

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	31-013
Project title	Habitat restoration, sustainable conservation for Niger Delta red colobus monkey
Country/ies	Nigeria
Lead Organisation	Foundation for Sustainability of Ecosystem, Wildlife and Climate (also SW/Niger Delta Forest Project)
Project partner(s)	Rewild; Apoi Community Conservation Association; Apoi Community Development Committee; Partners for Red Colobus (Forest Collective)
Darwin Initiative grant value	£573,599.00
Start/end dates of project	Start date: 01/04/2024 End date: 29/03/2027
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2024 – Mar 2025) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh
Project website/blog/social media	www.swnigerdeltaforestproject.org.ng
Report author(s) and date	Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh, Aniekan-Abasi Uwatt, Ebibaikebuna Erepauei (Apoi), Ayibatonye Suobai (Gbanraun), Kemensoutei Jephther Edu (Kokolo-ama) 23 rd April 2025

1. Project summary

The Niger Delta red colobus monkey (*Piliocolobus epieni*) occurs only within 1,500 km² in Bayelsa State, Nigeria due to the concentrated distribution of its preferred food tree species in the marsh forests of central Niger Delta (Werre 2000). Discovered in 1993, this species was classified as Critically Endangered in 2008 on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and has been listed five times (2008, 2010, 2016, 2018, 2022) as one of the 25 most endangered primates globally at biennial reviews by experts from the International Primatological Society. The primary threats to the species are habitat loss caused by excessive logging, oil extraction and exploration activities, and commercial bushmeat hunting/consumption. Since the early 2000s, violent conflicts and associated human rights violations stemming from revenue sharing, oil, and land disputes in the Niger River Delta region have rendered it unsafe for research or conservation activities. A survey conducted in 2013 revealed that the species had become

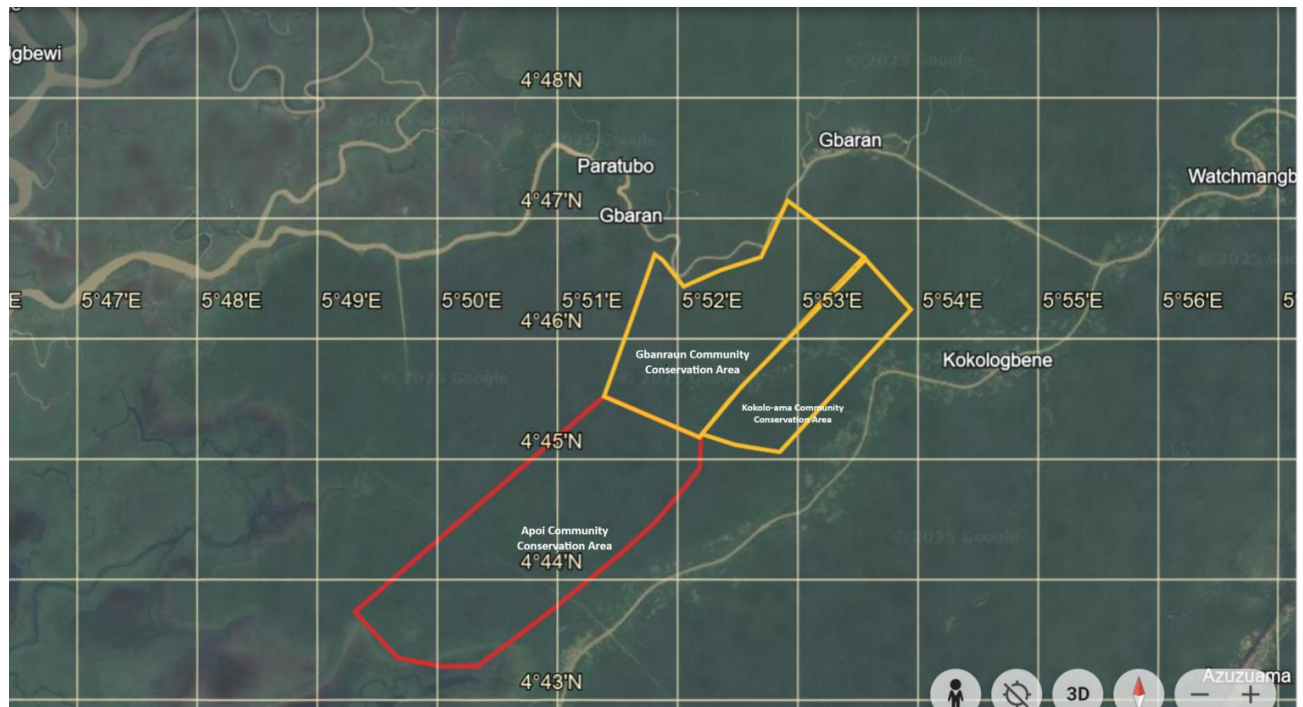
extinct in most areas of its range where it was previously recorded as abundant (see Ikemeh 2015; Werre 2000), including the location where the species was first discovered (Akeem & Lewiska 2022). Current estimates indicate that approximately 300 individuals of the red colobus monkey remain. This forest-dependent primate has never been successfully bred in captivity. Conservation efforts currently undertaken by SW/Niger Delta Forest Project provide the sole opportunity for the species' survival, although these initiatives remain fragile.

In 2020, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Apoi Community of Bayelsa State, and in 2021, we established the Apoi Community Conservation Area (ACCA), which covers 1,013 hectares where community rangers patrol to protect the last stronghold of the species. The ACCA has become a 'biodiversity island' amidst neighboring community forests that have largely been decimated by unregulated logging. The Apoi community has instituted by-laws to formally protect the species and the site; however, these measures are insufficient to deter or formally prosecute encroachers from neighboring communities, making the protected area challenging to manage and sustain.

The reasons for such heavy pressure to log in the conserved area are not difficult to understand. Niger Delta communities have been embroiled in conflicts with the government and oil companies over entrenched poverty and under-development in the region, despite bearing the burdens (mostly environmental damage leading to loss of livelihoods) of the oil sector that makes Nigeria Africa's largest oil producer. Furthermore, on May 29, 2023, the newly inaugurated president announced the end of fuel subsidies—an economic policy in place for approximately 50 years to reduce the cost of goods and services in the country. This situation has exacerbated poverty across the country and led to other negative effects such as rapidly rising inflation, job losses, crippling SMEs, etc., particularly in these remote communities, which increasingly turn to remnant forests as a means of income.

As a result, this project aimed to:

- i) Establish new community-based restoration (managed sites for conservation and reforestation) areas leading to expansion of conservation areas for the Niger Delta red colobus monkey in two neighbouring communities i.e. Gbanraun and Kokologbene. ***The map below shows the Apoi community conservancy in red polygon and the newly established conservation areas through the efforts of this project in yellow polygons.***
- ii) Improve knowledge of forest governance and facilitate the development of a legal framework
- iii) Address poverty issues by providing support for sustainable and diversified livelihood alternatives while also boosting existing local businesses



2. Project stakeholders/ partners

- i) New partnerships have been established with neighboring communities, including Gbanraun and Kokologbene (also known as Kokolo-ama), with their Community Development Committees (CDC) and Chiefs Councils, due to both demand and engagement efforts. These partnerships were formalized through the signing of a memorandum of understanding and now characterized by a close working relationship.
- ii) New partnerships have emerged in response to demand from other communities that are crucial to the conservation of the Niger Delta landscape and seascape, though they were not originally targeted in this project. Expressions of interest from the Foropa, Kassama, Sampou, Kulama I & II, and Ogbema communities in Bayelsa State are documented in official letters compiled in Annex 3.
- iii) Over the past year, existing partnerships with all host communities, including the Apoi Community Development Committee and the Apoi Community Conservation Associations' Board of Trustees and Management Committees, have been further strengthened through training in forest governance and management, regular meetings, refinement of agreements, and the clarification of roles within the project. The project's core strength entirely lies in empowering the communities to take ownership of the conservation processes, ensuring their engagement in project planning, activities, and decision-making.
- iv) Significant achievements include cooperation and advocacy efforts for policy developments that have garnered greater levels of public support for wildlife and forest conservation in the State. Public events organized to drive stakeholder discussions on developing legal frameworks for wildlife conservation in Bayelsa State have brought together leaders, experts, technocrats, and professionals from Niger Delta Universities, various government ministries in Bayelsa State, and interests at the Federal level (Attendance lists included in ANNEX 3).
- v) We have seen significant improvements in our interactions with the Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment, especially the Department of Forestry. As a result, we are considering a change request to replace the partners at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism with those at the Ministry of Environment.
- vi) During a public forum as part of efforts to develop a legal framework for wildlife conservation in Bayelsa State, we created a short film ([link](#)) in collaboration with local communities to illustrate why wildlife laws are crucial. Other evidence of our work here in this policy brief also in ANNEX 3.
- vii) We maintain an ongoing collaboration with the Partners for Red Colobus (registered name Forest Collective) for conservation education initiatives. The team at P4RC

designed and produced a children's storybook on the Niger Delta red colobus monkey, which is distributed freely to every child in all host communities. Over the past year, plans have been developed to expand the conservation education initiatives to reach a majority of schools and communities in Bayelsa State, beyond the areas where red colobus conservation efforts are being carried out. For this expansion plan, we would collaborate with Forest Collective in curriculum development for a mobile education programme and broader conservation education to train teachers and include sustainable livelihood training for local communities. The evidence for this is **Darwin Initiative Capability and Capacity (C&C) Application Ref: DIR31CC\1487 Project Title: Building capacity in Nigeria's Niger Delta through integrated conservation education.**

- viii) A new partnership with the Primatology Lab of Florida Atlantic University yielded productive training in arboreal camera trap deployment thus improving wildlife monitoring and forest surveillance.

3. Project progress

The project aims to conserve the Niger Delta red colobus monkey while promoting sustainable livelihoods for local communities through habitat restoration and socio-economic development.

Expected Impact: The Niger Delta red colobus monkey is effectively conserved; forest restoration areas are established providing critical habitat expansion and sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

Outcome Goals: By the end of Year 3, the project aims to protect the monkey, establish two community restoration areas of 15km², and benefit 1170 households through income generation and training.

Reduction of Illegal Activities: A target is set to reduce illegal logging and poaching to fewer than 5 incidents per year by Year 3, down from an average of 26 incidents.

Habitat Expansion: The conserved area for *P.epieni* in Apoi creek forests is expected to increase by at least 110%, with a 50% increase in wildlife occupancy in regenerated forests by Year 3.

Community Engagement in Conservation and Habitat Restoration Efforts: 35 local individuals will be engaged in habitat restoration activities, with a tree nursery established to plant a minimum of 10,000 seedlings annually by Year 2.

Poverty Alleviation: The project addresses poverty by providing infrastructure for education and healthcare, supporting 500 people with MSME equipment, and training 670 individuals in business skills by Year 3.

Legal Framework Development: New communal bylaws for forest governance and a conservation management plan for the red colobus monkey will be drafted and endorsed by key political actors by the end of Year 3.

Awareness and Communication: A radio show and other communication tools will be developed to improve awareness of biodiversity issues among 500,000 people in the region.

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1. Law enforcement and biomonitoring in the ACCA is improved and two new forest restoration areas are established with special designations and land use agreements.

Activity 1.1: Stakeholder consultations on key components of the project i.e., location of designated site for reforestation, term agreements, clarifications on land use, ownerships, tenure, rights etc. **[Activity completed evidenced from partnership agreements (MoU) with Gbanraun, Kokologbene ANNEX 3; baseline biodiversity and socio-economic reports; monthly reports compiled in ANNEX 4]** The main strategy to achieve this project output was to bring together all relevant parties to ensure that every aspect of project objective is

comprehensively understood and agreed upon. At its core, this activity involves structured consultations with stakeholders who have a direct interest in—or whose rights and responsibilities are affected by—our efforts to establish a conservation area. By engaging landowners, community representatives, customary authorities and most importantly the paramount traditional rulers of these communities in an open dialogue, we endeavoured to reach clear, mutually acceptable arrangements before any project activity begins. Within the scope of this activity, we carried out:

- **Stakeholder Engagement Process: Distributed briefing materials** that outline project targets, legal considerations and proposed schedule. We also had several **individual and group meetings**, organized one-on-one sessions with community leadership, as well as larger workshops or town-hall forums for community members. **Field Visits:** facilitated joint site inspections (in participatory mapping) so that participants can confirm coordinates, review environmental conditions and discuss practical issues such as boundaries, ownership claims, access tracks etc. We captured any proposed amendments to the draft agreements, and compiled a list of issues, responsible parties and deadlines for resolution.
- **Partnership and Land Use Agreements:** Coordinated stakeholder groups to agree on governance structures, communal laws governing the earmarked area for conservation and habitat restoration activities etc. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was drafted, followed by a series of meetings to clarify terms, roles, and statements through independently hired legal counsels.

Result:

- A fully executed land-use agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) signed by all relevant rights holders.

Activity 1.2: Facilitate participatory mapping of proposed reforestation areas' boundaries with special designations as community-managed (conservation) areas: Develop plan, logistics for community participation. **[Activity completed evidenced from participatory mapping carried out and delineated area shown in the map in the preceding section see ANNEX 4]** Within the scope of this activity, we carried out:

- **Site Selection and Validation:** Evaluate proposed locations based on ecological, social, and logistical criteria, including proximity to the existing Apoi Community Conservation Area (ACCA). Collaborate with stakeholder representatives to confirm boundaries, biodiversity characteristics, and current conditions of the habitat on ground.
- **Clarification of Land Use, Ownership, Tenure and Rights:** Map existing land-use patterns and legal titles to identify customary claims, private ownership and public or communal rights. Resolve any overlaps, ambiguities or conflicts in tenure by referencing local laws, traditional governance structures and previous land-use agreements. Specify how project activities (e.g., tree planting, patrolling, maintenance) align with or modify existing land-use rights, and document the consent of collective rights holders of land.

Result:

- Maps and GIS data layers showing confirmed site boundaries, land-use classifications and points of stakeholder interest or restriction.

Activity 1.3: Prepare maps showing agreed locations of proposed community managed areas and other geo-features; develop implementation plans; draft agreements etc. **[Activity completed evidenced from the above, implementation/Management plan pending for Gbanraun and Kokologbene but completed for Apoi, see copy in ANNEX 3]**

Activity 1.4: Community consultations on new land designations and signing of MoU. Facilitate community-to-community learning (Apoi sharing lessons learned with Gbanraun and Kokologbene). **[Activity fully completed with reference to Activity 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 above and evidenced from monthly reports, photographs etc. in ANNEX 4]**

As part of our 'peer-to-peer learning strategy, we successfully organized a community-to-community exchange in which the Apoi community hosted representatives of Gbanraun and Kokolo-ama at different times during the year sharing its key experiences, lessons learned and best practices in implementing conservation with their neighbours. Over the course of three site visits to ACCA and two facilitated workshops, Apoi CDC and ACCA management committee led hands-on demonstrations of the approaches that have driven their successes in areas such as governance, conservation area management, policy advocacy, and small-scale income generation. During each exchange, participants from Gbanraun and Kokologbene observed Apoi's community meetings, inspected ongoing project activities and the ACCA secretariat, and joined roundtable discussions to explore how to adapt these practices to their own contexts. The learning opportunity facilitated discussions on the challenges faced in Apoi community. Meanwhile, representatives from Gbanraun and Kokologbene engaged in action-planning exercises, creating detailed plans for piloting activities in their communities. By the conclusion of the final workshop, all three communities established informal peer-support network and an agreement to continue discussions with Apoi representatives to provide guidance for other emerging community conservation association.

Activity 1.5: Train community rangers in the use of Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) in the ACCA and deploy camera traps to enhance biomonitoring. **[Activity partially completed SMART training is still being planned with Rewild's Wildlife Crime Prevention Unit. On the other hand, community biomonitoring unit received training from Florida Atlantic University in arboreal camera trap deployment and 90 camera traps deployed efficiently throughout the area see ANNEX 4 for compilation of camera trap photolog]**

The objective of the SMART Training is to equip community rangers with the skills needed to record patrol effort, incident reports and species observations in a standardized, geo-referenced database. We are working closely with Rewild's Wildlife Crime Prevention Unit and collaborating on curriculum development, ensuring that modules on data entry, spatial analysis and evidence collection are closely aligned with our anti-poaching priorities. Initial planning have been held to highlight learning outcomes and logistical requirements but specific timing is yet to be decided on when formal training sessions are to be held due to the busy schedule of the trainer to deliver hands-on instruction at which time field-ready smartphones and user guides will also be provided.

In December 2024, we completed an intensive field course led by Research Technician from Florida Atlantic University. The course covered site selection in canopy environments, proper camera trap anchoring techniques, protocols, data entry and routine maintenance procedures (See ANNEX 4). Leveraging the newly acquired skills, the team installed 90 motion-activated camera traps at strategic points across the ACCA and other project sites, riparian corridors and known wildlife trails. Traps were positioned at varying heights to maximize detection of both ground-dwelling and tree-climbing species. • Data Management: Photos and videos captured by the cameras are downloaded on a periodic schedule, catalogued by date and location, and entered into a centralized database. A preliminary photolog detailing species identifications and activity patterns is provided in Annex 4.

Result:

- Improved Species Inventories: Fine-scale data on presence, abundance and behavior of elusive mammals, birds and reptiles.
- Community Engagement: Community members and leadership now take ownership of biodiversity stewardship, using tangible results from the camera trapping effort to advocate for effective wildlife conservation policies.
- Long-Term Monitoring: Establishment of a standardized, reproducible protocol that can be scaled to adjacent conservation areas or replicated in future phases of the project.

Activity 1.6: Carry out annual skill enhancement training for community rangers and biomonitoring teams. **[Activity referenced in Activity 1.5 and evidence available in monthly reports, training schedule and photographic evidence ANNEX 4]**

Activity 1.7: Share results with project partners and stakeholders. Collate/incorporate feedback. **[Activity completed evidenced from minutes of stakeholders' meetings compiled in ANNEX 3]**

Output 2. Local people are engaged in habitat restoration involving tree nursery, seed handling, propagation, transplanting, aftercare and monitoring processes.

Activity 2.1: Conduct baseline research of plant diversity and vegetation mapping of forest relics in designated location for reforestation; survey on other biodiversity elements. **[Activity commenced but stopped to allow some preliminary preparations to be concluded before completing this activity]**

Activity 2.2: Consultancy contracts and collaboration is established with organization/tree experts to train and monitor the reforestation plan/processes. **[Activity completed, tree expert identified, contractual agreement signed and preliminary work ongoing. Contract copy included in ANNEX 5 awaiting completion of activity 2.3 to commence training]**

Activity 2.3: Construction of tree nursery, local staff recruited and trained. Field office constructed for administration/management purposes of project activities in Gbanraun and Kokologbene communities. **[Activity commenced; see ANNEX 5. Local staff have been recruited as tree guardians, but their training and subsequent work have been postponed due to ongoing construction delays caused by certain local factors and disagreements among local chieftains. The construction of the tree nursery is expected to be completed by mid-May 2025.]**

Activity 2.4: A pocket guide/manual is produced (using scientific illustrations) in collaboration with local tree experts for use by staff and temporary workers of the project. **[Activity completed for the development of a manual see ANNEX 5; the illustrated version will be commissioned when training commences]**

Activity 2.5: Seed gathering, storage (with source data recorded) and germination, mapped and entered a database, data lodged in the herbarium. Planting regime is set, and plots are monitored by a dedicated team. **[Activity not yet carried out pending the completion of Activity 2.3]**

Activity 2.6: Habitat regeneration progress is measured annually. Biodiversity is also monitored e.g., avian diversity, presence of seed dispersals etc. **[Activity not yet carried out pending the completion of 2.3]**

Output 3. Individual-level and community-level poverty issues are addressed through employment, supporting SMEs and initiating sustainable livelihood alternatives amongst other community development programmes.

Activity 3.1: Conduct baseline socio-economic survey; explore options and interest (through consultations) for alternative livelihood project design. **[First phase of activity which is an experimental group phase has been completed and some aspects of activities ongoing see ANNEX 4]**

In the initial stage of this initiative, a comprehensive baseline socio-economic survey was carried out in target communities. The purpose of this survey was to collect detailed information on household income levels, existing sources of livelihood, asset ownership, market access, labor patterns and coping strategies. By combining structured questionnaires with focus-group discussions and key-informant interviews—engaging local leaders, women’s associations, youth groups and small-holder producers—the assessment team was able to build a robust data set from a sample size of 50 persons against which future project outcomes can be measured. Parallel to the survey, a series of consultative workshops and one-on-one interviews was convened to explore a range of alternative livelihood options and to gauge community interest in each. These sessions welcomed participation from farmers, fishers, artisans, traders and other relevant stakeholders. Participants reviewed possible income-generating activities—such as value-added processing, small-scale agribusiness, artisan services and vocational training—and together we discussed the skills, resources and market conditions required for each option. Feedback gathered during these consultations helped us to prioritize those interventions most likely to succeed in a local context and to tailor project design to real community needs. The first (“experimental group”) phase of activity has now been completed. During this pilot period, a limited number of households tested the proposed livelihood interventions under close monitoring. Lessons learned—including best practices, logistical challenges and early indications of economic impact—are still being documented. Based on initial results, several components of the project have moved into a broader implementation stage and are currently ongoing.

Activity 3.2: Create a beneficiaries database and set up a support scheme for SMEs in collaborations with experts, business consultant from the Bank of Industry. **[Activity ongoing to be completed in September 2025]**

Activity 3.3: Develop sustainable livelihood alternatives such as snail farming, beekeeping, fishery business. Provide support for trainings and start-up. **[Activity ongoing with reference to activity report for 3.1, experimental group phase with snail farming was recently concluded and currently being evaluated see ANNEX 4]**

Output 4. Legal framework for species protection is adopted and laws enacted. There’s also increased awareness of forest management and of biodiversity among local communities and government.

Activity 4.1: Meetings/consultations with government from the Bayelsa State ministry of Environment; ministry of Justice; ministry of culture and tourism including officials at the federal level. **[Activity ongoing and has advanced considerably see ANNEX 3]**

Activity 4.2: Organize first stakeholder strategic planning session (event) to discuss relevant laws and policies and establish understanding on the importance of biodiversity to political economy. **[Activity completed in two phases, first was a roundtable discussion event**

which was the first strategic planning session and a second a public forum to involve other stakeholders in the public especially following a government moratorium on logging see ANNEX 3]

The inaugural stakeholder strategic-planning session was convened in order to bring together key actors from government, civil society, academia and the private sector to review existing legal and policy frameworks governing land use, forest management and biodiversity protection; identify gaps and overlaps in those frameworks as they relate to sustainable development and political-economic objectives; build a shared understanding of how biodiversity underpins economic activities—such as fishing, forestry and tourism—and contributes to long-term fiscal stability

This activity unfolded in two complementary phases:

Phase 1 – Roundtable Discussion (Strategic Planning Session) held at the Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment on the 30th of September 2024 • Participants: 20 representatives, including officials from the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture and Justice; leaders of local NGOs; university professors; and private-sector firms. • Agenda Highlights: – Overview of national and state laws on biodiversity (e.g., Wildlife Conservation Act, Convention on Biological Diversity) – Analysis of the current forestry laws and the need for specific wildlife conservation policies Key Outputs: – A press briefing summarizing critical legal overlaps and lacunae – Consensus statement on the roadmap for policy reform and multi-stakeholder coordination.

Phase 2 – Public Forum (Broader Stakeholder Engagement) • Context: Convened following the government's moratorium on commercial logging (see Annex 3 for moratorium text and official decree), held on the 27th of March 2025 • Objectives: Solicit input on relevant laws that are context-specific to Bayelsa State, enforcement mechanisms, alternative livelihood opportunities and participatory monitoring of wildlife habitats • Format & Participation: – Town-hall style meeting attended by about 150 community members, journalists, and representatives of public offices including several security agencies – Question-and-answer panels with legal experts, economists and senior forestry officials • Outcomes: – Collection of 40+ stakeholder-sourced recommendations for improving transparency and accountability in biodiversity conservation in the State – Agreement to establish a multi-stakeholder “Biodiversity Advisory Committee” to guide policy development and monitor impacts

Together, these two phases laid the groundwork for a sustained, evidence-based dialogue on how robust biodiversity governance can spark conversations about socio-economic investments in communities and ensure local participation.

Activity 4.3: Workshop 1: Review the draft species action plan and endorse (follow up with one-on-one consultations). **[Activity not yet carried out pending the completion of the draft document which is ongoing]**

Activity 4.4: Workshop 2: Draft relevant laws and legal instrument to protect the species. (follow up with one-on-one consultations). **[Activity not yet carried out pending activity 4.3]**

Activity 4.5: Workshop 3: consortium of all stakeholders - communities, government, CSOs and private sector to endorse the enactment of draft laws (follow up with one-on-one consultations). **[Activity not yet carried out pending activity 4.4]**

Activity 4.6: ‘Epieni’ festival already being marked in Apoi community every 1st of November will be celebrated in Gbanraun and Kokologbene simultaneously. **[Activity implemented in Apoi since the MoU with Gbanraun and Kokologbene hadn’t been signed yet but planned to take place simultaneously in all 3 communities or jointly]**

Last November, the long-standing Epieni Festival—traditionally observed by the Apoi people on November 1st—was led by the Apoi Chief Council in collaboration with community development committee executives and the ACCA management committee, women association and youth groups. This celebration not only honored the ancestral customs of the Apoi people but also underscored a renewed commitment to conserving the last stronghold of the Niger Delta red colobus monkey known locally as ‘Epieni’. The festivities began with traditional drumming, games and dance performances that traced the community’s history through movement and song. Visitors and residents alike sampled native delicacies and were engaged with the rangers parade and other highlights that showcase the conservation efforts carried out in the ACCA. By staging the Epieni Festival with representatives from Gbanraun and Kokologbene in attendance, the Apoi leadership achieved several key objectives: reinforcing inter-village solidarity, showcasing the community’s rich heritage to a wider audience, and generating modest economic activity through local hospitality services. Community elders report that hundreds of families—many of whom had never participated in the festival together—reconnected last November, laying the groundwork for an even larger, more inclusive celebration in the next ceremony. The success of this event will ensure that the Epieni Festival remains a vibrant cornerstone of community participation in conservation for generations to come.

Activity 4.7: Press releases after every workshop; awareness posters/leaflets and billboards produced and distributed/displayed. **[Activity implemented as planned see compilation in ANNEX 5]**

Activity 4.8: Radio program (saving epieni is saving our heritage) will be broadcasted every week; film documentary of the project produced. **[Activity implemented as planned, Radio Program debuting in September 2024 but name changed to Kekere mi which means Conservation Time – different from the proposed title but more inclusive of the topics to be featured, and the documentary now complete and publicly available [link](#)]**

The Radio show premiered in September 2024 on Bayelsa FM airing weekly (every Friday at 2:00 p.m.) with plans to livestream broadcasts on digital platforms in September 2025.

- **Format and Content:** Each 30-minute episode combines in-studio interviews with conservation experts and traditional leaders, field reports from rangers/biomonitoring team members etc, listener call-ins, and short environmental news briefs. planned segments include “Heritage Spotlight,” which highlights local customs tied to wildlife or natural resources, and “Youth Voices,” or “Community Voices”. **Title Change:** Originally conceived as “Saving Epieni Is Saving Our Heritage,” the production team opted for the name “Kekere Mi,” literally “Conservation Time” in Ijaw language, to reflect a broader focus on Bayelsa’s entire ecology. The new title underscores that conservation is everyone’s responsibility, not just an Epieni-specific campaign.

Documentary Film “This Is Bayelsa” is just over 5-minute documentary that weaves together stunning aerial footage of Niger Delta’s mangroves with interviews of fishing families and local historians. It places the preservation of these habitats within the larger story of Bayelsa’s social and economic development. Showcases the interdependence of community livelihoods and healthy wetland ecosystems; Demonstrates how the ACCA is transforming the way community members perceive wildlife and Inspires viewers to support policy measures and community-led initiatives. Filming took place over six months (August 2024 – February 2025), covering seasonal changes in the tidal forests etc. Post-production wrapped in March 2025, and the film premiered at a public forum we organized in Yenagoa on the 27th of March 2025. The documentary will be shown in secondary schools, tertiary institutions and civil society groups across Bayelsa, accompanied by discussion guides to facilitate classroom and community workshops. Together, the weekly radio program and the documentary form a sustained outreach campaign that not only documents the beauty and importance of natural environment but also builds a lasting platform for dialogue, education and action on conservation issues throughout Bayelsa State.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

1. Law enforcement and biomonitoring in the ACCA is improved and two new forest restoration areas are established with special designations and land use agreements.

Indicator 1.1: 1500ha have been established as habitat restoration areas and designated as community managed areas by communal decree (land use agreements and signed MoU) by the end of Yr1. **[1,020.28ha was established with the possibility of expansion after some land claims dispute between families in Gbanraun have been resolved; delineated and designated as a community-managed area for conservation and habitat restoration purposes. See Annex 3]**

Indicator 1.2: Improved technologies and strategies for patrols and biomonitoring in ACCA reduces illegal logging by 40% and poaching by 30% Yr1 records as baseline **[There were an average of 26 incidents of logging and poaching before project implementation. From April 2024 to March 2025, 10 incidents were recorded accounting for 61.5% reduction in all illegal activities in the ACCA. See Annex 4 for monthly reports, Patrol logs summary etc.].**

2. Local people are engaged in habitat restoration involving tree nursery, seed handling, propagation, transplanting, aftercare and monitoring processes.

Indicator 2.1: 35 people from 2 local communities are actively involved in habitat restoration activities through seedling care, planting and after care monitoring by the end of Yr3. **[Work progressing slowly for this output but expected to pick up quickly and form a major part of the activities in Yr2]**

Indicator 2.2: Tree nursery (one in Gbanraun and another in Kokologbene) constructed and staff recruited by the end of Yr1. Minimum of 10,000 seedlings planted annually by Yr2 **[Work progressing slowly due to delay in the construction aspects of work but expected to pick up quickly and form a major part of the activities in this Yr2].**

3. Individual-level and community-level poverty issues are addressed through employment, supporting SMEs and initiating sustainable livelihood alternatives amongst other community development programmes.

Indicator 3.1: There is provision of basic infrastructure for educational access (i.e. classrooms renovations, teaching aids/materials provided including school uniforms and books in each community); access to healthcare (40 doctor hours in each community every month) and portable water (and two borehole water with tanks constructed in each community) compared to the availability and access at the project start in Yr1. **[80% of output achieved in Apoi community i.e. improved education access and provision of healthcare, work ongoing in Gbanraun and Kokologbene community and to attract more government support]**

Indicator 3.2: 500 people supported with start-up or scale-up equipment in Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) [(300 people receive training in sustainable fish farming, 50% of whom will be women; 200 will receive training and equipment for soap making, tailoring and cassava processing equipment)] that will support them with disposable income by Yr3. **[25% of work completed to support livelihood beneficiaries with training and equipment. A first phase experimental group activities are ongoing for different business categories, training and equipment provision was made for 20 persons in Apoi, evaluation carried out and included in reports in Annex 4]**

Indicator 3.3: 670 individuals (past forest users profiled) receive trainings; 370 women and 300 men will be trained in businesses such as product packaging, marketing, pricing and sales in fishery supply chain (e.g. crayfish, periwinkles) and of other products emerging from the other

businesses mentioned in 3.2) by Yr3. **[5% of training beneficiaries reached, this aspect of project will constitute most of the work in Yr 2 and Yr 3]**

4. Legal framework for species protection is adopted and laws enacted. There's also increased awareness of forest management and of biodiversity among local communities and government.

Indicator 4.1: New communal bylaws for improved forest governance drafted, provisionally agreed by chief councils and proposed for adoption by end of Yr2. **[Output accomplished in Yr1]**

Indicator 4.2: Niger Delta red colobus monkey conservation and management plan drafted and submitted for endorsement by end of Yr2. **[Output indicator not due to be assessed hinges on the completion of other supporting activities].**

Indicator 4.3: By end of Yr3, three key political actors/office holders particularly the commissioner for environment and the commissioner for tourism provide written support for the enactment and ratification of new state laws for wildlife protection and effective law enforcement. **[Output progress is positive and based on assumptions for this There's sustained interest and participation in reviewing existing law and/or policy; there's consensus between interest groups on provisions of the new law(s). The capacity of State and community institutions to implement new laws/bylaws/policies/plans is available and improved. See ANNEX 3]**

Indicator 4.4: By Yr1, radio show launched and other communication tools targeting government and key local communities developed, improving awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues among 500,000 people in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa State. **[Baseline for this output was zero or at best very minimal number of less than 500 persons reached in conservation awareness in the State but at present indications suggest the Radio Program reaches over 1 million people weekly]**

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome Indicator 0.1

By end of Y3, illegal logging and poaching has been reduced to less than 5 recorded incidents per year within the ACCA (baseline figure is average of 26 recorded incident per year during 2021 - 2022)

Baseline: Average of 26 recorded incidents of illegal logging and poaching per year (April 2021 – April 2023).

Progress to Date: By the end of Year 3, the number of recorded incidents should be no more than 5 per year within the ACCA. 10 incidents (leading to arrests) were recorded in ACCA from April 2024 to March 2025.

Evidence: Site monthly reports and patrol logs see ANNEX 4.

Outcome Indicator 0.2

By end of Yr3, conserved area for P.epieni in the Apoi creek forests increases by at least 110% (baseline = 10km² of ACCA at the start of Yr1) and by end Yr3 area occupied generally by wildlife in regenerated forest increases by 50%.

Baseline: 10 km² of ACCA conserved at the start of Year 1.

Progress to Date: The conserved area for P.epieni in the Apoi creek forests has increased by 101%. Wildlife occupation in new areas demarcated for conservation and restoration activities cannot be measured yet.

Evidence: Land surveys and map data see ANNEX 3.

Outcome Indicator 0.3

By end of Yr3, red colobus population has expanded with 4 known groups (baseline = 2 identified groups in ACCA)

Baseline: 2 identified groups of red colobus monkeys in ACCA.

Progress to Date: By the end of Year 3, the red colobus population has expanded to 4 known groups.

Evidence: Wildlife population studies and field observations see ANNEX 4. First systematic population census since conservation intervention is ongoing, commenced April 2025 and results expected in July-August 2025

Outcome Indicator 0.4

By end of Yr3, indices of socio-economic wellbeing for 1170 households in 3 local communities increases by 5% compared to baseline indices established from survey in Yr1.

Baseline: Socio-economic indices for 1170 households established from the survey in Year 1.

Progress to Date: 308 households representing 26% of target households for have improved access to child education and healthcare.

Evidence: Baseline surveys and economic assessments report in ANNEX 4. Compilation of video testimonies from community members being prepared for our social media handles @swnigerdelta.

Assessment of Indicators: The indicators selected are adequate for measuring the intended outcomes of the project. They provide clear, quantifiable targets and allow for straightforward assessment of progress. The baseline conditions established at the beginning of the project provide a solid reference point for measuring changes. Although, a quantifiable baseline still needs to be established for socio-economic indices. This is difficult to measure because our socio-economic assessments had to be carried out discretionarily in order not to create expectations that we don't have capacity to meet or to have elites hijacking the process or detracting from taking accurate numbers. Also,, we have observed situations where indigenes who moved to the capital Yenagoa, returning to the villages in order to access these improved socio-economic benefits.

Likelihood of Achieving Outcomes: Based on the progress to date, the project is on track to achieve its intended outcomes by the end of the funding period. The reduction in illegal activities, expansion of conserved areas, and positive feedback from the experimental groups on the improvement in socio-economic conditions are all indicate positive trends. Due to invitations from other communities not originally included in this project, we have observed an unforeseen significant impact that has surpassed the scope of the initial objectives.

Actions to Ensure Success: To ensure continued progress and address any potential challenges, the following actions will be taken:

- Strengthen partnerships with government agencies and local communities to maintain support and commitment.
- Enhance law enforcement and monitoring efforts to sustain improvements in conservation and forest restoration.
- Build capacity among local communities to empower them in exploring economic opportunities related to sustainable conservation.

- Regularly review and adjust strategies based on monitoring data and feedback from stakeholders.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Outcome Level Assumptions

Assumption 1: Project attracts and retains support of government agencies and local communities beyond the lifespan of the project.

Comments: This assumption holds true. Evidence of continued support can be found in ANNEX 3, where recent collaborations and commitments are documented.

Assumption 2: Project partners remain committed to achieving the project's objectives.

Comments: This assumption holds true. Regular meetings and joint (as well as individual) actions in reported cases demonstrate ongoing commitment from partners.

Assumption 3: The improvements on law enforcement and monitoring are sustainable, the restoration areas are effectively enforced, and no new external threats arise to override the positive effects of conservation and forest restoration.

Comments: Generally, this assumption holds true. Extending the conservation project to other neighbouring communities (i.e. Gbanraun and Kokologbene) around the Apoi Creek forests proved most effective and sustainable, representing a strategic approach indeed. These communities quickly aligned their actions with the conservation objectives being proposed. Nevertheless, most poaching in the ACCA now originates from distant neighbours who travel significant distances to engage in illegal activities within the forest. Enhanced law enforcement remains crucial to curtail these activities and improve monitoring reports.

*Assumption 4: The knowledge gained from habitat restoration amongst the local people is empowering them to explore other income-generating initiatives related to tree planting such as the economic importance of *Irvingia gabonensis*.*

Comments: This assumption is yet to be tested. Nonetheless, host communities are actively engaged in conservation project and eager to explore opportunities economic programmes initiated.

Assumption 5: Climate change does not make the weather unpredictable in ways that will hamper seedling performance after planting.

Comments: While climate change has introduced some unpredictability, there are already plans in place to find some adaptive strategies, such as taking considerable time for air-layering of the seeds.

Assumption 6: Actual social and economic interventions are determined through a participatory approach, and it is not imposed on them. These initiatives are embraced by local stakeholders.

Comments: This assumption holds true. Participatory approaches are well-documented and embraced by stakeholders, as evidenced by feedback reports and other community-led initiatives. In fact, that's why we also were strategic to implement this aspect of the project in phases. Having pilots/experimental groups of each of the economic interventions before onboarding large numbers of beneficiaries/participants.

Output Level Assumptions

Comments: Overall, the assumptions at the output level remain valid based on comments on the outcome level assumptions in above. The proactive management and adaptation to any emerging challenges have reinforced the project's progress. Continued monitoring and stakeholder engagement are crucial for sustaining these positive outcomes.

Assumption 7: Improved socio-economic wellbeing provide sufficient incentive to protect biodiversity; **Assumption 8:** There's sustained interest and participation in reviewing existing law and/or policy; there's consensus between interest groups on provisions of the new law(s); **Assumption 9:** The capacity of State and community institutions to implement any new

laws/bylaws/policies/plans is available and improved; **Assumption 10:** New state laws act as deterrent and reduces threats to conserved areas.

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

Impact on the DI application: The Niger Delta red colobus monkey is effectively conserved, forest restoration areas are established providing critical habitat expansion and sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

The project has made significant strides in conserving the Niger Delta red colobus monkey by establishing dedicated forest restoration areas that serve as critical habitats for this endangered species population to re-occupy as the population grows and is expected to continue to increase. These efforts not only expand the habitat available for the monkeys but also promote biodiversity by creating environments where various flora and fauna can thrive. The establishment and maintenance of these areas have been documented, recognized by communal decrees and acknowledged by the State government, demonstrating the project's direct impact on biodiversity conservation and on indigenous communities.

What contribution is your project making to a higher-level impact on human development and wellbeing (poverty reduction)? The project has contributed substantially to human development and poverty reduction through initiatives that integrate forest restoration with sustainable livelihoods for local communities. By involving community members in conservation efforts and providing them with opportunities to manage and benefit from these areas, the project has created new sources of income through employment, business training and opportunities. This approach not only addresses environmental sustainability but also promotes economic resilience and social wellbeing, as evidenced by improved educational infrastructure, health facilities and increased community engagement in conservation activities.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

The project has actively supported the implementation of NBSAPs by engaging in activities that promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The establishment of community-managed conservation areas has been a pivotal contribution, aligning with national priorities to protect biodiversity hotspots and endangered species. These areas have formed parts of official discussions at the national and state level where the establishment of the Apoi Creek National Park and Edumanom National Park in Bayelsa State have been proposed. The project contributes to climate resilience and adaptation strategies outlined in the Nigeria's NDCs. The promotion of habitat restorative practices will help to sequester more GHG emissions, thereby supporting national efforts to meet climate targets. **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** The project's efforts in biodiversity conservation directly support the objectives of the CBD. Activities such as educational campaigns and the creation of conservation areas contribute to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The project's achievements have been communicated to the CBD focal points, highlighting its alignment with global biodiversity goals. The project staff and a representative of the Apoi community participated in the Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 16) held in Cali, Colombia from 21 October - 1 November 2024. During this international event, the delegates reported on the project's progress and impact in the Niger Delta landscape where new relationships with international organizations and companies were formed and partnerships may emerge. Also, by promoting habitat restoration practices through tree planting, the project contributes to the UNFCCC's objectives. **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)** - The project's efforts to raise awareness about wildlife conservation and combat illegal wildlife trade align with CITES objectives. Through collaboration with local enforcement agencies, the project has contributed to improved monitoring and reporting of illegal trade activities.

In the current year, the project plans to participate in organized meetings by national focal points, detailing its contributions to biodiversity and development in host communities so that these can be incorporated national reports. Key interactions would include:

- Participation in national biodiversity strategy meetings, providing evidence of the project's impact on NBSAP implementation.
- Engagement with climate focal points to integrate project activities into national climate resilience plans.
- Collaboration with CITES focal point to enhance monitoring and reporting of illegal wildlife trade.
- Official recognition of community-managed conservation areas in national policy documents.
- Documentation of sustainable livelihood practices and their impact on meeting climate targets.

5. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

The project is designed to target and benefit several local communities that are directly affected by biodiversity loss and poverty. By focusing on these communities, the project aims to tackle key issues such as insufficient income, lack of education, and limited access to resources.

These communities have been mostly relegated in government programmes and face significant challenges in surviving without exploiting the remnant forests. Engagement with local communities has been a cornerstone of the project's implementation strategy. By conducting participatory workshops and consultations, the project team has ensured that the initiatives align with the specific needs and priorities of the community members. This inclusive approach has fostered a sense of ownership and collaboration, which is crucial for the long-term success of poverty reduction efforts. The project is expected to have several direct impacts on poverty reduction by year 3. For instance, by promoting sustainable livelihood practices and supporting local enterprises, the project is increasing household and community incomes. Indirect impacts are also anticipated, as the project works on improving ecosystem services such as water purification and soil fertility. These ecosystem services are vital for the well-being and economic stability of the communities. Through educational campaigns, the project is raising awareness about the value of wildlife and the importance of conservation, which is expected to lead to more sustainable practices and governance practices in the long run. This past year, the project has achieved notable successes, including the establishment of community-managed conservation areas and the initiation of income-generating activities in experimental groups such as providing training and equipment in tailoring as well as snail farming. The project also mobilized support for providing educational resources such as uniforms, schoolbooks, teachers aids and salaries, etc to improve quality of education and also provided health facilities and support he salaries of health personnel for Apoi community. These evidence are provided in **ANNEXES 3, 4 and 5.**

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.	
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	X
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

Our project focuses on promoting social inclusion by involving individuals from diverse backgrounds and addressing the influence of age, class, gender, and disability in project participation. During the planning phase, we collect input through various levels of consultations, focus group discussions, and to a lesser extent, systematic surveys to ensure marginalized voices are incorporated into our activities. Utilizing the GESI Analysis How-to Guide, we develop strategies tailored to women and other vulnerable groups, avoiding measures that exacerbate inequalities.

Key actions include:

- Establishing safe spaces for women and young people to express their concerns
- Providing accessible materials suitable for all ages and abilities
- Implementing business training programs aimed at the poorest, ensuring female participation

Beyond addressing basic needs, we empower participants by offering leadership roles and involving them in decision-making processes. To foster transformative change, we challenge unequal power structures by advocating for governance reforms within each host community.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Systems and processes implemented internally for monitoring and evaluating the project this past year include both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure comprehensive tracking of progress. We employed a multi-faceted approach that incorporates regular feedback loops, in-depth surveys as with the case of feedback forms administered to trainees, and participatory evaluation sessions with stakeholders. This holistic method ensures that we capture a wide range of perspectives and measure the impact of our interventions accurately.

To demonstrate that the Outputs and Activities of the project contribute to the Outcome, we meticulously track several indicators of achievements. Qualitatively, we gather narratives and feedback from participants about their experiences and perceived benefits. Quantitatively, we use metrics such as participation rates, the number of leadership roles filled by young people and women, and changes (formal and informal) influenced by our advocacy efforts.

Notably, we have introduced more frequent qualitative feedback mechanisms to ensure real-time adaptations where necessary. Local partners play a crucial role in sharing the M&E work, fostering a collaborative environment where information is disseminated effectively among all stakeholders. This collective effort ensures that lessons learned are integrated at every level, from administrative and management to technical and M&E aspects. Through shared responsibility, we maintain a dynamic and responsive approach to continuous improvement.

8. Lessons learnt

The implementation of this conservation project has yielded several important insights that we believe can inform and strengthen our work and perhaps other grassroots initiatives of a similar nature.

- The power of participatory design and community ownership: From the outset, engaging local stakeholders from decision-making to evaluations through inclusive

consultations, community assemblies and hands-on field activities proved instrumental in fostering a genuine sense of ownership. Community members were not merely beneficiaries; they became active champions of the project's objectives—mobilizing their peers, sharing lessons learned, and advocating for conservation practices across the wider landscape. This groundswell of grassroots support significantly accelerated behavioral change and enhanced the project's visibility among neighboring communities.

- The value of strong, locally anchored partnerships: We discovered that partnering formally with respected community leaders, local committees and aligning with other grassroots initiatives (their traditional ways of doing things) created a stable platform for decision-making and conflict resolution. By co-designing management plans and encouraging fairness, equity amongst them from the outset, we were able to reduce delays, clarify roles and strengthen accountability. Moving forward, we will continue to invest in these partnerships, providing training, technical assistance and even include small grants to ensure that local institutions remain empowered and resilient.
- The necessity of ongoing stakeholder engagement: Continuous two-way communication—through regular feedback sessions, participatory monitoring and targeted capacity-building workshops—proved essential for adapting our approach in real-time. These mechanisms ensured that emerging challenges (such as disagreements amongst stakeholder groups) were identified and addressed promptly. We recommend that similar projects embed informal feedback loops and adaptive management protocols into their implementation plan.

Other specific recommendations for similar projects:

- Prioritize early and sustained stakeholder mapping to identify champions and potential partners within each host community.
- Allocate dedicated resources for community established institutions that facilitate dialogue and mediate disputes.
- Emphasize capacity building at every stage to foster local leadership and long-term stewardship.

Finally, by centering participatory methods and reinforcing local partnerships, conservation projects can achieve greater impact, sustainability and community empowerment.

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

Not Applicable

10. Risk Management

- No new risks has arisen in the last 12 months that were not previously accounted for.
- No significant adaptations made to the project design this year to address risk.
- We don't have an updated version of the risk register.

11. Scalability and durability

When evaluating the long-term sustainability and enduring legacy of our conservation initiative, two interrelated factors stand out as particularly critical: the scalability of our approach and the durability of its outcomes. From the outset, we have engaged local communities—the primary custodians of the natural ecosystems (and target species) we seek to preserve—as active partners in each phase of the project. Through regular consultations, field activities, and participatory planning sessions, community members have not only acquired new knowledge and hands-on experience in biodiversity preservation, but have also deepened their understanding of the underlying ecological, social, and economic dynamics at play. This kind of sustained engagement empowers them to become effective stewards of their environment, capable of making informed decisions that balance conservation objectives with local livelihood needs.

The evidences we provide with this report already reveal that communities outside the initial project scope are expressing strong interest in adopting our conservation model. Formal letters of intent, participation to public forums, and unsolicited endorsements from neighboring communities underscore the perceived feasibility and appeal of the activities we have pioneered. Such outreach demonstrates that, when presented with transparent cost–benefit analyses and concrete examples of best practices, prospective adopters of this initiative readily recognize the tangible advantages—improved water quality, enhanced soil fertility, increased on-site wildlife—outweighing the modest investments of setting a place aside that will be untouched for a period of time and not to mention the resources required. These external demands for partnerships suggest we have laid a solid foundation for replicating our successes at larger geographic scales. To ensure that momentum is maintained beyond the project's initial funding cycle, we are working towards creating Integrated Sustainability Framework. Local and State government agencies getting involved in key aspects of the management cycles and integrating this support into their policy frameworks. Together, these alliances will create a resilient support system that both underpins current activities and paves the way for possible budgetary allocations by the State government for conservation purposes.

12. Darwin Initiative identity

- We used the Darwin Initiative logo in all publications e.g. the Policy Paper. All presentations made during meetings and for flyers and street publicities. We also mention Darwin Initiative support at the closing of every episode of the weekly radio program.
- During speeches and presentations in the State and even in international presentations, the Darwin Initiative support through the UK government have mentioned.
- Yes, the Darwin Initiative funding was recognised as a distinct project in most cases where it is the sole funder of an event and only a few times identified as one of few supporters of our work across the landscape.
- We perceive that there is very little understanding of Darwin Initiative in Nigeria, only amongst the conservation professionals do we find that people are familiar with Darwin Initiative
- Yes, we do tag BCF social media handles on Linkedin, Twitter and Instagram whenever we post updates on the project on social media.

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				

*Agreed changes to the budget at the start of the project to include a project partners' cost allocation that was entered in the project proposal but was omitted from the project budget (it wasn't omitted in entirety as the cost description had been provided but the amount(s) was omitted). Added the £___ indicated on the project proposal to project partner allocated budget bringing the total project partner budget from £___ to £___. This discrepancy was brought to our attention by the reviewers' feedback in the application outcome letter.

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 (£)			Milkywire Rainforest Trust
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			Tusk Trust Rewild Play for Nature Rainforest Trust

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.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
Video	ANNEX 6	Niger Delta Red Colobus Monkey in Apoi Community Conservation Area	@swnigerdelta	Yes
Video	ANNEX 6	Niger Delta Red Colobus Monkey in Apoi Community Conservation Area	@swnigerdelta	Yes
Video	ANNEX 6	Red capped mangabey in Apoi Community Conservation Area	@swnigerdelta	Yes
Video	ANNEX 6	Pangolin in Project Area	@swnigerdelta	Yes

Video	ANNEX 6	Niger Delta Landscape	@swnigerdelta	Yes
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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 The Niger Delta red colobus monkey is effectively conserved, forest restoration areas are established providing critical habitat expansion and sustainable livelihoods for local communities.	Two community managed areas (for conservation and restoration activities) were established increasing species range in the Apoi creek forests by 101%. Project is delivering socio-economic benefits to host communities with 26% of target households reached.	
Outcome: Niger Delta red colobus monkey is protected, two community restoration areas of 15km ² (1500ha) are established, 1170 households benefit from income generation, employment and training.		
Outcome indicator 0.1: By end of Y3, illegal logging and poaching has been reduced to less than 5 recorded incidents per year within the ACCA (baseline figure is average of 26 recorded incident per year during 2021 - 2022) [ICF KPI 8 26] [DI-D09] [DI-D18]	Illegal activities reduced by 61.5% during the year in review reported in section 3.2 and evidence in ANNEX 4.	Include acoustic monitoring to support patrol and surveillance to ensure all illegal activities are accounted for and not just when arrests are made or culprits are caught in the act.
Outcome indicator 0.2: By end of Yr3, conserved area for <i>P.epieni</i> in the Apoi creek forests increases by at least 110% (baseline = 10km ² of ACCA at the start of Yr1) and by end Yr3 area occupied generally by wildlife in regenerated forest increases by 50%. [DI-D01] [DI-D12].	Conserved areas for the red colobus monkey increased by 101% i.e. another 10.2km ² . Evidence in ANNEX 3	Conduct systematic monitoring for wildlife species so that comparison can accurately be made across project years.
Outcome indicator 0.3: By end of Yr3, red colobus population has expanded with 4 known groups (baseline = 2 identified groups in ACCA) [DI-D04]	Population census ongoing. Evidence in ANNEX 4	Complete population census across two seasons.
Outcome indicator 0.4: By end of Yr3, indices of socio-economic wellbeing for 1170 households in 3 local communities increases by 5% compared to baseline indices established from survey in Yr1.	Support has been mobilized for one of the three communities to benefit from improved quality of education and access to healthcare.	Replicate efforts in the remaining two communities
Output 1 Law enforcement and biomonitoring in the ACCA is improved and two new forest restoration areas are established with special designations and land use agreements.		
Output indicator 1.1: 1500ha have been established as habitat restoration areas and designated as community managed areas by communal decree (land use agreements and signed MoU) by the end of Yr1. [DI-D01] [DI-D12]	1020.28ha Report and evidence are provided in ANNEX 3 and section 3.2	

Output indicator 1.2: Improved technologies and strategies for patrols and biomonitoring in ACCA reduces illegal logging by 40% and poaching by 30% Yr1 records as baseline [DI-D18]	Illegal activities reduced by 61.5% reported in section 3.2 and 3.4. Evidence provided in ANNEX 4	SMART training is still pending, waiting to finalize plans with Rewild team.
Output 2. Local people are engaged in habitat restoration involving tree nursery, seed handling, propagation, transplanting, aftercare and monitoring processes.		
Output indicator 2.1: 35 people from 2 local communities are actively involved in habitat restoration activities through seedling care, planting and after care monitoring by the end of Yr3. [DI-A01]	This output has not yet fully commenced due to the delay in land agreements and the construction of tree nurseries. However, preliminary requirements have already been carried out.	Preliminary activities completed and tree planting efforts will kick off in June 2025.
Output indicator 2.2: Tree nursery (one in Gbanraun and another in Kokologbene) constructed and staff recruited by the end of Yr1. Minimum of 10,000 seedlings planted annually by Yr2	Construction work is ongoing and staff have been recruited. The tree planting activities are pending and scheduled to start in the second year of the project.	Preliminary activities completed and tree planting efforts kicks off in full swing.
Output 3. Individual-level and community-level poverty issues are addressed through employment, supporting SMEs and initiating sustainable livelihood alternatives amongst other community development programmes.		
Output indicator 3.1: There is provision of basic infrastructure for educational access (i.e. classrooms renovations, teaching aids/materials provided including school uniforms and books in each community); access to healthcare (40 doctor hours in each community every month) and portable water (and two borehole water with tanks constructed in each community) compared to the availability and access at the project start in Yr1. [DI-A06] [DI-D16]	Reported in section 3.2 and 4. The project also mobilized support for providing educational resources such as uniforms, schoolbooks, teachers aids and salaries, etc to improve quality of education and also provided health facilities and support he salaries of health personnel for Apoi community. These evidences are provided in ANNEXES 3, 4 and 5.	Replicate efforts in the remaining two communities in Yr 2.
Output indicator 3.2: 500 people supported with start-up or scale-up equipment in Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) [(300 people receive training in sustainable fish farming, 50% of whom will be women; 200 will receive training and equipment for soap making, tailoring and cassava processing equipment] that will support them with disposable income by Yr3. [DI-A10].	The report for tailoring training and equipment and for snail farming are provided in section 3.2 and evidence are in ANNEX 5	Plans are underway to turn the tailoring training and equipment provision into a social enterprise where the beneficiaries organize themselves into a cooperative and using discarded fabrics in the cities that would end up in waterways into souvenirs to promote red colobus conservation.
Output indicator 3.3: 670 individuals (past forest users profiled) receive trainings; 370 women and 300 men will be trained in businesses such as product packaging, marketing, pricing and	Experimental group training completed and reported in 3.2 and evidence is in ANNEX 5	We have reached out SMEDAN and other private sector stakeholders to ensure that

sales in fishery supply chain (e.g. crayfish, periwinkles) and of other products emerging from the other businesses mentioned in 3.2) by Yr3. [DI-B10] [DI-A01].		these training are delivered to target individuals.
Output 4. Legal framework for species protection is adopted and laws enacted. There's also increased awareness of forest management and of biodiversity among local communities and government.		
Output indicator 4.1: New communal bylaws for improved forest governance drafted, provisionally agreed by chief councils and proposed for adoption by end of Yr2.[DI-B12]	Not yet commenced.	Continue community-to-community learning where Apoi shares best practices in drafting communal laws for conservation purposes.
Output indicator 4.2: Niger Delta red colobus monkey conservation and management plan drafted and submitted for endorsement by end of Yr2. [DI-B02] [DI-A01]	Not yet initiated	We are on course to accomplish this output by end of Yr 2. Drafting process will commence once we compile resolutions from the recently organized public forum to develop legal framework for wildlife conservation in Bayelsa State.
Output indicator 4.3: By end of Yr3, three key political actors/office holders particularly the commissioner for environment and the commissioner for tourism provide written support for the enactment and ratification of new state laws for wildlife protection and effective law enforcement. [DI-B12]	This effort has advanced considerably and reported in section 3.2 and evidence provided in ANNEX 3	We are on course to accomplish this output by end of Yr 3. Plans for Yr 2 are to design a species action plan and seek follow-up on conclusions reached in previous stakeholder meetings/workshops
Output indicator 4.4: By Yr1, radio show launched and other communication tools targeting government and key local communities developed, improving awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues among 500,000 people in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa State [DI-A07].	Report on this output indicator is made in section 3.2 and evidence in ANNEX 5	Scale up the result accomplished with awareness-raising efforts.

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: The Niger Delta red colobus monkey is effectively conserved, forest restoration areas are established providing critical habitat expansion and sustainable livelihoods for local communities.			
Outcome: Niger Delta red colobus monkey is protected, two community restoration areas of 15km ² (1500ha) are established, 1170 households benefit from income generation, employment and training.	0.1. By end of Yr3, illegal logging and poaching has been reduced to less than 5 recorded incidents per year within the ACCA (baseline figure is average of 26 recorded incident per year during 2021 - 2022) [ICF KPI 8 26] [DI-D09] [DI-D18] 0.2. By end of Yr3, conserved area for <i>P.epieni</i> in the Apoi creek forests increases by at least 110% (baseline = 10km ² of ACCA at the start of Yr1) and by end Yr3 area occupied generally by wildlife in regenerated forest increases by 50%. [DI-D01] [DI-D12]. 0.3. By end of Yr3, red colobus population has expanded with 4 known groups (baseline = 2 identified groups in ACCA) [DI-D04] 0.4. By end of Yr3, indices of socio-economic wellbeing for 1170 households in 3 local communities increases by 5% compared to baseline indices established from survey in Yr1.	0.1 Survey/ biodiversity assessment reports; geo-visualizations; photographs; maps; specimens etc.; Rangers patrol data; Monthly Reports, collated data from ranger patrols and assessments 0.2. land use and partnerships agreements with Gbanraun and Kokologbene 0.3. Biomonitoring reports 0.4. Baseline socio-economic survey report; Monitoring and Evaluation report etc.	Project attracts and retains support of government agencies and local communities beyond the lifespan of the project. Project partners remain committed to achieving the project's objectives.
Outputs: 1. Law enforcement and biomonitoring in the ACCA is	1.1. 1500ha have been established as habitat restoration areas and designated as community managed	1.1 Signed partnership agreement/MoU	The improvements on law enforcement and monitoring are sustainable, the restoration areas

improved and two new forest restoration areas are established with special designations and land use agreements.	<p>areas by communal decree (land use agreements and signed MoU) by the end of Yr1. [DI-D01] [DI-D12]</p> <p>1.2 Improved technologies and strategies for patrols and biomonitoring in ACCA reduces illegal logging by 40% and poaching by 30% Yr1 records as baseline [DI-D18]</p>	<p>1.2.1 Monthly patrol reports, geo-visualization</p> <p>1.2.2 Camera trap photolog</p> <p>1.2.3 Field data/monitoring outputs</p>	are effectively enforced, and no new external threats arise to override the positive effects of conservation and forest restoration.
2. Local people are engaged in habitat restoration involving tree nursery, seed handling, propagation, transplanting, aftercare and monitoring processes.	<p>2.1. 35 people from 2 local communities are actively involved in habitat restoration activities through seedling care, planting and after care monitoring by the end of Yr3. [DI-A01]</p> <p>2.2. Tree nursery (one in Gbanraun and another in Kokologbene) constructed and staff recruited by the end of Yr1. Minimum of 10,000 seedlings planted annually by Yr2</p>	<p>2.1. Training modules; participants' lists.</p> <p>2.1.1 scientifically illustrated manuals (pocket guides)</p> <p>2.1.2. Recruitment letters and contract documents</p> <p>2.2. Herbarium logbook; tree nursery inventory/records</p> <p>2.2.1. Vegetation mapping, site map</p> <p>2.2.2. monthly monitoring reports of seed germination and viability</p> <p>2.2.3 Planting records/database,</p> <p>2.2.4.10,000 seedlings planted annually.</p>	<p>The knowledge gained from habitat restoration amongst the local people is empowering them to explore other income generating initiatives related to tree planting such as the economic importance of <i>Irvingia gabonensis</i></p> <p>Climate change does not make the weather unpredictable in ways that will hamper seedling performance after planting.</p>

<p>3. Individual-level and community-level poverty issues are addressed through employment, supporting SMEs and initiating sustainable livelihood alternatives amongst other community development programmes.</p>	<p>3.1. There is provision of basic infrastructure for educational access (i.e. classrooms renovations, teaching aids/materials provided including school uniforms and books in each community); access to healthcare (40 doctor hours in each community every month) and portable water (and two borehole water with tanks constructed in each community) compared to the availability and access at the project start in Yr1. [DI-A06] [DI-D16]</p> <p>3.2. 500 people supported with start-up or scale-up equipment in Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) [(300 people receive training in sustainable fish farming, 50% of whom will be women; 200 will receive training and equipment for soap making, tailoring and cassava processing equipment] that will support them with disposable income by Yr3. [DI-A10]</p> <p>3.3. 670 individuals (past forest users profiled) receive trainings; 370 women and 300 men will be trained in businesses such as product packaging, marketing, pricing and sales in fishery supply chain (e.g. crayfish, periwinkles) and of other products emerging from the other businesses mentioned in 3.2) by Yr3. [DI-B10] [DI-A01].</p>	<p>3.1. Baseline socio-economic survey report</p> <p>3.1.1 Evidence of infrastructure provided such as physical structure(s); contract awarded; scholarship awarded etc.</p> <p>3.2. Beneficiaries database; documentary report; procurement evidence etc.,</p> <p>3.3. Training modules and materials; feedback surveys; follow-up surveys</p>	<p>Actual social and economic interventions are determined through a participatory approach, and it is not imposed on them. These initiatives are embraced by local stakeholders.</p> <p>Improved socio-economic wellbeing provide sufficient incentive to protect biodiversity.</p>
<p>4. Legal framework for species protection is adopted and laws enacted. There's also increased</p>	<p>4.1. New communal bylaws for improved forest governance drafted, provisionally agreed by chief</p>	<p>4.1. Constitution/Customary Law document</p>	<p>There's sustained interest and participation in reviewing existing law and/or policy; there's consensus</p>

awareness of forest management and of biodiversity among local communities and government.	<p>councils and proposed for adoption by end of Yr2.[DI-B12]</p> <p>4.2. Niger Delta red colobus monkey conservation and management plan drafted and submitted for endorsement by end of Yr2. [DI-B02] [DI-A01]</p> <p>4.3. By end of Yr3, three key political actors/office holders particularly the commissioner for environment and the commissioner for tourism provide written support for the enactment and ratification of new state laws for wildlife protection and effective law enforcement. [DI-B12]</p> <p>4.4. By Yr1, radio show launched and other communication tools targeting government and key local communities developed, improving awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues among 500,000 people in Southern Ijaw LGA of Bayelsa State [DI-A07].</p>	<p>4.2. Species Conservation action and Management Plan Document; workshop output; press release</p> <p>4.3. Meeting minute; Proposal document, Gazette</p> <p>4.4. Press releases; radio program episodes; Billboard; flyers</p>	<p>between interest groups on provisions of the new law(s).</p> <p>The capacity of State and community institutions to implement any new laws/bylaws/policies/plans is available and improved.</p> <p>New state laws act as deterrent and reduces threats to conserved areas.</p>
<p>Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1. Each activity should start on a new line and be no more than approximately 25 words.)</p> <p>1.1. Stakeholder consultations on key components of the project i.e., location of designated site for reforestation, term agreements, clarifications on land use, ownerships, tenure, rights etc.</p> <p>1.2. Facilitate participatory mapping of proposed reforestation areas' boundaries with special designations as community managed areas: Develop plan, logistics for community participation.</p>			

- 1.3. Prepare maps showing agreed locations of proposed community managed areas and other geo-features; develop implementation plans; draft agreements etc.
- 1.4. Community consultations on new land designations and signing of MoU. Facilitate community-to-community learning (Apoi sharing lessons learned with Gbanraun and Kokologbene).
- 1.5. Train community rangers in the use of Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) in the ACCA and deploy camera traps to enhance biomonitoring.
- 1.6. Carry out annual skill enhancement training for community rangers and biomonitoring teams.
- 1.7. Share results with project partners and stakeholders. Collate/incorporate feedback.
- 2.1. Conduct baseline research of plant diversity and vegetation mapping of forest relics in designated location for reforestation; survey on other biodiversity elements.
- 2.2. Consultancy contracts and collaboration is established with organization/tree experts to train and monitor the reforestation plan/processes.
- 2.3. Construction of tree nursery, local staff recruited and trained. Field office constructed for administration/management purposes of project activities in Gbanraun and Kokologbene communities.
- 2.4. A pocket guide/manual is produced (using scientific illustrations) in collaboration with local tree experts for use by staff and temporary workers of the project.
- 2.5. Seed gathering, storage (with source data recorded) and germination, mapped and entered a database, data lodged in the herbarium. Planting regime is set, and plots are monitored by a dedicated team.
- 2.6. Habitat regeneration progress is measured annually. Biodiversity is also monitored e.g., avian diversity, presence of seed dispersals etc.
- 3.1. Conduct baseline socio-economic survey; explore options and interest (through consultations) for alternative livelihood project design.
- 3.2. Create a beneficiaries database and set up a support scheme for SMEs in collaborations with experts, business consultant from the Bank of Industry.
- 3.3. Develop sustainable livelihood alternatives such as snail farming, beekeeping, fishery business. Provide support for trainings and start-up.
- 4.1. Meetings/consultations with government from the Bayelsa State ministry of Environment; ministry of Justice; ministry of culture and tourism including officials at the federal level.
- 4.2. Organize first stakeholder strategic planning session (event) to discuss relevant laws and policies and establish understanding on the importance of biodiversity to political economy.
- 4.3. Workshop 1: Review the draft species action plan and endorse (follow up with one-on-one consultations).
- 4.4. Workshop 2: Draft relevant laws and legal instrument to protect the species. (follow up with one-on-one consultations).
- 4.5. Workshop 3: consortium of all stakeholders - communities, government, CSOs and private sector to endorse the enactment of draft laws (follow up with one-on-one consultations).
- 4.6. 'Epieni' festival already being marked in Apoi community every 1st of November will be celebrated in Gbanraun and Kokologbene simultaneously.
- 4.7. Press releases after every workshop; awareness posters/leaflets and billboards produced and distributed/displayed.
- 4.8. radio program (saving epieni is saving our heritage) will be broadcasted every week; film documentary of the project produced.

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

Checklist for submission

	Check
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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.	X
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see Section 16)?	X
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	X
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	X
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	