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Darwin Initiative Main & Extra Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":
(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/learning-and-evidence/>)

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

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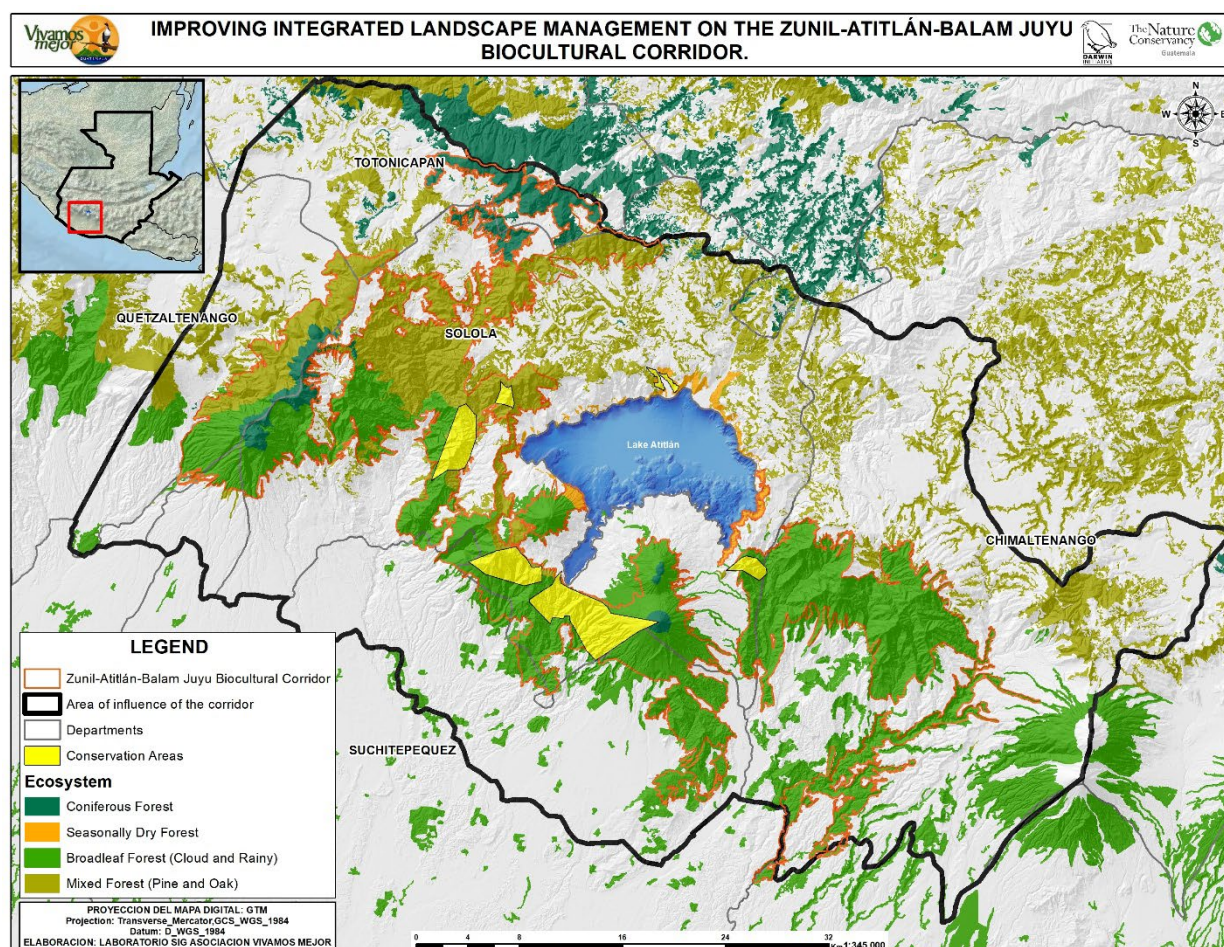
Darwin Initiative Project Information

Scheme (Main or Extra)	Main
Project reference	30-006
Project title	Improving integrated landscape management on the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyu biocultural corridor
Country/ies	Guatemala
Lead Organisation	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Project partner(s)	Asociación Vivamos Mejor (AVM)
Darwin Initiative grant value	GBP 598,996
Start/end dates of project	1 Jun 2023 – 31 May 2026
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2025 – Mar 2026) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	1 april 2025 – 31 march 2026
Project Leader name	José David Díaz González
Project website / blog / social media	
Report author(s) and date	Samuel Secaira & Erik Chavajay (AVM); José Alejandro Sosa, César Caté, Catalina Godoy & José David Díaz (TNC) - 30 April 2026

1. Project summary

The Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyu' biocultural and sustainable development corridor (ZABC) consists of a core zone, a continuous strip of forest extending along the Guatemalan volcanic chain, and its area of influence, a mosaic of land uses surrounding the core zone. It is the ancestral home of several Mayan peoples (Tz'utujil, Kaqchikel and K'iche') who base their livelihoods on goods and services provided by forests while maintaining a deep spiritual connection to the landscape through more than 25 ceremonial sites located within the corridor. In addition to its ecological and cultural importance, the area is heavily impacted by poverty and lack of government capacity to address populations' basic needs. Geographically, the project was carried out primarily in the department of Sololá and in the adjacent regions within the biocultural corridor of the department of Quetzaltenango and Chimaltenango, with a high proportion of Maya indigenous population (96 %), the second highest percentage of poverty (80.9%) and extreme poverty (40%) rates in the country, and a Human Development Index of 0.455. Despite their recognized value to conservation, livelihoods, climate change mitigation, and cultural identity, the corridor's core zone forests are being lost at alarming rates (800 ha lost in the last 10 years). According to a situation

analysis by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Asociación Vivamos Mejor (AVM), the primary threats to the corridor's ecosystems include forest fires caused by poor agricultural and apicultural practices and aggravated by prolonged dry seasons linked to climate change, landslides (due to lack of forest cover), land use change for agricultural purposes, and unsustainable extraction of firewood by rural communities. These conditions are exacerbated by the government's inability to provide the socio-economic conditions and technical assistance to promote conservation, access to ecologically sustainable livelihood opportunities, and the participatory governance that ensures buy-in from relevant stakeholders.



The project aims to halt the loss of biodiversity in the montane/cloud, pine-oak, and broadleaf forests of the ZABC caused by forest fires, land-use changes, forest degradation, and inappropriate agricultural practices. By using an integrated landscape management approach, we are strengthening the management capacities of state institutions, local governments, and indigenous communities. Additionally, we are generating knowledge about local biodiversity, improving inter-institutional coordination and capacity for adaptive fire management, restoring connectivity at degraded landscape sites, and improving household economy of 390 indigenous families.

2. Project stakeholders/partners

TNC leads overall project management and financial reporting, and institutional relations at national level. TNC partnered with AVM, a local organisation with extensive experience in the project's area of interest. AVM spearheads engagement with local governments, institutions, and communities, focusing on forest conservation, fire integrated management, landscape restoration, and livelihoods enhancement.

AVM maintained close coordination with regional government offices, including the protected area (CONAP), environment (MARN), forestry (INAB), and disaster reduction (CONRED), agriculture (MAGA) agencies. This project collaboration's with CONAP strengthened the regional Conservation Areas Support Roundtable (CASR), supported conservation area planning, and facilitated the establishment of new protected areas. The project engaged MARN to accompany CASR activities, as the country's biological corridors focal point. Through active participation in

CASR, the project worked with municipal park managers, Private Natural Reserve managers, and key stakeholders, such as the Private Natural Reserves Association (ARNPG), del Valle University of Guatemala (UVG), Lake Atitlán's sustainable management agency (AMSCLAE), and other NGOs and conservation initiatives in the region (Refer to MoV related to output 1 in section 3).

By active participation of AVM on Fire Management activities, support was secured by the Sololá's Environmental Commission (CODEMA) and the Development Commission of Sololá (CODEDE), under the lead of the Ministry of the Interior. Fire readiness and suppression are secured by the Departmental coordinator for risk reduction (CODRED), responding to the National Response Plan of the National Coordinator for risk reduction (CONRED) (Refer to MoV related to output 2 in section 3).

AVM led activity coordination with indigenous beekeepers and local coffee producer organizations Association Ik Luna and Asuvimagro. Partnerships with MAGA, Anacafé, and other NGOs provided technical input for beekeeping and coffee renewal (Refer to MoV related to output 4). The project worked closely with indigenous communities and municipal staff from 18 municipalities.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Toward Output 1, which aims to enhance local stakeholders' capacities for inclusive governance and sustainable management of the ZABC. More than 45 key stakeholders, managers, and representatives of conservation areas of the biological diversity of the Central Highlands of Guatemala have organized to comply with the Joint Administration and Shared Management Policy of the SIGAP and areas of importance for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in Guatemala [REDACTED]. In the process (2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026), these actors have been trained in different topics for integrated landscape management, such as integrated fire management, implementation of biological monitoring [REDACTED] (Reported), management of biological corridors, among others [REDACTED]. During this fiscal year, the actors continued meeting periodically and have continued to use these spaces for training, reflection, and self-evaluation. A self-evaluation workshop was held on the purpose of coordinating the group's conservation efforts ([Activity 1.2.1](#)). Over this time, a collective identity around regional conservation efforts has been created.

In this fiscal year, after two years of efforts, the regional Conservation Areas Support Roundtable (CASR) of the Central Highlands of Guatemala was established under CONAP Executive Resolution 189/2025 [REDACTED], becoming the second roundtable nationwide. This conservation platform will monitor the Zunil–Atitlán–Balam Juyú Biocultural Corridor and has updated its Management Plan.

Although more than 40 people from municipal women (OMM) -and-environment (UGAM) units have been trained to improve gender considerations in municipal planning, thereby increasing women's (OMM) participation in socio-environmental processes, significant gaps remain to achieve real and lasting change [REDACTED]. This process requires more time and cultural relevance. Assumption 1.2—"Municipalities are willing to hire women to represent them in governance spaces"—has not been met.

Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, implementation of the biological monitoring system for the Zunil–Atitlán–Acateño Biocultural Corridor continued, building on the system design and capacity development completed in 2024. Field data collection progressed across priority variables. Mammal monitoring was conducted at the Payajut site between March and September 2025, and the annual bird survey was completed in November–December 2025, recording 142 bird species (113 resident and 28 migratory). Routine data collection for vegetation structure and composition, mammals, birds, and climatic variables continued according to the established monitoring protocols. During site visits in 2025, technical failures affected several temperature and relative humidity data loggers, resulting in only partial data availability for climatic variables for this reporting period. Biennial vegetation monitoring is scheduled for April–May, with results to be consolidated and reported in the final report.

The process of updating the Management Plan for the Zunil–Atitlán–Balam Juyú Biocultural and Sustainable Development Corridor has been completed with the participation of CASR, public institutions, and organized local indigenous groups (Indicator 1.5). The process included 10 participatory workshops involving 79 participants from 34 academic, public, private, and community institutions (Activity [REDACTED]), as well as three technical focus groups addressing the corridor's natural, cultural, and economic components.

A geographic information systems analysis was also carried out to update territorial information [REDACTED]. The information considered included ecological niche modeling and the definition of bioclimatic corridors [REDACTED]. To conclude, a validation workshop was held with 45 participants convened under the Joint Administration and Shared Management Committee of the Central Highlands [REDACTED]. An additional achievement of this process is the expansion of the Biocultural Corridor to include forest massifs in the northern part of the Lake Atitlán Basin Multiple-Use Reserve in Tecpán, Montaña el Soco, and the Acatenango and Fuego volcanoes. The corridor's new working definition now covers nearly 100,000 hectares of forest, an increase of 40,000 hectares [REDACTED].

To support the biocultural corridor, conservation of more than 4,000 hectares of forest across key ecosystems has been strengthened in collaboration with four municipalities (Indicator 1.7). Management plans for four conservation areas have been updated with municipal backing [REDACTED]: 173.94 hectares of pine–oak forest in Chuiraxamoló Municipal Regional Park with the Santa Clara La Laguna municipality [REDACTED], 3,509 hectares of cloud and rain broadleaf forest in Rey Tepepul Municipal Regional Park with the Santiago Atitlán municipality [REDACTED], 252.03 hectares of cloud and pine–oak forest in Ikitiú Municipal Regional Park with the San Lucas Tolimán municipality [REDACTED], and 734.75 hectares of cloud and pine–oak forest in the Xiquichoy conservation area with the Santa María Visitación municipality [REDACTED].

In collaboration with the Sololá municipality, conservation of remnants of seasonally dry forests has been strengthened [REDACTED]. A total of 137.15 hectares have been recognized as a conservation area (Activity 1.7.3), and a management plan has been developed (Activity 1.7.4 & 1.7.5). Formal endorsement by the Municipal Council (Activity 1.7.2) remains pending beyond the reporting period, due to recent changes in council personnel, with a final approval meeting scheduled for May 2026.

Toward Output 2, which aims to stabilize *the rate of loss of key ecosystems due to wildfires is halted in the Zunil–Atitlán–Balam Juyú biocultural Corridor*. The Integrated Fire Management Strategy for the department of Sololá has been completed, significantly supporting the conservation of ecosystems within the biocultural corridor [REDACTED]. The process included a series of meetings, focus groups, workshops, expert consultations, and a geographic information systems analysis [REDACTED]. The strategy was validated within the framework of the Law of Development Councils, having been presented to and validated by the Departmental Environmental Commission (CODEMA) [REDACTED], the Departmental Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction (CODRED) [REDACTED], and the Departmental Development Council (CODEDE) [REDACTED].

A total of 300 people (255 men and 45 women), including community members and municipal officials, were trained in the Basic Techniques for Fire Control course. Of these, 167 hold certificates issued by CONRED [REDACTED]. Thanks to interinstitutional coordination under the departmental strategy, the impact of this output was improved, enabling an additional specialized course this fiscal year and strengthening departmental capacity for ongoing training. More than 25 (23 men and 2 women) wildland firefighters were trained and certified in the Forest Firefighter Course, which lasted four days and was delivered with support from AVM, AMSCLAE, CONRED, INAB, and the NGO AIRES [REDACTED].

A protocol has been developed to provide personal protective equipment and specialized gear on a temporary basis to local, municipal, and departmental brigades during fire response operations. This measure has significantly strengthened response capacity [REDACTED].

Important forests in the biocultural corridor have been protected, with maintenance completed on 25 KM of firebreaks [REDACTED]. Thanks to interinstitutional and community coordination, this firebreak system is maintained annually, contributing to the strategy's physical prevention

program. Through collaboration among municipalities, community groups, and other international cooperation projects implemented by Vivamos Mejor, maintenance of the system is planned for 2026 and 2027.

Toward Output 3, aiming at restoring 75 hectares of critical biological connectivity areas within the ZABC. Ecological restoration of 150 hectares of deforested and degraded lands in the biocultural corridor has been completed (Output 3). During the reporting period, 45 hectares were restored, through a combination of participatory planning, spatial analysis, and on-the-ground restoration actions. To support implementation, community workshops were conducted (Reported), GIS analyses were used to identify priority degraded areas (Reported), and commitment agreements were formalized among participating parties (

Under the cooperation agreement with the Mancomunidad Metrópoli de los Altos, restoration was implemented as part of a broader effort covering 150 hectares of forest, all of which are enrolled in the INAB PROBOSQUE forest incentive program, of which 75 hectares are located within the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam-Juyu biocultural corridor, specifically in the municipalities of Zunil and Cantel in Quetzaltenango

For restoration purposes, the CEDRACC nursery of Vivamos Mejor produced a total of 85,000 seedlings of 44 native species. Of these, 50,000 seedlings were produced, delivered, and planted during this fiscal year. The project exceeded its target for endemic, endangered, or ecologically key species, with 36.5% of seedlings meeting this criterion, including IUCN Red List species such as *Ocotea salvinii*, *Prunus guatemalensis*, and *Abies guatemalensis* (Activity 3.4.1 & 3.4.2). In addition, a wide diversity of species from different ecosystems was produced. In this fiscal year, 45 hectares of degraded lands in critical areas and connectivity gaps were reforested

In parallel, ten demonstration plots supporting integrated landscape management were established or strengthened. These plots showcase ecological restoration, coffee-based agroforestry systems, resilient beekeeping production systems, and household-level livelihood improvements. Outreach materials were created to publicize the plots, and exchange tours among plots were held to strengthen beneficiary knowledge. In this fiscal year an exchange tour was conducted among coffee growers, beekeepers, foresters, and conservation area managers, with a total of 60 participants (15 women and 45 men) (education material)

Towards Output 4, which aims to improve the household's economy of 390 indigenous families by achieving a minimum of 10 % increase in their annual income through sustainable livelihoods and savings from reduced fuelwood consumption. 52 beekeepers have completed training and certification by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food (MAGA) in "Sustainable production practices and honey commercialization". These beekeepers are from the municipalities of Sololá, San Juan la Laguna, Santa Catarina Palopó, and Santiago Atitlán, in the department of Sololá. Of these, nine beekeepers obtained registration in the Beekeeper and Apiary Registry (REGAPI) of MAGA's National Livestock Traceability System, enabling them to legally transport and commercialize apicultural products nationwide (MV 4.1.1).

Considering the baseline of the beekeeping situation, equipment and tools were fully delivered during this fiscal year to improve productivity and income generation. In this fiscal year the deliveries were completed, providing a total of 75 wooden hive bodies, 150 hive supers, 40 covers, and 1,300 wired frames. Apiary monitoring has been completed: 51 visits were made to collect baseline data. Data analysis is underway and will be reflected in the final report.

During the same reporting period, 59 coffee growers (20 women and 39 men) completed a capacity-building process focused on sustainable agroforestry coffee management. Four workshops were held, with an average attendance of 26 participants, covering topics such as community organization, renovation and establishment of coffee plots, and preparation of extracts and remedies for pest and disease management. Purchase and distribution of seedlings were completed: 120,000 Caturra coffee plants were delivered for the renovation of 7 hectares of coffee. Under agreements with the Ik Luna Women's Association and ASUVIMAGRO (Activity 4.2.4), the 59 coffee growers have implemented

improved practices in their agroforestry coffee plots. Plot monitoring for baseline data collection has been completed [REDACTED]. The analysis of projected coffee productivity will be included in the final report.

The identification, diagnosis, purchase, and delivery of materials for constructing improved wood-saving stoves were reported in the second fiscal year (Activity [REDACTED]). In this fiscal year, monitoring visits to assess their efficiency were completed and analyzed [REDACTED]. Results show that the improved stove reduces firewood consumption by 67%, decreasing average monthly use from 1.65 m³ to 0.60 m³. Considering the approximate price of firewood, the estimated monthly savings are Q. 946.00, equivalent to Q. 11,355.60 per year.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: *By 2026, local governments, institutions and indigenous communities have enhanced capacities for the inclusive governance and sustainable management of 63,000ha in the core zone the Zunil Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor.*

Governance & Capacity Building (Indicador 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3) At base line, the governance framework for the ZABC was underdeveloped, lacking a functioning platform for stakeholder collaboration. Efforts to establish the CASR between 2021 and 2022 were unsuccessful, with limited support to complete the required documentation, and no meeting were held during 2023. Additionally, CASR members faced gaps in capacity for governance, sustainable management, collaborative decisions-making, and gender-inclusive planning processes, in part because municipal CASR members (46%) were newly appointed employees without experience in conservation or connectivity planning and management.

In this fiscal year the Joint Administration and Shared Management Board of the Central Highlands was formalized by CONAP Executive Resolution 189/2025 [REDACTED]. This board represents more than 24 conservation areas within the Biocultural Corridor [REDACTED]. Three follow-up meetings were held during the period, with average attendance of 42, 63, and 42 participants, respectively [REDACTED]. Training on conservation and inclusive governance continued, and a self-assessment and reflection workshop was conducted [REDACTED]. Although progress has been made in strengthening municipal women's and environmental units, significant gaps remain to achieve deep changes that ensure equitable opportunities [REDACTED]. During the project, Assumption 1.2—that municipalities would be inclined to hire women staff to represent them on governance platforms—was not met.

Ecological monitoring & Niche Modelling (Indicador 1.4 & 1.6) At baseline, previous studies in the ZABC provided valuable snapshots of biodiversity but lacked systematic, long-term monitoring for effective conservation, while no prior information existed to understand the future impacts of climate change on biodiversity, limiting adaptive management.

During this fiscal year, the Vivamos Mejor Association continued collecting data for the ecological monitoring system [REDACTED]. Annual variables related to birds were recorded in all plots (MV 1.4.2; [REDACTED]), and camera traps were installed in one additional plot, Payajut. Biannual vegetation data will be collected in March and April.

Indicator 1.6 was completed during the second fiscal year. The results ([REDACTED] Reported) have been incorporated into the Biocultural Corridor planning, with several species—such as *Oreophasis derbianus* and *Puma concolor*—selected as attributes of ecological viability and priority conservation elements (see MD 1.5.1).

Conservation Planning and Protection (Indicators 1.5 & 1.7) At baseline, both the ZABC and regional municipal parks (RMP) lacked updated management plans, with previous planning efforts dating back to the previous decade. Furthermore, the endangered seasonally dry forest ecosystem was underrepresented in the regional municipal protected area network and lacked specific local conservation action planning.

Within the framework of CASR of the Central Highlands, the management plan for the Biocultural Corridor was updated [REDACTED]. A total of 79 people from 34 academic, public, private, and community institutions and organizations participated in the process, which included meetings, workshops, focus groups, and expert consultations (see Activities 1.6). Notably, the corridor's core and working area were expanded northward, northeastward, and eastward of Guatemala's volcanic chain and highlands. The new core area of the Zunil–Atitlán–Acatenango Biocultural

Corridor now comprises nearly 100,000 hectares of forest — about 40,000 hectares more than the previous boundary. This expansion enabled the inclusion of ecosystems previously unrepresented in the corridor, such as high-elevation conifer forests [REDACTED]. This achievement was made possible largely by the sustained participation of Board members representing these forest masses, who requested and facilitated the expansion.

Conservation management was strengthened across 4,806.87 hectares of cloud and pine-oak forests through the update and validation of management plans, carried out in close collaboration with conservation-committed municipalities [REDACTED] (also see [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]). Municipal governments provided technical input, institutional backing, and formal endorsement during the plan update and validation processes, reinforcing local governance for forest conservation within the Biocultural Corridor. Additionally, a new conservation area—Jaibal Municipal Regional Park—was formally declared in the municipality of Sololá (MV 1.7.2; see activity). The park encompasses more than 137.1 hectares and represents the largest conserved remnant of seasonally dry forest ecosystems within the Biocultural Corridor. A management plan for the new protected area has been completed, while formal municipal council endorsement remains pending beyond the reporting period due to recent changes in council personnel.

Output 2: *By mid-2026, the number of wildfires has stabilized and the rate of loss of key ecosystems due to wildfires is halted in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural Corridor.*

Development of the Regional Fire Management Strategy (Indicator 2.1) At baseline, Guatemala had recently approved the National Fire Management Strategy, with only Petén (out of 22 departments nationwide) having an RFMS. The ZABC lacked a formal and integrated fire management strategy.

Sololá, at the heart of the Zunil-Atitlán-Acatenango Biocultural Corridor, has strengthened its capacity to prevent and respond to wildfires, becoming the second department nationwide to adopt a Departmental Strategy for Integrated Fire Management [REDACTED]. The strategy has the endorsement of the Departmental Development Council, under the Law of Development Councils, and is aligned with CONRED's Departmental and National Response Plans (Indicator 2.1; [REDACTED] see also MV of Activities 2.1). The strategy includes 7 programs, 20 lines of action, and 61 activities.

The Integrated Fire Management Strategy is operated through coordination between CODEMA ([Link](#)) and CODRED ([Link](#)). In the Departmental Response Plan it was validated under Function 11.1 on Fire Response, covering interface fires and wildfires. Function 11.1 recognizes a technical committee, under CODEMA's forest unit, that responds to wildfires and interface fires in the department of Sololá. The strategy comprises six programs. The fire prevention, knowledge management, area restoration, and site planning programs are led by CODEMA's forest unit, while the fire rating system and fire suppression programs are led by the Incident Command System within CODRED. During this fiscal year the strategy is operational and is a core part of the forest unit's Annual Operational Plan [REDACTED].

The successful formalization of the strategy in Sololá has opened dialogue and generated interest within the Departmental Environmental Commissions (CODEMA) of Chimaltenango and Quetzaltenango to replicate the process.

Implementation of the Strategy (Indicators 2.2, 2.3 & 2.4) At baseline, fire management capacity in the ZABC was fragmented. A capacity diagnostic survey (refer to Activity 2.1.2 in Section 3.1) revealed that of 255 members of community and municipal fire brigades, 12% remained untrained, and existing firebreaks were insufficient in both length and maintenance to effectively control wildfire spread.

A total of 300 people (255 men and 45 women) were trained in the Basic Techniques for Forest Fire Control (TBCIF) course. Of these, 166 participants (154 men and 12 women) obtained CONRED certification. During this reporting period, 53 individuals (47 men and 6 women) were trained, and all received certification [REDACTED]. AVM has strengthened its response capacity and support for wildfire suppression in the Biocultural Corridor through equipment provision. Under a response protocol, AVM supports various departmental and municipal brigades in wildfire suppression [REDACTED] contributing to the conservation of montane broadleaf and conifer forests. Although Indicator 2.4 was reported as completed in the second fiscal year due to interinstitutional effort, maintenance of the firebreak system continues [REDACTED] see also

report on Activity 2.4.1). This has been achieved through collaborative efforts of municipalities and local NGOs such as AVM and Sotzil.

Within the framework of the Strategy, new and strengthened interinstitutional coordination has been achieved. AVM, AMSCLAE, AIRES, and CONRED delivered the Forest Firefighter course during this fiscal year, providing specialized training to 25 forest firefighters (). In January and February 2026, the Annual Operational Plan (POA) for the forestry axis of Sololá's CODEMA scheduled its activities based on the Strategy (MV 2.1.2).

All these actions carried out in this fiscal year have supported the development of six of the seven programs of the Strategy: 1) Governance; 2) Prevention; 3) Rating Systems; 4) Suppression; 5) Knowledge Management; and 6) Area Restoration (see MV 2.1.1).

Output 3: *By 2026, 75ha of forests in key biological connectivity areas of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú bioncultural corridor are restored and serve as demonstration sites.*

Identification of Degraded Areas & Demonstration Sites (Indicator 3.1 & 3.2) During this fiscal year, restoration agreements were signed between landowners, AVM, and TNC for 45 hectares restored (). Ten demonstration plots showcasing best practices for integrated landscape management were established (Indicator 3.2). Outreach materials out the plots reached over 3,000 viewers (). Farmer-to-farmer exchange tours strengthened local knowledge on landscape management; two tours were held this fiscal year with 82 participants (61 men and 21 women) ().

Connectivity Restoration (Indicators 3.3 & 3.4) During this fiscal year, seedlings were planted in degraded and deforested areas to cover an area equivalent to 45 hectares, thereby contributing to the biological connectivity of the Biocultural Corridor (MV 3.4.1. See Activity 3.4.3). At AVM's CEDRACC nursery, 50,000 seedlings of 44 native species were produced, of which at least 30,000 (36.5%) are endemic, threatened, or ecologically key species (). Collaboration agreements have been signed with 88 people (70 men and 18 women) to ensure the sustainability of these efforts (see MV 3.1.2).

Output 4: *By mid-2026, 390 indigenous families will improve their household economy, with a minimum 15% increase of their annual income derived from sustainable livelihoods and savings from reduced fuelwood consumption.*

390 families have improved or are projected to improve their income through beekeeping, coffee cultivation, and household savings from reduced firewood consumption. Activities have been completed

Sustainable honey production (Indicator 4.1) 52 beekeepers (14 women and 38 men) from five municipalities in Sololá completed training and were certified by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) in "Sustainable production and commercialization of honey" (). Of these, 9 have obtained the Guatemalan Beekeeping Registry (REGAPI). Surveys were conducted and the new practices in the apiaries were documented, demonstrating increased productivity and income (). An average increase of 54 pounds of honey per apiary was recorded in 2025, after harvesting season; additionally, on average, apiaries increased their hives by 104 %.

Sustainable coffee production (Indicator 4.2) At baseline, coffee growers from Ik Luna and Asumimagro lacked resources and motivation to renew upproductive coffee plots, limiting household income potential.

59 coffee growers (20 women and 39 men) have implemented better practices in their organic shaded coffee production units. Two conservation agreements were signed with two local indigenous organizations Members that have renewed plantations covering seven hectares and adopted sustainable coffee production practices (). In the process, a total of 4 workshops has been held on agricultural practices for organic coffee production (). Coffee renovation of 7 hectares of coffee plots was carried out this FY (). Although final monitoring has been held, final report is under way ().

Improved wood-saving stoves (Indicator 4.3). At baseline, indigenous families consumed an average of 1.3 firewood loads per month. Of these households, 28% exclusively purchased

firewood (at 53–80 \$ per load), 46% exclusively collected firewood (spending an average 6.7 hours/week), and the remainder both purchased and collected firewood.

During the first FYr, a total of 300 improved firewood-savings stoves were constructed. During this FY, an analysis of the social, environmental, and economic impact of improved firewood-saving stoves on families who acquired them was conducted, reporting greater efficiency and savings in firewood use and household economy. On an annual average, a household spends up to US\$2,407.40 on firewood purchases; with a fuel-efficient stove the expenditure falls to US\$893.30, reducing firewood consumption by more than 60%.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome: *By 2026, the integrated landscape management of 63,000 ha of forests in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor will be improved, effectively protecting biodiversity, restoring biological connectivity, and promoting sustainable livelihoods.*

Integrated landscape management of the 63,000 hectares of forest within the biocultural corridor has been enhanced through strengthened inclusive governance, capacity building for fire management, ecological restoration with native species, and improved livelihoods for corridor households.

Governance and Local Government Actions (Indicators 0.1 & 0.2) By Executive Resolution CONAP 189/2025, the CASR of the Central Highlands was established, becoming the second table of its kind nationwide. Based on CONAP's 2015 Policy for Joint Administration and Shared Management of SIGAP and Areas of Importance for Biological Conservation, the Table provides a platform for joint planning for regional biodiversity conservation. During its formation, key stakeholders were engaged and conservation efforts were strengthened, creating a shared identity around biodiversity management in the Central Highlands (see MV, Output 1.1). Thanks to the project, CASR has finally been legalized and the management of the Zunil–Atitlán–Balam Juyú biocultural corridor was linked to the Table. Within the CASR and through collaboration among CONAP, MARN, municipalities, private landowners, and NGOs, the corridor management plan was updated and now serves as the Table's management instrument.

Project achievements include expansion of the biocultural corridor. A technical redefinition—based on forest connectivity, ecosystem representativeness, and the participation and presence of stakeholders and conservation areas within the Table—enabled the corridor's enlargement. The new designation, Zunil–Atitlán–Acateño Biocultural and Sustainable Development Corridor, extends the corridor to include high-elevation conifer forests north of the RUMCLA, seasonally dry forests around Lake Atitlán, the mixed forests of Tecpán and El Soco mountain, and the cloud forests of Acateño and Fuego volcanoes (see MV, Output 1.5).

At the local level, the project-initiated conservation planning processes with five municipalities that jointly manage nearly 5,000 hectares of key corridor ecosystems. Management of four protected areas was strengthened through updated management plans, and the project supported the declaration of a new protected area—the largest contribution to conserving the region's seasonally dry forest: 137.1 hectares of mixed dry forest and oak woodland (see MV, Output 1.7)

Wildfire Stabilisation and Restoration of Degraded Connectivity (Indicators 0.3 & 0.4) The department of Sololá, located at the centre of the biocultural corridor, now has a departmental strategy for integrated fire management developed and validated under the Law of Development Councils thanks to the project. The strategy's operation links the Forestry Axis of the Departmental Environment Commission (CODEMA) with the Departmental Response Plan of the Departmental Coordinator for Risk Reduction (CODRED). The strategy is operational through the Forestry Axis and has been incorporated into the annual POA (MV.0.2.1). Multiple administrative actions have been undertaken (see MV, Output 1.2).

In this fiscal year, 80 hectares of degraded areas were fully reforested, with emphasis on zones critical for connectivity. The CEDRACC nursery (AVM) produced 50,000 seedlings of 37 native species representing the corridor's four ecosystems: montane cloud and rain broadleaf forest, mixed pine–oak forest, high-elevation conifer forests, and seasonally dry forest. Over 2,000 seedlings of two IUCN-listed threatened species (IUCN 2026)—*Ocotea salvinii* (EN) and *Prunus guatemalensis* (EN)—were produced and planted in their respective ecosystems. This high species diversity will support not only structural but also functional connectivity by introducing

species with key ecological roles. More than 88 community members participated in reforestation activities and committed to the process via a signed agreement (see MV, Output 1.4).

Climate Change Vulnerability of Key Species (Indicator 0.5) In the project's first fiscal year, the vulnerability of 25 ecologically key species within the biocultural corridor was assessed. Ecological niche modeling identified potential bioclimatic corridors for these species (see MV, Output 1.6). In this fiscal year, these data were used in the ecological viability analysis following the Open Standards for the Practice of in the corridor management plan update. For example, the puma was included as a conservation element due to its status as an apex predator and its potential to function as an umbrella species following bioclimatic corridors (see MV, Output 1.5).

Livelihood Improvement and Reduced Fuelwood Use (Indicator 0.6) The Project contributed to improve livelihoods for 390 households through construction of fuel-efficient stoves, strengthening of beekeeping, and rehabilitation of 15 hectares of coffee. More than 60% of participants are women, and a 10% increase in income or savings from these activities is projected. In this fiscal year, 7 hectares of coffee were rehabilitated and over 120,000 Caturra coffee seedlings were distributed; these have been planted and are under monitoring. Beekeepers were equipped and training continued: 51 beekeepers received training from MAGA and 9 secured REGAPI registration. Baseline data have been collected and changes are being analyzed for the annual report (see MV, Outputs 4). Regarding fuel-efficient stoves, this year an average annual savings of US\$2,407.40 per household was observed, meeting the targeted indicator (See MV, Output 4.3).

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 0.1: There is sufficient political stability to implement the project. | **Comments:** Political conditions remained stable, enabling uninterrupted implementation.

Assumption 0.2: Newly elected local authorities support project activities. | **Comments:** Most municipalities supported activities; Sololá delayed endorsement of a new protected area.

Assumption 0.3: The community remains consistently engaged. | **Comments:** Communities participated regularly in project activities.

Assumption 0.4: There is sufficient trust and commitment between local government, indigenous peoples and local communities to collaborate on the agreement and subsequent management activities. | **Comments:** Collaboration occurred without conflicts.

Assumption 0.5: There is sufficient legitimacy of local stakeholder representatives to adequately represent their communities and to be a channel for bringing the agreements reached to fruition for each stakeholder. | **Comments:** Representatives are formally recognized, including through CONAP resolution.

Assumption 0.6: Participants, in general, will reinforce their ideas, concepts and practices that are sustainable in the long-term by taking part on the activities of this project. Neighbours and relatives may be encouraged to adopt these practices by observing and listening to participants. | **Comments:** Trainings were completed and knowledge retention was confirmed.

Assumption 0.7: Seasonal or climate-related droughts or weather patterns will not be severe enough to prevent local communities from participating in this project. | **Comments:** Scheduling adjustments ensured full participation despite delays in rainfall.

Assumption 0.8: Measures to manage the Covid-19 pandemic will not impair the ability to execute the project activities by the communities and consortium partners. | **Comments:** COVID-19 did not affect activities during the period.

Assumption 1.1: Local governments, institutions, private nature reserves and CSOs are aware of their capacity needs, are interested in strengthening their capacity, continue to manifest interest and actively participate in the generation of agreements and planning instruments for the integrated management of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor and assign representatives of marginalized social groups within their institutions or organizations as representatives in the roundtable. | **Comments:** CASR members identified capacity needs and participated actively, including women and youth.

Assumption 1.2: Municipalities will be inclined to choose women to represent them at official governance platforms. | **Comments:** Some municipalities appointed women, but overall representation remains low.

Assumption 1.3: There is sufficient legitimacy of local stakeholder representatives to adequately represent their communities and to be a channel for bringing the agreements reached to fruition for each stakeholder. | **Comments:** See Assumption 0.5.

Assumption 1.4: The RUMCLA roundtable is perceived as a legitimate body and constituents participate actively and equitably in RUMCLA processes. | **Comments:** Participation levels confirm legitimacy.

Assumption 1.5: There is a common understanding of the basic problems that are present in the biocultural corridor by the local authorities and they are willing to address them. | **Comments:** Authorities consistently prioritized fires and monitoring.

Assumption 1.6: Local communities and stakeholders perceive protected areas and management plans as legitimate and effective mechanisms, and accept their implementation and operation. | **Comments:** Plans were broadly accepted, with remaining concerns in Sololá.

Assumption 1.7: Data literacy is sufficient to use data from the ecological monitoring system to improve adaptive management of the biocultural corridor. | **Comments:** Partners provided support to address data literacy gaps.

Assumption 2.1: Climate parameters are maintained in average ranges (10-year average). There are no extreme drought seasons outside normal parameters. | **Comments:** No extreme climatic events occurred.

Assumption 2.2: There is sufficient openness and interest on the part of the interested organizations to participate in a coordinated manner, both on the part of the local and central government and the communities. | **Comments:** Stakeholders coordinated effectively on RFMS development.

Assumption 2.3: There is sufficient institutional stability for the long-term development and implementation of the Integrated Fire Management Strategy. | **Comments:** Institutional continuity was maintained.

Assumption 3.1: Landowners in degraded key biodiversity connectivity areas are willing to implement forest restoration activities on their land. | **Comments:** Restoration occurred, though incentive concerns persist.

Assumption 3.2: Restored areas are sufficiently maintained and protected from future changes in land use. | **Comments:** Commitments were signed; monitoring is planned.

Assumption 3.3: There are no severe climatic or meteorological events that affect the integrity and extent of protected areas, or the commitment of landowners to maintain restored lands. | **Comments:** No severe events affected protected areas.

Assumption 3.4: There is sufficient interest among local farmers and others to attend training and visit demonstration sites. | **Comments:** Farmers showed strong interest and participation.

Assumption 3.5: Women will choose to reforest because it is seen as investing on future firewood sources. | **Comments:** Women led over one-quarter of restored hectares.

Assumption 4.1: According to the planning processes and development actions carried out by Vivamos Mejor over the past 30 years, stakeholders have expressed interest in coffee production and beekeeping, which has been documented in various planning documents and evaluations. Based on this, it is expected that farmers and beekeepers will maintain interest in project activities, complete training, use new equipment, and implement improved production practices. | **Comments:** Participants completed training and adopted improved practices.

Assumption 4.2: Women already engaged in some economic activity, such as coffee growing, are more likely to participate in workshops and decision-making roles. | **Comments:** Indigenous women actively participated and held leadership roles.

Assumption 4.3: Market conditions remain favourable for beekeeping and coffee production to be profitable and a desirable livelihood for the local population. | **Comments:** Producers continue investing in coffee and beekeeping.

Assumption 4.4: Women will desire to participate in the stove project. This results in a reduction of time, energy and economic resources dedicated to gathering or buying firewood. | **Comments:** Most stoves were allocated to women.

Assumption 4.5: The families benefiting from the wood-saving stoves use them and reduce their firewood consumption (as has been seen in other cases in the same region to which the project is intended to be directed). | **Comments:** Stove use is ongoing; monitoring is scheduled.

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

Impact statement: *Poverty and social inequality rates in rural and indigenous communities in the western highlands of Guatemala are reduced through the sustainable use and conservation of local biodiversity.*

During the project's final year, foundations were consolidated to promote integrated landscape management across Guatemala's central volcanic chain, enabling development opportunities.

The establishment of the Regional Table for Joint Administration and Shared Management of the Central Highlands (CASR)—the second such table nationwide— has coordinated conservation efforts under a regional vision. The Table brings together stakeholders who collectively manage more than 20,000 hectares of corridor forest. Since its formation in 2025, processes to organize similar tables in other regions have commenced.

The Departmental Strategy for Integrated Fire Management in Sololá, validated by the Departmental Development Council, creates the framework for coordinated integrated fire management. Operationally, it aligns efforts to address wildfire impacts, recognizes institutional mandates, and provides coordination spaces. Since its launch, departmental environment commissions in Quetzaltenango and Chimaltenango have placed strategy development on their agendas, contributing to strengthening the national response to forest fires.

With project support, the AVM nursery continues producing native and threatened species. Producing over 40 species in 2025, it ranks as the nursery with the greatest species richness nationally. This enables more appropriate ecological restoration that respects ecosystem diversity and ecological processes, avoiding biodiversity loss associated with low-diversity reforestations

Poverty reduction is being addressed through sustainable livelihoods, empowering indigenous producers to improve practices and incomes. Coffee growers renovated agroforestry systems, beekeepers were equipped with hives and trained in sustainable practices, and improved stoves were deployed to reduce firewood consumption. Beyond economic benefits, the project contributes to multidimensional poverty reduction by improving health outcomes (e.g., reduced indoor air pollution), saving time otherwise spent collecting firewood, and fostering inclusive governance. Workshops and CASR participation empowered stakeholders and strengthened community capacities.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

Through Output 1 (see Indicators 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3 in Section 3.2), the project has advanced the Joint Administration and Shared Management Policy of the Guatemalan System of Protected Areas and Natural Areas of Importance for the Conservation of Biological Diversity. Specifically, under Line 3 —participatory spaces for joint administration and shared management at regional and national levels— the project supported the establishment of the second Regional Table at the national level.

Output 2 (see Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 & 2.4) contributed to the National Fire Management Strategy in Guatemala and to the National Response Plan of the National Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction (CODRED), particularly Function 11. The development, validation, and operationalization of the departmental strategy for integrated fire management in Sololá lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive approach to fires in the highlands and volcanic chain of Guatemala.

Output 3 (see Indicator 2.4) contributes to the National Strategy for Forest Landscape Restoration. In particular, the active participation of Asociación Vivamos Mejor (AVM) in the

national table has positioned it as a reference for its nursery's high species richness and for documenting the project's restoration efforts.

The project significantly contributed to Guatemala's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP). Key actions included advancing the official recognition and participatory governance model for the CASR and training CASR participants (refer to Indicators 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3 in Section 3.2). These actions contribute to strengthening new territorial management spaces (NBSAP Strategic Activity 1.3), training institutional managers in biodiversity knowledge (NBSAP Strategic Activity 5.2), developing regional participatory mechanisms for biodiversity conservation (NBSAP Strategic Activity 7.2), developing efficient local governance mechanisms, implementing biological corridors, and creating spaces for training and permanent dialogue and mechanisms for participation in territorial management (NCCAP Adaptation Result 4.1).

5. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

Poverty and extreme poverty in Guatemala stem from multiple, historically rooted structural factors; therefore, the issue is multifaceted and requires an integrated approach. In response, the project was designed with a landscape-integrated management approach.

The project's different results target several problems that contribute to poverty. Result 4 (Indicators 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3) directly benefits 390 households economically through increased income or cost savings. Results 2 and 3 address sustainable management of natural resources—particularly water and forests—which are essential livelihoods for communities in the Guatemalan highlands. Result 1 has strengthened governance of forest blocks of high ecological and biodiversity value (Indicator 1.1).

The project has also reinforced our implementing partner, Asociación Vivamos Mejor (AVM), which has promoted sustainable development in the highlands and volcanic chain since 1989 and has detailed territorial knowledge (See <https://vivamosmejor.org.gt/>). As a local actor, AVM supports sustainable change in the medium and long term. Specifically, the project has strengthened operations of its field school, the Center for Education in Rural Development and Climate Change Adaptation (CEDRACC), where germplasm is produced and beneficiaries are trained. The school trains over 1,000 community members annually (nearly 60% women) in integrated landscape management and food security.

6. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	X
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

The project is sensitive to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). Activities were designed with the local context in mind and aim to ensure women's participation in meeting basic needs. However, structural community issues remain delicate and require additional time, attention and resources to address effectively

In this fiscal year, 26% of apiculture participants and 33% of coffee-growing participants were women, partially meeting Indicator 1.3 (target: 25% for apiculture and 50% for coffee). Women's average participation in the joint administration table meetings (Indicator 1.1) was 24%, and in reforestation activities (Indicator 3.4) was 21%. Overall, there is still a gap to reach gender equality.

At the community level, implementing Indicator 4.3—the installation of improved, fuel-saving stoves—has provided opportunities to address gender equity. AVM's household livelihood improvement approach includes training on hygiene, women's rights and environmental protection.

Our local partner continues to strengthen its GESI capacities. This fiscal year they leveraged synergies with other AVM projects to train staff on disability inclusion, delivering a five-day diploma course by Associazione Centro Orientamento Educativo (COE) that provided specialized training to team members.

The project is GESI-sensitive at both the implementing partner and community levels. With more time and guidance, it can become an empowering intervention.

7. Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

TNC's process to evaluate project progress and achievements includes a schedule for quarterly meetings with AVM to monitor progress, achieve indicators effectively, and verify the activities outlined in the project's logframe. The TNC implementation team has supported AVM throughout the project, organising regular calls and visits to AVM offices to follow up on activity implementation.

No amendments were made to the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan this year. Details of the achievement indicators and means of verification can be found in the logframe (Annex 2).

8. Lessons learnt

Although activities were largely completed within the planned timeframe and the project's results and objectives were achieved, unexpected delays arose that warrant attention and reflection. The original plan scheduled Indicators 1.5 and 2.1 to be met in the first fiscal year to ensure project continuity; however, these were not achieved until the third fiscal year.

These delays were largely dependent on the political will of government actors. In the first fiscal year a staff change at CONAP delayed the formation of the CASR. Likewise, some verification means—such as 1.7.1—which rely on local governments have been difficult to finalize and remain pending. These lessons should be incorporated into the design of future project proposals.

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

We have thoroughly reviewed all last year's recommendations as part of the project's second annual report, and we endorse the revised context.

In response, we have addressed all comments as follows:

- 1) The reference context for each result has been included, along with the corresponding sources of verification and evidence, detailed in each section.
- 2) All outstanding deliverables from the 2nd annual report, submitted in 2025, have been completed.
- 3) The completion of the Management Plan for the Zunil, Atitlán, Balam Juyu Biocultural Corridor (Activities 1.5.1 & 1.5.3) has been added as a final and highly important deliverable, with an expansion of its scope, which serves as an exit strategy regarding the monitoring, management,

and administration of the biocultural corridor by the CODEMA Co-Management Council, formed within this same DARWIN project.

10. Risk Management

Over the past 12 months the international cooperation context has shifted in ways that jeopardize the continuity of civil society organizations dependent on external aid. The closure of USAID and the rise in international conflicts have multiple impacts, reducing opportunities to deliver sustainable local development in the most vulnerable countries. Organizations such as TNC and AVM have been affected by these changes.

This fiscal year there were staff changes at both the local partner AVM and TNC Guatemala in roles related to project implementation. Although both organizations' institutions provided support and mitigated the impact, the situation requires adaptive project management, which has affected activity progress and caused delays.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Delivery Chain If one of the project partners suffers changes to staff capacity, affecting its delivering capacity, there is a risk of not performing all the activities as planned.	Possible	Minor	TNC is willing to sharing experiences, good practices, and helping partners to quickly increase their capacities in case it is needed. Also, TNC, as a large organization, is prepared to intervene and ensure that activities not covered by partners will still get executed and covered by TNC

11. Scalability and durability

The project has the potential to be replicated along Guatemala's volcanic chain and scaled nationally. Indicators such as 1.1 and 2.1—the establishment of regional tables for joint administration and shared management (CASR) and the development of a departmental strategy for fire management—are replicable, particularly in the country's western region. The experience could be expanded to the departments of Chimaltenango, Quetzaltenango and San Marcos, which share similar socio-ecological conditions. Since the project began, regional attention to these issues has increased, recognizing the project's work and encouraging replication.

The sustainability and longevity of the results rely on the work of local partners like AVM. Their continuous work over three decades has allowed processes to continue and new topics to be integrated for more comprehensive approaches. Learning spaces such as CEDRACC extend knowledge of ecological restoration, integrated fire management and biodiversity-based rural economies beyond the project. In this way, the project has helped consolidate and sustain initiatives the organization was already pursuing.

12. Darwin Initiative identity

Through social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, Vivamos Mejor has shared all the various activities carried out during the DARWIN process, highlighting not only the technical support provided by TNC but also expressing gratitude to the DARWIN project and the British Embassy for their support over the past three years.

Similarly, within the launch processes in 2025—such as the co-management committee, the strategic fire management plan, and the biocultural corridor management plan, have served not only to highlight the DARWIN project's support through the visibility of its logo but also verbally, promoting the effective support it has provided over the past three years. This support can serve as an excellent tool for managing and monitoring actions specifically related to biological corridors in Guatemala, particularly those adjacent to the Guatemalan highlands region. How has the UK Government's contribution to your project's work been acknowledged?

Local, regional, and national authorities have come together at symbolic moments of great significance—such as the launch of initiatives including the establishment of the co-management committee, the strategic fire management plan, and the biocultural corridor management plan—

during which indigenous authorities from the region, municipal mayors' offices, and institutional bodies such as CONAP, INAB, MARN, MAGA, and CONRED, have highlighted the valuable and significant support provided by the British Embassy through the DARWIN project for the conservation and restoration of the natural resources and biodiversity of this corridor. This support has had a profound impact on biodiversity conservation and restoration, and all these institutions express their deep gratitude to the DARWIN project.

Stakeholders saw the Darwin-funded project as its own distinct initiative, not just another piece of a larger program. They consistently described it as a standalone, innovative effort that advanced an integrated approach combining governance, fire management, habitat restoration, community livelihoods, and biodiversity monitoring. This clear identity helped partners take ownership and made it easier to engage different sectors.

Beyond recognition, the project has shown real influence and potential for replication. The management approach developed under the Darwin Initiative has sparked interest from other biological corridor projects across Guatemala, which now look to the Zunil–Atitlán–Balam Juyú experience as a practical model for participatory governance and landscape planning. Notably, MARN's Biological Corridors Management Unit has expressed interest in adapting similar approaches for other corridors, suggesting the Initiative is well-understood by key national institutions and seen as a credible model for expanding conservation efforts.

14. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2025/26 Grant (£)	2025/26 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)				

Others (see below)	
TOTAL	

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			

15. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

During this reporting period, from TNC we see a great potential to align the project's outcomes with the planning phase of a potential Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiative in Guatemala. While a PFP mechanism isn't yet being implemented at full, and the expectation is to have it ready by 2027, this Darwin project has provided, refined, and documented core elements that could be essential for implementing conservation mechanisms such as Biocultural Corridors.

The experience gained from developing and validating the Biocultural Corridor Management Plan, expanding and consolidating the corridor's geographic scope, and strengthening the Co-management Committee has produced practical, on-the-ground learnings about multi-stakeholder governance, institutional roles, and implementation readiness. These lessons offer valuable insights that could shape how the PFP model is adapted and scaled to fit Guatemala's institutional and territorial realities, considering how integrated planning across biodiversity conservation, fire management, restoration, and livelihoods can actually work at a landscape scale—an approach that aligns perfectly with the logic of permanence-based finance. As Guatemala explores initiatives like *Corazón de la Vida*, the Zunil–Atitlán–Balam Juyú Biocultural Corridor provides a concrete pilot experience. Its governance and management structures could be expanded and strengthened under a future PFP framework.

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

- In 2026, the process of updating the Management Plan for the Zunil–Atitlán–Balam Juyú Biocultural and Sustainable Development Corridor was completed, with the participation of CASR, public institutions, and organized local indigenous groups (Indicator 1.5).
- During the last fiscal year, 2025–2026, the strategy was presented and validated through broad stakeholder participation, including national agencies (INAB, CONRED, CONAP), municipalities, and NGOs, under the oversight of the Co-Management Committee. It has now been validated and approved.

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2025-2026

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2025 - March 2026	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact Poverty and social inequality rates in rural and indigenous communities in the western highlands of Guatemala are reduced through the sustainable use and conservation of local biodiversity.	The project has made progress in biodiversity conservation through active engagement with CASR, enabling collaboration on conservation planning, threat assessments, and action implementation in the ZABC. Ecological niche modelling and updated species data support adaptive management, while fire management strategies, brigade training, and firebreak maintenance mitigate wildfire risks. Restoration efforts have enhanced biological connectivity, with 45 hectares. . In poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods empower indigenous producers. Coffee growers renovated agroforestry systems, beekeepers gained hives and training, and stoves reduced firewood consumption. Health, time savings, and inclusive governance foster broader social equity.	
Outcome By 2026, the integrated landscape management of 63,000 ha of forests in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor will be improved, effectively protecting biodiversity, restoring biological connectivity, and promoting sustainable livelihoods.		
Outcome indicator 0.1. By the first quarter of 2025, a cross-sector agreement for the sustainable management of 63,000ha of forests in the core zone of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú is signed by local governments, institutions, and indigenous communities' representatives.	CASR has been legalized. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	Include in final report.
Outcome indicator 0.2. By mid-2026, at least 3 local governments have included conservation-restoration actions in their annual operational plans and increased funding for their implementation with an integrated landscape management approach.	Environmental Departmental Commission (CODEMA) has included conservation-restoration actions in the annual operational plan.	Include in final report.
Outcome indicator 0.3. By mid-2026, wildfire occurrence and the rate of loss of key biodiversity areas (12,550ha of high biodiversity ecosystems in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor core zone) due to wildfires has at least stabilized.	The Regional Fire Management Strategy (RFMS) was finalised. Achievements include 200 trained participants, fire equipment acquisition, and 28 km of firebreaks. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	Include in final report.

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2025 - March 2026	Actions required/planned for next period
Outcome indicator 0.4. By the fourth quarter of 2025, 75ha of degraded lands in key biological connectivity areas of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor have been restored (replanted) using native, endemic, endangered and key ecological forest species.	A total of 75 hectares of degraded land have been restored to improve connectivity for more than 30% of the endemic species that are either endangered or of key ecological importance in the municipalities of Zunil and Cantel. These 75 hectares have been enrolled in the PROBOSQUE Forest Incentives Program. The evidence is presented in section 3.1.	Include in final report.
Outcome indicator 0.5 By 2026, information on the vulnerability to climate change of 25 key species (trees and birds) will be known through the generation of current and future ecological niche maps.	Ecological niche modelling was completed and validated. Findings were summarised, included in conservation area plans, and considered during management plan updates to enhance connectivity strategies. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	Include in final report.
Outcome indicator 0.6. By the first quarter of 2026, annual incomes of at least 390 indigenous people (at least 50% women and youth) will be increased by at least 10%, through sustainable livelihoods, plus reported savings equivalent to 30% of total annual income due to reduced fuelwood consumption, contributing to reduced rural poverty, social inequality, and ecosystem degradation.	Sustainable livelihood initiatives benefited 490 indigenous people (76% women) through honey production, coffee renewal, and reduced firewood consumption. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	Final data analysis to report..
Output 1 By 2026, local governments, institutions and indigenous communities have enhanced capacities for the inclusive governance and sustainable management of 63,000ha in the core zone the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor.		
Output indicator 1.1. By mid-2024, the roundtable for the Multiple Use Reserve of the Watershed of Lake Atitlán (RUMCLA roundtable) is strengthened and fully operational to generate agreements for the integrated and sustainable management of the Zunil, Atitlán, Balam-Juyú biocultural corridor, including the promotion of representation and effective participation of marginalized social groups such as indigenous women and youth.	The CASR was revitalised. Evidence supporting CASR's operational status includes the recognition by CONAP executive resolution, provided in Section 3.2.	No further action required.
Output indicator 1.2. By mid-2024, RUMCLA roundtable members are trained on their rights and obligations (for example as part of the National Policy of Citizen Participation in Processes of Development), governance and decision making, interinstitutional negotiations and consensus reaching, collaboration between multicultural groups, and the benefits and importance of inclusive decision making to poverty alleviation.	Governance and sustainable management capacities were strengthened through training activities with CASR members, achieving the indicator goal. Surveys showed an overall improvement in participants' knowledge and perceptions. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	No further action required.

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2025 - March 2026	Actions required/planned for next period
Output indicator 1.3. By the fourth quarter of 2024, municipal gender equality units are strengthened and have increased capacity to support local gender equality initiatives, by increasing their capacity in building gender considerations into municipality planning processes and increasing women's participation in socio-environment processes.	Municipal staff attended gender inclusion workshops using real study cases to evaluate knowledge and propose strategies for integration into environmental planning. 40 people participated. More than 25% women participated in CASR meetings. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	No further action required.
Output indicator 1.4. By the fourth quarter of 2024, a permanent ecological monitoring system will be fully functional and generating and sharing data to key stakeholders for the adaptive management of 63,000ha of forest of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor core zone.	AVM's Ecological Monitoring System (EMS) is active, with data collection is underway. Vegetation data expected for final report. Evidence provided in Section 3.1.	Complete fire incidence and plot data collection, update forest cover, and prepare and share a biannual monitoring report.
Output indicator 1.5. By mid-2025, the management plan for the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor will be developed jointly with local governments and indigenous communities.	Management plan has been updated by CASR. Final draft.	Final version, include in final Report.
Output indicator 1.6. By the fourth quarter of 2025, there is scientifically based information that will allow the planning of bioclimatic corridors for the effective conservation of 25 endemic, threatened or iconic bird and/or tree species through the modeling of their current and future ecological niche, considering the impacts of climate change.	Completion of ecological niche modelling for 25 endemic, threatened, or iconic species. Results are being considered in the ZABC management plan update to improve north-south connectivity. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	No further action required.
Output indicator 1.7. By the end of the project, at least 4,000 hectares of key biodiversity areas of the biocultural corridor (cloud forest, pine-oak and/or seasonally dry forest ecosystems) are protected through new or updated legal schemes (declaration of 1 new protected area and updating of 4 management plans for existing protected areas).	Documentation for the declaration of Jaibal Atitlán RMP (135 ha) is pending and its management plan is in final draft. Management plans for Iquitiú, Rey Repepu, Xiquichoy and Chuiraxamoló RMPs have been updated and endorsed. Combined conservation areas total 4,806.87, exceeding the 4,000 ha target. Evidence provided in Sections 3.1 & 3.2.	Complete Jaibal Management plan and secure endorsement.
Output 2. By mid-2026, the number of wildfires and the rate of loss of key ecosystems due to wildfires has at least stabilized in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor.		
Output indicator 2.1. By the end of 2024, an Integrated Fire Management Strategy for the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor is developed and jointly implemented with local governments and indigenous communities.	Integrated Fire Management Strategy validated and is being jointly implemented. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	No further actions required. Include in final report.
Output indicator 2.2. By mid-2025, 140 people from indigenous communities will be trained in forest and urban-forest interface fire prevention and response (including better agricultural and apicultural practices to reduce wildfires).	A total of 300 people (255 men and 45 women) were trained in the Basic Techniques for Forest Fire Control (TBCIF) course. Of these, 166 participants (154 men and 12 women) obtained CONRED certification. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	No further actions required.

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2025 - March 2026	Actions required/planned for next period
Output indicator 2.3. By mid-2025, 3 new forest fire brigades, including 30 brigade members, will be formally trained, and fully equipped to effectively prevent and combat forest fires.	Local capacities have been strengthened; equipment is available to attend local emergencies. 25 departmental brigades attended a specialized workshop. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	Continue training at least 9 brigade members. Support incident response.
Output indicator 2.4. By beginning of 2026, 25 km of blacklines and firebreaks will be constructed and/or maintained to prevent forest fires in fire sensitive or fire independent ecosystems (cloud Forest, tropical broadleaf forests).	28 km of firebreaks were maintained, surpassing the project target of 25 km, near fire sensitive ecosystems (cloud- and broadleaved forests in San Pedro and Atitlán volcanoes). Evidence provided in Sections 3.1 & 3.2.	Include findings in final report.
Output 3. By 2026, 75ha of forests in key biological connectivity areas of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor are restored.		
Output indicator 3.1. By the beginning of 2025, 75ha of key degraded biological connectivity areas are identified, and conservation agreements are signed with owners of the areas to be restored.	Commitments are secured for 45 ha restored in 2025. Evidence provided in Section 3.2.	Include findings in final report.
Output indicator 3.2. By mid-2025, 10 demonstration sites have been established within the biocultural corridor, expanding knowledge amongst approximately 3,000 smallholder farmers of local communities by utilising the farmer-to-farmer approach	10 demonstration sites have been established, exchange with more than 100 people have been carried out, and social media products have reached more than 3,000 people (See MV 3.2.).	Include findings in final report.
Output indicator 3.3. By 2 nd quarter of 2025 the 75 ha of forested areas will be inscribed in the Forest Incentive Program of Guatemala, which will oversee monitoring tree survival rates (which should be between 60 and 75%) and cover the maintenance costs	The 75 hectares planted in 2025 with native species in areas with high water recharge capacity within the biocultural corridor in the municipalities of Zunil and Cantel have been included in the forest incentive programs of the National Forestry Institute (PROBOSQUES).	Register 75 ha in the incentives program, restore 75 ha using native species
Output indicator 3.4. By the fourth quarter of 2025, 75ha of degraded lands located in key areas for biological connectivity in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor are restored using native species (planting over 82,000 trees, of which at least 30,000 or 36.5% are endangered and endemic tree species).	During the 2025 planting season, 50,000 trees from 37 species were planted to restore 45 hectares and improve connectivity, including 10,314 plants of endangered species (IUCN and LEA National list), 2814 of local endemic species, and 16,455 of regional endemic species. Evidence provided in Section 3.1.	Include findings in final report.
Output 4. By mid-2026, 390 indigenous families will improve their household economy, with a minimum 10% increase of their annual income derived from sustainable livelihoods and savings from reduced fuelwood consumption.		

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2025 - March 2026	Actions required/planned for next period
Output indicator 4.1. By the begininng of 2026, 40 beekeepers (at least 25% women) will be fully equipped and trained in sustainable production and joint marketing practices and will increase their annual honey production by at least 30%, generating a minimum 5% annual income increase for their households.	beekeepers, while 52 beekeepers and their family members (26% women) attended workshops on sustainable practices and hive management, with surveys indicating improved knowledge. Evidence provided in Sections 3.1 & 3.2. An average increase of 54 pounds of honey per apiary was recorded en 2025, after harvesting season; additionally, on avarage apiaries increased their hives by 104 %. Equipment was given according to needs (See MV. 4.1)	Monitor and develop income change report.
Output indicator 4.2. By the first quarter of 2026, 50 coffee growers (at least 50% women) will improve their productive units through the implementation of better agricultural practices (organic coffee production) and the renovation of 15 hectares of mixed shade coffee agroforestry systems (using more productive and resilient coffee plants and enriching the coffee shade with native forest species) generating a minimum 10% annual income increase (when the new coffee plants stabilise production in the 4th year after planting).	During this FY Coffee renovation trainings continued, with 52 growers (33% indigenous women) renewing 7 hectares of coffee agroforestry systems using improved practices (See Section 3).	Analyse information of last survey to include in final report.
Output indicator 4.3. By the first quarter of 2026, the firewood consumption of 300 families is reduced by 50% through the construction of wood-saving stoves, generating an annual economic saving of \$500 per family (savings equivalent to 30% of total annual income) and reducing ecosystem degradation.	379 improved wood-saving stoves were distributed to families in eleven municipalities within and near ZABC's core zone, exceeding the target of 300. A baseline for fuelwood consumption and associated co-benefits has also been established. During this FY, an analysis of the social, environmental, and economic impact of improved firewood-saving stoves on families who acquired them was conducted, reporting greater efficiency and savings in firewood use and household economy (MV 4.3.1). On an annual average, a household spends up to US\$2,407.40 on firewood purchases; with a fuel efficient stove the expenditure falls to US\$893.30, reducing firewood consumption by more than 60%	Include findings in final report.

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
Impact: Poverty and social inequality rates in rural and indigenous communities in the western highlands of Guatemala are reduced through the sustainable use and conservation of local biodiversity.			
Outcome: By 2026, the integrated landscape management of 63,000 ha of forests in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor will be improved, effectively protecting biodiversity, restoring biological connectivity, and promoting sustainable livelihoods.	0.1. By the first quarter of 2025, a cross-sector agreement for the sustainable management of 63,000ha of forests in the core zone of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú is signed by local governments, institutions, and indigenous communities' representatives.	0.1.1 Report of the agreements generated for the sustainable management of the biocultural corridor including list of participating members.	- There is sufficient political stability to implement the project. - Newly elected local authorities support the project activities.
	0.2. By mid-2026, at least 3 local governments have included conservation-restoration actions in their annual operational plans and increased funding for their implementation with an integrated landscape management approach.	0.2.1 Annual operating plans of the selected local governments describing the conservation-restoration activities to be developed and detailing the increase in funding for their implementation.	- Community remains consistently engaged. - There is sufficient trust and engagement between local government, indigenous peoples, and local communities to collaborate on the agreement and subsequent management activities.
	0.3. By mid-2026, wildfire occurrence and the rate of loss of key biodiversity areas (12,550ha of high biodiversity ecosystems in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor core zone) due to wildfires has at least stabilised.	0.3.1 Report with comparative analysis of changes in the occurrence of forest fires and the rate of loss of key ecosystems due to this factor, covering a period of 10 years before the start of the project until mid-2026 (report developed through the ecological monitoring system of Vivamos Mejor Association).	- There is sufficient legitimacy of local stakeholder representatives to adequately represent their communities and to be a channel for bringing the agreements reached to fruition for each stakeholder.
	0.4. By the fourth quarter of 2025, 75ha of degraded lands in key biological connectivity areas of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor have been restored (replanted) using native, endemic, endangered, and key ecological forest species.	0.4.1 Report of the increase in the presence of native, endemic, endangered, and key ecological forest species in key areas for biological connectivity of the Zunil-Atitlán- Balam-Juyú biocultural corridor (based on data developed by Vivamos Mejor permanent ecological monitoring system); including maps of restored areas and modelling of bioclimatic corridors	- Participants, in general, will reinforce their ideas, concepts and practices that are sustainable in the long-term by taking part on the activities of this project. Neighbours and relatives may be encouraged to adopt these practices by observing and listening to participants.

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	0.5 By 2026, information on the vulnerability to climate change of 25 key species (trees and birds) will be known through the generation of current and future ecological niche maps.	0.5.1. Inclusion of the strategy to conserve these 25 key species is included in the management plans of the protected areas of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam-Juyú biocultural corridor	- Seasonal or climate-related droughts or weather patterns will not be severe enough to prevent local communities from engaging in this project. - Measures to manage the Covid-19 pandemic will not impair the ability to execute the project activities by the communities and consortium partners.
	0.6. By the first quarter of 2026, annual incomes of at least 390 indigenous people (at least 50% women and youth) will be increased by at least 10%, through sustainable livelihoods, plus reported savings equivalent to 30% of total annual income due to reduced fuelwood consumption, contributing to reduced rural poverty, social inequality, and ecosystem degradation.	0.6.1 Report with survey results (before and after project implementation) describing changes in income derived from sustainable livelihoods of at least 390 direct project beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender and age). 0.6.2 Survey before and after stoves are built comparing wood consumption reduction, economic savings, and other co-benefits derived from stove building 0.6.3 Report with survey results (before and after project implementation) describing changes in of social, economic, environmental, and health benefits generated from the use of improved wood-saving stoves.	
Output 1 By 2026, local governments, institutions and indigenous communities have enhanced capacities for the inclusive governance and sustainable management of 63,000ha in the core zone the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor.	1.1. By mid-2024, the roundtable for the Multiple Use Reserve of the Watershed of Lake Atitlán (RUMCLA roundtable) is strengthened and fully operational to generate agreements for the integrated and sustainable management of the Zunil, Atitlán, Balam-Juyú biocultural corridor, including the promotion of representation and effective participation of marginalized social groups such as indigenous women and youth.	1.1.1 Agreement to reform the RUMCLA roundtable for the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor signed by local governments, institutions, and indigenous communities' representatives. 1.1.2 List of all official members of the RUMCLA roundtable detailing the participation of marginalized social groups (indigenous women and youth). 1.1.3 Minutes of RUMCLA roundtable meetings	- Local governments, institutions, private nature reserves and CSOs are aware of their capacity needs, are interested in strengthening their capacity, continue to manifest interest and actively participate in the generation of agreements and planning instruments for the integrated management of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor and assign representatives of marginalized social groups within their institutions or

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	1.2. By mid-2024, RUMCLA roundtable members are trained on their rights and obligations (for example as part of the National Policy of Citizen Participation in Processes of Development), governance and decision making, interinstitutional negotiations and consensus reaching, collaboration between multicultural groups, and the benefits and importance of inclusive decision making to poverty alleviation.	1.2.1 Survey results detailing changes in knowledge and perception of stakeholders on the importance of integrated landscape management, governance and inclusive decision making for biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation according to the needs of each stakeholder.	organizations as representatives in the roundtable. - Municipalities will be inclined to choose women to represent them at official governance platforms.- There is sufficient legitimacy of local stakeholder representatives to adequately represent their communities and to be a channel for bringing the agreements reached to fruition for each stakeholder.
	1.3. By the fourth quarter of 2024, municipal gender equality units are strengthened and have increased capacity to support local gender equality initiatives, by increasing their capacity in building gender considerations into municipality planning processes and increasing women's participation in socio-environment processes.	1.3.1 Attendance list of training courses for the municipal gender equality units. Surveys before and after training demonstrating the change in knowledge and perception of participants.	- RUMCLA roundtable is perceived to be a legitimate body and constituents actively and equitably participate in RUMCLA processes - There is a common understanding of the basic problems that are present within the biocultural corridor by local authorities and they are willing to address them. - Local communities and stakeholders perceive protected areas and management plans as legitimate and effective mechanism, and accept their implementation and functioning. - Data literacy is sufficient to utilise data from the ecological monitoring system to improve adaptive management of the biocultural corridor.
		1.3.2 Number of women participating in active management of the biocultural corridor, through RUMCLA roundtable compositions and surveys.	
	1.4. By the fourth quarter of 2024, a permanent ecological monitoring system will be fully functional and generating and sharing data to key stakeholders for the adaptative management of 63,000ha of forest of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor core zone.	1.4.1 Permanent ecological monitoring system installed in the offices of Vivamos Mejor Association (with technical and technological capabilities for long term ecological monitoring of the area). 1.4.2 Report with two-year ecological monitoring data (2024 and 2025), including changes in forest cover, incidence of forest fires (number of events and number of affected hectares), and ecological dynamics data, sensitive to the impacts of climate change, using indicator species of birds and trees.	

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	1.5. By mid-2025, the management plan for the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor will be developed jointly with local governments and indigenous communities.	1.5.1 Updated management plan for the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor (endorsed by local governments, institutions, and leaders of indigenous communities).	
	1.6. By the fourth quarter of 2025, there is scientifically based information that will allow the planning of bioclimatic corridors for the effective conservation of 25 endemic, threatened or iconic bird and/or tree species through the modeling of their current and future ecological niche, considering the impacts of climate change.	1.6.1 Report on the current and future ecological niche (modelling) of 25 species of birds and/or trees including planning of bioclimatic corridors for their conservation, using global databases of biodiversity (Ebird, Inaturalist, Global Biodiversity Information facility) and local information from permanent biodiversity monitoring system established by the project.	
	1.7. By the end of the project, at least 4,000 hectares of key biodiversity areas of the biocultural corridor (cloud forest, pine-oak and/or seasonally dry forest ecosystems) are protected through new or updated legal schemes (declaration of 1 new protected area and updating of 4 management plans for existing protected areas.	1.7.1 Agreement on the declaration of 1 new protected area (1 new Regional Municipal Park endorsed by local government and proposal delivered to the National Protected Areas System's regional office. 1.7.2 Management plan developed for the new protected area (endorsed by local governments, institutions, and leaders of indigenous communities). 1.7.3 Updated management plans for 4 existing protected areas (endorsed by local governments, institutions, and leaders of indigenous communities). 1.7.4 GIS shapefile with polygons of at least 4,000ha protected through new or updated legal schemes.	

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Output 2 By mid-2026, the number of wildfires and the rate of loss of key ecosystems due to wildfires has at least stabilised in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor.	2.1 By the end of 2024, an Integrated Fire Management Strategy for the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor is developed and jointly implemented with local governments and indigenous communities.	2.1.1 Published final document of the Integrated Fire Management Strategy for the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor endorsed by members of the participatory governance platform. 2.1.2 Report on outcomes of the joint implementation of the Integrated Fire Management strategy by local governments and indigenous communities.	- Climatic parameters remain in average ranges (10-year average). There are no extreme drought seasons outside normal parameters. - There is sufficient openness and interest from stakeholder organisations to participate in a co-ordinated way, both from local and central government and from communities. - There is sufficient institutional stability for development and long-term implementation of the Integrated Fire Management Strategy.
	2.2. By mid-2025, 140 people from indigenous communities will be trained in forest and urban-forest interface fire prevention and response (including better agricultural and apicultural practices to reduce wildfires).	2.2.1 Attendance certificates of training courses on forest and urban-forest interface fire prevention and response. Surveys before and after training demonstrating the change in knowledge and perception of participants.	
	2.3. By mid-2025, 3 new forest fire brigades, including 30 brigade members, will be formally trained, and fully equipped to effectively prevent and combat forest fires.	2.3.1 Graduation certificates of formal training courses on wildfires prevention and control (certified by the National Forestry Institute and supported by TNC Global Fire Management Team and the US Forest Service) for 30 forest fires brigade members. 2.3.2 Signed lists of delivered forest fire prevention and control certified equipment	
	2.4. By beginning of 2026, 25 km of blacklines and firebreaks will be constructed and/or maintained to prevent forest fires in fire sensitive or fire independent ecosystems (cloud Forest, tropical broadleaf forests).	2.4.1 Map and GIS shapefiles of implemented blacklines and firebreaks	

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Output 3 By 2026, 75ha of forests in key biological connectivity areas of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor are restored.	3.1. By the beginning of 2025, 75ha of key degraded biological connectivity areas are identified, and conservation agreements are signed with owners of the areas to be restored.	3.1.1. Document with results of analysis of degraded areas to be restored with a biological connectivity approach (based on data collected by Vivamos Mejor Ecological Monitoring system). 3.1.2. Individual and collective agreements signed between the owners of the areas to be restored (75ha), Vivamos Mejor Association, and The Nature Conservancy.	- Landowners of key degraded biodiversity connectivity areas are willing to implement forest restoration activities on their lands. - Restored areas are sufficiently maintained and protected from future land use change. - There are no severe climatic or weather events impacting on the integrity and extent of protected areas, or landowners' commitment to maintain restored land. - There is sufficient interest among local farmers and others to attend training and visit demonstration sites. - Women will choose to reforest because it is seen as an investing on future firewood sources.
	3.2. By mid-2025, 10 demonstration sites have been established within the biocultural corridor, expanding knowledge amongst approximately 3,000 smallholder farmers of local communities by utilising the farmer-to-farmer approach.	3.2.1 Attendance list of training courses for demonstration site landowners on farmer-to-farmer approach. Surveys before and after training demonstrating the change in knowledge and perception of participants. 3.2.2 Print outs of educational handouts and brochures 3.2.3 Record of visits to demonstration sites by local communities and other stakeholders within the biocultural corridor.	
	3.3 By 2nd quarter of 2025 the 75 ha of forested areas will be inscribed in the Forest Incentive Program of Guatemala, which will oversee monitoring tree survival rates (which should be between 60 and 75%) and cover the maintenance costs	3.3.1 Yearly reports from Forests Incentive Program on the progress of the reforestation of the 75 ha. 3.3.2 Biological connectivity areas restoration report including maps and photographs (before and after) of restored areas (using a standardized photographic monitoring protocol developed by TNC), with records of the survival rate	

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	3.4. By the fourth quarter of 2025, 75ha of degraded lands located in key areas for biological connectivity in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor are restored using native species (planting over 82,000 trees, of which at least 30,000 or 36.5% are endangered and endemic tree species).	3.4.1. Biological connectivity areas restoration report including maps and photographs (before and after) of restored areas (using a standardized photographic monitoring protocol developed by TNC), with records of the survival rate. 3.4.2 Inventory of native forest plants (82,000 plants) used for restoring 75ha of degraded biological connectivity areas; including at least 30,000 plants of endemic, endangered and key ecological tree species (listed on the IUCN-Red List, CONAP- LEA list and other relevant scientific literature related to endangered species).	
Output 4 By mid-2026, 390 indigenous families will improve their household economy, with a minimum 10% increase of their annual income derived from sustainable livelihoods and savings from reduced fuelwood consumption..	4.1. By the beginning of 2026, 40 beekeepers (at least 25% women) will be fully equipped and trained in sustainable production and joint marketing practices and will increase their annual honey production by at least 30%, generating a minimum 5% annual income increase for their households.	4.1.1 Training course attendance certificates issued by Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Food (MAGA) and signed lists for the delivery of apiculture materials and equipment. 4.1.2 Surveys before and after training demonstrating the change in knowledge on better practices for beekeeping and joint marketing. 4.1.3 Survey results by project staff before and after the project implementation detailing changes in income generation due to improved beekeeping practices and joint marketing.	- According to planning processes and development actions carried out by Vivamos Mejor in the last 30 years, stakeholders have expressed their interest in producing coffee and beekeeping, which has been documented in several planning documents and assessments. Based on this, it is expected that farmers and beekeepers maintain interest in project activities, complete training, use new equipment, and implement better production practices.

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	4.2. By the first quarter of 2026, 50 coffee growers (at least 50% women) will improve their productive units through the implementation of better agricultural practices (organic coffee production) and the renovation of 15 hectares of mixed shade coffee agroforestry systems (using more productive and resilient coffee plants and enriching the coffee shade with native forest species) generating a minimum 10% annual income increase (when the new coffee plants stabilise production in the 4th year after planting).	4.2.1 Surveys before and after training demonstrating a change in knowledge on better agricultural practices for organic coffee production (data disaggregated by gender). 4.2.2 Conservation agreements signed with 50 coffee growers implementing better agricultural practices on their plots. 4.2.3 Map and GIS shape of 15ha of renewed coffee agroforestry systems. 4.2.4 Comparative report of projected economic benefits derived from the implementation of better agricultural practices and the renewal of 15ha of coffee agroforestry systems (including before and after photographs of renewed plots).	- Women already engaged in some economic activity, such as coffee growing, are more likely to participate in workshops and decision-making roles. - Market conditions remain favourable for beekeeping and coffee production to be profitable and a desirable livelihood for local people. - Women will desire to participate in the stove project. This results in a reduction of time, energy and economic resources dedicated to gathering or buying firewood - The families benefiting from the wood-saving stoves use them and reduce their firewood consumption (as seen in other cases in the same region as the project is planning to target).
	4.3. By the first quarter of 2026, the firewood consumption of 300 families is reduced by 50% through the construction of wood-saving stoves, generating an annual economic saving of \$500 per family (savings equivalent to 30% of total annual income) and reducing ecosystem degradation.	4.3.1 Survey before and after stoves are built comparing wood consumption reduction, economic savings, and other co-benefits derived from stove building 4.3.2 Report of social, economic, environmental and health benefits generated from the use of improved wood-saving stoves, based on survey results developed before and after the project implementation.	

Activities

Output 1: By 2026, local governments, institutions and indigenous communities have enhanced capacities for the inclusive governance and sustainable management of 63,000ha in the core zone the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor.

- 1.1.1 Identification, mapping, and engagement of key stakeholders in the biocultural corridor for their inclusion in the reform and strengthening of the RUMCLA roundtable for the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor.
- 1.1.2 Signing of the cross-sector agreement that strengthens and reforms the RUMCLA roundtable and includes the official list of the members with their main governance roles.
- 1.2.1 Training of RUMCLA roundtable members and other local stakeholders through 4 workshops on role definition, knowledge and perception, governance of the territory, and the legal framework of the biological corridor and evaluation of participant comprehension through surveys before and after the workshops.
- 1.3.1 Training of at least 40 civil servants of municipal gender equality units in building gender considerations into municipality planning processes and increasing women's participation in socio-environment processes.
- 1.4.1 Secondary information gathering through bibliographic review of biological monitoring antecedents in the biocultural corridor and supervised classification of satellite images to map more precisely the ecosystems of the biocultural corridor.
- 1.4.2 Determine variables for monitoring through satellite images and field visits (including bird species, tree cover, etc). Set baseline values for the ecological monitoring system.
- 1.4.3 Training of RUMCLA roundtable members and other local stakeholders and experts through 2 workshops on the selection of variables to be monitored and the design and operationalisation of the ecological monitoring system.
- 1.4.4 Monitor ecological variables twice a year during the project and summarizing results in an annual ecological monitoring report.
- 1.5.1 Two workshops with the RUMCLA roundtable members for the evaluation of the expired biocultural corridor management plan.
- 1.5.2 Carry out an analysis of geospatial information such as forest cover, human population distribution, forest fires, etc, and literature to update the ecological, social, economic, and cultural information of the biocultural corridor in the management plan.
- 1.5.3 Two workshops with RUMCLA roundtable members and additional experts from local government, community leaders, and other CSOs, to update the biocultural corridor management plan: objectives, mission, vision, conservation targets, threats, opportunities, conservation elements and strategies.
- 1.5.4 After the workshops, additional 1-on-1 consultations with key experts to collect feedback on drafts of the management plan. Finalise management plan endorsed by local governments, institutions, and leaders of indigenous communities
- 1.6.1 Data gathering through bibliographic review of global and local biodiversity and climate databases and systems to build modeling of their current and future ecological niche, considering the impacts of climate change.
- 1.6.2 Workshop with bird and botany experts to validate the report describing the bioclimatic corridors in the biocultural corridor for endemic, threatened or emblematic bird and/or tree species.
- 1.7.1 Meetings with local communities and municipalities to inform them of plans to designate a new protected area and get their commitment, agreement, and collaboration
- 1.7.2 Formalization of the agreement for the voluntary declaration of a new protected area in the core zone of the biocultural corridor, categorised as 'regional municipal park' and filing of its registration in the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP)
- 1.7.3 Field delimitation of the new protected area, collection of biophysical and socioeconomic information and preparation of a technical study to be submitted to CONAP for its approval.
- 1.7.4 Elaboration of the management plan for the new regional municipal park (including geographic, social, economic, and environmental information) through 4 workshops with the municipalities and the representatives of local communities and local CSOs.

1.7.5 Update of management plans (including geographic, social, economic, and environmental information) for 4 existing protected areas (endorsed by local governments, institutions, and leaders of indigenous communities) through 4 workshops (1 per protected area) with the municipalities, local communities, and local CSOs.

Output 2: By mid-2026, the number of wildfires and the rate of loss of key ecosystems due to wildfires has at least stabilised in the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor.

2.1.1 Map existing geographic information systems and databases (such as forest cover images and data repositories systems) for monitoring forest fires, including heat spots and landscape scars due to fires. Evaluate and analyse the history of forest fires as well as their characteristics and patterns as recorded in these databases and systems.

2.1.2 Hold two meetings with the Department of Forest Fires of the National Institute of Forests (INAB), local landowners, local communities, and municipalities to identify the drivers, instigators, and sites and fronts of forest fires in the biological corridor as a basis for developing solutions, resources and actions in the Integrated Fire Management Strategy.

2.1.3 Develop an Integrated Fire Management strategy in the biocultural corridor, based on the above-mentioned analyses and consultations and aligned with the needs and concerns of the members of the RUMCLA roundtable and other stakeholders (INAB, municipalities, forest firefighters, etc.) to secure its implementation.

2.1.4 Validate and socialize the Integrated Fire Management strategy with key actors (members of the RUMCLA roundtable, INAB, municipal governments, forest firefighters) through a workshop, resulting in the publication of the final IFM strategy document (both online and distributed to partners in printing).

2.1.5 After the next dry (forest fire) season (mid-2025), set up an implementation report detailing the success of the IFM strategy by analysing satellite images, maps, above identified databases and systems, as well as field visits and surveys of local communities.

2.2.1 Five training workshops for 50 community members and RUMCLA roundtable members in the 'basic techniques for forest fire control' course and on best agricultural and apicultural practices for the reduction of forest fires in the biocultural corridor, including the certification of forest fire fighters in the biocultural corridor and evaluation of participant comprehension through surveys before and after the workshops.

2.3.1 Equip 3 new forest fire brigades (cotton suit, leather boots and gloves, goggles, helmet, backpacks, weather kit, monofilter, fire bat, drip burner, Mcleod Pulaski tools, flashlights, radios, fire rakes, scrapers, fire swatters, brush hooks, drones, etc.) and set up guidelines and trainings for the maintenance and proper use of the equipment.

2.4.1 Construction, georeferencing, and maintenance of 25 km of firebreak rounds and gaps, black lines for the control of forest fires in coordination with local governments.

Output 3: By 2026, 75ha of forests in key biological connectivity areas of the Zunil-Atitlán-Balam Juyú biocultural corridor are restored and serve as demonstration sites

3.1.1 Organise two workshops for landowners with degraded areas susceptible to forest restoration within the framework of the National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy of Guatemala, to explain the importance of restoring degraded areas, raise awareness on the processes that lead to land degradation and actions to avoid further degradation.

3.1.2 Preparation of a report on the identification of at least 75ha of degraded areas through field inspections and aerial images with potential for reforestation with forest species that are native, key, endemic and/or in danger of extinction.

3.1.3 Signing of individual and collective agreements on forest restoration commitments with landowners.

3.2.1 Creation of 10 restoration demonstration sites out of the best examples of restored areas within the 75ha reforested area through signing and demarcation, and the training of the owners for leading field visits and sharing lessons learned, supported by the Center for Education for Rural Development and Climate Change Adaptation (CEDRACC).

3.2.2 Organise, prepare basic information (handouts, brochures), and report on min. 6 visits to the demonstration sites with 120 direct beneficiaries of the project, to expose them to the practices and techniques on how and why to restore degraded areas, so they can then expand knowledge amongst approx. 3,000 local smallholder farmers, by utilising the farmer-to-farmer approach.

3.3.1 Inscription of restored lands in the Guatemala Forest Incentive Program run by INAB to secure funds from the government for the landowners for the maintenance of the trees for the next 6 years.

- 3.4.1 Collection of seeds of native, key, endemic and endangered forest species in local certified seed producer forests to secure seed quality.
 - 3.4.2 Production of forest plants with emphasis on native, key, endemic, and endangered species in the CEDRACC nursery of AVM.
 - 3.4.3 Planting of over 82,000 trees (of which at least 30,000 are endangered and endemic tree species) with local community members, schools, and AVM staff by Q2 of year 2024 in the degraded areas identified.
 - 3.4.4 Development of biological connectivity restoration report based on satellite images and mapping which will include an inventory of native forest plants used and the progress of the restoration actions carried out in this project.
- Output 4: By mid-2026, 390 indigenous families will improve their household economy, with a minimum 10% increase of their annual income derived from sustainable livelihoods and savings from reduced fuelwood consumption.**
- 4.1.1 Detailed assessment of current beekeeping practices in the biocultural corridor (based on the previous engagement with local producers and situation analysis conducted by AVM). Resulting in a diagnostic baseline on apiaries performance and the identification and selection of at least 40 beekeepers out of the larger group in the biocultural corridor area (prioritising those that have small, unsustainable practices, are located closest to the core zone and show leadership in their communities).
 - 4.1.2 Four training workshops of at least 40 beekeepers (at least 25% women) in sustainable production topics such as hive health, diseases and treatments, floral resources in the forests, honey, propolis, royal jelly and wax production, and marketing practices such as packing, advertisement, branding, etc., and evaluation of participant comprehension through surveys before and after the workshops.
 - 4.1.3 Purchase and delivery of equipment and tools (wooden beehives, smokers, thermometers, hive tools, mating hives, storage tanks, extractors, filters, etc.) to at least 40 beekeepers to support their sustainable beekeeping production processes.
 - 4.1.4 Monitoring apiaries performance through field inspections and surveys, evaluating productivity and income generated compared to diagnostic baseline.
 - 4.2.1 Two workshops with leaders of the coffee growers' cooperatives to present and discuss workplan details regarding renewal of the coffee plots and best sustainable agricultural practices.
 - 4.2.2 Three workshops for female coffee growers to discuss and analyse, supported by data from surveys and field inspections, the effectiveness of their production practices and management of coffee seedling nurseries, building their capacity to sustainably increased production, and evaluation of participant comprehension through surveys before and after the workshops.
 - 4.2.3 Four training workshops on sustainable production processes in organic coffee farming including topics of natural fertilizers, biological control of pests and diseases and organic certification.
 - 4.2.4 Signing of at least two conservation agreements for best agricultural practices with at least 50 coffee growers (min 50% women) in the biocultural corridor.
 - 4.2.5 Purchase and delivery of tools, supplies, materials, and each producer's coffee seedlings for the improvement of coffee seedling nurseries for the renewal of plantations.
 - 4.2.6 By June 2025 start monitoring assessments of the harvesting of coffee plantations in the renovated coffee plots and the preparation of corresponding reports, including a comparison of economic benefits compared with the scenario without project.
 - 4.3.1 Identification and prioritization of 300 beneficiary families out of 3,000 families in the biocultural corridor (selecting those that currently have traditional unsustainable cooking practices, live closest to the core zone and show leadership in their communities) for the construction of 300 improved wood-saving stoves. Hold baseline survey on consumption of wood per household.
 - 4.3.2 Purchase and deliver of materials and guide in the construction of wood-saving stoves for at least 300 families
 - 4.3.3 Through household surveys, monitor firewood consumption by the improved wood-saving stoves and associated social, economic, environmental, and health benefits and compare it the baseline survey to assess the impact on the forests, household economics and health. Develop report measuring savings in purchase of firewood, time spent in firewood collection, and the decrease of respiratory diseases among families benefitted with the project.
 - 4.3.4 Conduct site visits to demonstration sites and locations where key sustainable activities have been developed (such as wood saving stoves and beekeeping facilities in operation) to spread the knowledge and trigger the interest of additional stakeholders in the biocultural corridor to incorporate these practices.

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Cross-cutting activities Project management • Hold meetings every month (during the first year), and every 3 months (on years 2 and 3), among TNC and AVM project leaders, to share advances of the project, challenges, priorities and next steps. • Hold quarterly meetings with project Advisory Committee • Develop trainings for staff involved in the project regarding TNCs Code of conduct, Standard Operating Procedures, among other Standards that project staff need to comply with, including safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults. Communications: • Utilise social media platforms to disseminate information and reinforce messaging by creating social media groups • Develop radio broadcasts jointly with local stations to spread awareness for behavioural changes in the biocultural corridor, including the importance of preventing forest fires, reducing deforestation, and sustainable productive practices. • Develop printed materials on the importance of integrated landscape management for biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods, and climate change projects • Development of an online repository of information related to the project in which all the written documents such as methodologies, guidelines, reports, technical documents, papers, etc. will be stored and accessible to the project's beneficiaries • Evaluate total audience reached and survey targeted communities to assess comprehension of information shared Reporting • Develop quarterly technical and financial reports, to be reviewed during Project Management meetings and shared with other stakeholders.			

Table 1 Standard Indicators

Please see the Standard Indicator guidance for more information on how to report in this section, including appropriate disaggregation.

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number(s) here	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. Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2, 2.1	People	Male - Non-IPLC	20	10		30	60
E.g. DI-A01	E.g. Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2, 2.1	People	Male - IPLC	5	5		10	20
E.g. DI-A01	E.g. Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2, 2.1	People	Female – Non-IPLC	30	5		35	60
E.g. DI-A01	E.g. Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2, 2.1	People	Female - IPLC	5	6		11	20
E.g. DI-B01	E.g. Number of new or improved habitat management plans available and endorsed	0.3	Number	New	1	0		1	2
E.g. DI-B01	E.g. Number of new or improved habitat management plans available and endorsed	0.3	Number	Improved	1	1		2	3

Explanation of calculations and assumptions used for Standard Indicator reporting:

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 correct template (checking fund, scheme, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	X
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line and indicating where any link to other material can be found.	X
Is your report and supporting material more than 10MB? If so, please consider the best way to submit. One zipped file, or a download option, is recommended. We can work with most online options and will be in touch if we have a problem accessing material. If unsure, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	X
Have you provided an updated risk register? You should provide an updated version of your Risk Register alongside your report.	
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	X
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	