Darwin Initiative Main & Extra Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":
(https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/information-notes/)
It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes)
Submission Deadline: 30th April 2025
Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line

Darwin Initiative Project Information

Scheme (Main or Extra)	Main
Project reference	31-011
Project title	Coffee for nature: Restoring Nicaraguan biodiversity through coffee agroforestry
Country/ies	Nicaragua
Lead Organisation	ECOM Agro-industrial Corp. Limited
Project partner(s)	Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Darwin Initiative grant value	£600,000.00
Start/end dates of project	April 1st 2024 – March 31st 2027
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2024 – Mar 2025) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2024 – March 2025 Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Edgardo Alpizar
Project website/blog/social media	n/a
Report author(s) and date	Irma Magaña, Fernanda Limón and Abiecer Soza J.

1. Project summary

Nicaragua, one of the most biodiverse countries in Central America, is facing mounting environmental and social challenges driven by deforestation, climate change, poverty, and landscape fragmentation. Ranked 21st on the Global Risk Index, the country's vulnerability is particularly acute in rural areas, where 41% of the population are smallholder farmers with limited adaptive capacity. Since 2000, a 22% reduction in tree cover has disrupted critical ecological functions, particularly in biodiversity hotspots, intensifying risks to both nature and human wellbeing—including food security, water access, and livelihoods.

This project focuses on a 36 km² area in the Jinotega Department, situated between two Key Biodiversity Areas: Datanlí-El Diablo and Peñas Blancas natural reserves. Both areas's strategic importance lies in its potential to serve as a biological corridor, reconnecting fragmented forest habitats between these reserves. By developing sustainable Coffee Agroforestry Systems (CAS), the project aims to restore ecosystem connectivity while enhancing the resilience of smallholder farming communities.

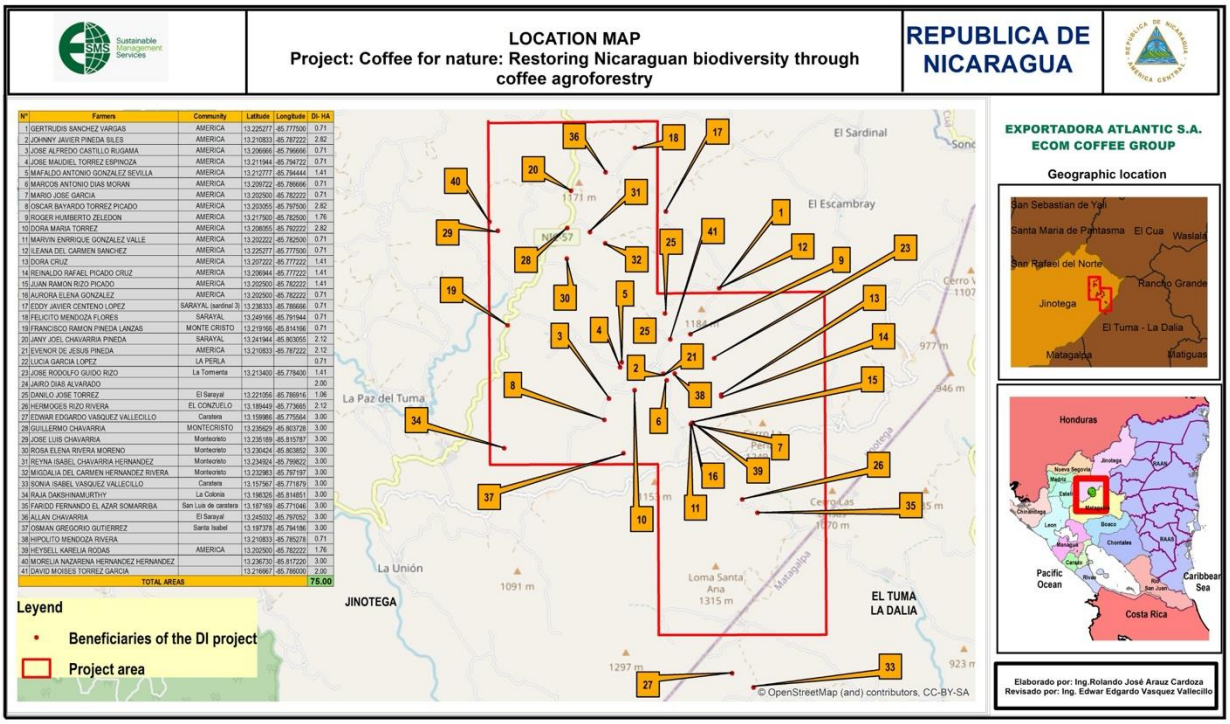
Through a practical and scalable model, the project supports rural producers—particularly marginalised groups such as women-headed households—to adopt climate-resilient practices and diversify income. Beneficiaries receive access to a short credit scheme, technical training in certification, and preferential market channels, enabling them to overcome key barriers to agroforestry adoption. In doing so, the project fosters landscape restoration, increases forest cover, and strengthens vital ecosystem services such as pollination, soil health, and microclimate regulation.

The intervention also contributes to poverty reduction by boosting agricultural productivity and income stability in the face of climate shocks. These interlinked outcomes are underpinned by

rigorous field research, national data, and evidence from successful agroforestry initiatives that demonstrate the dual benefits of conservation and development.

A central innovation of the project is the use of big-data modelling and geospatial analysis to prioritise interventions. By integrating datasets on biodiversity, watersheds, forest cover, canopy height, and elevation, the project identifies areas with the highest potential return on investment for restoration. This replicable and time-sensitive methodology supports strategic decision-making and can be applied more broadly across Latin America.

By bridging the divide between biodiversity protection and rural development, this project presents a viable blueprint for achieving inclusive and sustainable outcomes—where ecological integrity and community wellbeing are advanced together.



N°	Famers	Community	Latitude	Longitude	DI- HA
1	GERTRUDIS SANCHEZ VARGAS	AMERICA	13.225277	-85.777500	0.71
2	JOHNNY JAVIER PINEDA SILES	AMERICA	13.210833	-85.787222	2.82
3	JOSE ALFREDO CASTILLO RUGAMA	AMERICA	13.206666	-85.796666	0.71
4	JOSE MAUDIEL TORREZ ESPINOZA	AMERICA	13.211944	-85.794722	0.71
5	MAFALDO ANTONIO GONZALEZ SEVILLA	AMERICA	13.212777	-85.794444	1.41
6	MARCOS ANTONIO DIAS MORAN	AMERICA	13.209722	-85.786666	0.71
7	MARIO JOSE GARCIA	AMERICA	13.202500	-85.782222	0.71
8	OSCAR BAYARDO TORREZ PICADO	AMERICA	13.203055	-85.797500	2.82
9	ROGER HUMBERTO ZELEDON	AMERICA	13.217500	-85.782500	1.76
10	DORA MARIA TORREZ	AMERICA	13.208055	-85.792222	2.82
11	MARVIN ENRRIQUE GONZALEZ VALLE	AMERICA	13.202222	-85.782500	0.71
12	LEANA DEL CARMEN SANCHEZ	AMERICA	13.225277	-85.777500	0.71
13	DORA CRUZ	AMERICA	13.207222	-85.777222	1.41
14	REINALDO RAFAEL PICADO CRUZ	AMERICA	13.206944	-85.777222	1.41
15	JUAN RAMON RIZO PICADO	AMERICA	13.202500	-85.782222	1.41
16	AURORA ELENA GONZALEZ	AMERICA	13.202500	-85.782222	0.71
17	EDDY JAVIER CENTENO LOPEZ	SARAYAL (sardinal 3)	13.238333	-85.786666	0.71
18	FELICITO MENDOZA FLORES	SARAYAL	13.249166	-85.791944	0.71
19	FRANCISCO RAMON PINEDA LANZAS	MONTE CRISTO	13.219166	-85.814166	0.71
20	JANY JOEL CHAVARRIA PINEDA	SARAYAL	13.241944	-85.803055	2.12
21	EVENOR DE JESUS PINEDA	AMERICA	13.210833	-85.787222	2.12
22	LUCIA GARCIA LOPEZ	LA PERLA			0.71
23	JOSE RODOLFO GUIDO RIZO	La Tomenta	13.213400	-85.778400	1.41
24	JAIRO DIAS ALVARADO				2.00
25	DANILO JOSE TORREZ	El Sarayal	13.221056	-85.786916	1.06
26	HERMOGES RIZO RIVERA	EL CONZUELO	13.189449	-85.773665	2.12
27	EDWAR EDGARDO VASQUEZ VALLECILLO	Carretera	13.159986	-85.775564	3.00
28	GUILLERMO CHAVARRIA	MONTECRISTO	13.235829	-85.803728	3.00
29	JOSE LUIS CHAVARRIA	Montecristo	13.235186	-85.815787	3.00
30	ROSA ELENA RIVERA MORENO	Montecristo	13.230424	-85.803852	3.00
31	REYNA ISABEL CHAVARRIA HERNANDEZ	Montecristo	13.234924	-85.799822	3.00
32	MIGDALIA DEL CARMEN HERNANDEZ RIVERA	Montecristo	13.232983	-85.797197	3.00
33	SONIA ISABEL VASQUEZ VALLECILLO	Carretera	13.157567	-85.771676	3.00
34	RAJA DAKSHINAMURTHY	La Colonia	13.198326	-85.814851	3.00
35	FARIDD FERNANDO EL AZAR SOMARRIBA	San Luis de carretera	13.187169	-85.771046	3.00
36	ALLAN CHAVARRIA	El Sarayal	13.245032	-85.797052	3.00
37	OSMAN GREGORIO GUTIERREZ	Santa Isabel	13.197375	-85.794186	3.00
38	HIPOLITO MENDOZA RIVERA		13.210833	-85.785278	0.71
39	HEYSELL KARELIA RODAS	AMERICA	13.202500	-85.782222	1.76
40	MORELIA NAZARENA HERNANDEZ HERNANDEZ		13.236733	-85.817220	3.00
41	DAVID MOISES TORREZ GARCIA		13.216667	-85.786000	2.00
	TOTAL AREAS				75.00

2. Project stakeholders/ partners

Over the past year, collaboration between formal partners and key stakeholders in this project has continued to evolve and strengthen. The partnership between ECOM and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (CLO) was built on mutual expertise and a shared commitment to addressing the dual challenges of biodiversity loss and rural poverty in Nicaragua. The participation of communities and other local partners, has been critical from the outset, ensuring that the project is demand-driven and rooted in local priorities.

ECOM has taken the lead in implementation, establishing a revolving fund for short-term access to credit and handling financial administration. CLO leads scientific research, biodiversity impact assessments, and the monitoring framework. Both partners have worked collaboratively on planning, adjusting implementation strategies, and informing monitoring and evaluation processes.

This partnership approach has led to several important achievements, including:

1. Selection of the implementation area based on an in-depth analysis to ensure the highest return on investment and biodiversity.
2. Identification and mapping of beneficiaries in critical and important areas for restoring forest cover.
3. Definition of the logical path for supplies and monitoring.

A local middleman (Osman Gutierrez) who sells 100% of his coffee to ECOM, plays a key operational role within the project. With an established presence in the region, they are responsible for collecting coffee produced by some of the participating farmers, securing commercial continuity with ECOM. His logistical capacity and direct engagement with farmers strengthen the link between project goals and real-world outcomes.

A key strength has been the close alignment between technical implementation and scientific monitoring, which has ensured that activities are practical, and evidence based. Beyond the formal partnership, the project has actively involved a broader set of stakeholders, including planting and logistics suppliers during establishment of the coffee and forest trees, who are also key to ensuring success and scalability over time.

3. Project progress.

Some delays were experienced at the start of the project due to a five-month gap in funding disbursement and the overlap with the local coffee harvest season, during which producers prioritised that activity. These factors impacted the initial activity timeline. However, the project has adjusted its approach accordingly and continues to make progress towards its objectives, maintaining a strong focus on delivering long-term outcomes for biodiversity and livelihoods. The team has adapted implementation strategies to ensure that timelines are realigned without compromising the quality or scope of the interventions.

Importantly, these early experiences have reinforced the project's commitment to working in a flexible, context-sensitive manner that respects the realities of rural livelihoods while maintaining momentum towards long-term outcomes.

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

During this reporting period, steady progress has been made across all five project Outputs, despite early delays due to funding disbursement and the overlap with the local coffee harvest season. Below is a summary of activity implementation aligned with the project's log frame:

Output 1: Development of a scalable methodology for biodiversity metrics and impact assessment.

- Activity 1.1 (Model development and methodology refinement) was completed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (CLO), using five geospatial datasets to identify priority areas for restoration based on biodiversity completeness. The methodology is adaptable and replicable across Latin America.
- Activity 1.2 (Submit methodological manual for publication) is ready and will be submitted alongside this report. (Annex 4.1)

Output 2: Practitioner and decision-maker guide for biodiversity restoration in Nicaragua.

- Activity 2.1 (Create biodiversity completeness maps and identify high-impact areas) has been completed. (Annex 4.2) Relevant maps have been prepared and are included as annexes to this report. Presentation to key stakeholders is planned for the next quarter.

Output 3: Enhanced biodiversity and connectivity through coffee agroforestry.

- Activity 3.1 (In-situ selection of priority restoration areas) has progressed with the mapping of suitable areas on 38 farms. (Annex 4.3)
- Activity 3.3 (First reforestation cycle) is underway. While planting has not yet commenced, saplings are currently in development for the first 75 hectares, and preparations are well advanced. (Annex 4.4)

Output 4: Improved farmer livelihoods through agroforestry adoption.

- Activity 4.1 (Establish credit guidelines and assess eligibility) has been completed. Guidelines have been finalised, and field assessments were carried out to identify eligible farmers. The final list of beneficiaries for the initial stage is prepared and ready for implementation. (Annex 4.5)
- Activity 4.2 (Workshops on financial literacy) has been delayed and will be implemented in the next reporting period.
- Activity 4.5 (Technical improvement and monitoring visits) has begun with initial visits to selected farms. These will become more regular as the project progresses. (Annex 4.6)

Output 5: Strengthening local capacity for sustainable agriculture and conservation.

- Activity 5.1 (Socialisation and rural appraisal) is ongoing, with approximately 20% completion. Initial efforts have focused on one-on-one engagement with farmers. (Annex 4.7 and Annex 4.8)
- Activities 5.2–5.4 (Training on gender equality, human rights, and sustainable coffee production) are scheduled for June and December due to the initial implementation delays.

In summary, while some activities have shifted slightly from their original timeline, the project remains on track to meet its objectives. Evidence of progress—including maps, credit guidelines, and beneficiary lists—is submitted as annexes to this report.)

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: A reproducible and scalable methodology for providing spatially explicit biodiversity metrics and quantifying potential biodiversity impacts of interventions

The baseline for this output was the absence of an integrated, spatially explicit methodology tailored to the Nicaraguan context. During this reporting period, significant progress has been made. A preliminary version of the methodological manual has been developed and is currently under internal review and refinement. It is submitted as part of this report.

The next step includes a validation and knowledge exchange workshop with national stakeholders, to ensure alignment with both local implementation and broader conservation strategies. The output is on track to be fully achieved within the project timeline.

Output 2: A practitioner and decision-maker guide to biodiversity restoration in Nicaragua, including implementation recommendations and priority areas for intervention

Baseline conditions indicated a lack of accessible guidance integrating science-based spatial planning with on-the-ground restoration practices. As of this reporting period, substantial progress has been made, maps displaying species- and community-level biodiversity metrics are being developed. These highlight areas offering the highest potential return on investment for biodiversity restoration.

Outreach and consultation activities have begun, involving government actors, NGOs, and local stakeholders. These sessions will be essential to ensure the guide's relevance and uptake. The project will continue this engagement through technical workshops in the coming period. Based on current progress and planned follow-up, the output is likely to be achieved.

Output 3: Enhanced biodiversity supported by habitat restoration and increased landscape connectivity through coffee agroforestry

At baseline, participating farms had fragmented land use, minimal forest connectivity, and no formal restoration efforts. Progress to date includes the identification and mapping of 40 priority farms and the initiation of a reforestation process. Although saplings have not yet been transplanted, they are currently being grown in nurseries in preparation for the first planting phase covering approximately 75 hectares.

Monitoring mechanisms have been outlined, and field-level biodiversity data collection using CLO's Latin American Program for Landbirds (PROALAS) and eBird protocols is underway. Given this progress and the implementation structure in place, output 3 is on track for achievement by the project's conclusion.

Output 4: Adoption of coffee agroforestry improves farmers' livelihoods by increasing income, food security, and climate resilience

The baseline indicated limited technical and financial support for agroforestry adoption among smallholders. This year, draft credit guidelines and eligibility criteria have been developed, and an initial list of prospective beneficiaries has been compiled through site visits. Plot design and agroforestry planning have begun for the first cohort.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

The project aims to restore a multifunctional landscape in a high biodiversity-value region by establishing 150 hectares of coffee agroforestry, delivering both environmental and socioeconomic benefits. Progress toward this Outcome is underway, with clear advancements on several indicators, although initial field realities have necessitated some adaptive strategies.

Indicator 0.1: While 50 smallholder farmers are expected to adopt agroforestry systems by Year 3, current progress shows that land availability per farmer is lower than anticipated. To reach the target area, the strategy has shifted toward engaging a greater number of producers with smaller individual plots. The commitment to gender balance remains a priority, though further efforts are required to ensure greater participation of women-headed households.

Indicator 0.2: The project remains on track to meet the 150-hectare target through the adapted multi-producer approach. Although reforestation has not yet begun, preparatory steps—including seedling development and plot identification—have been completed.

Indicator 0.3 & 0.4: All participating farmers have agreed to pursue Rainforest Alliance certification, which includes the protection of on-farm forests and agroforestry model. Baseline data collection and socialisation of certification requirements have laid the foundation for meeting these indicators by Year 3.

Indicator 0.5: While forest tree planting has not yet started, nursery activities are under way, and the target of planting 30,000 native trees remains achievable within the current timeline.

Indicator 0.6: A biodiversity baseline using eBird and PROALAS methodology has been established across geo-referenced plots. This dataset will serve as the foundation for tracking biodiversity changes over the course of the project.

In summary, although early-stage delays and field conditions have required adaptive measures, the Outcome remains achievable. The indicators are deemed appropriate and continue to guide implementation. Any adjustments deemed necessary based on ongoing evaluation will be proposed in the next reporting cycle.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

All Outcome-level assumptions identified at the beginning of the project continue to hold true. Regular monitoring has confirmed that the foundational conditions necessary for achieving the project's goals remain stable. Below is an overview of each assumption, the rationale behind it, and current observations based on fieldwork and partner engagement:

Assumption	Status and Commentary
A1: Legal, land tenure, and political situation of Nicaragua is challenging, but effective communication and previous experience of stakeholders will allow for project implementation.	**Valid.** In Nicaragua, agrarian reforms and titling policies have supported land access. All participating producers confirmed secure tenure over their project-related parcels. This has facilitated engagement and avoided land conflict issues.
A2: Prices of inputs remain relatively stable (after the high rise of the last 2 years), maintaining the projected investment costs per hectare.	**Valid.** All producers have committed to covering their own plot implementation costs (soil preparation, planting, and maintenance), which has helped maintain project feasibility despite ongoing price fluctuations.
A3: Coffee agroforestry increases smallholder farmers' adaptability to climate change compared to conventional coffee production.	**Valid.** Field interactions confirm that producers recognise the climate-resilient benefits of agroforestry. Their interest and adaptability reinforce the project's theory of change.
A4: Previous studies show a high accuracy of Cornell's model.	**Valid.** To date, the Cornell model continues to provide reliable data and analysis. It remains the best fit for the project's spatial planning and restoration targeting needs.

The team will continue to track these assumptions throughout implementation to ensure that any potential risks are addressed promptly. Should any shift arise, adaptive measures will be integrated into project planning and execution.

Monitoring **Output-level assumptions** has been integral to guiding project implementation. Field visits, partner coordination, and direct engagement with producers have allowed for regular validation of these assumptions. All continue to hold true at this stage of the project, though the team remains alert to any contextual shifts.

Below is a summary by Output:

Output	Assumption	Status and Commentary
1	A1: The current amount of high-quality eBird checklists (>35k for Nicaragua) will be sufficient to generate robust information for most bird species and species of conservation interest.	**Valid.** eBird remains the cornerstone of biodiversity data collection. Each geo-referenced plot is already contributing initial species records, and the volume of checklists has proven sufficient for baseline analysis.
2	A1: Cornell's models will continue to provide accurate and meaningful information on biodiversity.	**Valid.** The modelling framework continues to perform well, guiding intervention design. Regular contact with field teams ensures a strong flow of data and mutual feedback.
3	A1: Coffee agroforestry provides improved habitat for most species vs. conventional land use.	**Valid.** Farmers view agroforestry as both economically and ecologically beneficial. Their commitment to conservation supports this assumption.
	A2: Agroforestry systems function as ecological corridors.	**Valid.** While data collection is ongoing, field evidence and species movement patterns support the role of agroforestry in improving connectivity between reserves.
	A3: Bird counts using PROALAS are a meaningful proxy for biodiversity monitoring.	**Valid.** The PROALAS protocol has proven highly accurate, yielding precise data and supporting short-term biodiversity evaluations.
4	A1: Coffee agroforestry improves farmer income.	**Valid.** Although income tracking is ongoing, participation in Rainforest Alliance certification and adoption of CAS suggest farmers anticipate added value and returns.
	A2: There is strong farmer interest in these interventions.	**Valid.** Farmers confirm strong interest, especially given the opportunity to renew their production systems with little upfront cost.
	A3: CAS generates significant local employment.	**Valid.** Each farmer is seen as a growing entrepreneur, and CAS implementation has already shown potential for increased labour demand.
	A4: Certification (Rainforest Alliance) increases income.	**Valid.** All producers are committed to certification, recognising its potential for higher market value and enhanced livelihoods.
5	A1: Farmers are motivated to improve their skills and knowledge.	**Valid.** Farmers have shown eagerness to engage in training and adapt to the demands of environmentally responsible, globally relevant production.
	A2: Project partners have sufficient capacity to deliver training.	**Valid.** Partners have proven able to deliver effective one-on-one capacity-building and are preparing for broader training activities in the coming months.

The project will continue monitoring these assumptions through M&E processes to ensure adaptive responses where needed. Thus far, all indicators suggest strong alignment between project activities, stakeholder engagement, and the foundational conditions for success.

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

The intended impact outlined in the original application is the **long-term conservation of biodiversity and improvement of human well-being** in rural Nicaragua. The project contributes to this broader goal by addressing key drivers of environmental degradation—such as deforestation, habitat fragmentation, and unsustainable farming practices—while improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

The project is actively supporting biodiversity conservation through the establishment of **CAS** in areas identified as having high restoration potential. Using a replicable methodology developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology—based on artificial intelligence and spatial data—the project has begun to target interventions in landscapes where restoration is likely to yield the highest biodiversity benefits.

Initial biodiversity baselines have been established using **eBird and PROALAS protocols**, and the geo-referencing of participating farms enables long-term monitoring of species richness, abundance, and habitat recovery. These data contribute not only to project evaluation but also to broader national and regional biodiversity reporting and planning processes.

The project also promotes Rainforest Alliance certification, which incorporates clear requirements for forest protection and ecological restoration on farms, aligning long-term land stewardship with market incentives and conservation goals.

The project aims to contribute to **poverty reduction in rural communities** through support for climate-resilient livelihoods and increased access to financial and technical resources. Although still in early stages, key foundational steps have been taken:

- **Draft credit and eligibility guidelines** (Annex 4.9) have been prepared, forming the basis for a future financial support mechanism that will enable smallholder farmers to invest in agroforestry.
- **Initial visits and assessments** are helping to identify prospective beneficiaries based on environmental commitment and suitability for agroforestry adoption.
- **Plot planning and nursery development** have begun, with the goal of supporting agroforestry establishment that can provide both environmental services and alternative income streams.

The project also incorporates a strong commitment to **social inclusion**, with a focus on engaging women, youth, and local community participants. While challenges such as limited land access for women have emerged, the team is exploring flexible pathways for involvement, including group-based models and leadership or training roles that don't depend on land tenure.

Through this integrated approach, the project is laying the groundwork for a lasting impact on both biodiversity conservation and community well-being. As activities expand in the coming year, the dual ecological and socioeconomic benefits are expected to strengthen, supporting Nicaragua's broader environmental and development goals.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

During this reporting period, the project has focused on building the foundations necessary for meaningful engagement with Nicaragua's national policy frameworks and international environmental commitments. While no formal reports have yet been submitted to convention focal points, the project's design and early actions align closely with national strategies such as the National Environmental and Climate Change Strategy (ENACC), the Resilience and Climate Change Plan, and the country's NDCs under the UNFCCC.

Key contributions this year include:

- Alignment with Nicaragua's restoration commitments under the Bonn Challenge and 20x20 Initiative, through the establishment of agroforestry systems in areas targeted for ecological restoration.

- Baseline biodiversity assessments and initial reforestation efforts, contributing data that will support national reporting to the CBD and improve monitoring of forest health and ecological connectivity.
- Development of a methodology for spatially targeting interventions (Output 1), and ongoing biodiversity data collection, which will inform local decision-making and future national reporting under the REDD+ framework.

Although direct interaction with national focal points has not occurred this year, project partner ECOM maintains regular engagement with government institutions, such as MARENA, laying the groundwork for future policy contributions. All biodiversity and landscape data collected will be openly available to relevant institutions and communities to promote evidence-based planning and inclusive environmental governance.

5. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

This project contributes to multidimensional poverty reduction in rural Nicaragua by promoting sustainable coffee agroforestry as a nature-based solution that simultaneously improves livelihoods and enhances environmental resilience. By supporting smallholder farmers—particularly those living in the area of influence of the project—the initiative aims to strengthen income opportunities, food security, and adaptive capacity in the face of climate and economic challenges.

Over the past year, key foundations have been laid to enable tangible benefits for participating communities. Credit and eligibility guidelines have been developed and field-tested to support smallholders in accessing finance for agroforestry establishment. The list of eligible farmers for the first round of support is now complete, representing a major step toward enabling producers to invest in diversified and climate-resilient coffee systems. While trainings in financial literacy and sustainable production are scheduled for the coming months, the early engagement has helped build trust and interest among participants.

The project's early efforts in identifying and preparing areas for reforestation are also central to poverty reduction. By restoring degraded landscapes with native species and improving ecological connectivity, the project is setting the stage for enhanced ecosystem services—such as improved soil fertility, water regulation, and pollination—that underpin sustainable agricultural productivity and community wellbeing.

Environmental awareness has been a key theme during this initial phase. Field teams have worked closely with farmers to increase understanding of how conservation and improved land stewardship contribute to long-term household resilience. Many producers have shown strong interest in the environmental goals of the project, with some already taking steps to improve their farming practices and participate more actively in restoration planning.

Recognising that poverty is complex and shaped by unequal access to resources and opportunities, the project has also prioritised inclusion from the outset. While there have been challenges in ensuring full participation of women—particularly due to land access constraints—steps are being taken to address these barriers in future stages. Tailored engagement strategies are being developed to ensure that women, youth, and marginalised groups can access training and play meaningful roles within the agroforestry network, even if they are not primary landowners.

Though it is still early to report measurable impacts on household incomes, the foundations now in place—financial tools, technical guidance, environmental awareness, and community engagement—are expected to deliver long-term poverty reduction benefits. As the project expands its agroforestry footprint and community engagement efforts, the combined ecological and social benefits are expected to increase, advancing the project's central aim of linking conservation with tangible, measurable improvements in rural livelihoods.

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	

From the start, this project has recognised the importance of building a truly inclusive approach—one that not only delivers ecological and economic benefits but also supports the most vulnerable members of the community. In rural Nicaragua, that often means addressing long-standing gender inequalities, and ensuring that women, youth, and indigenous groups are meaningfully included in decisions, training, and access to resources.

Our goal has always been to ensure that women are not just present in project activities but have the same opportunities as men to benefit—from markets, training, credit, and agroforestry systems that can strengthen their resilience to climate change. However, putting this into practice has brought some early lessons.

As we reached out to potential female participants, it became evident that the barrier was structural. Many of the women identified did not have access to enough land suitable for planting—something that is still often controlled by male members of the household or community. As a result, despite our efforts, the number of women actively involved in this first stage of the project is still lower than planned.

Gender-responsive training sessions for both technical staff and community leaders will help shift attitudes and support an environment where women's participation is not only accepted but actively encouraged.

Beyond gender, we are also working to ensure broader social inclusion. The project team is aware that age, ethnicity, and literacy can affect how people engage with agroforestry systems and the services we offer. That's why our training sessions have been tailored to local languages and adapted for accessibility. Youth and indigenous farmers have been identified as priority groups for technical support and future leadership within the agroforestry network.

This experience has highlighted that inclusion isn't something that happens automatically—it requires ongoing attention, adaptation, and, often, tackling deeper social norms. We still have progress to make, but these early insights have helped us refocus our strategy. Going forward, we will continue building more inclusive mechanisms for landless women, incorporate GESI indicators into our monitoring framework, and ensure that future phases of credit, certification, and biodiversity restoration reach and reflect the full diversity of the communities we work with.

In short, while our GESI work is still evolving, we are fully committed to making sure that the benefits of this project are shared fairly—and that those with the fewest resources are never left behind.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

The project is supported by a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system designed to track progress against both the Outputs and the overall Outcome. This system has been coordinated among partners and is functioning effectively during the early stages of implementation. It captures both quantitative and qualitative data, allowing the team to monitor ecological, social, and technical aspects of the intervention.

Indicators of achievement include both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitatively, the project is tracking progress through:

- The number of smallholder farmers engaged (baseline: 40 producers),
- Hectares of land identified and prepared for agroforestry (nursery work underway for 75 ha),
- Number of native trees to be planted and monitored,
- Biodiversity data collected through eBird on geo-referenced plots,
- Gender representation among participants,
- Credit guidelines developed and farmers assessed for eligibility.

Qualitatively, indicators include:

- Producer attitudes and commitment to biodiversity conservation,
- Levels of awareness around sustainable farming and certification (e.g., Rainforest Alliance),
- Inclusivity and engagement with marginalised groups, including women and indigenous farmers,
- Training participation and satisfaction, based on early-stage one-on-one interactions.

These indicators are being measured through baseline surveys, participatory assessments, field visits, geospatial mapping, and biodiversity monitoring protocols. For example, biodiversity data collection is underway on all baseline plots, and producers have been sensitised to environmental stewardship, showing an early behavioural shift in favour of sustainable practices.

No formal changes have been made to the M&E framework during this reporting period, but early implementation has highlighted the value of adaptive approaches—particularly in aligning land availability and gender inclusion expectations with on-the-ground realities.

M&E responsibilities are distributed among partners. ECOM leads field-level data collection and monitoring; Cornell supports design and analysis of social indicators and inclusive approaches; CLO provides technical oversight and spatial analysis. Information is shared through joint meetings, shared digital platforms, and coordinated reporting to ensure a coherent and comprehensive M&E approach.

So far, the system is functioning well, providing timely insights that support adaptive management. However, as implementation scales up, refinements in data harmonisation and reporting processes are expected to further enhance effectiveness.

8. Lessons learnt

This first year of implementation has underscored the value of flexibility and the need to continuously adapt project plans to the realities encountered in the field. While many aspects of the project progressed as planned—such as the establishment of key partnerships, development of technical tools, and early capacity-building efforts—certain field activities, particularly the selection of beneficiaries, revealed important gaps between expectations and reality. Initially, the project relied heavily on a finca-by-finca approach to identify eligible producers for agroforestry activities. While thorough, this method proved inefficient and time-intensive. Often, it led to visits that did not result in viable participation due to land availability, interest, or eligibility criteria. A more strategic approach, combining an expanded preliminary contact list with phone calls or consultations before field visits, would have saved valuable time and resources. Additionally, stronger engagement with local leaders and community organisations from the outset could have helped refine beneficiary selection, build trust, and increase project visibility in priority areas.

The challenge of promoting gender inclusion also surfaced early in implementation. Although the project aimed to ensure equal participation for women, the reality on the ground was more complex. Many of the women contacted were interested in joining but lacked access to suitable land—highlighting structural barriers that cannot be overcome through outreach alone. This has prompted the team to rethink the approach for the next phase, considering alternative pathways for women's engagement. These early challenges have been critical learning moments, reinforcing the need for context-sensitive planning, early consultation, and adaptive implementation. Moving forward, these lessons will shape how beneficiary outreach, gender strategies, and logistical planning are approached to ensure greater efficiency, equity, and long-term impact. While a formal Change Request is not currently required, adjustments are already being incorporated into the planning for year two to ensure the project remains responsive and grounded in the realities of rural Nicaragua.

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

N/A

10. Risk Management

No new risks have arisen during the reporting period that were not previously accounted for in the project's risk assessment. As a result, no significant adaptations to the risk register have been necessary for this report. The project continues to monitor and mitigate existing risks, and the risk management strategies remain effective. (Annex 4.10)

11. Scalability and durability

The project has been deliberately designed with scalability and long-term durability in mind. From the outset, interventions were developed to be replicable, embedded within existing institutional and community frameworks, and aligned with national environmental and rural development priorities.

To promote future scalability, the project focuses on a focal landscape with high biodiversity return potential and strong logistical feasibility—leveraging ECOM's established operational presence. By targeting areas in the area of influence of the project and integrating ecological priorities with farmer support mechanisms, the model presents a strong value proposition for broader replication. Activities such as establishing 150 hectares of coffee agroforestry, implementing a revolving credit fund, and deploying spatial prioritisation tools have all been designed with a view toward replicability in other highland regions of Nicaragua and beyond.
The use of open-access biodiversity data and replicable bird monitoring systems (based on the PROALAS guidelines) strengthens the project's scientific robustness and facilitates knowledge transfer to other regions or partners. Outreach activities—including planned webinars and presentations of the biodiversity restoration guide—will further support the dissemination and adoption of methodologies by national and international stakeholders.

Durability is also being reinforced through long-term behavioural change and capacity building. All participating smallholders were selected based on demonstrated environmental commitment. Ongoing environmental awareness-raising, training in sustainable practices, and technical accompaniment aim to instil lasting attitudes and behaviours that prioritise conservation alongside economic sustainability. As observed during this period, producers have developed a heightened awareness of the ecological value of their actions and their role in the broader conservation objective.

At a systemic level, the project is creating mechanisms to ensure sustained impact beyond the funding period. This includes the revolving fund, which will continue to provide access to credit for agroforestry beyond the life of the grant, as well as the integration of community-level monitoring and evaluation tools that support adaptive management. Partnerships with key stakeholders, such as Agricola Sta. Isabel, ECOM, and local authorities are central to sustaining institutional engagement and policy alignment.

In line with the original exit strategy, continued collaboration with national stakeholders and the availability of tools, data, and methods will ensure that both outputs and impacts can be carried

forward. Furthermore, the project's alignment with Nicaragua's restoration goals under initiatives such as the Bonn Challenge and 20x20 provides a clear policy framework through which scaling and durability can be reinforced.

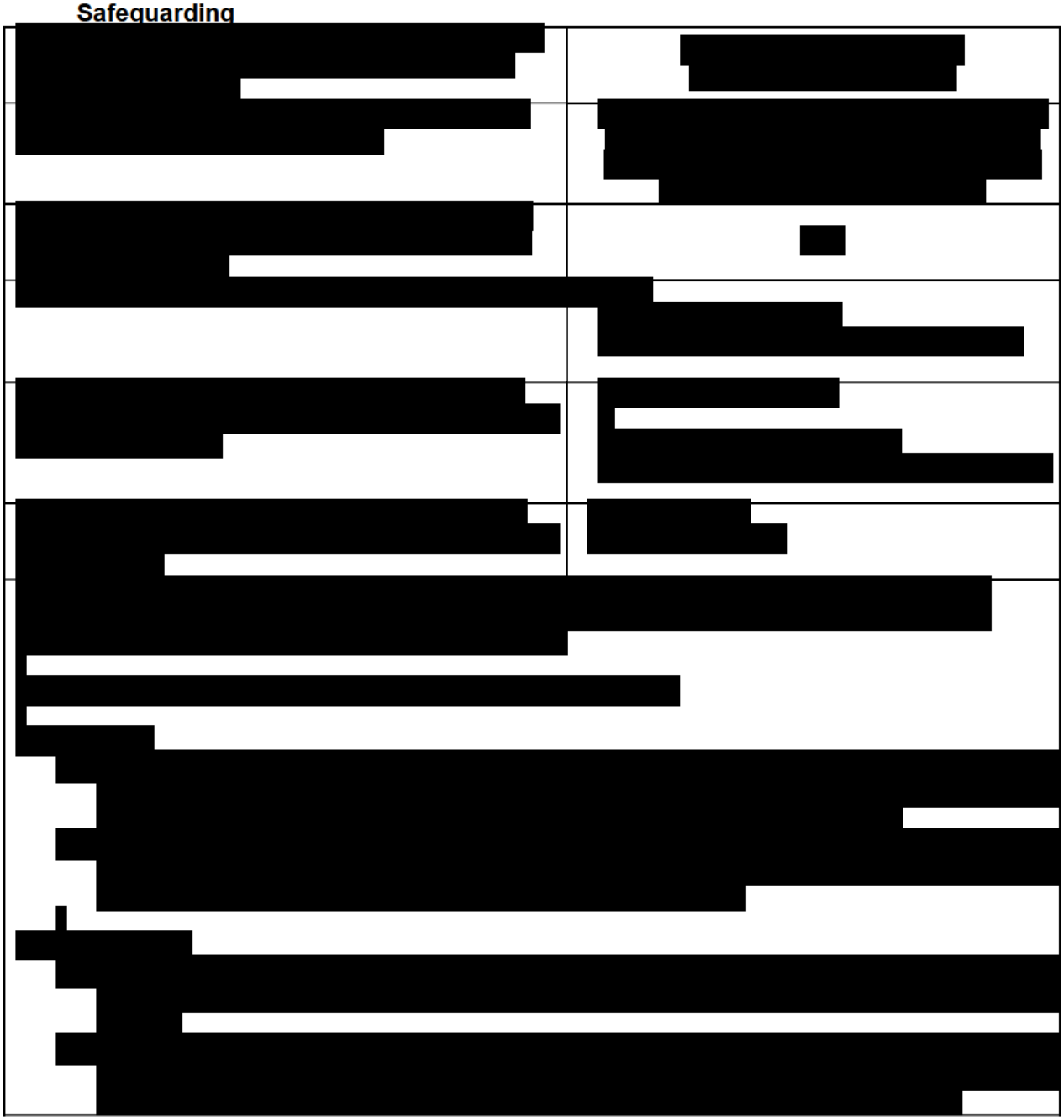
As such, while the project is still in its early implementation phase, it is on track to deliver lasting outcomes and offer a replicable model for linking sustainable agriculture with biodiversity conservation in rural landscapes.

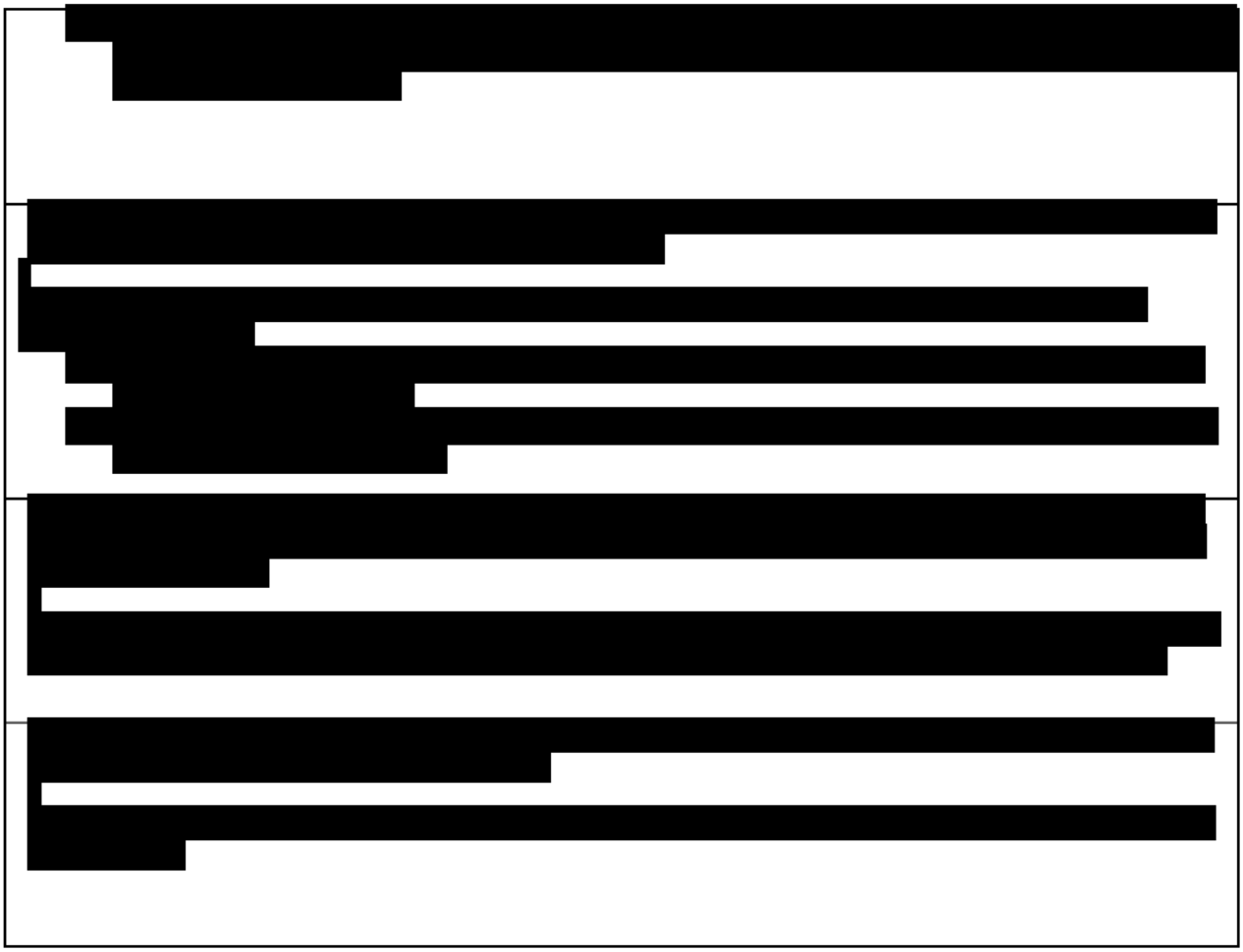
12. Darwin Initiative identity

Given that the project is still in its early stages, no formal efforts have yet been made to publicise the Darwin Initiative. This approach reflects the project's intention to first engage and inform relevant local authorities before undertaking any broader public communications.

Nonetheless, the UK Government's support through the Darwin Initiative will be clearly acknowledged in all future public materials and communications, as well as in interactions with beneficiaries and stakeholders, in line with programme requirements.

13. Safeguarding





14. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2024/25 Grant (£)	2024/25 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	£ 130,093	£ 129,988		

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			*ECOM Internal Accounting System*

Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)	£ 0.00	£ 0.00	

15. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

N/A

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

N/A

17. Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2024-2025

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact Improved biodiversity, landscape connectivity, farmers' livelihoods and resilience to climate change in Nicaraguan highlands through sustainable coffee production; Nicaragua is used as an example for other coffee-producing countries.	**Contributions to Biodiversity:** • Restored habitats and established wildlife corridors via agroforestry, enhancing connectivity between Datanli El Diablo and Peñas Blancas Natural Reserves. • Over 35,000 eBird checklists collected for biodiversity monitoring. • PROALAS bird monitoring shows positive impact of agroforestry on biodiversity. **Contributions to Human Communities:** • Increased livelihoods and economic resilience for smallholder farmers through sustainable coffee agroforestry. • Farmers adopted climate-resilient coffee varieties, improving their adaptability to climate change. • Empowered marginalized groups, particularly women-headed households, with access to training and resources. **Broader Influence:** • Replicable model for other Latin American countries, combining biodiversity conservation with rural development.	
Outcome A restored multifunctional landscape in an area with a high potential return on investment for biodiversity, ecosystem services, and livelihoods through the establishment of 150 hectares of coffee agroforestry.		
Outcome indicator 0.1 50 smallholder farmers, with 50% women-headed households will be more resilient to climate change impacts by adopting coffee agroforestry practices and/or being trained on sustainable farming practices by Y3 **[DI-DO2].**	The project has made steady progress in engaging smallholder farmers, with an emphasis on ensuring at least 50% of the participants are women-headed households. Initial assessments were completed to identify eligible farmers, and technical support has been provided through field visits. Evidence provided in Section 3.4 and Annex 4.6 and 4.9	• Complete training sessions on sustainable farming and coffee agroforestry practices for additional farmers, with a continued focus on women-headed households. • Monitor the adoption of agroforestry practices and track the resilience improvements of participating farmers, specifically in relation to climate change impacts. • Expand outreach to engage more farmers, ensuring the gender target is met and that the number of smallholder farmers adopting agroforestry continues to increase.

Outcome indicator 0.2 Establishment of 150 hectares of Sustainable Management Practices (SMPs, through agroforestry, forest conservation and forest regeneration) in the focal area during the course of the project by Y3 **[DI-DO1].**	The initial 75 hectares for agroforestry establishment are on track. Preparations for the first planting cycle, including nursery management have been completed. The project is proceeding with plans to plant the first batch of saplings on the identified plots. Evidence provided in Section 3.3 and Annex 4.4	• Commence planting of coffee agroforestry saplings on the first 75 hectares. Focus on high-quality saplings and ensuring biodiversity is considered in the planting strategy. • Continue preparing the second batch of plots for the remaining 75 hectares, ensuring they meet agroforestry standards and are ready for planting in subsequent cycles. • Monitor the initial phase of agroforestry implementation and track the success rate of the planted saplings, adjusting strategies as needed.
Outcome indicator 0.3 Establish a baseline of bird species abundance, richness, and completeness in the focal area (Y1). Use PROALAS point count data collected in the field to ground-truth model estimates (Y1). Quantify changes to species- and community-level biodiversity metrics between baseline and subsequent evaluations (Y3).	Baseline bird species data collection has been completed using the PROALAS point count method. This data has been used to establish the initial biodiversity metrics for the area. A clear baseline for species richness and abundance has been established, which will be essential for future impact evaluations. Evidence provided in Section 3.3	• Conduct follow-up biodiversity monitoring to track changes in bird species abundance and richness, comparing data collected during this period with the established baseline. • Continue ground-truthing the model estimates with field data to refine species abundance metrics and ensure accuracy. • Prepare for mid-term evaluations of biodiversity, focusing on species- and community-level changes, and adjust monitoring techniques if necessary.
Output 1 Developed a highly reproducible methodology for providing spatially-explicit guidance on biodiversity and expected impacts of interventions at region-specific and country levels, based on a big-data analysis to estimate species “completeness” and abundance.		
Output indicator 1.1 Methodological manual targeting practitioners and policy advisers published open access by Cornell in Y2 of the project. **[DI-C01].**	The methodological manual has been drafted and is now in the final stages of review and trial. The project is on track for the manual to be published in open access format by Cornell by the end of Year 2. The manual, which outlines a scalable methodology for biodiversity metrics and impact assessment using geospatial data, has been reviewed internally and is currently undergoing final refinement. Evidence provided in Section 3.1 and Annex 4.1	□ Finalise and submit the manual for open access publication with Cornell, ensuring that it is accessible to a wide audience of practitioners, policymakers, and researchers across Latin America and beyond. □ Promote the manual through relevant channels to ensure that the target audience, including key stakeholders in biodiversity conservation, adopts it as a valuable resource. □ Coordinate the dissemination strategy to ensure that key decision-makers in Latin America are made aware of the manual’s availability and use.
Output indicator 1.2 Feedback workshop hosted with key (international) stakeholders working on the topic coinciding with the publishing of the methodological manual (expected at the end of year 1). Project goal: 30 key decision- makers reached across Central American countries, including government institutions,	Due to the delay mentioned in section 3, the workshop plan is currently under development. The workshop will be aligned with the manual’s publication, ensuring the content is highly relevant to the participants.	□ Finalise workshop logistics**,** ensuring that key decision-makers are confirmed for participation, with invitations sent to a range of stakeholders from government bodies, NGOs, and businesses. □ Host the feedback workshop upon the manual’s publication, collecting feedback and engaging participants in discussions about the applicability of the methodology for biodiversity restoration in the region.

NGOs, and private businesses. **[DI-C13]**		□ Prepare a workshop report summarising key findings and recommendations, which will also inform further refinement of the manual and its implementation in practice.
Output 2. Developed a guide for practitioners and decision- makers on biodiversity restoration and conservation in Nicaragua that includes areas for intervention with highest potential for impact, and plot to landscape-level implementation recommendations. The Guide is presented to key national and international stakeholders.		
Output indicator 2.1 Creation of biodiversity completeness map for Nicaragua, including assessment of areas with the highest potential for biodiversity improvement created by Cornell in Y2 of the project. **[DI-C03]**	The creation of the biodiversity completeness map for Nicaragua has been completed. The methodology to assess biodiversity completeness has been developed and finalised, with data collected and analysis tools set up to guide map creation. Initial geospatial datasets are prepared, laying the foundation for the creation of the map in Y2. Evidence provided in Section 3.1 and Annex 4.2	□ Finalise the biodiversity completeness map for Nicaragua, using collected datasets and analysis tools developed in Y1. □ Collaborate with local stakeholders and experts to verify and validate the map to ensure its practical relevance for landscape restoration. □ Begin dissemination of the map, making it available to key stakeholders and implementing organisations in Y2.
Output indicator 2.2. Presentations and webinars of report delivered to stakeholders at the national (e.g. government, NGO's, private organizations) and international (ECOM, UICN, WRI, coffee companies) level involved in landscape restoration (Project goal: 30 stakeholders reached by year 3). **[DI-C13]**	The report summarising the methodology and findings for biodiversity restoration is under preparation. Stakeholder identification and outreach have been initiated, with initial contacts made with key national and international actors. Evidence provided in Section 3.1	□ Finalise and publish the report detailing the methodology and findings, incorporating the results of the biodiversity completeness map, once it is completed. □ Organise webinars and presentations aimed at key stakeholders, particularly those involved in landscape restoration and biodiversity conservation, to engage them in the project's findings. □ Host at least 2 webinars to target the 30 stakeholders (government, NGOs, private sector) to raise awareness and encourage collaboration on landscape restoration and biodiversity initiatives.
Output 3. Increased biodiversity through habitat restoration and landscape connectivity due to the establishment of coffee agroforestry near a key forest area.		
Output indicator 3.1 100% of forests on farmers' lands actively protected by Y3, with baseline Y1. (Rainforest Alliance certification requirement)	Baseline assessments have been completed on participating farms, including land use mapping and identification of existing forested areas. All participating farmers have agreed to pursue Rainforest Alliance certification, which includes forest protection commitments. Socialisation of certification requirements has taken place through individual visits and planning sessions. Evidence provided in Section 3.3 and 3.5 of the report.	□ Begin supporting farmers in implementing **forest protection measures** required for certification (e.g. buffer zones, no-deforestation clauses). □ Provide training and technical support on Rainforest Alliance criteria. □ Monitor early compliance and adaptation of land management practices on a rolling basis.
Output indicator 3.2. Equivalent Connected Area (ECA[1]) will have increased at the end of the project duration.	ECA modelling is underway using geospatial analysis tools as part of the biodiversity completeness methodology. Mapping of 40 farms and the identification of restoration priority areas supports future increases in landscape connectivity.	□ Continue geospatial monitoring and refine ECA modelling based on reforestation progress. □ Start planting and restoration activities to contribute to increased habitat connectivity. □ Analyse early connectivity changes as farms begin implementing agroforestry plans.

	Connectivity baselines are being established through spatial mapping, forming the reference for future comparison. Evidence referenced in Section 3.1 and 3.2.	
Output indicator 3.3 Positive changes observed in species richness, community completeness and relative abundance of species of concern relative to Y1 baseline by Y 3, as a proxy for overall biodiversity **[DI-C02]**	Biodiversity baselines have been established using PROALAS point count protocols and ***eBird*** citizen science data across geo-referenced plots. Monitoring methodologies have been validated and standardised for long-term tracking. Initial bird monitoring has begun on selected farms. Evidence in Section 3.5.	□ Expand field monitoring to additional farms, particularly those entering the reforestation phase. □ Continue seasonal biodiversity assessments using the same standardised protocols. □ Begin preparing comparative analysis structures to evaluate change by Y3.
Output indicator 3.4 30,000 native trees planted and alive by year 3 through agroforestry. **[DI-D04]**	Tree planting has not yet begun; however, nurseries have been established, and saplings are being cultivated for the first 75 hectares. Participating farms have been selected and plots for planting identified. Agroforestry design and planning is complete for initial cohort of farmers. Evidence in Section 3.1 and 3.3 of report and Annex 4.4	□ Begin the first reforestation cycle, focusing on the initial 75 hectares. □ Distribute saplings and provide technical support for planting. □ Monitor early survival rates and begin maintenance (watering, shading, etc.) to ensure success.
Output 4. Adoption of coffee agroforestry improves livelihoods by increasing income, food security and climate change resilience.		
Output indicator 4.1 50 smallholder farmers included in credit schemes by Year 3, benefiting directly from Darwin funds, of whom at least 50% are women-headed households.	Credit scheme guidelines and eligibility criteria have been finalised. Field assessments completed to identify eligible smallholder farmers for the initial cohort. Preliminary beneficiary list prepared, though disbursements have not yet begun. Gender representation remains a challenge; early outreach has identified constraints for women's participation. Evidence provided in Section 3.1 and 3.5; draft guidelines included in Annex 4.9.	• Launch the initial credit disbursement phase, prioritising eligible farmers from the prepared list. • Continue targeted outreach to improve participation of women-headed households. • Begin linking financial access with agroforestry implementation support (e.g. inputs, tools).
Output indicator 4.2 37,000 working days of labour created for the local community within 3 years, equalling $320,000 of the project's funding.	Labour generation began through nursery setup, farm visits, and early agroforestry planning, though still limited in scale. Monitoring systems are being designed to track labour days and disaggregated economic impact over time. Evidence partially captured through implementation logs; formal accounting system to be fully operational in Y2.	• Increase local employment through reforestation work, technical visits, and training delivery. • Establish clear tracking of working days and associated expenditures by activity. • Begin reporting against cumulative labour and income generation by gender and activity type.
Output indicator 4.3 50 smallholders are certified by Rainforest Alliance by Year 3.	All selected farmers have agreed to pursue Rainforest Alliance certification.	□ Provide targeted training and technical assistance on Rainforest Alliance standards. □ Begin pre-certification assessments and support farmers in meeting key criteria.

	Certification requirements have been introduced during farm visits, and initial steps (e.g. mapping, documentation) are in progress. No farmers are certified yet, but foundational preparation has begun. Evidence in Section 3.3 and 3.5	□ Coordinate with Rainforest Alliance partners to schedule certification audits for Year 3.
Output 5. Developed **l**ocal capacity to implement, improve, and manage sustainable agriculture and forest conservation.		
5.1 Smallholders learn about sustainable agricultural practices through technical workshops. Project goal: 50 smallholder farmer households reached by year 3. **[DI-A01]**	Workshop implementation has been delayed due to the initial funding gap and coffee harvest season. However, groundwork has been laid through one-on-one farm visits and informal training during agroforestry planning. Training content is currently being developed and tailored to local needs. Evidence: Partial delivery referenced in Section 3.1; full workshops scheduled.	• Deliver first full technical workshops on sustainable practices, building on initial informal engagement. • Distribute accompanying materials and provide follow-up technical support through farm visits. • Begin formal tracking of participant households and topics covered.
5.2 Smallholders learn about on-farm biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services through workshops. Project goal: 50 smallholder farmers by year 3. **[DI-A01]**	No biodiversity-specific workshops delivered yet, though individual socialisation sessions have introduced related concepts (e.g. habitat corridors, forest conservation). Workshop content is in development, informed by baseline biodiversity data and Rainforest Alliance criteria. Evidence: Preliminary engagement covered in Section 3.1 and 3.5.	• Launch biodiversity-focused workshops highlighting **ecosystem services**, tree planting benefits, and farm-level conservation. • Use baseline data and bird monitoring results to localise content and show relevance to farmers' land. • Monitor uptake and adjust materials to ensure clarity and relevance.
5.3 Smallholders become aware and understand the value contributed by men and women to agriculture. **[DI-A01]**	Gender training workshops have not yet taken place. Initial engagement has included informal discussion on women's participation and barriers to access. Planning is underway for gender and human rights sessions in June and December (as noted in Section 3.1).	• Deliver the **f**irst gender equality and human rights workshops**.** • Include content on equitable access to land, credit, and training. • Engage both male and female farmers in shared discussion formats to promote joint understanding.

18. 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: Improved biodiversity, landscape connectivity, farmers' livelihoods and resilience to climate change in Nicaraguan highlands through sustainable coffee production; Nicaragua is used as an example for other coffee-producing countries.			
Outcome: A restored multifunctional landscape in an area with a high potential return on investment for biodiversity, ecosystem services, and livelihoods through the establishment of 150 hectares of coffee agroforestry.	0.1 50 smallholder farmers, with 50% women-headed households will be more resilient to climate change impacts by adopting coffee agroforestry practices and/or being trained on sustainable farming practices by Y3 **[DI-DO2].** 0.2 Establishment of 150 hectares of Sustainable Management Practices (SMPs, through agroforestry, forest conservation and forest regeneration) in the focal area during the course of the project by Y3 **[DI-DO1].** 0.3 Establish a baseline of bird species abundance, richness, and completeness in the focal area (Y1). Use PROALAS point count data collected in the field to ground-truth model estimates (Y1). Quantify changes to species- and community-level biodiversity metrics between baseline and subsequent evaluations (Y3).	0.1 Credit databases, workshop proceedings (source Ecom) 0.2 Yearly farm visits, GPS measurements, tree counts. (source Ecom) 0.3 Data for Cornell's models: 35K existing eBird checklists and 65+ environmental variables, field data from on-the-ground bird monitoring during the project by specie and community levels. (Source Cornell)	Legal, land tenure, and political situation of Nicaragua is challenging but effective communication and previous experience of stakeholders will allow for the project implementation. Prices of inputs remain relatively stable (after the high rise the last 2 years), maintaining the projected investment costs per hectare. Coffee agroforestry increases smallholder farmers' adaptability to climate change compared to conventional coffee production. Previous studies show a high accuracy of Cornell's model hold true.

Outputs: **1**. Developed a highly reproducible methodology for providing spatially-explicit guidance on biodiversity and expected impacts of interventions at region-specific and country levels, based on a big-data analysis to estimate species “completeness” and abundance.	1.1 Methodological manual targeting practitioners and policy advisers published open access by Cornell in Y2 of the project. **[DI-C01].** 1.2 Feedback workshop hosted with key (international) stakeholders working on the topic coinciding with the publishing of the methodological manual (expected at the end of year 1). Project goal: 30 key decision-makers reached across Central American countries, including government institutions, NGO’s, and private businesses. **[DI-C13]**	1.1.1 Submission confirmation email and PDF document. 1.1.2 Proceedings of publication. 1.2.1 Official attendance through Zoom analytics. 1.2.2 Workshop proceedings. (Source, Cornell)	The current amount of high- quality eBird checklists (>35k for Nicaragua) will be sufficient to generate robust information for most bird species and especially for species of conservation interest.
2. Developed a guide for practitioners and decision- makers on biodiversity restoration and conservation in Nicaragua that includes: areas for intervention with highest potential for impact, and plot to landscape-level implementation recommendations. The Guide is presented to key national and international stakeholders.	2.1 Creation of biodiversity completeness map for Nicaragua, including assessment of areas with the highest potential for biodiversity improvement created by Cornell in Y2 of the project. **[DI-C03]** 2.2 Presentations and webinars of report delivered to stakeholders at the national (e.g. government, NGO’s, private	2.1 Submission confirmation email and PDF document. 2.1.2 Proceedings of publication. 2.2.1 Official attendance through Zoom analytics (disaggregated by gender and nationality). 2.2.2 Webinar proceedings. (Source, Cornell)	Cornell’s models will continue to provide accurate and meaningful information on biodiversity. Collaboration with the British Embassy, local NGO´s and our professional network will allow us to successfully connect with decision-makers.

	organisations) and international (ECOM, UICN, WRI, coffee companies) level involved in landscape restoration (Project goal: 30 stakeholders reached by year 3). **[DI-C13]**		
3. Increased biodiversity through habitat restoration and landscape connectivity due to the establishment of coffee agroforestry near a key forest area.	3.1 100% of forests on farmers' lands actively protected by Y3, with baseline Y1. (Rainforest Alliance certification requirement) 3.2 Equivalent Connected Area (ECA[1]) will have increased at the end of the project duration. 3.3 Positive changes observed in species richness, community completeness and relative abundance of species of concern relative to Y1 baseline by Y 3**,** as a proxy for overall biodiversity **[DI-C02]** 3.4 30,000 native trees planted and alive by year 3 through agroforestry. **[DI-D04]**	3.1.1 On-farm GPS measurements and remote sensing verification of protected forest area. (Source, Cornell) 3.1.2 Rainforest Alliance Certification database. (Source,ECOM) 3.2 ECA calculated using GIS spatial data as explained in Saura et al. (2011); see reference document. 3.3.1 Reports of modelled estimations, based on field collected data (3.3.2). 3.3.2 Bird point counts, following the PROALAS protocol; see reference document. 3.4.1 Annual tree counting.	Coffee agroforestry systems provide improved habitat for most species compared to other agricultural land uses in the focal area, resulting in positive biodiversity impacts. Agroforestry systems are used as natural corridors by animals, improving connectivity between forest patches. Bird counts using the PROALAS protocol provide a meaningful proxy to identify overall biodiversity impact in a short time period.
4. Adoption of coffee agroforestry improves livelihoods by increasing income, food	4.1 50 smallholder farmers included in credit schemes by year 3, benefiting directly from	4.1 Credit databases, annual household surveys. Descriptive analyses (disaggregated by	Coffee agroforestry provides a higher income to farmers than other activities in the focal area.

security, and climate change resilience.	Darwin funds, of whom at least 50% are woman-headed households. 4.2 37,000 working days of labour created for the local community within 3 years, equalling $320,000 of the project's funding. 4.3: 50 smallholders are certified by Rainforest Alliance by Y 3	gender of household lead, number of members, area covered) (Source,ECOM). 4.2 Paycheck database. Descriptive analyses (disaggregated by gender of household lead, number of members, area covered) (Source,ECOM) 4.3 Rainforest Alliance Certification database. Descriptive analyses (disaggregated by gender of household lead, number of members, area covered) (Source,ECOM).	Previous studies indicating a high interest of farmers to participate in this type of project holds true in the focal area. Coffee agroforestry creates a high amount of labour for the local community. Rainforest Alliance Certification significantly increases coffee farmers income.
5. Developed **l**ocal capacity to implement, improve, and manage sustainable agriculture and forest conservation.	5.1 Smallholders learn about sustainable agricultural practices through technical workshops. Project goal: 50 smallholder farmer households reached by year 3. **[DI-A01]** 5.2 Smallholders learn about on-farm biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services through workshops. Project goal: 50 smallholder farmers by year 3. **[DI-A01]** 5.3 Smallholders become aware and understand the value contributed by men and women to agriculture. **[DI-A01]**	5.1 Technician records of farm visits. Training plan documentation. Workshop proceedings. Diagnostic and post workshops learning evaluations Y1 and Y3. (disaggregated by gender and age) (Source,ECOM) 5.2 Training plan documentation. Workshop proceedings and official attendance. Diagnostic and post workshops learning evaluations. Y1 and Y3. (disaggregated by gender and age) (Source, Cornell)	All selected smallholder farmers remain interested in increasing their knowledge and capacity. Project partners possess sufficient capacity for providing training.

		5.3 Training plan documentation. Workshop proceedings and official attendance. Diagnostic and post workshops learning evaluations. Y1, Y2, Y3. (Disaggregated by gender and age)) (Source, Cornell)	
Activities 1.1 Model development and methodology refinement 1.2 Sumit methodological manual for publication 1.3 Feedback workshop hosted with key (national and international) stakeholders working on the topic 2.1 Create biodiversity completeness map for Nicaragua, including assessment of areas with the highest potential for biodiversity 2.2 Design and approval of the guide for decision-makers 2.3 Presentation and webinars on the guide (for stakeholders, NGOs, and public offices involved in landscape restoration) 3.1 In-situ recognition and selection of restoration priority areas 3.2 Establishment of Rainforest Alliance Certification process 3.3 First reforestation cycle 3.4 Monitoring of tree conditions and survival 3.5 Second reforestation cycle 3.6 Evaluation of species richness, community completeness and relative abundance of species of concern 4.1 Establish credit guidelines, evaluation and beneficiaries' eligibility 4.2 Workshops and training for financial literacy 4.3 Credit disbursements process 4.4 Agroforestry coffee crop establishment 4.5 Periodical technical improvement and monitoring visits to farmers 5.1 Socialization and consulting process and rapid rural appraisal 5.2 Training session to reinforce and communicate policies of gender equality for technicians 5.3 Design and run workshops on gender equality and human rights for beneficiaries			

19. Annex 3: Standard Indicators Abiecer

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-DO2a	50 smallholder farmers, with 50% women-headed households, will have adopted coffee agroforestry design for climate change resilience, and being trained on sustainable farming practices	0.1	Number of People	Women	0			0	25
DI-DO2b	50 smallholder farmers, with 50% women-headed households, will have adopted coffee agroforestry design for climate change resilience, and being trained on sustainable farming practices	0.1	Number of People	Men	0			0	25
DI-D01	150 hectares of coffee agroforestry under Sustainable Management Practices	0.2	Number of hectares		0			0	150
DI-D04	30,000 native trees planted and alive by year 3 through agroforestry	0.5	Number of plants		0			0	30,000
DI-C01	Methodological manual targeting practitioners and policy advisers published open access by Cornell	1.1	Number	New	0			0	1
DI-C13	Feedback workshop hosted with key (international) stakeholders working on the topic coinciding with the publishing of the methodological manual	1.2	Number of webinar		0			0	2
DI-C03	Biodiversity completeness map for Nicaragua, including assessment of areas with the highest potential for biodiversity improvement created by Cornell	2.1	Number	New	1			1	2
DI-A01a	Smallholders followed trainings on sustainable agricultural practices through technical workshops	5.1	Number of People	Women	0			0	25

DI-A01b	Smallholders followed trainings on sustainable agricultural practices through technical workshops	5.1	Number of People	Men	0			0	25
DI-A01a	Smallholders followed trainings about on-farm biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services through workshops	5.2	Number of People	Women	0			0	25
DI-A01b	Smallholders followed trainings about on-farm biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services through workshops	5.2	Number of People	Men	0			0	25
DI-A01a	Smallholders follow training promoting awareness of the value contributed by men and women to agriculture	5.3	Number of People	Women	0			0	25
DI-A01b	Smallholders follow training promoting awareness of the value contributed by men and women to agriculture	5.3	Number of People	Men	0			0	25

21. 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?	
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Is your report 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.	
Have you provided an updated risk register? If you have an existing risk register you should provide an updated version alongside your report. If your project was funded prior to this being a requirement, you are encouraged to develop a risk register.	
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see Section 16)?	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	