7 indigenous primary schools in the project area. Students and teachers were encouraged to form an eco-club to promote student involvement in community conservation activities. Eco-clubs were formed in each of the 7 indigenous primary schools. During Y3, a second set of trainings will be carried out in each school, and the eco-clubs will be encouraged to identify conservation activities for implementation.

#### **Output 3 Activities**

3.1 Analyse and monitor gendered aspects of natural resource use, disaggregating roles in livelihoods and community decision-making processes to ensure gender-responsive project delivery (Y1).

In Y1, FFI carried out a desk review of gender reports and information related to indigenous communities in Ratanakiri Province. This provided a list of issues which should be looked at during gender analysis for targeted indigenous communities. During Y2, FFI and NTFP designed a household survey to gather socio-economic information about households in indigenous communities with CPAs. The survey was designed to capture information on gendered aspects of natural resource use, gender roles, access and control over natural resources, and community decision-making. Each CPA was sampled separately since indigenous communities are not ethnically homogeneous in terms of access to natural resources, access to market and government services, and agricultural potential.

3.2 Analyse community socio-economic status and assess traditional and current agricultural and NTFP/wildmeat harvesting practices, and cultural values (Y1).

A household survey has been designed to record the socio-economic status of households. For this, households have been stratified, using local criteria, into poor, middle and elite households. Different socio-economic groups have different access to traditional and current

agricultural lands, and to NTFPs within CPAs. Elite households capture much of the benefits and have much larger landholdings than middle households, while poor households have limited access to land and resources and often work as laborers for better-off and elite households.

3.3 With IPs, identify and evaluate strategies based on conservation goals, agro-ecological conditions, traditional practices, existing skills/interests, and market demand based on market system analysis (Y1).

During Y1 and Y2, a series of meetings and workshops were held with each of the CPAs to document existing farming systems – mainly subsistence food crop agriculture and plantations of high-value commercial crops. In accessible communities, subsistence agriculture is used to clear areas of secondary forest for cash crops, mainly cashew nut. Indigenous farmers clear the land and plant rice, vegetables and other food crops for 2-3 years, interplanting cashew nut seedlings within the food crop gardens. This provides households with income (sale or subsistence use) while the cashew trees mature. Clonal cashew nut trees usually start fruiting in year 3 and continued production for 30 years or more.

3.4 Deliver technical training and develop capacity for indigenous producers for climate-smart agriculture, poultry, and revitalisation of sustainable traditional NTFP harvesting (Y1-Y3).

In the project area, climate-smart agriculture is best achieved through agroforestry, mainly mixed tree-crop plantations. These plantations allow for the accumulation of carbon and other nutrients in the trees and the soil, contribute to improved watershed management, and serve as a corridor, between protected areas, for wildlife. The agroforestry systems being developed combine best agroecology practices with traditional knowledge to produce sustainable climate-smart models which can be replicated over a wide area. The initial focus has been on the establishment of cashew nut seed gardens, strategically located to allow wide access to cuttings for the production of clonal planting stock. The project is also helping women to establish seed gardens of high-valued fruit trees around their homestead, for sale and/or subsistence.

The project has carried out assessments for selected NTFP including Malva Nut and Cobra Mushroom. These are very valuable commodities and provide a seasonal source of income for many households. During Y2, the project supported the CPAs/youth to map and measure malva nut trees within the 4 CPAs. In Y3, the project will carry out a survey of the production of malva nut, the fees paid for extraction, and the income generated from the sale of malva nuts. The project is working with communities and PDoE to test the potential for cloning malva nut trees so they can be cultivated in plantations outside protected areas.

3.5 Improve market access for selected agricultural and NTFP goods through better linkage between target communities and private sector and development of processing unit if feasible (Y1-Y3).

The project has mapped out the value chains (market systems) for cashew nuts, malva nuts and cobra mushroom. There are already well-functioning market systems from the communities to the export market in Thailand and Vietnam. Therefore, the main focus is on improving the quantity and quality of the product being produced at the community level. For cashew nut, this involves the establishment of cashew nut seed gardens for the best adapted and most commercial variety of cashew nut.

### 3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

#### **Output 1**

- 1. Zonation and management plan developed and being implemented for Virachey National Park.
- 1.1. By end of Y1, generation and dissemination of data and knowledge to inform evidence-based zonation of the national park.

Several biodiversity surveys were carried out during the reporting period:

- 1) Herpetology field survey 7-16 September 2022. Species encountered included 12 amphibians, 6 reptiles, 2 snakes and 2 turtles.
- 2) Bat survey 1-14 March 2023. The survey resulted in live capture and release of 21 bat species arranged in 5 families.
- 3) Siamese crocodile presence and habitat survey 15-22 March 2023 for O'Çhay and O'Chantong Rivers. No crocodiles were sighted and no suitable habitats were found.
- 4) Camera trap (66) were deployed from 1-30 March 2023 and data will be collected and analysed in July 2023.

Biodiversity surveys (wildlife and vegetation) are on-going and will be used along with results of previous surveys as evidence for zonation of VNP.

1.2. Indigenous community representatives (at least 30% women) actively participate in zonation workshops in Y1.

No progress to report.

1.3. Zonation map finalised by end Y2, taking into account needs and rights of IPs.

Zonation map has not yet been prepared.

1.4. Management plan produced and implementation initiated by project end.

Too early to report on.

#### Output 2.

- 2. Revised CPA management plans established and implemented by indigenous communities.
- 2.1. Management plans for the four CPAs in Ratanakiri Province revised by end Y2.

The review of the existing CPA management plans and governance systems raised several important issues which need to be addressed before the preparation of new CPA management plans. First, membership of CPA and CPA committees was not inclusion with many households not being members and the CPA committee dominated by men from elite families. There is only one woman on the CPA committees and CPA members are mainly men. The existing management plans have led to the degradation of the forest in CPAs through the overextraction of timber and poles by CPA members. That is, the management plans were not based on principles of sustainable production and use, and there are no programmes for the restoration of native trees and forests. In Y2, the project worked with indigenous youth to carry out a mapping and inventory of malva nut trees within CPAs.

Most households, especially poor households, are not aware of the purpose and potential benefits of CPAs or CPA membership. To address this, the project is building knowledge and awareness on CPA through gender-inclusive workshop. This process is expected to take one year and will take place in Y3.

2.2. 50% of CPA Committee members upskilled in CPA management by end Y3.

In Y1, the project carried out a training needs assessment with CPA committee members. They identified their felt needs. In Y2, a number of training have been provided for CPA members, mainly focused on improved administration and fundraising skills. Priority was given to building broad community awareness of the benefits of the CPA, and working with CPA Committees and Village Chiefs to have the majority of indigenous households registered as CPA members.

As a result, 2621 households have been registered as CPA members, which represents the majority of households.

2.3. CPA members take part in community patrols

The members of the CPA committee have been carrying out community patrols on a volunteer basis. CPAs gain fees for the extraction of malva nuts and cobra mushroom, but such funds are not sufficient to cover CPA costs or the cost of patrols.

#### Output 3.

Resilient and sustainable livelihoods strategies adopted by women and men in target households in indigenous communities.

3.1. At least 400 producers and community-based extension workers (at least 50% women) trained in climate-smart agriculture, poultry production, and sustainable NTFP. collection by project mid-term.

During Y2, 188 households were trained in 2-3 climate-smart agriculture technical. Awareness have been carried out in 4 CPA on importance of sustainable NTFP collection in preparation for the 2023 harvesting season.

3.2. At least two climate-smart agriculture techniques are applied by 200 households (midterm) and 400 households (end of project).

During Y2, 188 households were trained in 2-3 climate-smart agriculture techniques.

3.3 400 households (50% female members) have increased annual income from existing land holdings and sustainable NTFP use and sale, by 10% (mid-term) and 20% (end of project).

During the establishment of agroforestry seed orchards, the indigenous households plant rice, vegetables and other food crops intercropped with the commercial trees. During Y2, the project supported 100 households to establish agroforestry seed orchards. The average value of produce (rice, vegetables, other food crops) from each plot was \$535. Most of the produce is for household consumption with excess being sold or battered to neighbours.

Note: FFI has put in a change request to change the indicator, but final approval has not been received so the project is continuing with the original indicator. The proposed revised indicator is: 400 households, 1600 people (50% female members) have increased annual income from existing land holdings and sustainable NTFP use and sale, by 10% by Y3

## 3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome: Management of Virachey National Park is strengthened and well-being of indigenous communities is improved.

- 0.1 Rate of annual forest cover loss in Virachey NP and associated biodiversity corridor is reduced by at least 20% by 2024 compared to 2020 baseline.
- 0.2 At least 75% of both female and male members of participating households report positive multi-dimensional well-being outcomes (e.g. income, food security, social status, gender equality, agency, and/or cultural values) by project end.

Outcome Indicator 0.1 targets forest cover loss in Virachey NP and biodiversity corridors with a target of at least 20% reduction by 2024 compared to 2020 baseline.

With restrictions on Economic Concessions, most illegal logging results in degradation of forest and not loss of forest. Thus, forests can be restored with a combination of natural regeneration and reforestation interventions. It is anticipated that the management plan will include a

restoration plan to return degraded and secondary forests to high-conservation value forests consisting of native species. The silviculture of important native species are well known. The indicator should still be valid.

Outcome Indicator 0.2 remains valid and it is expected that most participating households will experience and report positive multi-dimensional well-being outcomes. This will include improved incomes and livelihoods, as well as more inclusion in local governance and decision-making, especially by indigenous women.

Assessments including market systems assessments at the beginning of the project have identified key commodities (NTFPs and agricultural commodities – mainly cashew nut and fruit trees) that have the potential to benefit significant numbers of indigenous households. The assessment of agricultural commodities identified that greatest benefit would come from improving the quality and quantity of production through the use of the best adapted clonal planting stock. This is the approach, agreed to by indigenous farmers, traders and Provincial Department of Agriculture, which has been adopted for the project.

## 3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Outcome Assumption 1: The strong political will to sustainably manage Virachey National Park continues.

Comments: The government working through the Ministry of Environment continues to show strong political will to sustainably manage Virachey National Park. The government's commitment to conservation in Cambodia has been re-confirmed when Cambodia committed to the new CBD Global Biodiversity Framework and targets.

Outcome Assumption 2: The existing environmental legislative framework is maintained or improved, and is upheld by government and industry actors.

Comments: Part of the Government of Cambodia's commitment to the new Global Biodiversity Framework and target is a commitment to revise the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. This should be done within a year.

Outcome Assumption 3: Cambodia continues to effectively contain and mitigate the community spread of Covid-19, such that human, material, and financial resources remain available for conservation and livelihood improvement activities.

Comments: Cambodia's response to covid-19 was amongst the best at containing and mitigating it's spread. In 2022, Cambodia ended all Covid-19 restricts and things are now back to normal, with resources once again available for conservation and livelihood improvement activities.

Output 1 Assumption 1: Government remains committed to the development of a zonation and management plan for Virachey National Park.

Comments: The Government remains committed and is supporting project activities for the development of a zonation and management plan for Virachey National Park.

Output 1 Assumption 2: Government processes move at a sufficient pace to approve zonation.

Comments: Zonation involves a number of integrated processes: (1) draft zonation based on aerial interpretation of the forest types and their condition, (2) consultations with stakeholders to determine their recommendations for zones and land use within zones, and (3) a consent process from local indigenous communities based on principles of Fair, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). There is also the need for a modern governance structure for VNP which involves co-management between government and local, indigenous communities. This is relatively new to Cambodia and it may take time for government to adjust legislation and policies required as an enabling environment. Thus, the process is complicated and time

consuming. Also, the government approval process takes time as well. The pace of approval may be slower than desired. FFI will work with partners to move the process forward.

Output 2 Assumption 1: CPA legal status is upheld.

Comments: Legislation and status clear.

Output 2 Assumption 2: CPA members are able to meet.

Comments: There are no restrictions on CPA members meeting. Cambodia removed all Covid-19 restrictions in 2022.

Output 2 Assumption 3: Committees continue to equitably and transparently represent their local constituency.

Comments: If we accept that the local constituency is CPA members then CPA committees (elected by members) are fairly equitable and transparent. However, registered CPA members are mainly men who represent households as Head of Household. Women and the poor tend not to be involved, and these groups are marginalized. Thus, more work needs to be done to make CPA membership and committees more inclusive and equitable. This will be the focus of the project during Y3, using community engagement and gender-equitable workshops to advocate for inclusion, including the equitable participation of women in decision-making.

Output 3 Assumption 1: Innovative practices introduced are readily adopted by indigenous women and men. This assumption will be mitigated through ensuring practices are appropriate to the cultural, socio-economic and agroecological context.

Comments: Innovative and climate-smart practices introduced during Y2 have been readily adapted to indigenous women and men. Over 100 seed orchards (agroforestry models) have been established by indigenous women and men in their communities. Also, indigenous women and men are participating in training being provided for climate-smart agriculture.

# 3.5 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty reduction

The stated Impact in the original application form is:

The biodiversity and cultural values of Virachey National Park are secured, allowing for the recovery of depleted wildlife populations and long-term well-being improvement amongst indigenous communities.

It is anticipated that at the end of the project there will be new inclusive management plans for VNP and the 4 CPAs. This will help secure the biodiversity and cultural values of VNP. This in turn will allow for the recovery of depleted wildlife populations over time. New CPA management plans include activities to restore the degraded native forests in CPAs to full cover using native species. This will improve the habitat for many endangered species.

The agroforestry and climate-smart agriculture activities will lead to more sustainable incomes and sustained livelihoods. The more inclusive processes used during the project will help transform gender-roles in these indigenous communities, and provide women with a more equitable voice in decision in governance and the agriculture sector.

The agroforestry models being developed under the project combine best agroecology practices and traditional knowledge. Using mixed-agroforestry models allows household to gain income from food crops while the more commercial tree crops are maturing. Thus, incomes will increase during the life of the project and will continue to increase after the project has ended and agroforestry plantations mature. This has potential to reduce poverty not only for direct participants, but also neighbouring households that will have access to clonal planting stock and improved knowledge and skills on agroforestry and climate-smart agriculture. This will lead to improved livelihoods for neighbouring households as well.

Field activity reports are attached to this report to provide evidence of agroforestry and climatesmart agricultural practices.

## 4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

The project has contributed to the 2016 NBSAP, especially Theme 1: Protection of Biodiversity and Theme 2: Threatened species. The project has allowed FFI/MOE to continue to carry out biodiversity surveys in VNP which have confirmed the presence of many threatened and endangered species. These surveys serve as information inputs for the on-going zonation and management planning process. This will contribute to NBSAP Target 8 (Aichi Target 11): *In 2020, at the latest, existing protected areas and conservation areas, including community-based natural resource management areas, have management plans and have started implementation.* 

The project has not had time to contribute to the NDCs, but the promotion and adoption of mixed-agroforestry systems will lead to more carbon sequestered in agroforestry systems and soil. In the future, this can be quantified as part of Cambodia's NDCs as they are in other countries, such as Vietnam.

The project will also contribute to the new CBD Global Biodiversity Framework and Targets, especially Target 3 and Target 22, by ensuring the active and inclusive participation of indigenous peoples in the management of protected areas (i.e., Virachey National Park).

## 5. Project support to poverty reduction

Cambodia reached lower middle-income status in 2015. Cambodia aims to become an upper middle-income country by 2030; however, COVID-19 has delayed development. Therefore, as a lower middle-income country, Cambodia still needs significant development support from international organizations and donors, for both conservation and development/poverty alleviation. The Darwin Initiative project provides support for both conservation and development/poverty reduction.

The expected beneficiaries (400 households and 1600 people) are members of indigenous communities which live adjacent to VNP in Ratanakiri. The northeast provinces are the poorest in Cambodia with poverty rates of about 22%. Within these provinces, indigenous communities tend to be the poorest and most marginalized.

Participating indigenous household are expected to have increased income and improved livelihoods as a result of the project. The increased income will come from improved production and marketing of malva nut and cobra mushrooms (NTFPs), and from increased quantity and quality of their cashew nut and fruit trees grown in agroforestry systems.

In Y2, 100 households were supported in establishing agroforestry seed gardens. Since food crops are interplanted with the tree crop, these household have been able to gain significant extra goods and income from the newly establish agroforestry seed gardens. It is established that the average value of food crops produced is \$535. The tree crops will start fruiting in 3 years and will continue to produce significant and increasing income for up to 35 years.

## 6. Gender equality and social inclusion

The project endeavours to ensure that it integrates gender in all its activities, that women have equal access to project resources and information, equal participation, equal opportunities to benefit from project activities, and that our work supports systems that promote gender equality. This includes considering gender in all stages of the project cycle, including assessment, planning and design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation through collection of sex-disaggregated data to monitor gender-differentiated impacts, making adjustments where necessary to guarantee gender equity and reduce inequality. We will seek to address the barriers to female participation by ensuring the timing, location and format of activities are tailored to their needs. We will build the capacity of female stakeholders to voice their opinions and work with men to enable women's voices to be heard, ensure their concerns addressed, and their skills and knowledge utilised.

The project is promoting social inclusion by working directly with indigenous communities lying adjacent to VNP. These indigenous communities have been marginalized from development. The project is building the capacity of indigenous communities to better manage their Community Protected Areas (CPAs) for the production of high-value non-timber forest

products. The project is also working with indigenous communities to improved the quantity and quality of their agriculture production. This will lead to high incomes and improved livelihoods. This will help to close the income gap between indigenous communities and migrant communities in Ratanakiri Province. The project is empowering indigenous men and women to take charge of their own development.

Within indigenous communities, women are largely marginalized from governance and decision-making. Most indigenous women are illiterate and cannot speak the national language. It is therefore difficult for them to access information and knowledge. The project (FFI and local partner NGO NTFP) are engaging indigenous women and men in agricultural activities focused on agroforestry and climate-smart agriculture. Better educated indigenous youth (male and female) have been recruited to translate and facilitate livelihood activities so that indigenous women can be meaningfully involved. To date, 47% of those directly involved in agroforestry seed orchard establishment have been women. Women are also participating equally in training on climate-smart agriculture.

The project has delayed the revision process for CPA management plans to ensure that women are equally involved in the process and participate in future decision-making. In Y3, the project will carry out a series of gender-inclusive workshop to build awareness and knowledge of women and men on the potential benefits of CPAs for present and future generations of indigenous peoples. The process and workshops will stress the importance of women's equal participation in both the planning process and also the future governance system for CPAs. The anticipated outcome is the equal participation of women in future CPA decision-making.)

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board <sup>1</sup> .	The project does not have a Project Board, but is led by a working group consisting of FFI, NTFPO and PDOE, with monitoring and technical support from MoE. About 40% of key staff assigned by the working group have been women.
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women <sup>2</sup> .	FFI, MOE, PDoE and NTFPO are all led by men. However, women play an important role in project planning and decision-making. The Community Engagement Lead for FFI is a woman, and is responsible for designing and facilitating community engagement activities for Output 2 and 3.

#### 7. Monitoring and evaluation

As noted in the project proposal, FFI adheres to the principles of adaptive management for its conservation actions, which includes planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and adaptation. As a key component of this project cycle, FFI has in place a rigorous Monitoring & Evaluation and reporting system, that is being applied to the project. For each anticipated Conservation Outcome, the project measures progress against identified indicators and implementation milestones. At regular intervals, project management and staff, along with relevant partners, review implementation progress to assess the effectiveness of activities,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

FFI's efficiency in implementation, and to update the project work plan as needed. FFI also regularly produces reports as part of its organisation-wide project management cycle, including midterm and final reporting in accordance with the guidelines. Financial management, monitoring and reporting will be conducted with several layers of oversight. FFI's accounts are audited annually and our years of on-the-ground experience have consistently supported our ability to cost activities precisely.

Biodiversity data is recorded systematically by FFI staff, as part of biodiversity surveys, and the process of zonation is being thoroughly documented. A work plan for the zonation and management plan development will be agreed with MoE, and available as a document against which to track progress. Discussions as part of zoning and management plan working group meetings, as well as consultation workshops, are recorded in meeting minutes, with emphasis on participation by, and input from, IPs. Participant lists are produced for all meetings.

The impact, outcome, outputs and targets for the project remain the same. Therefore, there has been no changes to the M&E system

FFI's local NGO partner, NTFPO, shares in the M&E work and they monitor all their project activities. Participation/attendance lists are kept for all project activities with data sex-disaggregated. NTFPO also participates in gender-sensitive market system assessments, and records data on roles and responsibilities and the sharing of benefits. NTFPO and FFI facilitate baseline surveys (desk reviews, household surveys, focus groups discussions and key informant interviews) which are used for final evaluation of the outputs and outcome.

The project has completed detailed household surveys for the four CPAs clusters. The household survey gathers socio-economic data, information on gender roles, and perceptions on key conservation issues (illegal logging and poaching). The data is presently being analysed, and will serve as a baseline against which project indicators can be measured.

Indicators of achievement and how these are being measured:

1.1 By end of Y1, generation and dissemination of data and knowledge to inform evidence-based zonation of the national park.

Measured by the number of surveys carried and the survey reports prepared and shared.

1.2 Indigenous community representatives (at least 30% women) actively participate in zonation workshops in Y1.

Minutes of workshops with indigenous communities and attendance lists disaggregated by sex.

- 1.3 Zonation map finalised by end Y2, taking into account needs and rights of IPs. Zonation maps and approval of the zonation map by indigenous people (FPIC).
- 1.4 Management plan produced and implementation initiated by project end. Management plan and approval of management plan by indigenous people
- 2.1 Management plans for the four CPAs in Ratanakiri Province revised by end Y2. Revised management plan and endorsement by CPA members and approval by MoE.
- 2.2 50% of CPA Committee members upskilled in CPA management by end Y3. Number of CPA Committee member completing training packages identified during training needs assessment with self-assessment.
- 2.3 CPA members take part in community patrols Patrol reports participants and observations.
- 3.1 At least 400 producers and community-based extension workers (at least 50% women) trained in climate-smart agriculture, poultry production, and sustainable NTFP. collection by project mid-term.

Project activity reports for training and summary of those participate

3.2 At least two climate-smart agriculture techniques are applied by 200 households (mid-term) and 400 households (end of project).

Project activity reports for climate-smart agriculture techniques and list of adaptors.

3.3 400 households (50% female members) have increased annual income from existing land holdings and sustainable NTFP use and sale, by 10% (mid-term) and 20% (end of project). Monitoring of household incomes for beneficiary households and documentation of income from food crops intercropped in agroforestry seed orchard.

#### 8. Lessons learnt

In the past year, progress has been made on all three outputs. For Output 1, working in partnership with the MoE and the PDoE has worked well, with progress made through field surveys and consultations. For Output 2, CPAs have willingly engaged with the project, both for consultations and also for field surveys and inventories required for the revision of CPA management plans. Information is required for the preparation of sustainable management plans to replace existing management plans which are not sustainable. Local indigenous youth are enthusiastic about participating in such surveys and inventories. They like to learn new technologies used in surveys and inventories.

For Output 3, working with local NGO NTFPO which is trusted by local indigenous communities has made engagement relatively easy. It was possible to identify lead farmers who were interested in using their land for the establishment of clonal seed gardens. Local farmers are interested in innovations, especially the use of high-value clonal planting stock in mixed agroforestry system. They know that future income will come as a result of good planting stock and modern climate-smart agriculture methods, especially mixed agroforestry systems. The main lesson-learnt is that conservation projects benefit from partnering with government, local NGOs and indigenous communities.

The need to change local NGO partner, to avoid reputational risk, was unfortunate, but has been positive, since the replacement NGO, NTFPO, have proven to be good facilitators with good relationships with indigenous communities. They have been willing to work in partnership with the FFI technical team to implement activities which contribute to the Outputs.

When working with indigenous communities, trust is often more important than technical capacity. Technical expertise can be seconded from other projects, but trust cannot be quickly built. Thus, it is recommended that similar projects work with local NGO partners who have already established trust with the local indigenous communities.

Lesson-learned from the project are being integrated into proposals for future funding. For example, these lesson-learnt are being used in the design for the new Biodiverse Landscape Fund (Lower Mekong) project, especially for activities being implemented in Cambodia.

#### 9. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

The issues raised in the review of the project's last Annual Report have been addressed. The feedback from the DEC (Approval Letter 12 August 2021) were addressed in the project's half year report. Comment 2 in last year's Annual Report review requested that evidence be provided in the Year 2 Annual Report. This is being done.

Project partners agreed to prepare evidence activities implemented by the project during the reporting period.

Recommendations from last year's review were addressed in the half year report. In this Annual Report, the project is also providing a better explanation of livelihood activities being implemented under the project, and also provides a better explanation of what constitutes climate-smart agriculture.

## 10. Risk Management

In the proposal, the focus was on Financial Risk Management. As stated, FFI has a zero-tolerance approach to bribery. FFI's anti-bribery policy is compliant with the Bribery Act (2010) and applies to all Members of Council, employees, volunteers, contractors, partners, and any other person associated with FFI. FFI bribery procedures address the following: direct

and facilitation payments; payments under duress; gifts and hospitality; procurement; conflicts of interest; whistle-blowing, et al. All aspects of this project will be governed by FFI's strict financial management systems, which assure a complete accounting of all financial resources and use of time on a real-time basis and summarized in regular financial performance reports. Risk specific to this project includes partners' financial management capacity. FFI requires signed sub-grant agreements, with agreed financial and narrative reporting requirements, in order to transfer funding to partners. Further tranches of funding are only released once previous tranches have been fully reported and reconciled.

No new risks have arisen in the last 12 months, and no significant adaptation have been made to the project design to address changes in risk.

The project will complete and submit a risk register next year using the template found on the Darwin Initiative website.

## 11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

The zoning and management planning process for VNP and CPAs have been enhanced by bringing the process in line with specific targets under the new Global Biodiversity Framework, which calls for greater participation of Indigenous peoples (Target 3 and Target 22).

The exit strategy was also enhanced through the establishment of seed gardens of high-value tree crops at strategic locations with indigenous communities and training indigenous farmers to produce their own clonal planting stock using cuttings from these seed gardens. This provides indigenous farmers with the knowledge, skills and capacity to lead their own agricultural development.

## 12. Sustainability and legacy

During the year, there has been increasing interest and capacity resulting from the project. Project partners including the MoE, PDoE, NTFP Organization and indigenous communities have all increased their capacity through participation in project activities. This has led to growing interest and support for the project and its activities. This is reflected in the strong support provided to the project by MoE, PDoE and the Provincial Governor, and in their contribution to the success of FFI's BLF Proposal, which is scheduled to start in 2023.

FFI's communications team shares major project news and developments through media releases and other targeted and appropriate channels. FFI has a dedicated webpage for Cambodia which is updated with information generated throughout this project. FFI is able to host resources here and in the 'documents' section of the FFI website, where project outputs can be shared and tagged as 'open access'. Documentation is be a critical part of the project. FFI uses this information to develop robust case studies and learning materials that can be shared with the Darwin initiative, and shared throughout FFI and with partners that are working on similar issues. Further appropriate audiences and communication channels will be identified for further dissemination of this work

The intended sustainable benefits post-project are still valid. It is anticipated that increased capacity of government and communities to manage VNP with agreed zoning and management planning will lead to a reduction in the rate of forest lost and to the restoration of VNP through a combination of natural regeneration and assisted forest restoration.

It is also anticipated that indigenous farmers will have increased knowledge and skills in sustainable agroforestry, combining climate-smart agricultural practices and best agroecology principles. Improved planting stock will lead to increased quantity and quality of production and more sustainable incomes and livelihoods for indigenous households. Improved management of CPAs will allow indigenous households to maintain or increase their production and income from selected NTFP, such as malva nut and cobra mushrooms, and explore the potential of ecotourism as an alternative income for indigenous households.

The project will ensure a sustained legacy of the project Outcomes by achieving Outputs and targets. For Output 1, the new zoning and management plan will guide the sustainable management of VNP for the next five years. This will lead to a reduction in deforestation, opportunities for forest and ecosystem restoration, reduction in poaching, and recovery in wildlife populations. For Output 2, the new CPA management plans will be based on principles of sustainable management and will include a restoration plan for forests and ecosystems within CPAs. This will maintain and enhance the production and marketing of important NTFPs, which will continue to contribute to the livelihoods of indigenous households. The restored ecosystems will attract more tourists and open the opportunity for ecotourism enterprises operated by indigenous peoples. For Output 2, the activities being implemented are laying the foundation for on-going agricultural development. The agroforestry seed gardens will provide indigenous farmers with a local source of cuttings for the production of high-value clonal planting stock. The training provided will allow indigenous farmers to produce their own clonal planting stock. Training in climate-smart agriculture techniques will provide indigenous farmers with the knowledge and skills to adapt to future climate change.

## 13. Darwin Initiative identity

The Government of Cambodia, at national and provincial levels, are aware of the UK Government's contribution to the project. This started with their original letter of support for the project proposal, and has continued throughout project implementation. Senior government officials from the Ministry of Environment and Provincial Government actively participated in the Inception Meeting and know UK Government's contribution. The Darwin Logo is used on banners for all project meetings at the provincial and community level. The Darwin Logo is also used on sign boards marking the establishment of seed gardens for clonal cashew nut and high-value fruit trees. Therefore, community members and beneficiaries recognized the contribution of the Darwin Initiative and UK Government.

In the project area the Darwin Initiative project is the only project being implemented by FFI and partners, and is therefore not seen as part of a larger programme. Also, there are no other conservation projects being implemented for VNP by other international NGOs or donors. Thus, the Darwin Initiative is seen as a distinct project with a clear identity.

Understanding of the Darwin Initiative is strong within the Ministry of Environment and within Ratanakiri Province, but is less well-known by the general public. It is anticipated that understanding will improve as FFI and partners (NTFPO and MoE) release more media about the project.

#### 14. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	No
Have any concerns been investigated in the past 12 months	No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes/No [If yes, please provide their name and email] Yes. Garry Shea,
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	Yes/No [If yes, please provide date and details of training] The focal point has completed all the training modules developed by FFI related to safeguarding. These are quite comprehensive, and provided to staff online.
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	100% of FFI staff and consultants have received formal training from FFI head office. This involves on-line training packages through FFI's training system called Mangrove. 100% of staff of NTFPO have received safeguarding training from their organization. All staff are required to sign a commitment to Safeguarding.

Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.

FFI and the local partner NGO can have a strong Safeguarding policy and provide training to staff, and have been able to ensure Safeguarding in relation to staff and consultants. However, the project has identified many issues in the community that should be addressed, including issues related to child marriage and child labour which are cultural norms in the indigenous communities. Building awareness and transforming cultural norms on these difficult issues will take time and a coordinated effort by stakeholders.

Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify.

All new staff for FFI and NTFP will be required to complete Safeguarding and sign a commitment to Safeguarding.

## 15. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2022/23 Grant (£)	2022/23 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	199,693.48	199,693.48		

Table 2: Project mobilising of matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

	Matched funding secured to date	Total matched funding expected by end of project
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project.		
Total additional finance mobilised by new activities building on evidence, best practices and project (£)		

## OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption, country and credit	Online accounts to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2022-2023

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact The biodiversity and cultural values secured, allowing for the recovery olong-term well-being improvement a	of depleted wildlife populations and	Preliminary steps have been taken which will lead to positive outputs and outcomes contributing to the Impact. Capacity building for MoE and PDoE has increased their understanding of the zoning and management planning process, while participation in biodiversity surveys has increased the capacity of rangers to patrol and protect wildlife.	
		The project is providing indigenous farmers with the knowledge and skills they need for improved production and increased incomes. Project is also providing indigenous farmers with agroforestry seed gardens where they can take cuttings of high-value clonal stock and improve their agroforestry system to generate improved livelihoods.	
Outcome  Management of Virachey National Park is strengthened and well-being of indigenous communities is improved.	<ul> <li>0.1 Rate of annual forest cover loss in Virachey NP and associated biodiversity corridor is reduced by at least 20% by 2024 compared to 2020 baseline.</li> <li>0.2 At least 75% of both female and male members of participating households report positive multi-dimensional well-being outcomes (e.g. income, food security, social status, gender equality, agency, and/or cultural values) by project end.</li> </ul>	With restrictions on Economic Concessions, most illegal logging now results in degradation of forest and not loss of forest. Degraded forests can be restored with a combination of natural regeneration and reforestation interventions. It is anticipated that the new management plan will include a restoration plan to return degraded and secondary forests to high- conservation value forests consisting of native species. The silviculture of important native	Capacity building will continue for MoE/PDOE staff, which will improve their capacity to manage and protect VNP.  Livelihood activities will continue to maintain and enhance the benefits from NTFPs. This includes field assessments of malva nut and cobra mushrooms and development of plan for improved management. Improved marketing will lead to additional income for producers.

		species is well known. The indicator should still be valid.  It is expected that most participating households will experience and report positive multi-dimensional well-being outcomes. This will	Project will continue to train indigenous farmers in climate-smart agriculture, including mixed-agroforestry with high-value commercial crops, use of organic fertilizers and pesticides, and use of cover crops and green manure to
		include improved incomes and livelihoods, as well as more inclusion in local governance and decision-making, especially by	maintain fertility of soil under agroforestry systems. These will contribute to increased income and improved livelihoods.
		indigenous women.  Assessments including market systems assessments at the beginning of the project have identified key commodities (NTFPs and agricultural commodities — mainly cashew nut and fruit trees) that have the potential to benefit the majority of indigenous households. The assessment of agricultural commodities identified that greatest benefit would come from improving the quality and quantity of production through the use of the best adapted clonal planting stock. This is the approach, agreed to by indigenous farmers, traders and Provincial Department of Agriculture, which has been adopted for the project.	Inclusive processes will lead to greater participation of indigenous women as beneficiaries and decision-makers.
Output 1.  Zonation and management plan	1.1 By end of Y1, generation and	1.1 Several biodiversity surveys were period:	<u> </u>
developed and being implemented for Virachey National Park.	dissemination of data and knowledge to inform evidence-based zonation of the national park.	<ol> <li>Herpetology field survey 7-16 Septincluded 12 amphibians, 6 reptiles</li> <li>Bat survey 1-14 March 2023. The release of 21 bat species arrange</li> </ol>	s, 2 snakes and 2 turtles. e survey resulted in live capture and
Darwin Initiative Main Annual Report Template 2023		22	

- 1.2 Indigenous community representatives (at least 30% women) actively participate in zonation workshops in Y1.
- 1.3 Zonation map finalised by end Y2, taking into account needs and rights of IPs.
- 1.4 Management plan produced and implementation initiated by project end.
- 3) Siamese crocodile presence and habitat survey 15-22 March 2023 for O'Çhay and O'Chantong Rivers. No crocodiles were sighted and no suitable habitats were found.
- 4) Camera trap (66) were deployed from 1-30 March 2023 and data will be collected and analysed in July 2023.
- 1.2 No significant progress to report.
- 1.3 Draft zonation map has been prepared but not shared.
- 1.4 Preparation work only.

Note: Indicators 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 will take place during Y3 and Y4

## Activity 1.1

1.1 Conduct targeted biodiversity surveys, with participation from IPs, of wildlife and key habitats to provide the knowledge for an evidence-based zonation and management plan (Y1).

The project initiated a camera trap biodiversity survey. 66 camera traps were strategically deployed at 8 key areas across VNP (05) and BCC (03). The camera traps were deployed from 1-30 March 2023. The results of this survey will be available within July and will inform the ongoing zonation process.

A bat survey was carried out in Virachey National Park from 1 to 14 March 2023. The field survey resulted in the live capture and release of 21 bat species arranged in five families. These included two species which represent the first records for Cambodia: *Eudiscopus denticulus* and *Rhinolophus stheno*. Report is attached.

A Siamese crocodile presence and habitat surveys was carried out from 15-22 March 2023 by two technical FFI staff, one Ministry of Environment ranger and two During the next period, the project will recover and process images from the camera trapping survey. Results will be documented in a report which will be shared in MoE and PDoE.

		community members from O'Chay. The survey covered approximately 42 Km along O'Chay and O'Chantong Rivers and tributaries. No crocodile signs/sightings were seen along the rivers and tributaries and no suitable habitats for crocodiles were recorded.	
Activity 1.2  1.2 Disseminate results of biodiversi galvanise a sense of pride nationally Y2).		The results of biodiversity surveys have been shared with MoE and PDoE.	Results of surveys will be shared with MoU and PDoE. The results will also be shared on FFI website.
Activity 1.3  Conduct participatory zonation const stakeholders, to inform a zoning of V and IPs' sustainable resource use rig	NP that fulfils conservation needs	Waiting for engagement by MoE. MoE has to mobilize funds to participate in process.	Consultations for zonation will take place during Y3.
	ement plan in partnership with MoE, and with input from indigenous	Too early to prepare and finalize management plan.	Zonation will be completed in Y3, and will be used to draft a new management plan for VNP.
Output 2 Revised CPA management plans established and implemented by indigenous communities.	<ul> <li>2.1 Management plans for the four CPAs in Ratanakiri Province revised by end Y2.</li> <li>2.2 50% of CPA Committee members upskilled in CPA management by end Y3.</li> <li>2.3 CPA members take part in community patrols</li> </ul>	of CPA and CPA committees was no being members and the CPA commit families. There is only one woman or	ues which need to be addressed nanagement plans. First, membership t inclusive, with many households not tee dominated by men from elite in the CPA committees and CPA ng management plans have led to the ough the over-extraction of timber the management plans were not

Activity 2.2.  Strengthen technical and organisational capacities of existing CPA Committees to update, implement and monitor existing management plans, and to engage in relevant decision-making (Y1-Y2).  FFI and partners carried out a participatory training needs assessment with members of the CPA committee during Y1-Y2, which emphasised management	Activity 2.1.  Assess current CPA management pratenure and resource use needs within (Y1).		of malva nut trees within CPAs.  Most households, especially poor hou purpose and potential benefits of CPA this, the project is building knowledge	useholds, are not aware of the As or CPA membership. To address and awareness on CPA through these is expected to take one year and anining needs assessment with CPA their needs. In Y2, a number of a members, mainly focused on ing skills.  Itee have been carrying out the sis. CPAs gain fees for the extraction but such funds are not sufficient to
Darwin Initiative Main Annual Report Template 2023	Strengthen technical and organisation Committees to update, implement and plans, and to engage in relevant decis	I monitor existing management	participatory training needs assessment with members of the CPA committee during Y1-Y2, which emphasised management	members are elected for a 5-year period, and the present committee members are in the final 2 years of

	skills and fundraising. Subsequently, the project provided training in management and fundraising.	inclusive workshops will be used in 2024 to build community-wide knowledge of CPAs and the potential benefits for present and future generations of indigenous people. Workshops will also promote the need for inclusion in the membership of CPAs and CPA Committees so that women benefit more equitably from the CPAs and have a meaningful voice in CPA decision-making. In parallel with these workshops and trainings, the project is carrying out field assessments of CPAs, to help guide future management and restoration plans for the CPAs.
Activity 2.3 Support the revision and monitoring of CPA management plans to ensure effectiveness and equitable distribution of risks/costs/benefits (Y2).	During the reporting period, the focus has been on reviewing existing CPA management plans and their effectiveness in guiding the sustainable management of CPAs. The management plans have failed to prevent forest degradation in the CPAs, but have been successful in retaining malva nut trees for annual production and harvesting of malva nuts for marketing. The review shows that the present management plans have not ensured effective and equitable distribution of risks/costs/benefits; there is a need to expand CPA membership and to revise the governance system (CPA committees).	The awareness process and gender inclusive workshops will take place during Y3 and management plans revised in Y4.  In Y3, this will involve as series of 3 workshops for each of the CPAs.  The CPA management plans will be revised to ensure effectiveness and equitable distribution of risks/costs/benefits.

Activity 2.4  Train and support CPA members to conduct monthly forest community patrols to record, remove and discourage threats to wildlife, in line with CPA management plans (Y2-Y3).	At the present time, CPA committee members carry out patrols to record, remove and discourage threats to wildlife. This is done on a volunteer basis since CPA committees do not have funds to support patrols Members of the CPA committees coordinate their activities with Park Rangers who are present and active in and around the CPAs. Park Rangers are trained in carrying out patrols, and FFI and MoE provide on-going training as needed. The new revised CPA management plan should include a business plan which will fund patrolling activities.	Training will be provided to CPA members in patrolling.
Activity 2.5  Deliver two gender-inclusive workshops per year per target community within CPAs on regulations in protected areas including cultural and scientific contextual components (Y1-Y3).	Due to delays in contracting the local partner NGO no gender-inclusive workshops were carried out the build awareness and knowledge on CPAs and their importance.	To counter the delays in implementing Gender-inclusive workshops, there will now be 3 workshops for each CPA in Y3. These will focus on building community awareness and knowledge on the (1) importance of protected areas and associated wildlife, (2) potential importance of CPAs for present and future generations, and (3) preparing a community vision for the CPAs. The final series of workshops will take place in Y4, and will involve a

			community review of the draft revised CPA management plans.	
Activity 2.6  Support 4 youth eco-clubs to take an active role in conservation stewardship within their communities through capacity building and local awareness events (Y1-Y3).		During Y2, FFI and NTFPO prepared materials (posters, notebook with information and conservation games) for a school-based environmental education programme. The programme was implemented in 7 indigenous primary schools in the project area. Students and teachers were encouraged to form an eco-club to promote student involvement in community conservation activities. Eco-clubs were formed in each of the 7 indigenous primary schools. During Y3, a second set of trainings will be carried out in each school, and the eco-clubs will be encouraged to identify conservation activities for implementation.	A second round of training will be carried out in the 7 schools in coming year. Eco-clubs will be supported to get involved in environmental activities in and around schools.	
Output 3.  Resilient and sustainable livelihoods strategies adopted by women and men in target households in indigenous communities.	3.1 At least 400 producers and community-based extension workers (at least 50% women) trained in climate-smart agriculture, poultry production, and sustainable NTFP. collection by project mid-term.  3.2 At least two climate-smart agriculture techniques are applied by 200 households (mid-term) and 400 households (end of project).	<ul> <li>3.1 During Y2, 188 households were trained in 2-3 climate-smart agriculture techniques. Awareness has been carried out in 4 CPA on importance of sustainable NTFP collection in preparation for the 2023 harvesting season.</li> <li>3.2 During Y2, 188 households were trained in 2 or more climate-smart agriculture techniques.</li> <li>3.3 During the establishment of agroforestry seed orchards, the indigenous households plant rice, vegetables and other food crops intercropped with the commercial trees. During Y2, the project supporter</li> </ul>		

3.4 400 households (50% female members) have increased annual income from existing land holdings and sustainable NTFP use and sale, by 10% (mid-term) and 20% (end of project).

value of produce (rice, vegetables, other food crops) from each plot was \$535. Most of the produce is for household consumption with excess being sold or battered to neighbours.

Request has been submitted for revision to:

400 households, 1600 people (50% female members) have increased annual income from existing land holdings and sustainable NTFP use and sale, by 10% by Y3

## Activity 3.1

Analyse and monitor gendered aspects of natural resource use, disaggregating roles in livelihoods and community decision-making processes to ensure gender-responsive project delivery (Y1).

During Y2, FFI and NTFPO designed a household survey to gather socio-economic information about households in indigenous communities with CPAs. The survey was design to capture information on gendered aspects of natural resource use, gender roles, access and control over natural resources, and community decision-making. Each CPA was sampled separately since indigenous communities are not homogeneous in terms of ethnic group, access to natural resources, access to market and government services, and agricultural potential.

Data from household surveys will be analysed and documented. Additional information will be gathered during Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and the gender-inclusive workshops.

Activity 3.2  Analyse community socio-economic status and assess traditional and current agricultural and NTFP/wildmeat harvesting practices, and cultural values (Y1).	Household survey has been designed to record the socio-economic status of households. For this, households have been stratified using local criteria into poor, middle and elite households. Different socio-economic groups have different access to traditional and current agricultural lands, and to NTFPs within CPAs. Elite households capture much of the benefits and have much larger landholdings than middle households, while poor households have limited access to land and resources and often work as laborers for better-off and elite households.	Household survey had questions related to socio-economic status, current agricultural and NTFP/wildmeat harvesting practices, and cultural values. Data will be analysed this coming year, and documented.
Activity 3.3  With IPs, identify and evaluate strategies based on conservation goals, agro-ecological conditions, traditional practices, existing skills/interests, and market demand based on market system analysis (Y1).	During Y1 and Y2, a series of meetings and workshops were held with each of the CPAs to document existing farming systems – mainly subsistence food crop agriculture and plantations of high-value commercial crops.	In the coming year, the project will complete market system assessments for key NTFP and agricultural commodities using M4P tools and methods.
Activity 3.4  Deliver technical training and develop capacity for indigenous producers for climate-smart agriculture, poultry, and revitalisation of sustainable traditional NTFP harvesting (Y1-Y3).	The initial focus has been on the establishment of cashew nut seed gardens, strategically located within communities to allow wide access to cuttings for the production of clonal planting stock.  The project is also helping women to establish seed gardens of high-	Training will continue during coming year to build on training delivered during Y3.  This will primarily focus on NTFPs – malva nut and cobra mushrooms, and agricultural commodities – cashew nut and high-value fruit trees.

	valued fruit trees around their homestead. The project has carried out assessments for selected NTFP including Malva Nut and Cobra Mushroom. During Y2, the project supported the CPAs/youth to map and measure malva nut trees within the 4 CPAs.	In Y3, the project will carry out a survey of the production of malva nut, the fees paid for extraction, and the income generated from the sale of malva nuts.  The project is working with communities and PDoE to test the potential for cloning malva nut trees so they can be cultivated.
Activity 3.5 Improve market access for selected agricultural and NTFP goods through better linkage between target communities and private sector and development of processing unit if feasible (Y1-Y3).	The project has mapped out the value chains (market systems) for cashew nuts, malva nuts and cobra mushroom.	Market system assessment will be completed for selected NTFPs and agricultural commodities.  Assessments will identify root causes of market underperformance for indigenous farmers, and interventions to improve the performance of the key market systems.

Annex 2: Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	are safeguarded, enabling the recovery during livelihood improvement amongs		curing the future of the northern
Outcome:  Forest cover in Virachey National Park is preserved through strengthened park and CPA management, and through the adoption of resilient and sustainable livelihoods, providing improved wellbeing for indigenous communities.	<ul> <li>0.1 Rate of annual forest cover loss in Virachey NP and associated biodiversity corridor is reduced by at least 20% by 2024 compared to 2020 baseline.</li> <li>0.2 At least 75% of both female and male members of 400 participating households report positive multi-dimensional wellbeing outcomes (e.g., income, food security, social status, gender equality, agency, and/or cultural values) by project end.</li> </ul>	O.1 Land cover analysis.  O.2 End of project participatory multi-dimensional well-being assessment report.  All relevant data will be sex-disaggregated	The strong political will to sustainably manage Virachey National Park continues.  The existing environmental legislative framework is maintained or improved, and is upheld by government and industry actors.  Cambodia continues to effectively contain and mitigate the community spread of Covid-19, such that human, material, and financial resources remain available for conservation and livelihoods improvement activities.
Output 1  1. Zonation and management plan developed and being implemented for Virachey National Park.	1.1. By end of Y1, generation and dissemination of data and knowledge to inform evidence-based zonation of the national park.  1.2. By end of Y1, draft and zonation maps incorporate input provided by indigenous community	1.1 Biodiversity survey report.      1.2 Draft zonation maps; zonation workshops' minutes, post workshop surveys indicating participants' impression of enfranchisement, and participants' lists.	Government remains committed to the development of a zonation and management plan for Virachey National Park.  Government processes move at sufficient pace to approve zonation

Output 2	2.1. Management plans for the four	2.1 CPA management plans.	CPA legal status is upheld.
2. Revised CPA management plans established and implemented by indigenous communities.	CPAs in Ratanakiri Province revised by end Y2.  2.2. 70% of CPA Committee members (c. 27) upskilled in CPA management by end Y3.  2.3. Number of snares and other threats to biodiversity recorded per unit of effort by CPA members (at least three per CPA) taking part in monthly community patrols is reduced by 50% by end Y3.  2.4. By end of project, 75% of 500 community members of all genders within the CPAs demonstrate increased understanding of the ecological values of the forest and the rationale for its protection, and self-report adherence to CPA rules and regulations	<ul> <li>2.2 CPA training participant lists before and after skills survey.</li> <li>2.3 Community patrol records.</li> <li>2.4 KAP survey baseline and endof-project reports; annual participatory project evaluation report.</li> <li>All relevant data will be sex-disaggregated.</li> </ul>	CPA members are able to meet.  CPA Committees continue to equitably and transparently represent their local constituency.
Output 3  3. Resilient and sustainable livelihoods strategies adopted by women and men in target households in indigenous communities.	<ul> <li>3.1. At least two climate-smart agriculture techniques are applied by 200 trained producers (at least 50% women) by end Y2 and 400 trained producers (at least 50% women) by end Y3.</li> <li>3.2. 400 households, 1,600 people (50% female members) have increased annual income from existing land holdings and sustainable NTFP use and sale. As a result of community engagement with farmers,</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>3.1 Training evaluation reports, baseline; mid-term and end-of-project study of farming practices, annual participatory project evaluation report.</li> <li>3.2. Natural resource use and income assessment baseline; midterm and end-of-project reports; annual participatory project evaluation report.</li> </ul>	Innovative practices introduced are readily adopted by indigenous women and men This assumption will be mitigated through ensuring practices are appropriate to the cultural, socio-economic and agroecological context.

both men and women, tree crop improvement (cashew nut and high-value fruit trees) have been prioritized. The planting materials are clonal (grafted) planting stock which will start producing after 3 years with an increase in production as trees mature. Therefore, incomes of participating households should increase by 10% after 3 years and 20% after 5 years.

3.3 Socio-economic baseline and end-of-project reports; annual participatory project evaluation report.

All relevant data will be sexdisaggregated.

3.3. 400 households improve their food security by decreasing the number of hungry months by at least 10% by end Y3.

Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

- 1.1 Conduct targeted biodiversity surveys, with participation from IPs, of wildlife and key habitats to provide the knowledge for an evidence-based zonation and management plan (Y1).
- 1.2 Disseminate results of biodiversity surveys to raise awareness and galvanise a sense of pride nationally, and to augment political will (Y1-Y2).
- 1.3 Conduct participatory zonation consultations with MoE, IPs and other stakeholders, to inform a zoning of VNP that fulfils conservation needs and IPs' sustainable resource use rights (Y1-Y2).
- 1.4 Develop an evidence-based management plan in partnership with MoE, following best practice guidance and with input from indigenous communities (Y2-Y3).
- 2.1 Assess current CPA management practices, customary institutions, land tenure and resource use needs within four CPAs in Ratanakiri Province (Y1).
- 2.2 Strengthen technical and organisational capacities of existing CPA Committees to update, implement and monitor existing management plans, and to engage in relevant decision-making (Y1-Y2).
- 2.3 Support the revision and monitoring of CPA management plans to ensure effectiveness and equitable distribution of risks/costs/benefits (Y2).

- 2.4 Train and support CPA members to conduct monthly forest community patrols to record, remove and discourage threats to wildlife, in line with CPA management plans (Y2-Y3).
- 2.5 Deliver two gender-inclusive workshops per year per target community within CPAs on regulations in protected areas including cultural and scientific contextual components (Y1-Y3).
- 2.6 Support 4 youth eco-clubs to take an active role in conservation stewardship within their communities through capacity building and local awareness events (Y1-Y3).
- 3.1 Analyse and monitor gendered aspects of natural resource use, disaggregating roles in livelihoods and community decision-making processes to ensure gender-responsive project delivery (Y1).
- 3.2 Analyse community socio-economic status and assess traditional and current agricultural and NTFP/wildmeat harvesting practices, and cultural values (Y1).
- 3.3 With IPs, identify and evaluate strategies based on conservation goals, agro-ecological conditions, traditional practices, existing skills/interests, and market demand based on market system analysis (Y1).
- 3.4 Deliver technical training and develop capacity for indigenous producers for climate-smart agriculture, poultry, and revitalisation of sustainable traditional NTFP harvesting (Y1-Y3).
- 3.5 Improve market access for selected agricultural and NTFP goods through better linkage between target communities and private sector and development of processing unit if feasible (Y1-Y3). Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

## **Annex 3: Standard Indicators**

The project will review the Standard Indicators and integrate into the logframe during next reporting period.

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
E.g. DI-A01	E.g. People who attended training on CBD Reporting Standards	E.g. Number of officials from national Department of Environment who attended training on CBD Reporting Standards	People	Men	20			20	60
E.g. DI-C17	E.g. Articles published by members of the project team	E.g. Number of unique papers published in peer reviewed journals	Number	None	1			1	4

In addition to reporting any information on publications under relevant standard indicators, in Table 2, provide full details of all publications and material produced over the last year that can be publicly accessed, e.g. title, name of publisher, contact details, cost. Mark with an asterisk (\*) all publications and other material that you have included with this report.

Table 2 Publications

Ī	Title	Type	Detail	Gender of Lead	Nationality of	Publishers	Available from
		(e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	(authors, year)	Author	Lead Author	(name, city)	(e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)

## **Checklist for submission**

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the <b>correct template</b> (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and <b>deleted the blue guidance text</b> before submission?	
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a> putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with <a href="mailto:BCF-">BCF-</a> Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
<b>Have you included means of verification?</b> You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 16)?	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	1