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

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Darwin Initiative Project Information

Scheme (Main or Extra)	Main
Project reference	31-014
Project title	Community Commitment for the conservation of the classified forest of Mont Béro
Country(ies)	Republic of Guinea
Main Partner	Birdlife International
Project Partner (s)	Guinee Ecologie
Darwin Initiative Grant Value	£600,000.
Project start and end dates	01/04/2024 – 31/03/2027
Reference period (e.g. April 2023 – March 2024) and number (e.g. annual report 1, 2, 3)	April 2024 – March 2025 (annual report 1)
Name of the project manager	George Ilebo
Project website/blog/social media	http://www.birdlife.org
Author(s) and date of the report	Mariama Savané & George Ilebo 03/20/2025

1. Project summary

Mount Béro Classified Forest in Guinea is located between 8° 05' and 8° 25' north latitude, 8° 23' and 8° 36' west longitude, covers approximately 26,850 hectares in size and is bordered by 25 villages across six rural communes. This forest is part of the Guinea montane forests, which also extends into Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ivory Coast.

Mount Béro classified forest is rich in biodiversity, hosting numerous species, including the pygmy hippopotamus (*Choeropsis liberiensis*), the western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*), Diana monkey (*Cercopithecus diana*), and over 88 bird species, such as the Copper-tailed Starling (*Hylopsar cupreocauda*), Palm-nut Vulture (*Gypohierax angolensis*), Western Long-tailed Hornbill (*Horizocerus albocristatus*), and white-necked rockfowl (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*), etc.

Despite being designated as a classified forest in 1952, Mount Béro has struggled with effective protection. Since the 2010 coup, the site has not been adequately policed (PAG, 2021). Although a team was reinstated in 2019, their efforts were hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the

subsequent coup in 2021. In addition, ecological and social assessments conducted in 2022-2023 by Kew Gardens, Guinée Écologie, and BirdLife International, along with direct participatory consultations with forestry services, local communities, and local authorities, highlighted concerning levels of ecological degradation and acknowledged some efforts by forest services but revealed them to be largely inadequate. Additionally, while the management context appears favourable, there are significant deficiencies in outcomes, inputs, and processes (IMET assessment, 2019).

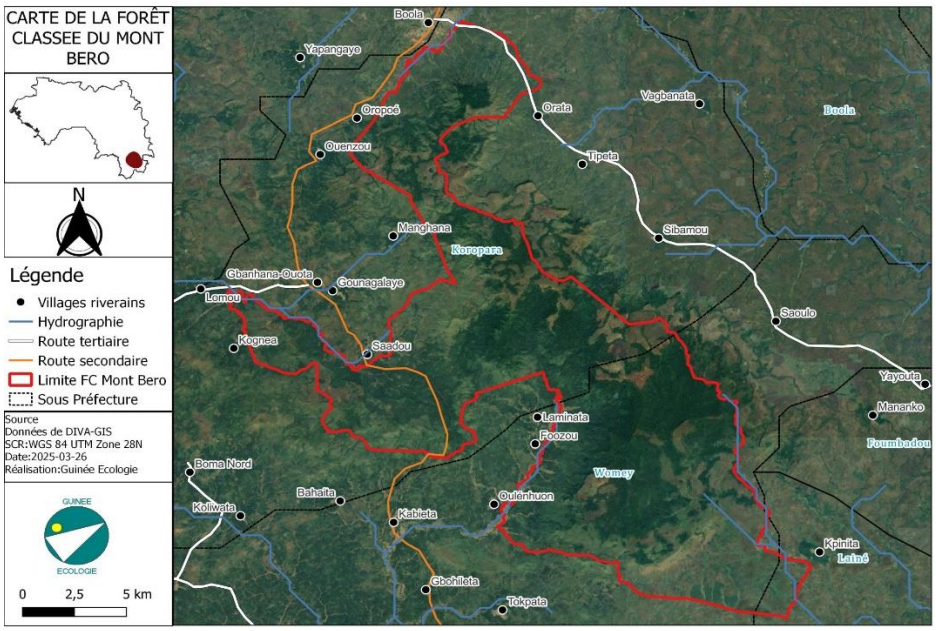
These assessments also highlighted the significant threats facing Mount Béro Classified Forest, including high population growth and poverty, especially among a youthful population, coupled with reduced agricultural productivity and increased pests, exacerbating pressures on the forest. The introduction of large herds of zebu cattle has led to habitat degradation, while subsistence and commercial agriculture, along with illegal logging, further threaten the ecosystem.

Against that backdrop, the Guinean Ministry of Environment has expressed interest in designating Mount Béro as a Protected Area, emphasizing the need to balance law enforcement with local development. Although communities and authorities have agreed on a roadmap for joint management (Seredou Agreement, 2021), implementation remains pending. In addition, BirdLife and Guinée Écologie identified Mount Béro as a priority landscape in their Guinean Forests of West Africa Strategy (2023-2032), highlighting the urgent need for landscape restoration. Opportunities for sustainable finance, particularly through biodiversity offsets from the mining sector, could support long-term management, but current governance structures may hinder progress.

As such, this project seeks to create enabling conditions for local communities living around Mount Béro Classified Forest to benefit from biodiversity and/or carbon offset programmes by establishing robust, inclusive, grassroots governance and management structures and ensure effective conservation and restoration of surrounding areas, providing a platform for equitable benefit-sharing. It also promotes environmentally sound agricultural practices in forest-adjacent communities, and foster participatory valuation of ecosystem services, and raise awareness and commitment among local communities for forest conservation.

The project is situated in the Guinée Forestière region, specifically around the Mont Béro classified forest in the Nzérékoré prefecture. This area features a mosaic of threatened forest ecosystems and has a high rural population density, with 25 villages located directly adjacent to the classified forest, making sustainable and participatory landscape management a necessity.

Map 1: Project sites



2. Project stakeholders/ partners

From its inception, the "Community Engagement for the Conservation of the Mont Béro Classified Forest" project has actively involved all official partners, including Kew Gardens, the National Herbarium, and the Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ), which represents the Guinean government. These stakeholders were fully integrated into the participatory planning and joint implementation processes. The CFZ's role in strategic decision-making, particularly in establishing and managing governance bodies and ecological restoration actions, has empowered local institutions to take ownership of the project, enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness.

Over the past year, the partnership with the CFZ was strengthened through an implementation protocol for activities that highlights this collaboration. Similarly, cooperation with Kew Gardens and the National Herbarium has evolved through coordinated technical actions, especially concerning conservation strategies for endangered plant species. A significant achievement of these partnerships was the successful organization of the official launch of two Darwin Initiative-funded projects in Guinea, which was notably attended by the British Ambassador to Guinea in Nzérékoré, thereby enhancing the project's visibility and institutional importance.

The project also engaged decentralized stakeholders, including prefectural and sub-prefectural authorities, customary leaders, and community members, through a project launch workshop, participatory governance workshops, and regular consultations and coordination meetings.

As such, the inclusive partnerships fostered throughout the project, supported by strong local and institutional involvement, have significantly contributed to enhancing the sustainability and impact of interventions aimed at conserving Mont Béro and promoting community development

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1: Multi-Stakeholder Engagement and Governance Structure for Béro Classified Forest are secured, including the engagement of 250 representatives (30% women) from 10 adjacent communities.

The establishment of community advisory committees (activity 1.1.1) began later than originally planned. However, the teams were able to organize participatory processes in each of the 25 identified villages, resulting in the effective establishment of 25 community advisory committees. The planned training sessions (activity 1.1.2) will be carried out in the coming months. Formal structures and operational procedures (activity 1.1.3) will be established, validated by local authorities, in the next quarter. Regular exchanges (activity 1.1.4) will begin in the last quarter of year two, which will require intensification in year three to compensate for the accumulated delay. The establishment of the Management Board/Council (activity 1.2.1) is in high gear and will be operationalized in the first quarter of year two (2025/2026)

Output 2: Sustainable agriculture livelihood interventions implemented in 10 adjacent villages benefitting 1,500 people, while facilitating knowledge transfer and capacity building to extend these sustainable practices beyond the targeted villages.

The participatory agricultural assessment (Activity 2.1) was successfully conducted with co-financing from the L'Occitane Foundation, adhering to the planned schedule. It involved effective participation from local and technical stakeholders across five targeted villages: Kabiéta, Fozou, Manghana, Gbanhana-Ouota, and Boola Centre. This assessment allowed for the identification and mapping of local agroecological practices.

Communities have taken proactive measures to prevent bushfires by establishing firebreaks and implementing logging bans to protect their natural palm groves. They are also utilizing organic manure and practice crop rotations, such as rice-maize and rice-cowpea, to maintain soil fertility and diversify their income. Additionally, practices like mulching and burying plant

residues, including rice stubble, contribute to land health. Agroforestry is another key practice, combining coffee and cocoa trees with fruit or forest trees to provide shade and enhance fertilization. Furthermore, the local communities use of wood ash as a biological control method effectively reduces reliance on chemical inputs in these areas.

However, the transfer of agricultural technology (Activity 2.2) and the development of sustainable agricultural practices manuals (Activity 2.3) experienced delays, with the first workshops only organized at the end of the year. Initial training for technicians, extension agents, and community promoters (Activity 2.4) was completed in eight out of ten target villages, including Fozou, Kabiéta, Boola, Orata, Lomou, Manghana, Sibamou, and Saoulo, 294 participants, primarily women (156, or 53%) and men (138, or 47%) were engaged.

While initial support in agroecology and agroforestry (Activity 2.5) has not yet commenced, it is planned to start in April. Field visits conducted indicate a growing and encouraging interest from the communities in these initiatives.

Output 3: 100 ha of degraded areas in Mount Béro Classified Forest and in direct periphery (within the buffer zone) actively restored using native/endemic trees, 10 ha under piloted Assisted Natural Regeneration, and more than 7,000 socio-economically valuable tree species planted in the surrounding areas.

In collaboration with the Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ), three community nurseries were established (Activity 3.1), producing a total of 49,512 tree seedlings of native species. Participatory mapping exercises were conducted to identify restoration areas (Activity 3.2), resulting in the reforestation of 75 hectares of degraded land (Activity 3.3). The distribution of socio-economic species (Activity 3.4) was successfully implemented in three villages: Gounagalaye, Laminata, and Ouléouon, thanks to support from Kew. This initiative aims to provide 1,200 seedlings of socio-economic species, including Garcinia kola and Beilschmiedia mannii, in addition to 9,750 economic plants, such as palm and cocoa, produced across 11 villages bordering Bero (Activity 3.5).

A field monitoring exercise conducted in 2024 revealed that the plants exhibited strong vigor, achieving an impressive survival rate of 98.5%, with no significant diseases or infestations. Effective management practices, including weeding, watering, and proper spacing, were implemented by the tree nursery team. However, there was a loss of 14,235 plants, approximately 19% of the initial production. Specifically, Foozou experienced a loss of 4,600 plants due to dense Mucuna pruriens and ant attacks, while Ouléouon had the highest losses at 8,400 plants. In Kabiéta, 1,235 plants were lost primarily due to competition with invasive species and heat stress. To mitigate future risks, firebreaks were established at all sites.

Active advocacy is underway with the MEDD, the National Directorate of Fauna and Flora, and the Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ) to sustainably integrate existing and future community nurseries into annual national reforestation campaigns.

Output 4: Increased awareness of 7,500 community members on the ecosystem services provided by Mount Béro through participatory analysis and educational programs.

The initial deployment of the Toolkit for Ecosystem Service Site-Based Assessment (TESSA) tool (Activity 4.1) but

Necessary arrangements including community consultations have been completed, and first data collection (Activity 4.1.1). will be done in the first quarter of 2025/2026. The publication of TESSA results (Activity 4.1.2) and the associated awareness-raising (Activity 4.1.3) are also planned for the first quarter of the second year (of 2025/2026).

Support for the education sector and teacher capacity building (Activities 4.2.1 and 4.2.2) was conducted in partnership with Kew, where visits to 10 local schools were undertaken.

A launch day was organized, featuring speeches and participation from local education authorities. The first day focused on introducing environmental education and the themes outlined in the educational booklet designed for this purpose. The second day addressed topics related to climate change, extinction, ecosystem services, and threats. Presentations included endangered tree species in the region and seed collection, as well as the concept of school nurseries and gardens, along with guidance on setting up a tree nursery.

Output 5: Success stories and evidence-based interventions on ecosystem services preservation support private sector offsetting strategy roll out and are widely disseminated in the Guinée Forestière region and the wider Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA) biodiversity hotspot.

Development of an online data repository for the project hosted by the Nzérékore Forest Center (CFZ) is ongoing. Additionally, communication efforts were conducted through social media, which allowed for regular and dynamic engagement with a broader audience. Documentation of success stories, lessons learned, and best practices is ongoing and will be shared during the annual webinar for conservation stakeholders operating in the Guinée Forestière region.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Multi-Stakeholder Engagement and Governance Structure for Béro Classified Forest are secured, including the engagement of 250 representatives (30% women) from 10 adjacent communities

Initially, there were no formally recognized community governance structure around Mount Béro, and local communities had limited involvement in sustainable natural resource management processes. During the first year, the project made significant strides in establishing participatory governance for the Mont Béro classified forest. A total of 25 community advisory committees were formed through participatory and consensus-based processes in the 25 affected villages. Currently, these committees comprise of 152 community representatives, with 30.26% of them being women.

Formation of a Forest management council with representation of 30% women and 30% youth has been finalized and will formally be established in the coming weeks with these elected members.

Output 2: Sustainable agriculture livelihood interventions implemented in 10 adjacent villages benefitting 1,500 people, while facilitating knowledge transfer and capacity

Traditional agricultural practices in Mount Béro made minimal use of agroecology, and communities lacked the technical capacity for sustainable agriculture. To address these challenges, the project conducted an agricultural assessment with local stakeholders to identify specific needs and suitable agricultural techniques for the local context. As such, the following agroecological practices were identified including conservation, agroforestry, composting and organic waste management, integrated pest management, and Sustainable livestock practices such as sustainable rangeland management,

To facilitate the transfer and adoption of these agroecological practices, training manuals were developed. Additionally, 20 technicians and community promoters were trained to raise awareness of agroecology in eight priority villages: Fozou, Kabiéta, Manghana, Lomou, Boola, Orata, Sibamou, and Saoulo. This outreach reached a total of 294 participants, comprising 138 men (47%) and 156 women (53%).

Despite initial delays, the project is on track to achieve the targets of this output

Output 3: 100 ha of degraded areas in Mount Béro Classified Forest and in direct periphery (within the buffer zone) actively restored using native/endemic trees, 10 ha under piloted Assisted Natural Regeneration, and more than 7,000 socio-economically valuable tree species planted in the surrounding areas.

There is high ecological degradation of Mount Béro. To address this, the project in the first year, established three communal tree nurseries in collaboration with Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ), producing a total of 49,512 native tree species. This initiative facilitated the reforestation of 75 hectares in Kabiéta and Ouléouon, utilizing 24,512 native species of high ecological value, including *Carapa procera* (6,360 plants), *Terminalia superba* (6,000 plants), *Terminalia ivorensis*

(4,800 plants), *Heritiera utilis* (4,472 plants), *Lovoa trichilioides* (2,000 plants), and *Entandrophragma cylindricum* (880 plants) sourced from the Kabiéta community tree nursery.

Additionally, with support from Kew Gardens and the National Herbarium, three community groups in Laminata, Ouléouon, and Gounagalaye developed commercial tree nurseries. Gounagalaye and Laminata are already capable of supplying plants for restoration efforts.

Furthermore, to boost community engagement, 9,750 economically valuable plants (2,750 oil palms and 7,000 cocoa plants) were planted in 11 riverside villages, including Kabiéta, Foozou, Saadou, Lomou, Manghana, Orata, Mananko, Kpinita, Sibamou, Saoulo, and Tokpata. This initiative will soon be supplemented by the purchase of 1,200 additional plants of socio-economic species (*Garcinia kola*, *Beilschmiedia mannii*, and *Xylopia aethiopica*), which will be produced by the nurseries supported by Kew and planted in community plantations in the beneficiary villages.

The project is on track to achieve the targets of this output.

Output 4: Increased awareness of 7,500 community members on the ecosystem services provided by Mount Béro through participatory analysis and educational programs.

Throughout implementation of project activities in 2024, awareness raising was conducted among key stakeholders, including local communities, and authorities. In addition, workshops were organized to establish community advisory committees, emphasizing the importance of their involvement in the participatory management of the Mount Béro classified forest.

The results of the ecological inventory conducted with funding from L'Occitane Foundation were used to highlight the necessity of preserving forest resources in Mount Bero. In addition, the results of the agrarian diagnostic study provided a framework for educating local communities and local producers about good agroecological practices aimed at not only improving community livelihoods but also contribute to environmental conservation.

Further, the project raised awareness of local communities on agroecology in Fozou, Kabiéta, Manghana, Lomou, Boola, Orata, Sibamou, and Saoulo villages, where a total of 294 people (138 men/47% and 156/53% women) attended.

The deployment of Toolkit for Ecosystem Service Site-Based Assessment (TESSA) was delayed and has not yet formally begun, but necessary preparations have been finalized. However, in collaboration with Kew Garden and Guinée Ecologie, 25 teachers were initially trained on integrating forest conservation into school curriculum to reach at least 1,000 students.

The project is on track to achieve the targets of this output.

Output 5: Success stories and evidence-based interventions on ecosystem services preservation support private sector offsetting strategy roll out and are widely disseminated in the Guinée Forestière region and the wider Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA) biodiversity hotspot.

The establishment of the online database, hosted by the Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ) for sharing reports, is currently under discussion. Due to the delay in commencing project implementation, the first annual webinar did not occur as planned and has been rescheduled for the second year. However, informal exchanges with Local Authorities and Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ) facilitated active communication regarding the project's progress. In addition, social media was used as indicated below:

1. Signature of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) by the communities. https://www.guineeecologie.net/post/projet-béro-les-communautés-signent-le-consentement-libre-informés-et-préalable-clip

2. An inventory carried out for sustainable management of biodiversity. https://www.guineeecologie.net/post/projet-assure-un-avenir-durable-à-la-forêt-classée-du-mont-béro-un-entreprises-acteur-pour-un.
3. Monitoring the development of tree nurseries. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=858138486340699&set=a.471687354985816&__cft__[0]=AZX4P6L9Q_OWm-XkOcLMPJn_fULfAOiugd3C1uM2FgdpQahFzte09DU8-In6 MSzVRvlHd1eGrcPfeGol4XgtwwbPKEJ907n7I2NCBbxTT5gbp4MEBhccU2oKCXxY3IaWzLepm qWE04U1hfDmE4MncXgDo0nghSj73X-xLh0Ymn2adfhQ6869as0sBkehmWfvHis&__tn__=EH-R
4. Data collection in the classified forest of Mont Béro. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1046331380854741&set=a.471687354985816&__cft__[0]=AZUxPgo53C_Ni2NKOtlEOMImb7XqJ_pP_9sjrqqcIMGOPT2LQL uhseaAYCRD1lAixdIkvZiF60PZyZVeSi_yQWmDyMobisWpCTycWcXsWNcZioSPDZo6PjETkDS a5-cuQCufeDq4ynlAy6s2h78Sa9e3cElpTTjon8COWnAys8yfvUDeUdO8L8TcU&__tn__=EH-R

Despite initial delays, the project is generally expected to achieve the targets of this output.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome (Inclusive management foundations for Mount Béro Classified Forest are established, creating enabling conditions for private sector offsetting and sustainable agriculture promotion, and benefiting 1,500 people from 10 adjacent rural communities).

The project established a collaboration with CFZ and OGPNRF, funded by the World Bank, to manage natural resources in Mont Béro and Pic de Fon National Park. In 2024, patrols and ecological monitoring were conducted over 21 days each quarter by four teams of 15 officers in Laminata, Foozou, Ouléouon, Boola, Orata and Topkata, which are biodiversity-sensitive areas prone to threats like poaching and illegal resource exploitation. The patrol teams covered 2,760 km, totaling 5,114 hours, using GPS tracking and Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tools (SMART) software for monitoring.

A total of four patrols were conducted, including two dedicated to the ecological monitoring of threatened species, including chimpanzees (Pan troglodytes) and duikers. During this period, direct observation recorded 9 encounters with species such as Cercopithecus diana (Diana's monkey), and indirect clues (tracks, droppings) revealed the presence of 17 black-fronted duikers (Cephalophus nigrifrons) and other key mammals. Indirect observations also confirmed the presence of the western chimpanzee and bushbuck (Tragelaphus scriptus).

To bolster these efforts, camera traps were installed over a six-month period in sensitive areas. The cameras captured images of 15 different animal species, helping to enrich data on populations in the park. The devices recorded a total of 30 to 210 images per camera per month, tracking primarily rare and endangered species.

While the results were positive, there were some challenges, such as power supply issues and sometimes reduced image quality during rainy periods. Despite these issues, the patrols enhanced protected area management, and strengthened local community cooperation through awareness initiatives, crucial for effective and sustainable management of Mount Béro.

Pre-feasibility study to assess the potential for forest carbon financing was conducted by Earthshot Lab with match-funding from L’Occitane Foundation. The assessment showed that there is high carbon removal potential in Mount Béro. For instance, there are 31,021 hectares of degraded land eligible for Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation (ARR) with the potential to sequester up to 427.8 tCO2e per hectare in 40 years, in a low leakage scenario; and 18,046 hectares of stable forest eligible for REDD+, with the potential to reduce emissions by 1,314,892 tCO2e in 40 years, translating to an average annual tCO2e reduction of 32,872 tCO2e.

While the financial viability analyses showed that an ARR project is economically feasible on areas over 6,000 hectares at a carbon price of US$ 15.1, while a REDD+ project could be marketed at a carbon price of US$ 6.3, below the maximum recommended price of US$ 10.

In an attempt to increase forest coverage in Mount Béro classified forest area, native tree seedlings were planted in 75 hectares of degraded land.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 1: Local social and political stability is maintained, enabling the effective implementation of project activities.
This assumption remained broadly valid during the first year of the project. Despite minor challenges related to access to some villages, no major socio-political disruptions were recorded. Village committees were established without significant opposition from local authorities, which constitutes tangible evidence that the social stability required by the project is maintained. However, an isolated criminal incident in Kabieta demonstrates that local tensions occasionally exist and must be closely monitored. To manage this risk, the project has strengthened its outreach and community mediation strategies, as evidenced by the minutes of meetings with local authorities and affected communities.

Assumption 2: Local communities accept and actively engage in the interventions proposed by the project.
This hypothesis remains largely true, with good overall community involvement, as clearly demonstrated by reports of participatory activities (establishment of advisory committees, participation in agricultural training, nursery maintenance). However, some challenges have emerged, including the initial low level of mobilization in some villages and language barriers hindering a full understanding of the proposed activities. The project is addressing these challenges through tailored approaches, including additional training sessions in local languages and simplified teaching tools. The increased engagement observed in Kabieta after the fire, with community initiative to strengthen site monitoring, is further evidence of gradual acceptance and strengthening of local involvement.

Assumption 3: Climatic conditions remain favorable for agricultural activities and ecological restoration.
This hypothesis has been valid so far, as the climatic conditions observed during the reporting period have enabled successful seedling production in community nurseries and effective ecological restoration of targeted areas. However, the fire in Kabieta highlights the importance of managing the risk associated with bushfires exacerbated by prolonged dry seasons. In response, the advisory committees established will also be community fire monitoring committees, in accordance with the recommendations made during post-fire meetings.

Assumption 4: Local and national institutions remain engaged and actively support project activities.
This hypothesis remains fully valid, with sustained and even strengthened engagement from the Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ). A formal collaboration protocol between Guinée Écologie and the CFZ has been established, strengthening coordination of activities and ensuring regular monitoring of progress. The CFZ's direct participation in workshops and strategic meetings attests to their support for the project.

Assumption 5: The material and financial resources planned by the project are available within the planned timeframe.
This assumption has proven partially false over the past year. Indeed, the initial delay in the start of activities was directly linked to an unforeseen delay in the receipt of funds, affecting several activities such as community training. To overcome these delays, a revision of the activity schedule was carried out, accompanied by stricter management of available resources. Official communications with the Darwin Initiative and interim financial reports clearly demonstrate these corrective measures.

Assumption 6: Mining companies follow through with their current commitment to offsetting their environmental impacts by investing in the conservation of the Béro Classified Forest. This assumption held true as Rio Tinto provided £6,203,345.9 for small grants to build the capacity of CSOs in Guinea and Sierra Leone on forest conservation; and to support to support the implementation of Pic De Fon Classified Forest.

Assumption 7: The government continues to prioritize the conservation of classified forests and takes proactive measures to ensure their preservation, including the protection and designation of a network of protected areas. This assumption held true as the Guinean Ministry of Environment has expressed interest in designating Mount Béro as a Protected Area.

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

The overall impact targeted by the initial proposal for the "Community Engagement for the Conservation of the Mont Béro Classified Forest" project is to sustainably contribute to the conservation of the unique biodiversity of the Mont Béro Classified Forest while significantly improving the socio-economic well-being of local communities living around the forest.

Contribution of the project to the conservation of biodiversity:

The project is making a significant contribution to higher-level biodiversity impact by implementing several concrete actions. In year one, restoration of 75 hectares of degraded forest commenced with the planting of over 25,000 native seedlings and endangered plant species produced in a community tree nursery. This ecological restoration will not only rehabilitate essential natural habitats for local wildlife but also restore critical ecosystem functions on Mount Béro.

Project contribution to poverty reduction (human development and well-being:

The project is contributing to the socio-economic well-being of local communities. The establishment of village governance committees, composed of 152 community representatives, 30.26% of whom are women and youth, promotes direct management of issues related to natural resources and local development. The project has also initiated training in agroecology and agroforestry in 8 community villages, thus increasing their capacity to develop sustainable income-generating activities. In addition, the production of nearly 9,750 economic plants in 11 villages is enabling communities to gradually improve their incomes through the sustainable exploitation of these resources. Although the immediate economic effects are still limited, these initial interventions are already showing encouraging signs in terms of the potential improvement of local living conditions.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

Over the past 12 months, the "Community Engagement for the Conservation of the Mont Béro Classified Forest" project has directly contributed to the implementation of Guinean national policies, including the NBSAP, the NDCs, and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP). Through the formal establishment of 25 community advisory committees and the ecological restoration of 75 hectares of forest with 25,000 native plants, the project actively supports national objectives related to community participation, forest ecosystem restoration, and carbon sequestration. These achievements have been formally shared with national authorities, thus strengthening Guinea's contribution to international conventions on biodiversity and climate

5. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

The "Community Engagement in Mont Béro" project contributes both directly and indirectly to the multidimensional reduction of poverty among the communities surrounding Mont Béro. The direct beneficiaries include local communities from 25 villages across six rural communes: Koropara, Womey, Boola, Soulouta, Foumbadou, and Lainé, totaling approximately 1,500 individuals targeted by agricultural and socio-economic interventions.

This year, key direct impacts on poverty reduction include the establishment of community nurseries, which will produce over 9,750 plants for agroforestry purposes (such as cocoa and oil palm) to be distributed to 11 villages. Additionally, 1,200 socio-economic plants, like *Garcinia kola*, *Beilschmiedia mannii*, and *Xylopia aethiopica*, etc., will be provided to diversify incomes and enhance food security for local households. These initiatives directly contribute to the project's logical framework indicators related to increased household incomes and improved food security.

Indirectly, the project furthers poverty reduction by enhancing local governance and strengthening community capacity in sustainable natural resource management. The successful establishment of 25 village consultative committees and the provision of initial agroecology training courses in eight villages empower local communities in the long term. These achievements enable populations to better manage their natural resources, ensuring lasting benefits in social, economic, and environmental well-being.

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	

The design and implementation of this project actively addressed Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) issues. Gender considerations were integrated into the proposed outcomes and outputs, ensuring that at least 30% of the project beneficiaries were women. Field activities were implemented inclusively, taking into account gender dynamics and the needs of other vulnerable groups, such as youth.

For example, 25 community advisory committees were formed through participatory and consensus-based processes, comprising 152 community representatives, of which 30.26% were women. Additionally, during awareness-raising sessions on agroecology, a total of 294 participants were engaged, with women making up 53% of that number.

The project adopted a Rights-Based Approach, which included Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in stakeholder engagement throughout its implementation. To ensure all voices were heard, separate meetings were occasionally held for men and women, allowing for the expression of views that may not have been shared in mixed settings. Meetings were often scheduled in the afternoons, accommodating women's responsibilities for household chores.

Stakeholders were provided with prior information (at least one week's notice), and meetings and workshops were conducted in locations accessible to both women and men. This approach facilitated broader participation and ensured that the perspectives of all community members were considered.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for the project was primarily based on its initially validated logical framework. This M&E system enabled the verification of whether the activities and outputs effectively contributed to the project's expected outcome.

The relevance of the M&E system lies in the systematic use of clearly defined quantitative and qualitative indicators outlined in the logical framework, allowing for direct and objective measurement of progress. Key quantitative indicators monitored included the number of established community advisory committees (25 committees formed), the area restored (75 hectares), the number of plants produced in three community nurseries (49,512 000 plants), and the number of people trained in agroecology (294). Qualitative indicators reflect community engagement, such as the proactive response of Kabiéta residents after a fire, strengthened

collaboration with the CFZ, and the institutional validation of the committees by local authorities.

These indicators were measured using periodic activity reports, minutes from community meetings, nursery monitoring sheets, and regular field visits by project supervisors. The results will be documented and archived in a database jointly managed by Guinée Écologie and the Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ), facilitating information exchange between project partners.

The governance of the M&E system is a collaborative effort involving BirdLife, Guinée Écologie, Kew Gardens, the National Herbarium, and the CFZ. Guinée Écologie primarily handles operational monitoring in the field, while Kew Gardens and the National Herbarium provide specialized technical support related to species conservation and ecological assessment. The CFZ actively participates in monitoring governance and ecological restoration activities, lending strong institutional legitimacy to the approach. Information is shared during regular coordination meetings among partners, ensuring transparency and collective ownership of the results.

Over the past year, no significant changes were made to the initial M&E plan. However, areas for improvement have been identified, including the need to enhance the frequency and rigor of qualitative assessments, particularly regarding community engagement and local ownership. Additionally, the initial delays in some activities highlight the necessity for stricter operational monitoring to anticipate and manage potential risks of future delays.

8. Lessons learnt

During the first year of implementing the "Community Engagement in Mont Béro" project, several important lessons were learned at administrative, technical, and monitoring and evaluation levels.

What Worked Well:

- The close collaboration and synergy between the Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ) and technical partners, such as Kew Gardens and the National Herbarium, facilitated strong ownership of the project and enhanced its legitimacy both locally and nationally. Regular meetings and a formal collaboration protocol with the CFZ proved to be an effective model.
- The participatory process used to establish the 25 village consultative committees was successful, fostering strong involvement from local communities. The engagement seen in Kabieta following the arson fire demonstrated that community responsiveness and ownership are promising when communities are actively solicited.
- The establishment of community nurseries largely achieved its initial objectives, resulting in the installation of 9,750 plants for economic use. This success illustrates the effectiveness of a community approach to managing local natural resources.

What Didn't Work Well:
A significant delay in the effective start of activities was observed during the first year. This delay led to low absorption of the initially planned resources, which slowed down the implementation of essential training and ground activities. Additionally, the project highlighted weaknesses in proactively managing environmental risks, as evidenced by the arson attack in Kabieta.

What Would Be Done Differently:
If the year were to be repeated, the project would establish an operational reserve to better manage financial and logistical constraints. A strengthened strategy for preventing and managing environmental risks, particularly fires, would be integrated from the project's initial phase.

Recommendations for Similar Projects:

- Strengthen community engagement and ownership from the outset by organizing clearly defined participatory processes, including communication mechanisms tailored to various educational levels.

- Systematically plan for proactive management of significant environmental risks, such as fires or other climatic hazards, by integrating preventive measures like firebreaks, regular awareness campaigns, and community fire monitoring committees.

Integrating Learning into Future Plans:
To address the challenges related to the startup delays and low absorption observed in the first year, the project will enhance its operational monitoring system through detailed quarterly reviews of progress compared to the initial plan.

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

This is not applicable because this is the first annual report for the project.

10. Risk Management

In our project risk management strategy, BirdLife International employs a comprehensive framework that encompasses risk identification, assessment, and response planning. We prioritize early identification of potential risks and conduct regular assessments, engaging the team in open discussions to gather diverse perspectives. Risks are categorized based on their likelihood and potential impact, enabling us to focus our mitigation efforts on high-priority areas. We also hold regular risk review meetings to ensure that all team members are aware of potential risks and can actively contribute to mitigation strategies. This approach allows for continuous monitoring and adaptation of our strategies in response to emerging risks throughout the project lifecycle.

Despite this, the following risks were encountered during the implementation of the project.

1. Staff turn-over due to external factors, such as competitive job markets, individual career aspirations, and personal circumstances of key staff members, have led to unexpected departures. Although we offer competitive compensation and strive to create a positive work environment, unforeseen personal decisions can still result in sudden exits. This turnover among key staff impacted BirdLife International's ability to sign a contract with the implementing partner, Guinée Écologie. It took BirdLife three months to replace the resigning staff, resulting in the contract being signed in July 2024. Consequently, this delay also affected Guinée Écologie's recruitment of project staff, which did not take place until October 2024.
2. Access to certain villages was particularly challenging due to poor road infrastructure and significant distances, complicating the transport of equipment and logistics on the ground.
3. Loss of 19% of trees planted due to termite attacks, competition with invasive species, heat stress and fire outbreaks.
4. Prolonged sickness of the project lead which resulted to his inability to travel to the project site for monitoring.
5. Initial resentment from some communities that expressed reservations due to past unfulfilled promises from other projects
6. High illiteracy levels in the target local communities

To mitigate these risks, the following measures were undertaken.

1. To address staff turnover, succession planning and cross-training were implemented, alongside enhanced onboarding processes and employee engagement initiatives. Professional development opportunities were provided, and a supportive work culture was promoted through mentorship programs. Exit interviews were also conducted to better understand the underlying reasons for turnover.
2. To tackle the challenges of accessing certain villages, logistical measures were established, including the use of all-terrain vehicles and more precise planning based on weather conditions to optimize travel.

3. Detailed planning and forecasting during project implementation led to the development of strategies for accelerating other activities. This included proactive budget monitoring, with monthly and quarterly financial reviews to assess burn rates and compare actual expenditures against budgeted amounts to identify any variances.
4. To overcome community reluctance and high illiteracy levels, awareness-raising and trust-building dialogue activities were conducted, involving local mediators and regular participatory meetings to better understand and address their needs. Additionally, community meetings and training sessions were facilitated by local members who served as interpreters, enhancing understanding and ownership among village committee members.
5. Sought a budget Change Request that was approved by the donor.
6. To improve survival rate of tree seedlings planted, the project team established fire lines and adopted integrated pest management methods to address termite attacks.

11. Scalability and durability

The project will create an innovative, multi-stakeholder management model for a biodiversity-rich sites by integrating local communities, government institutions, and a local and international NGOs that can be replicated in other key biodiversity areas in the Guinean Forests of West Africa, and elsewhere.

The awareness and training manuals developed from this project can serve as a blueprint for other contexts.

BirdLife's Guinean Forest Conservation Strategy, launched in August 2023, identified ten priority landscapes, including Bero. The lessons learned, best practices and success stories will inform the design and implementation of similar initiatives across the Guinean Forests of West Africa.

Sustainability aspects

Economic Sustainability: The project will create commercial tree nurseries that deliver tangible economic benefits to local communities in the Mount Bero landscape.

Social Sustainability: Strong and inclusive governance structures are central to the project. By actively involving local communities, including vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women and youth, the project aims to establish participatory management mechanisms that enhance the management of natural resources at the grassroots level.

Environmental Sustainability: The project plans to restore 100 hectares of forest land, which is expected to improve the provision of various ecosystem services both within and outside of Mount Bero.

Institutional Sustainability: Community advisory committees have been established to support conservation efforts in Mount Bero, strengthening collaboration with local partners and national authorities, including the N'Zérékoré Forest Centre and the Guinean Office of National Parks and Wildlife Reserves. This strategic partnership enhances ecological monitoring and surveillance, improving coverage of sensitive areas and responsiveness to threats such as poaching and deforestation. Additionally, the project has expanded international partnerships, notably with Kew Gardens, to develop environmental education programs for communities adjacent to Mount Bero.

12. Darwin Initiative identity

Over the past year, there has been improved understanding of the Darwin Initiative in Guinea as the project partnered with Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ), Kew Gardens and the National Herbarium in forest conservation strategies for endangered plant species. A significant achievement of these partnerships was the successful organization of the official launch of two Darwin Initiative-funded projects in Guinea, which was notably attended by the British Ambassador to Guinea in Nzérékoré, thereby enhancing the project's visibility and institutional importance

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	**151,637**			

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 (£)			L'Occitane Foundation
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			• Rio Tinto: £__ for small grants to build the capacity of CSOs in Guinea and Sierra Leone on forest conservation; and £__ to support to support the implementation of Pic De Fon Classified Forest • CEPF: £ __ for small grants to support CSOs in the Guinean Forests of West Africa to tackle biodiversity loss and climate change. • NaturAfrica: £__ to build the technical capacity of partners in forest conservation

15. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

Not applicable

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

There were delays in starting the implementation of project activities, thus, there are no outstanding achievements registered this year

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)
				Yes
				Yes
				Yes
				Yes
				Yes

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 Mount Béro Classified Forest's long-term conservation is ensured through engagement of local stakeholders in protecting and restoring critical biodiversity habitats, promoting sustainable agriculture, and unlocking of sustainable finance opportunities	The project contributed to forest conservation through the restoration of 75 hectares of degraded forest with native tree species. Also, it contributed to improved forest governance through the establishment of village governance committees, composed of 152 community representatives, 30.26% of whom are women and youth. Further, the project contributed to reduction in poverty through the establishment of three community commercial tree nurseries, which will produce over 9,750 plants for agroforestry purposes and diversify incomes and enhance food security for local households (for details see section 3.5)	[redacted]
Outcome: Inclusive management foundations for Mount Béro Classified Forest are established, creating enabling conditions for private sector offsetting and sustainable agriculture promotion, and benefiting 1,500 people from 10 adjacent rural communities.		
Outcome indicator 0.1: Increase patrolling efforts by 10% annually from project start to project end, as informed by the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART).	Four patrols and ecological monitoring were conducted covering 2,760 km, totalling 5,114 hours, using GPS tracking and Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tools (SMART) software for monitoring (for details, see section 3.3).	Continue patrolling and monitoring using Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tools (SMART)
Outcome indicator 0.2: Improve the Integrated Management Effective Tool (IMET) score to 50% by project end. Baseline score (2019): 39.31%.	This will be measured at the end of the project	This will be conducted at the end of the project
Outcome indicator 0.3: Achieve a 1% increase in forest coverage by project end, specifically within the classified forest area	So far 75 hectares of degraded land is being restored by planting native forest species with high ecological value (for details see section 3.1)	Planting of native trees in additional 25 hectares of degraded land
Outcome indicator 0.4: Maintain zero hectare of canopy cover loss in the buffer zone. Baseline: to be defined in 2023 based on 2020-2021 NASA data	This will be measured at the end of the project	Ascertain the project baseline from NASA data sets
Outcome indicator 0.5: Biodiversity and carbon offset enabling conditions are established and fulfilled by project end	Pre-feasibility study to assess the potential for forest carbon financing was conducted by Earthshot Lab with match-funding from L'Occitane Foundation (for details, see section 3.3)	Conducting a comprehensive feasibility study for biodiversity and carbon offset in Mount Béro
Output 1: Multi-stakeholder engagement and governance structure for the Béro Classified Forest are ensured, including the engagement of 250 representatives (30% women and youth) from 10 adjacent communities.		

Output indicator 1.1: Participation of community members (at least 40% women and 30% youth) in community advisory committees.	25 community advisory committees were successfully established, actively integrating 152 members, with 30.26% women (for details, see section 3.1)	Formalization, training and ongoing support for committees to make them fully operational
Output indicator 1.2: The committee members (30% women and 30% young people) participate in the Béro Classified Forest Management Council.	The selection process for members of the 25 community advisory committees has been finalized, ensuring the minimum required representation of 30% women and 30% youth. The Béro Classified Forest Management Council will be formally established in the coming weeks with these elected members (for details see sections 3.1 & 3.2)	Meeting, selection and official validation of the composition of the Council by the local authorities
Output 1.3: Committee members received training in 4 half-day sessions and support in the form of ongoing coaching regarding their roles and responsibilities.	Training, as well as support for committee members regarding their roles and responsibilities, is scheduled for the first quarter of the second year. These training courses will aim to strengthen the operational capacities of elected members, and their understanding of the issues related to participatory governance of Mount Béro.	Continuous reinforcement through training in local languages and logistical support
Output indicator 1.4: Key stakeholders, including community representatives, local and central authorities (30% women), have established and approved their participation in the Béro Classified Forest Steering Committee	The official establishment of the Steering Committee, including community representatives as well as local and central authorities with at least 30% female participation, has been launched since June 2024. Confirmation of the participation of these stakeholders will be validated by the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) in the first quarter of 2025/2026	Monitor progress for the decision to establish the steering committee at the MEDD
Output 2. Sustainable agricultural interventions implementing livelihoods in 10 adjacent villages benefiting 1,500 people, while facilitating knowledge transfer and capacity building to expand these sustainable practices beyond the targeted villages		
Output indicator 2.1: Publication and approval of the agricultural assessment and associated knowledge products at the end of year 1. **[DI-C01]**	Participatory agricultural assessment completed, 294 people trained, including 53% women in 8 villages (for details see section 3.1 output 2 and section 3.2 output 2)	Structuring groups, intensifying training for technicians, financial and practical support and providing additional agricultural equipment.
Output indicator 2.2: Project technicians, rural extension agents and community promoters capable of promoting sustainable agriculture (at least 50% women and youth) following a one-week training.	20 technicians and community promoters were trained to raise awareness of agroecology in eight priority villages: Fozou, Kabiéta, Manghana, Lomou, Boola, Orata, Sibamou, and Saoulo (for details see section 3.1 output 2 and section 3.2 output 2).	Finalize the selection of participants and organize practical training for technicians and community agents.
Output indicator 2.3: Project technicians, rural extension agents and community promoters from 10 trained villages reported providing additional training to at least 1,000 beneficiaries	294 people trained, including 53% women (for details see section 3.1 output 2 and section 3.2 output 2)	Effective implementation of cascade training after the initial training of technicians.

Output indicator 2.4 Proportion of economic interest groups (EIGs) established and functional at the end of the project (project objective of at least 10 groups of at least 50 beneficiaries	10 economic interest groups, each comprising at least 50 beneficiaries, have been identified (for details see section 3.1 output 2 and section 3.2 output 2).	Support for the creation and formal structuring of EIGs. Provision of technical and material support to ensure their operationality.
Output indicator 2.5: 1,500 smallholder farmers (at least 50% women) reporting adoption of sustainable and forest-friendly agricultural practices by the end of the project	The adoption of sustainable agricultural practices by beneficiaries will depend directly on upcoming practical training (indicator 2.2) and knowledge transfer to communities (indicator 2.3).	Regular monitoring of farmers to assess the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.
Output indicator 2.6: 20 ha of improved and sustainable agricultural practices within agroforestry systems to benefit populations so that they are more resilient to weather shocks and climate trends	Commercial tree nurseries have already been established in 11 villages with 2,750 oil palm plants and 7,000 cocoa plants. In addition, 1,200 additional tree species produced for details see section 3.1 output 2).	Acquisition and distribution of 1,200 additional plants and planting and regular monitoring of community agroforestry plots.
Output 3: 100 ha of degraded areas in the Mont Béro classified forest and in the immediate periphery (within the buffer zone) actively restored using native/endemic trees, 10 ha under pilot assisted natural regeneration and more than 7,000 tree species of socio-economic value planted in the surrounding areas.		
Output indicator 3.1: 10 community nurseries established and self-managed by groups of at least 10 members (at least 50% women and 50% youth) in 10 villages	Three community nurseries have been established in three villages in collaboration with Kew Gardens (for details see section 3.2 output 3).	Extend the establishment of community nurseries to other villages and strengthen the technical capacities of new groups to ensure their autonomy and sustainability.
Output indicator 3.2: 100 ha of degraded or converted ecosystems under active restoration by the end of the project	75 hectares of degraded land are being restored by planting native forest species with high ecological value (for details see section 3.1).	Continue planting activities to achieve the target of 100 hectares restored and strengthen protection strategies, notably through the establishment of community fire surveillance.
Output indicator 3.3: 10 ha of degraded or converted ecosystems as part of an assisted natural regeneration pilot project by the end of the project	This activity has not yet begun, but preparations are underway for its upcoming implementation. The assisted natural regeneration pilot project will be launched in close collaboration with local communities and the CFZ to identify and protect selected areas.	Identify precisely the 10 hectares dedicated and put in place the necessary measures to protect and monitor natural regeneration in these pilot areas.
Output indicator 3.4: Advocacy carried out to integrate community nurseries into annual reforestation campaigns, thus contributing to their sustainability as businesses.	Ongoing advocacy with the MEDD, the National Directorate of Fauna and Flora, and the Nzérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ) to sustainably integrate existing and future community nurseries into annual national reforestation campaigns (for details see section 3.1 output 3)	Finalize a formal agreement and strengthen advocacy with prefectural and regional authorities to ensure sustainable institutional and financial support.
Output 4: **Increased awareness of the ecosystem services provided by Mount Béro among 2,500 community members through participatory analyses and educational programs**		
Output indicator 4.1: Publication and approval of the site-specific ecosystem services assessment and	This activity has not yet been carried out, but preparations are currently underway, including the translation of documents, the	Carry out the TESSA participatory launch and data collection workshop this month

associated knowledge products (by the Nzérékoré Forestry Centre) by the end of the project	development of terms of reference and the mobilization of local stakeholders.	
Output indicator 4.2: 1,500 beneficiaries (at least 50% women and 50% youth) with increased awareness of the value of ecosystem services provided by the Mount Béro forest by the end of the project	Awareness-raising activities specific to ecosystem services have not yet begun. However, advanced preparations have been made, and operational plans for awareness-raising campaigns have been developed to reach at least 1,500 beneficiaries, including women and youth.	Launch awareness campaigns through community workshops and local radio broadcasts and produce appropriate awareness materials in local languages (Guerzé and Kornienko)
Output indicator 4.3: 25 teachers trained in integrating forest conservation into school curricula report having used the new approach with at least 1,000 students at the end of the project	25 teachers trained in collaboration with Kew Garden (for details see section 3.1 output 4).	Capitalize on this experience of the NbS project by planning additional training specifically adapted for teachers in schools near Mont Béro.
Output 5: Successful examples and evidence-based interventions in ecosystem service conservation support the implementation of private sector offset strategies and are being widely disseminated in the Forest Guinea region and the Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA) biodiversity hotspot.		
Output indicator 5.1: Creation of an accessible online Forest Service database comprising reports/assessments from private/NGO sector resources/data with established protocol for systematic uploading (project milestones)	Development of an online data repository for the project hosted by the Nzérékore Forest Center (CFZ) is ongoing (for details see section 3.1 output 5).	Operationalize the online data repository
Output indicator 5.2: Annual webinars for conservation stakeholders from active local and international NGOs and other conservation stakeholders operating in the Forest Guinea region with more than 20 participants (50% women)	Not yet started	Organize and hold annual webinars with conservation stakeholders active in Guinée Forestière region
Output indicator 5.3: Sharing of project lessons with stakeholders active in the Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA) hotspot on the sidelines of at least 1 regional event	Not yet started	Documentation and sharing of project success stories, best practices and lessons learned with stakeholders active in the Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA)
Output indicator 5.4: The results of TESSA's studies have been shared with at least one private sector company active in forested Guinea to inform offset investment priorities for maintaining and improving the supply of ecosystem services.	Not yet started	Share the TESSA studies with RioTinto to inform their offset investment priorities for sustaining and improving ecosystem services supply
Output indicator 5.5: Social media presence with more than 3,000 interactions per year	Some project information was conveyed through social media (for details see section 3.1 output 5)	Increase social media presence of the project
Output indicator 5.6: Number of media-related activities, including articles, audiovisual materials and reports	Agroecology training manuals produced (for details see section 3.2 output 5; and section 11)	Produce project articles, audio-visual, and news report

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

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Mount Béro Classified Forest's long-term conservation is ensured through engagement of local stakeholders in protecting and restoring critical biodiversity habitats, promoting sustainable agriculture, and unlocking of sustainable finance opportunities.			
Outcome: Inclusive management foundations for Mount Béro Classified Forest are established, creating enabling conditions for private sector offsetting and sustainable agriculture promotion, and benefiting 1,500 people from 10 adjacent rural communities.	0.1 Increase patrolling efforts by 10% annually from project start to project end, as informed by the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART). 0.2 Improve the Integrated Management Effective Tool (IMET) score to 50% by project end. Baseline score (2019): 39.31%. 0.3 Achieve a 1% increase in forest coverage by project end, specifically within the classified forest area. 0.4 Maintain zero hectare of canopy cover loss in the buffer zone. Baseline: to be defined in 2023 based on 2020-2021 NASA data. 0.5 Biodiversity and carbon offset enabling conditions are established and fulfilled by project end. 0.6 Stable encounter rate of native fauna particularly key flagship species such as chimpanzees, forest buffalo by EOP. 0.7 Forest-friendly, sustainable agricultural practices directly benefit 1,500 people (50% women) living around Béro, leading to acknowledged income increase and/or revenue staggering by EOP. 0.8 Increased recognition of the international value of Mount Bero Classified Forest through its designation as Key Biodiversity Area (KBA).	0.1 SMART report(s) 0.2 Integrated Management Effective Tool assessment 0.3 Satellite Imagery NASA : https://mangrovescience.engine.app/view/guinea-lcluc-explorer 0.4 Satellite Imagery NASA : https://mangrovescience.engine.app/view/guinea-lcluc-explorer 0.5 Private sectors offset plans and/or percentage of enabling conditions versus criteria set by private sector 0.6 Baseline and EOP Biomonitoring data obtained during patrols, using camera traps and conducting faunal surveys. 0.7 Baseline and EOP socioeconomic assessment and household surveys. 0.8 Proposal submitted to the KBA Secretariat through the KBA National Coordination Group (NCG) established under Guinee Ecologie's leadership.	The political situation remains stable, ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted democratic transition with a certain degree of continuity. The teams assigned to the Béro Forest at the Nzérékoré Forest Center will be maintained throughout the project duration, or the transition will occur gradually without significant disruptions. NASA will continue providing satellite images for Guinea in the coming years, allowing free access to updated and reliable data for monitoring purposes. Mining companies follow through with their current commitment to offsetting their environmental impacts by investing in the conservation of the Béro Classified Forest. The government continues to prioritize the conservation of classified forests and takes proactive measures to ensure their preservation, including the protection and designation of a network of protected areas.

Output 1: Multi-Stakeholder Engagement and Governance Structure for Béro Classified Forest are secured, including the engagement of 250 representatives (30% women and youth) from 10 adjacent communities.	1.1. Community members (at least 40% women and 30% youth) participating in Community Advisory Committees. Baseline: 0 Project milestones: 100 people in year 1, 250 in year 2, 250 in year 3) **[DI-B07]** 1.2. Committee members (30% women and 30% youth) are participating in Béro Classified Forest Management Council. Baseline: 0 (Project target 50 people by year 2 i.e., 2 representatives per communities) **[DI-B07]** 1.3. Committee members received training through 4 half-day sessions and support through continuous accompaniment regarding their roles and responsibilities. (Project target 100% by year 2) **[DI-A01]** 1.4. Key stakeholders including community representatives, local and central authorities (30% women) have established and endorsed participation in Béro Classified Forest Steering Committee (Project target 100% by year 2). Baseline: 0. **[DI-B05]**	1.1. Attendance records, Community Advisory Committees establishment report, minutes of community meetings (gender-disaggregated data), acts of creation (formal) 1.2. Attendance records, Béro Classified Forest Management Council establishment report, minutes of Council meetings (gender-disaggregated data), act of creation (formal) 1.3. Training reports (gender-disaggregated data) regarding their roles and responsibilities. (Project target 100% by year 2) [DI-A01] 1.4. Key stakeholders including community representatives, local and central authorities (30% women) have established and endorsed participation in Béro Classified Forest Steering Committee (Project target 100% by year 2). Baseline: 0. [DI-B05]	Government remains committed in integrating the communities in the governance structure. The participatory selection and training of community representatives ensures a fair, inclusive, and effective, representation of the local communities
Output 2: Sustainable agriculture livelihood interventions implemented in 10 adjacent villages benefiting 1,500 people, while facilitating knowledge transfer and capacity building to extend these sustainable practices beyond the targeted villages**.**	2.1. Agricultural assessment and associated knowledge products published and endorsed by the end of Y1. **[DI-C01]** 2.2. Project technicians, rural extension workers, and community promoters capable of promoting sustainable agriculture (at least 50% women and youth) following a week-long training. (Project target 20 people trained by year 2) **[DI-A01].** 2.3. Project technicians, rural extension workers, and community promoters from 10 villages trained reporting to have delivered further training to at least 1,000 beneficiaries (at least 50% women and youth) by EOP. **[DI-A05]** 2.4. Proportion of Economic Interest Groups (IEG) established and functional at project end (Project target of at least 10 groups of minimum 50 beneficiaries (at least 50% women and youth) with 100% self-sustained by project end) **[DI-A10]**	1.1. Agricultural assessment report and Nzérékoré Forest Center endorsement letter and any other mean of endorsement e.g., preamble from prefectural authority. 1.2. Training reports (age and gender-disaggregated data) including post-course feedback. 1.3. Post-course 6-months surveys (using mobile social platform) 1.4. IEG registration (e.g., cocoa, coffee, rice farming, market gardening, poultry, aquaculture, etc) and membership list (gender-disaggregated data); annual General Assembly report and simplified annual financial/accounting report. 1.5. Baseline and EOP socioeconomic assessments, disaggregated by gender and age (household surveys).	There are no major climate events or political upheavals influencing the production and markets of agricultural products. At least 20 project technicians, rural extension workers, and community promoters are available and actively participate in training, demonstrating an interest in implementing their learning in the field, with a ratio of 1:50 beneficiaries in terms of support/continuous training. Beneficiaries are convinced by the techniques taught, with a replication potential of approximately 1 to 5.

	2.5. 1,500 smallholder farmers (at least 50% women) reporting the adoption of sustainable, forest-friendly agricultural practices by project end [DI-B10] 2.6. 20 ha of improved, sustainable agriculture practices under agro-forestry systems benefitting people to be more resilient to weather shocks and climate trends **[DI-D10]**	1.6. Satellite imagery, photos, reports on sustainable agriculture practices uptake.	The trend and interest in higher-quality products that adhere to social and environmental standards continue to evolve positively.
Output 3: 100 ha of degraded areas in Mount Béro Classified Forest and in direct periphery (within the buffer zone) actively restored using native/endemic trees, 10 ha under piloted Assisted Natural Regeneration, and more than 7,000 socio-economically valuable tree species planted in the surrounding areas**.**	3.1. 10 community tree nurseries established and self-managed by groups of at least 10 members (at least 50% women and 50% youth) in 10 villages (Project milestones: 5 in year 1, 10 in year 2, 10 in year 3) with replication potentialized through exchange visits with other 15 villages. 3.2. 100 ha of degraded or converted ecosystems under active restoration by project end (Project milestones: 25 in year 1, 50 in year 2, 100 in year 3) **[DI-D12]** 3.3. 10 ha of degraded or converted ecosystems under piloted Assisted Natural Regeneration by project end (Project milestones: 10 in year, with maintenance and monitoring of success in Y2 and Y3) **[DI-D12]** 3.4. Advocacy conducted to integrate community tree nurseries into annual reforestation campaigns, contributing to their sustainability as businesses.	3.1. Photos, tree nursery inventories, survival rate records. 3.2. Satellite imagery (compared with participatory mapping of areas under restoration on the ground). 3.3. Satellite imagery (compared with participatory mapping of areas under restoration on the ground). 3.4. Agreement signed with CFZ on supplying national reforestation campaigns with trees coming from the Bero adjacent nurseries	There are no major climatic events influencing plant mortality in the nursery or after active restoration. Fires are not a limiting factor, and fire management (including early fires and firebreaks) in restoration areas is considered in the restoration management costs per hectare and is annually ensured in sensitive areas. Communities maintain an interest in cash crop cultivation within agroforestry systems
Output 4: Increased awareness of 2,500 community members on the ecosystem services provided by Mount Béro through participatory analysis and educational programs**.**	4.1. Ecosystem Service Site-Based Assessment and associated knowledge products published and endorsed (by the Nzérékoré Forest Center) by project end [DI-C01] 4.2. 1,500 beneficiaries (at least 50% of women and 50% youth) with increased awareness of the value of ecosystem services provided by Mount Béro forest by the end of year 2. 4.3. 25 teachers trained in integrating forest conservation into school curriculum reporting to have used the new approach to at least 1,000 pupils by the end of the project **[DI-A05]**	4.1. Ecosystem Service Site-Based Assessment report, progress report and Nzérékoré Forest Center endorsement letter and any other means of endorsement e.g., preamble from prefectural authority 4.2. Surveys before and after participatory TESSA (Toolkit for Ecosystem Service Site Based Assessment) implementation demonstrating a change in perception on the value of ecosystem services provided by Mount Béro forest. 4.3. Training course reports (age and gender-disaggregated data) with post course 6-months surveys (using mobile social platform).	The targeted beneficiaries will actively participate in and respond positively to the awareness-raising activities, resulting in increased awareness of ecosystem services. The new approach to integrating forest conservation into the school curriculum will be well-received by the teachers.

Output 5: Success stories and evidence-based interventions on ecosystem services preservation support private sector offsetting strategy roll out and are widely disseminated in the Guinée Forestière region and the wider Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA) biodiversity hotspot**.**	5.1. Forest Service online database established and accessible, capturing reports/assessments from Private Sectors/NGO sourced resources/data with protocol established for systematic upload (Project milestones: database established in year 1, 20 reports available in year 2, 30 in year 3) **[DI-C16]** 5.2. Annual webinars for conservation stakeholders of active local and international NGO and other conservation stakeholders operating in the Guinée Forestière region with over 20 attendees (50% women) **[DI-C13]** 5.3. Project lessons shared with stakeholders active in the Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA) hotspot in the margins of at least 1 regional event (side-event). 5.4. Results from TESSA studies shared with at least one private sector company active in Guinee Forestiere to inform offset investment priorities for sustaining and improving ecosystem services supply. 5.5. Social Media presence with over 3,000 engagement per year **[DI-C12]** 5.6. Number of Media related activities, including articles, audio-visual, and news report (Project milestones: 5 in year 1, 2 in year 2, 5 in year 3) **[DI-C15]**	5.1. Forest Service online database link 5.2. Webinars records, attendees list disaggregated by gender and types of stakeholders (baseline scoping of stakeholders to be refined at project start). 5.3. Event report, outreach material. 5.4. Advocacy outcomes on private sector offset strategy. 5.5. Social media impressions per platform. 5.6. References, links, impressions, click through rates.	Stakeholders, including private sectors and NGOs, will actively participate by submitting their reports and data to the dedicated database. The webinars, which will attract over 20 attendees, ensuring a substantial audience and participation, will provide valuable knowledge sharing, capacity building, and networking opportunities for conservation stakeholders

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)

0.1 Implement mainstream activities
0.1.1 Launch the project in the Guinée Forestière region.
0.1.2 Realise the baseline and EOP socio-economical surveys oin the targeted villages.
0.1.3 Support utilisation of the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) to inform and guide patrolling activities and monitor efforts with the conservation management authorities.
0.1.4 Implement the Integrated Management Effective Tool at EOP.

Output 1. Multi-Stakeholder Engagement and Governance Structure for Béro Classified Forest are secured, including the engagement of 250 representatives (30% women and youth) from 10 adjacent communities.

1.1 Creation/Strengthening and Formalization of Community Advisory Committees and Management Council
1.1.1 Select representatives from 25 villages through participatory processes to form community advisory committees.
1.1.2 Provide training and support to committee members regarding their roles and responsibilities.
1.1.3 Establish formal structures and procedures for committee operations.
1.1.4 Facilitate regular exchanges and discussions among committee members and project stakeholders.
1.2.1 Establish a Management Council with representation from the 25 community advisory committees.
1.2.2 Formalize the Community Advisory Committees and Management Council.
1.3 Creation of a Steering Committee:
1.3.1 Develop a proposal outlining the committee's mandate, composition, and responsibilities.
1.3.2 Advocate for the implementation of the steering committee.
1.3.3 Facilitate the establishment of the steering committee.

Output 2. Sustainable agriculture livelihood interventions implemented in 10 adjacent villages benefitting 1,500 people, while facilitating knowledge transfer and capacity building to extend these sustainable practices beyond the targeted villages.

2.1 Conduct an agricultural assessment involving local actors in rural development.

2.2 Transfer appropriate agricultural technologies, potentially with support from organizations like Fauna & Flora/GRET already involved in neighbouring landscape (10-year experience in the Ziama Classified Forest).

2.3 Develop manuals to guide sustainable agricultural practices.

2.4 Train project technicians, rural extension workers, and community promoters from 10 villages to disseminate knowledge.

2.5 Provide basic support in agroecology, small-scale livestock farming, and agroforestry to the 10 villages.

Output 3. 100 ha of degraded areas in Mount Béro Classified Forest and in direct periphery (within the buffer zone) actively restored using native/endemic trees, 10 ha under piloted Assisted Natural Regeneration, and more than 7,000 socio-economically valuable tree species planted in the surrounding areas.

3.1 Collaborate with local communities and forest services to establish nurseries using native/endemic tree species and socio-economically valuable species (This includes participatory exercices for seed collection.).

3.2 Conduct mapping exercises to identify potential areas for restoration, involving and seeking buy-in from local communities.

3.3 Promote collaborative plantation initiatives involving forest services and communities.

3.4 Distribute and support planting more than tree species of socio-economic value (providing timber, fruits, medicinal properties, or other benefits to local communities) in the surrounding areas.

3.5 Develop mechanisms for ongoing monitoring of restored areas and planted trees beyond the project duration (post-planting care, including regular maintenance activities such as watering, weeding, and protection from pests and diseases).

3.6 Documenting the entire restoration process, including activities undertaken, challenges faced, and lessons learned.

3.7 Conduct advocacy with Ministry and CFZ to have community tree nurseries as suppliers of annual reforestation campaigns

Output 4. Increased awareness of 7,500 community members on the ecosystem services provided by Mount Béro through participatory analysis and educational programs.

4.1 Rolling-out the Toolkit for Ecosystem Service Site-Based Assessment (TESSA).

4.1.1 Collect locally relevant data to generate information on ecosystem service (ES) values.

4.1.2 Publish the main TESSA study and associated knowledge products e.g., links between forest management practices and specific ES

4.2 Promote the TESSA study as an awareness tool for adult populations.

4.3 Support Education Sector and Capacity Building:

4.3.1 Collaborate with the INRA to integrate conservation aspects into regular school subjects.

4.3.2 Build capacity of teachers to enhance their understanding of forest conservation and its integration into the curriculum.

Output 5. Success stories and evidence-based interventions on ecosystem services preservation support private sector offsetting strategy roll out and are widely disseminated in the Guinée Forestière region and the wider Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA) biodiversity hotspot.

5.1 Establish an online tool hosted by CFZ, supporting its capitalisation and developing a protocol for systematic upload of reports and assessments to ensure consistency and accessibility.

5.2 Organize annual webinars specifically targeted at conservation stakeholders operating in the Guinée Forestière region.

5.3 Share project lessons and best practices at local/national events (including through targeted advocacy meetings) and with stakeholders active in the GFWA hotspot through side-events at regional events.

5.4 Share TESSA results on priorities for sustaining and improving ecosystem services supply and provision to private company active in the area.

5.5 Ensure social media presence to engage with a wide audience regularly sharing updates, success stories, evidence-based interventions.

5.6 Engage with media outlets to share project achievements/stories, publish articles, create audio-visual content, and produce news reports.

Table 2 Publications (see annex 4)

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
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?	Yes
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	Yes
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.	No
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.	Yes
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.	To be developed
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	Yes
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Yes
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	