

Darwin Initiative Capability & Capacity: Final 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: no later than 3 months after agreed end date.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	DARCC024
Project title	Strengthening Local Partner Capacity For Effective Biodiversity and Poverty Interventions
Country(ies)	Zambia
Lead Organisation	Action Against Hunger
Project partner(s)	Kaluli Development Foundation (KDF), Environment Africa Zambia (EAZ) and Conservation Farming Unit (CFU)
Darwin Initiative grant value	£195,000
Start/end dates of project	1/04/2023 to 30/06/2024
Project Leader's name	Carmin O'Neal
Project website/blog/social media	Twitter: https://twitter.com/ACFinZambia Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ACFinZambia
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1 Project Summary

This project addressed the capacity challenges faced by three Zambian local organisations operating within the Zambezi Kafue Watershed, namely, Kaluli Development Foundation (KDF), Environment Africa Zambia (EAZ), and Conservation Farming Unit (CFU). These organisations struggled with inadequate systems and tools for effective project management, data collection, storage, analysis, and reporting before this project was implemented. By enhancing their capabilities, the project empowered them to design and implement high-impact projects that contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable agricultural livelihoods.

The project strengthened the core functions of local organisations in the areas of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), project management, procurement, human resources, financial management, and resource mobilisation. By building these capacities, local organisations are now better equipped to manage and execute projects with significant positive impacts on biodiversity conservation, as evidenced through their improved reporting and capacity to conduct surveys as

shown in the attached baseline and endline reports. Additionally, they are positioned to formulate robust proposals to attract substantial funding for larger-scale initiatives for biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction, enabling them to implement interventions that are both evidence-based and high-impact.

The project conducted community awareness campaigns aimed at increasing knowledge about biodiversity conservation, Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), and climate change adaptation in targeted communities

1.1 The biodiversity challenges and human development and wellbeing challenges

- Lack of awareness on importance of biodiversity conservation and IWRM.
- Lack of Community preparedness to withstand the adverse effects of climate change such as droughts and floods.
- Over-exploitation of natural resources as a means of economic empowerment by Communities engaging into unsustainable practices such as deforestation, contributing to depletion of valuable natural resources in the Zambezi watershed.

1.2 Problems Identification

Several methods were used to identify the problems. In terms of coming up with solutions that are responsive to address the gaps that the Local Non-Governmental Organisations (LNGOs) were facing, Action Against Hunger assessed and identified the gaps that Environment Africa (EA) was facing, which informed the project design. It was established that EA needed capacity building in Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), Project Management and design, overall system strengthening such as procurement, Human Resource and Financial Management. For the additional two LNGOs that were not assessed prior to the program design, a rigorous process of assessment was done, as detailed in section 2.4 on local partner selection.

In addition, at the project inception, a baseline survey was conducted to inform the focus of the interventions and to assess the prevailing challenges within the Zambezi watershed. The baseline process included data collection from communities (adult and children representatives) around the watershed and incorporated Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Water Resource Management Authority (WARMA), Forestry Departments (FD), Cooperatives, Traditional leadership, and other relevant stakeholders at national, provincial, and district levels. The baseline survey also made use of secondary data from past studies of similar nature to complement the findings from the primary data sources.

Furthermore, the targeted communities underwent a knowledge assessment prior to the awareness campaigns in biodiversity conservation, Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), and Risk Reduction Strategies. The idea was to leverage the indigenous knowledge of the community and develop solutions that are not alien to the lifestyles of the communities.

1.3 Project Location.

The project was implemented across eight districts in the Western and Southern Provinces of Zambia in Mwandi, Sesheke, Kazungula, Sioma,imba, Shangombo, Sioma, and Livingstone located along the Zambezi-Kafue Watershed. The locations were strategically chosen to maximise the project's impact on biodiversity conservation, and community resilience. The project areas are well presented as shown in the maps in **Annex 5**.

2 Project Partnerships

The project demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering collaboration among all Partners and key stakeholders. This collaborative approach was central to the project's strategy, involving various host country institutions, including government Ministries, local NGOs and international organisations. By partnering with Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) who supported with technical expertise on irrigation system set up, the project was able to enhance the capacity of the three LNGO's in sustainable agriculture practices. Partnerships were managed and maintained through ongoing engagement during implementation, whereby regular interactions and consultations with the three selected LNGO facilitated feedback and engagement among key stakeholders in decision-making processes. For instance, the identification of training needs and the development of project proposals were done collaboratively with the MoA, local partners, and the communities. The project enabled opportunities for cross-learning across participating organisations, which encouraged knowledge exchange and partnership for future collaborations.

Additionally, the project collaborated with other key stakeholders such as the Water Resource Management Authority (WARMA) and Forestry Departments to integrate biodiversity conservation and climate resilience strategies into local NGO operations. These partnerships helped to align project activities with national priorities and leverage existing resources and expertise.

The project also engaged international organisations, such as the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT), to provide advanced technical support and resources for implementing high-impact interventions. This collaboration resulted in the successful setup of mechanised solar-powered irrigation systems, enhancing the sustainability and effectiveness of agricultural practices in the targeted areas.

Overall, the project's collaborative approach ensured that local NGOs were well-supported and equipped to deliver impactful biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction programmes, fostering long-term partnerships and sustainable development.

2.1 Demand Driven Partnership

The partnerships were based on the demand from the host Country. The project design made consultations with Government, LNGOs, and conducted desk reviews to direct the project formulation.

The implementation has continued engaging various partners such as UN Agencies, donor communities, International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO), Government line Ministries and local leaderships.

The project inception workshop brought together various stakeholders including Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United National Development Program (UNDP), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), International Federation for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Worldwide Federation (WWF), and government representatives, who have been key in the implementation of the project, leveraging on the different synergies that have forged joint resources mobilisation and ACF participate in national technical working groups refer to Annex 7.

The Government of Zambia played a critical role in this intervention. It recommended the LNGOs that could be relevant to the program during partner selection. The Government through the MoA worked with ACF, LNGO and beneficiary households to identify and implement participatory climate-resilient food systems, livelihoods, services, and markets in the Zambezi-Kafue watershed communities.

Government continues to provide endorsements for resource mobilisation to scale up the interventions, citing some of the benefits, lessons learnt and best practices that the project brought forth even after project cycle.

2.2 The beneficiaries Involvement

The beneficiaries were at the core of the program, which contributed to successful project implementation. The baseline survey conducted gave insights on biodiversity changes that informed the decision making to refine the implementation. The feedback was incorporated to formulate awareness campaign materials and guided the design of some strategies for the program for instance

2.3 Roles of the Local Partners & Participatory Reporting

The local partners took responsibility to conduct baseline survey at community level to understand the ecosystem and the human element of the communities living in the watersheds and disseminated the findings to the stakeholders. They generated updated maps with watersheds and prepared reports from the baseline and mid-term reviews they conducted.

The local partners have been at the core of community mobilisation and conducting awareness campaigns on biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction strategies. Refer to Annex 12 Report on awareness campaigns.

The three LNGOs have been involved in the reporting and most of the content from this and previous reports have been an amalgamation of local partners works and individual reports. This report was shared for their review before submission to Defra.

2.4 Achievements, lessons, strengths or challenges with the partnerships

ACF continues to work closely with the Local partners and has gone further to work closely with other LNGO within the project areas for cross learning, and harmonization of the activities. During survey findings information dissemination, other local partners, government, private sector in the project areas were brought together, so that they could benefit from the information and provide feedback on the findings for incorporation. This improved the quality of the final reports, enhanced the ownership as well as appreciation and utilization of the data.

ACF engages the British High Commission in Zambia as a key partner for poverty reduction. They were invited to the launch of Darwin project and the project team sustained engagements through email communication. Additionally, Chief Executive Officer for ACF, Dr. Charles Owubah met with the Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Sam Waldok – UK/FCDO to continue strengthening ties on policy matters aimed at addressing poverty in Zambia.

For additional information on achievements refer to section 3, also section 4.3 and 4.5 on achievements and lessons learnt are on section 6.

2.5 Challenges

- **Variability in Baseline Capacity Across LNGOs:** The three partner organisations started from different levels of institutional maturity, especially in financial systems and programme design experience. This entailed that more time was required to tailor capacity building needs
- **Short Project Duration Limited Deep Institutional Change:** Although the project successfully introduced tools and systems (finance, M&E, HR, safeguarding), deeper institutional adoption particularly behaviour and cultural change requires more time. Board approvals, internal staff buy-in, and procedural integration stretched beyond the available timeline. Therefore, full internalisation of changes and full adoption of the policies is undergoing endorsements by the board.
- **Staff Capacity and Workload Constraints in Partner NGOs:** The competing needs from local partners sometimes come into play because the staff that the local partners have are also responsible for other day to day tasks of the Organisations, though not common but sometimes their human resources are stretched across the different demands, especially that the project spread across a wider coverage of eight district for a thin budget. To resolve this, each local partner had to attach one dedicated staff to this project and the tailored mentoring and flexible delivery schedules helped, but future efforts may need to fund temporary technical assistance to support implementation of complex systems.

- **Difficulty in Demonstrating Immediate Outcome-Level Change:** The core project outcome of organisations being “enabled to deliver large-scale biodiversity-poverty programmes” requires more than a single year to fully materialise, particularly in terms of securing funding and implementing large proposals. This design of the outcome aligning to the project duration was over-ambitious, while technical capacity improved and proposals were submitted, longer-term follow-up is needed to track actual delivery and impact.

2.6 Local Partner Selection

To facilitate the selection process for the local partner, the process started with mapping of local NGOs in general. A letter to request for a list was written to the Government, the Ministry of Community Development that is responsible for registration of LNGOs on the 4th of May 2023.

After the list was obtained, some parameters were set up to guide the shortlist for the Darwin Project. The focus at this stage was to select all the LNGO that were focused on biodiversity and climate change with presence along our project targeted areas, the Zambezi Watershed. A total of 16 LNGO was pulled out of the list based on these area perimeters. Thereafter, an invitation for EOI was sent out to the 16 NGO on 24th May, 2023, with 31st May as the deadline for submission of EOI.

Out of the 16 invitations sent out, 10 LNGOs responded as shown in Annex 6. Based on the company profile that the 10 LNGOs submitted, the analysis was done in line with relevance of the activities that the project envisaged to carry out.

With the analysis, the list came down to 4 NGOs (refer to table and comments) that were subjected to due diligence. The due diligence was conducted by administering a questionnaire with attached responses for the 4 companies shortlisted namely Bulimi, Green Earth (BGE), Kaluli Development Foundation (KDF) and Conservation Farming Unit (CFU).

The main assessment was based on provision of Administrative Documentation Checklist and secondly on adequately providing answers to the questionnaires. Even though capacity was to be built, the local partners had to show some level of systems being in place that could be strengthened. For instance, they needed to have a Board in place for good Governance. Based on that, the ranking was as follows from highest to the lowest, 1st Kaluli Development Foundation, 2nd Conservation Farming Unit, 3rd Bulimi and 4th Green Earth. The target for the project was to build the capacity of three Local Partners, and one local partner was pre-selected at project design stage, to understand the capacity that potentially Local NGOs face and incorporate them in the initial project design.

From the shortlist, only two local partners were to be selected, and the final selection was passed over to the Regional Office and Headquarters to finalise to enhance transparency. The Regional Office working with Headquarters made final recommendations for the KDF and CFU. Thereafter, the collaboration agreements were prepared outlining the different activities and responsibilities of ACF and that of the local partners, after review they both parties signed. [Attached is the Letter to Government, Due diligence questionnaire, photos of training in the links\).](#)

3 Project Achievements

3.1 Outputs

Overall, the project successfully achieved its three intended Outputs as defined in the project design, using the SMART indicators and outcomes proposed. The baseline condition showed limited organisational capability across financial, HR, and programmatic systems within the three Local NGOs (LNGOs). Tangible progress that were recorded includes in each capacity area, validated through policy updates, pre/post-training assessments, audited financial systems, and independently developed funding proposals. These achievements indicate a positive trajectory towards achieving the project's objectives.

Output 1: Training for local organizations on operational and technical knowledge that will empower them to implement projects that help communities in watershed areas.

At baseline condition, the three LNGOs had limited capacity in project management, proposal development and securing donor funding. They lacked comprehensive systems and tools for effective project management, data collection, storage, analysis and reporting. Change recorded: The project provided extensive training and mentoring in project lifecycle management, proposal development and budgeting. This included workshops on self-assessment objective setting, project planning. As a result, all three LNGOs have developed and submitted more than comprehensive project proposal incorporating Theory of change and logical framework with biodiversity and food security outcomes Annex 21 N and 7. This is evidenced by;

- **Training Logs and Attendance:** Documented evidence of training sessions conducted, including attendance logs and training materials (Annex 13).
- **Submitted Proposals:** Examples of proposals submitted to various donors, such as the Climate Clean Air Coalition and Darwin Initiative Main Round 31 (Annex 14).
- **Pre/Post Training Assessments:** Assessments showing an average 76% increase in technical knowledge among participants (Annex 14).

Indicators of Success:

- **Indicator 1.1:** Local NGOs develop at least one comprehensive project proposal with biodiversity and food security outcomes.
 - Achieved: All three local NGOs developed and submitted proposals, with several securing funding.
- **Indicator 1.2:** Local NGOs update their internal policies including safeguarding and operational manuals to support project design and implementation.
 - Achieved: Updated institutional policies, such as HR manuals and safeguarding policies, were adopted (Annex 17).

Problems & Resolutions;

Staff overload due to limited human resources at partner organisations was resolved by attaching a dedicated focal point to the Darwin project.

Low policy baseline required an initial deep-dive diagnostic before training material development, extending the training phase.

Output 2: Local organisations empowered with functional tools for operations like accounting system, HR system and M&E data collection system.

At baseline condition, the three Local NGOs had inadequate internal systems for finance, HR, M&E, and procurement, limiting their ability to manage large-scale projects. Partners were using basic tools (mostly spreadsheets), with no automated systems or documented procurement/Human Resources processes. There was no structured data collection architecture.

Change Recorded: The project strengthened the core functions of local NGOs by developing and implementing functional tools for operations. This included training in finance system management, HR policy development, and M&E integration with data collection tools.

Three LNGOs were empowered with functional tools for operations in accounting system, HR system and M&E data collection system. The three LNGOs now operate with functional, locally-tailored policies in finance, HR, procurement, and safeguarding. Organisations now conduct baseline/endline surveys independently, using digital tools and generating maps for reporting. Support was provided for the development of visual reports to share project progress with stakeholders. Finance teams successfully completed a budgeting workshop and now generate full annual budgets using new templates.

Evidence:

- **Budgeting Tools:** Developed budget templates and annual budget drafts (Annex 21).

- **M&E Tools:** Use of KoboToolbox for digital data collection and QGIS for spatial mapping (Annex 13).
- **Quarterly Financial Reports:** Financial reports prepared and submitted by local partners (Annex 21K).

Indicators of Success

- **Indicator 2.1:** Local NGOs are able to prepare comprehensive budgets and record accounting transactions that can be audited.
 - Achieved: Local NGOs successfully prepared donor-aligned budgets and risk registers.
- **Indicator 2.2:** Local NGOs have simple and easy-to-use HR systems including recording of staff time, leave tracking, and payroll processing.
 - Achieved: Updated HR manuals and staff tracking systems were adopted (Annex 4).
- **Indicator 2.3:** Local NGOs have comprehensive data collection tools that help in setting up baseline surveys and community registration.
 - Achieved: Baseline and endline assessments conducted using KoboToolbox and QGIS (Annex 9 & 10).

Problems & Resolutions

Software costs made full adoption of enterprise-level systems unsustainable; we adapted by enhancing current systems with modular templates and free tools, Kobo, and GIS.

Connectivity issues in rural areas were mitigated by using offline-compatible tools like KoboCollect and manual syncing.

Output 3: Enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Practices

At baseline Condition the three LNGOs had limited capacity in monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, affecting their ability to track project progress and impact. They did not have dedicated M&E frameworks or tools. Reporting was largely anecdotal or donor dependent.

Change Recorded: The project enhanced the M&E capabilities of local NGOs by training them in M&E integration with data collection tools and developing standardized tools for survey planning, indicator tracking, and data analysis.

Evidence:

- **M&E Tools:** Use of KoboToolbox for digital data collection and QGIS for spatial mapping (Annex 13).
- **Baseline and Endline Reports:** Reports showing the progress and impact of interventions (Annex 9 & 10).
- **Quarterly Financial Reports:** Financial reports prepared and submitted by local partners (Annex 21K).

Indicators of Success:

- **Indicator 3.1:** Increased financial capability among local organizations, as evidenced by the successful development and utilization of comprehensive budget templates and project budgets.
 - Achieved: Local NGOs developed and utilized comprehensive budget templates (Annex 21).
- **Indicator 3.2:** Enhanced financial transparency and accountability within local organizations, demonstrated by proficient use of the finance system for recording auditable accounting transactions.

- Achieved: Financial reports prepared and submitted by local partners (Annex 21K).
- **Indicator 3.3:** Trained local organizations on HR systems and implemented HR systems for staff time recording, leave tracking, and payroll processing.
 - Achieved: Updated HR manuals and staff tracking systems were adopted (Annex 4).
- **Indicator 3.4:** Improved data management and decision-making capabilities within local organizations, as indicated by the successful integration of M&E systems with comprehensive data collection tools.
 - Achieved: Baseline and endline assessments conducted using KoboToolbox and QGIS (Annex 9 & 10).

Problems & Resolutions:

Lack of a unified M&E culture was tackled through intensive coaching and involving partner staff in tool development.

3.2 Outcome

The project successfully achieved its intended outcomes of enabling LNGOs to design and deliver biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction programs in the watershed communities of Zambia. Through targeted capacity-building initiatives, LNGOs now have the knowledge, skills, and internal capacity required to implement effective conservation and restoration programs. The project's approach to training and hands-on involvement in developing large-scale program proposals has empowered LNGOs, positioning them to lead future initiatives sustainably refer to Activity 1.8 for more details

The key evidence supporting the achievement of the project outcome is summarized below, referenced against the original indicators of success:

Outcome Indicator 1: LNGOs have knowledge on conservation and restoration approaches ideal for watersheds.

Baseline Condition: Prior to the project, LNGOs had limited knowledge of watershed-specific conservation and restoration approaches.

Progress to Date: The LNGOs have significantly increased their understanding of these approaches through workshops and on-the-ground training sessions. Evidence includes:

- Participation in 3 capacity-building workshops. These workshops covered ecosystem restoration, soil management, and community-based conservation strategies (Annex 14: Training Agendas and Attendance Logs).
- Development of detailed watershed maps. These maps were created using QGIS and were used to inform new project proposals (Annex 13: Tool Outputs)
- Successful completion of training on ecosystem restoration practices, soil management, and community-based conservation strategies (Annex 14: Assessment Summary).
- Integration of practices in new project proposals. The LNGOs integrated these practices into new project proposals developed during the project period (Annex 7).

Outcome Indicator 2: The LNGOs have sufficient internal capacity in Finance, HR, M&E, and programs to implement large-scale programs (over £100,000).

Baseline Condition: Limited internal operational capacity among local partners at the start of the project, with no prior experience managing large-scale projects.

Progress to Date: The LNGOs now demonstrate improved organizational capacity, particularly in financial management, human resources, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Evidence includes;

- **Development of Internal Systems for Finance, HR, M&E, and Procurement:** LNGOs adopted updated HR manuals, financial management systems, and M&E tools (Annex 4: Policy Snapshots).

- **Creation of Donor-Aligned Budgets and Risk Registers:** LNGOs developed and utilized comprehensive budget templates and risk registers (Annex 21: Budget & Risk Tools).
- **Submission of Funding Proposals for Large-Scale Projects:** Each LNGO submitted at least one funding proposal for over £100,000 to international donors, demonstrating readiness to lead complex projects (Annex 7).
- **Conducting Surveys Using KoboToolbox and QGIS:** M&E teams now use these tools for geospatial planning and data collection (Annex 13: Tool Outputs).

Challenge encountered; **Limited Initial Capacity to Use Advanced M&E Tools:** Intensive training and continuous support ensured successful integration and use of M&E tools.

3.3 Monitoring of assumptions

The project assumptions were closely monitored throughout the project's duration, with regular assessments conducted to ensure that the critical conditions remained valid and effective mitigation measures were implemented where necessary. The monitoring of these assumptions was integral to addressing risks and ensuring that the project stayed on course to achieve its outcomes. The pathway to change been held true. The assumptions have generally supported the intended project outcomes, leading to progress in both biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction.

Assumption 1: Close working relationship with local provincial and district administration in respective watersheds.

Regular meetings, consultations, and joint planning sessions helped ensure that project activities aligned with local government priorities. However, occasional challenges arose due to bureaucratic processes and differing priorities, which required ongoing communication and negotiation to maintain effective partnerships. These challenges were anticipated in the original assumptions and were managed through targeted discussions and increased flexibility in project timelines.

Assumption 2: Acceptance from communities where organizations will be operating.

Community acceptance has been strong overall, with widespread support for the project. Evidence includes high participation in community consultations, decision-making processes, and awareness-raising activities. These efforts fostered a sense of ownership among community members. However, some resistance and skepticism were encountered in isolated cases, primarily due to misunderstandings about the project's goals. This was managed through targeted engagement efforts, focusing on dialogue and trust-building initiatives to address community concerns. The participatory approach reinforced community buy-in and ensured that any resistance was effectively mitigated.

Assumption 3: Participation of key government actors like the Forest and Wildlife Department and Energy Regulatory Board with local organizations.

Collaboration agreements were established early in the project to formalize partnerships, delineate roles and responsibilities, and ensure consistent government support. Regular meetings and joint planning sessions facilitated strong coordination between the project and government institutions, ensuring alignment of efforts.

Assumption 4: Participation of and endorsement from traditional leadership, such as the Barotseland Royal Establishment.

The endorsement and active participation of local chiefs such as the mukuni chiefdom in southern province and the Barotseland Royal Establishment in western province were instrumental in securing community trust and access to resources. Regular consultations and respectful engagement with traditional authorities have ensured their continued involvement. This has been

a critical factor in the project's ability to work effectively within the communities and sustain long-term impacts. Traditional leaders helped mediate community discussions and endorse conservation practices, leading to greater acceptance and participation from residents.

Overall Impact on Biodiversity and Poverty Reduction

The monitoring of assumptions played a key role in achieving the desired project outcomes, particularly in fostering collaboration between local communities, government, and traditional leaders. Over 4,738 community members have a better understanding of climate change, ecosystem health, and sustainable livelihood alternatives. Additionally, conservation farming techniques, smart agriculture practices, and improved knowledge of ecosystem connectivity have been successfully implemented. The LNGOs are now equipped with the skills and tools necessary to lead future initiatives and collaborate with external partners.

Through stakeholder engagement, workshops, and cross-sectoral collaboration, the project has created lasting impacts, improving food security, livelihoods, and ecosystem resilience in the watershed communities. The success of these interventions, supported by the validity of the original assumptions, indicates that the project has achieved its intended outcomes and paved the way for continued progress.

4 Contribution to Darwin Initiative Programme Objectives

4.1 Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

This capacity is contributing immensely to restoring Zambia's Zambezi watershed and Kafue watershed making up part of the Kavango Zambezi Trans-frontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA). The project strongly contributed to the Nationally Determined Contribution of Zambia to the Paris Agreement on climate change. The project has built the capacity and capability of local organizations that jointly work with communities living around the Zambia's Kafue and Zambezi watersheds to implement seamlessly poverty eradication measures and food systems that are climate resilient, less wasteful, less environmentally destructive and less carbon-intensive through training and demonstration. The impact is that the organization is contributing to the communities' pursuit of sustainable conservation and restoration approaches that are adding to the watershed ecosystems thriving as natural and managed ecosystems benefiting from the local organizations' strong capabilities technically, supported by strong systems of project management, data collection, analysis and reporting, strong automated financial management, procurement and operational systems. Environment Africa (EA), Conservation Farming Unit (CFU) and Kaluli Development Foundation (KDF) have had their capacity boasted to actually implement climate resilient food systems, livelihoods and markets thereby contributing significantly and directly to seven Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs) specifically Goals (1) no poverty, (2) zero hunger, (3) good health and well-being, (7) affordable and clean energy, (8) decent work and economic growth, (10) reduced inequality, (13) climate action.

The capability and work of the LNGOs is contributing to the Zambia National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) developed in 1997 after Zambia ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1993. The NBSAP identifies Zambia priorities, potential and constraints and identifies opportunities for donor support in the conservation and management of the country's biodiversity. The plan recognised over 600,000 households depended directly on Zambia's biodiversity for their livelihoods. The number has grown since. The dependence of Biodiversity along the Kavango Zambezi Trans-frontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) section of Zambia is evident on the highways given the huge number of trucks ferrying wood for timber and biomass inform of charcoal.

4.2 Project support to biodiversity conservation and multidimensional poverty reduction

This project did not deliver direct poverty reduction outcomes, but indirectly contributed to long-term poverty reduction efforts by strengthening the ability of three LNGOs to design and deliver community-led programmes that integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

Through training in proposal development, project lifecycle planning, and use of M&E tools, LNGOs gained the skills to plan interventions that address multidimensional poverty, including food insecurity, ecosystem degradation, and climate vulnerability. All three LNGOs have since initiated or scaled up demonstration plots and 4,738 farmer engagement activities focusing promoting sustainable conservation and restoration approaches under separate, complementary funding, as a result of appreciation of the importance of the biodiversity conservation. These activities, while outside the direct scope of the Darwin project, reflect the application of capacity gained and demonstrate the potential for indirect, long-term impact on poverty in the watershed areas.

The LNGOs had their capacities strengthened in project management, data collection, and sustainable agricultural practices, enabling them to effectively support community-driven conservation and poverty reduction efforts.

4.3 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

This project contributed to gender equality by strengthening the capacity of LNGO staff to apply gender-sensitive approaches in institutional management and project design. A total of 11 staff across the three LNGOs were trained on gender analysis, inclusive leadership, and integrating Zambia’s National Gender Policy into organisational practices. Training materials were adapted from national frameworks and included sessions on identifying and mitigating barriers to women’s participation in programme design and leadership.

The project integrated with other project resources mobilised by LNGOs to deliver direct services such as boreholes or seed inputs, in addition to delivering its core mandate of supporting LNGOs in updating internal policies to reflect gender-sensitive hiring, safeguarding, and representation principles. Gender-disaggregated attendance data shows that 46% of workshop participants were female. Board and leadership structures across the LNGOs showed varying levels of female representation, with two of the three NGOs exceeding 50% female leadership at senior levels.

The project targeted LNGOs staff to create a deep awareness of gender to promote equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities within LNGOs. ACF’s approach actively promoted the inclusion of women, conducting two gender training sessions conducted with the LNGOs. The LNGOs were supported in developing Gender Policies and appointing Gender Ambassadors as peer support to each other. Supporting documentation: Annexes 14, 18.

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board ¹ .	75% of the Project Board is female
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women ² .	CFU Board is led by a woman and is 50% female, but senior leadership is male dominated (33/67%). KDF Board is male dominated 86% and 14% female, but staffing is 50% women in key position EA: The board is female dominated with 71% and 29% male, and senior staffing of 58 female and 42% male

¹ A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

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

	AAH: The Country Director of AAH in Zambia is female and the leadership staff accounts for 53% women. The board of AAH UK is 50% male and 50% female. The executive leadership team of AAH UK is 60% male and 40% female.
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GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	x
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

4.4 Transfer of knowledge

The project sought and actively engaged in knowledge transfer through various training for local LNGOs. The LNGOs also were able to streamline messages on climate change and biodiversity into their routine awareness activities with the communities. The findings of the baseline and endline surveys were always disseminated to the wider public through workshops, emailing the reports, and extracting excerpts for publications. The project aired on radio, climate change messages to broaden the project reach, and had been publishing on social media and print media reaching a wider impact beyond the targeted LNGOs to include Government, communities and stakeholders as indirect beneficiaries. The project also participated in various international learning sharing platform, where it was able to share about the project and learn from other country programs through "Multi-Country Evidence Week".

4.5 Capacity building

The aspect of cross learning was one of the major achievements of this project. By bringing together the three different LNGOs, the project has promoted collaboration among them, encouraging knowledge exchange and partnerships. This collaborative approach has been acknowledged by the LNGOs as a significant benefit. For instance, CFU Program manager, Stanley Silwiimba stated "By connecting CFU with other organizations and individuals working in the same field, thereby contributing to more shared learning and exchange of best practices."

The LNGOs also recognise that the Darwin Initiative has provided financial resources to support the expansion of their operations, enabling them to implement new conservation techniques in water management, food resilient and ecosystems management. As a result, irrigation facilities have been successfully implemented in Zimba and Livingstone demonstrating the tangible impact of the Darwin Initiative.

Being associated with the Darwin Initiative has increased the visibility and recognition of CFU, KDF and EA enhancing their ability to attract additional funding, partnerships and support from other stakeholders interested in conservation and sustainable agriculture.

This increased visibility has also led to high government recognition, evidenced by invitations to participate in national farmer field day activities and being given roles in the 2024 drought response to mobilise communities and distribute relief food to the affected communities.

In terms of exit strategy, the project utilised existing government structures to support the beneficiaries, ensuring continuity at the end of the project cycle. The use of local partners further ensures continuity beyond the project lifecycle, as they have mainstreamed the awareness campaigns and other community activities within their existing programs. The targeted beneficiaries of the Darwin project are within areas of operations of the local partners, ensuring ongoing support and follow-up.

Lastly, the Project worked towards attainment of smooth exit through successful capacity building. This included training and mentoring sessions that equipped the LNGOs with the skills and tools needed to sustain their operations independently. The project's approach to capacity building has laid a strong foundation for future sustainability and long-term impact

5 Monitoring and evaluation

Throughout the life of the project, a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system was implemented to track progress, measure impact, and provide useful feedback to all stakeholders. This system was designed to ensure that the project stayed aligned with its objectives and effectively addressed the needs of the target communities and ecosystems.

Over the course of the project, , iterative adjustments were made to the M&E plan to respond to on-the-ground realities and emerging challenges especially during the drought El Nino situation Zambia faced. For example, some indicators were refined to be more contextually relevant and data collection tools were improved to ensure accurate reporting. The M&E system was both practical and highly useful in providing feedback to partners and stakeholders. By tracking both qualitative and quantitative indicators, it enabled the project team to understand how activities translated into tangible results in biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction. Partners found the M&E system helpful for making evidence-based decisions, adjusting implementation strategies, and showcasing progress during stakeholder meetings.

Each partner played an active role in data collection, analysis, and reporting. This collaborative approach ensured that the M&E system was inclusive and reflected the diversity of local perspectives. While partners contributed equally to the M&E efforts, the project's lead organization took on a coordinating role to ensure consistency across data sets and reporting processes and utilized the DHIS2 system to capture some of the aligned indicators for consistent reporting. Information was shared through regular workshops, reports, and stakeholder meetings. Partners also used visual reports and data presentations to communicate progress and impact to stakeholders, making the information accessible and actionable. s.

6 Lessons learnt

Tailored mentoring, co-development of systems, and peer collaboration proved critical for building sustainable capacity. Open-source tools and ongoing support enabled partners to adopt new systems despite tight timelines.

Tailored Mentoring is More Effective than Standalone Training: Initial capacity assessments revealed distinct organisational gaps across finance, M&E, procurement, and program design. While initial workshops were valuable, ongoing mentoring and on-the-job technical coaching significantly improved learning and adoption this was done for instance as onsite walkthroughs of budgeting templates or policy co-development sessions. For lasting capacity, organisations benefited more from iterative support than one-off sessions.

Co-development Builds Ownership and Sustainability: Policies and systems (finance, HR, safeguarding) were more effectively institutionalised when LNGOs co-developed them with ACF's facilitators, ensuring contextual relevance for each LNGO, because the three NGOs circumstances were not the uniform.

With capacity building, the LNGOs can achieve a lot, in tackling biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction. Having been capacity built in M&E for instance, the local partners proceeded to conduct the baseline survey in the target communities within the watershed area and confidently presented their findings to a large audience of stakeholders.

Cross-NGO Collaboration Strengthens Peer Learning; Bringing together three different LNGOs that had never collaborated before enhanced peer to peer learning, standardisation of tools, and joint problem solving, particularly as was evidenced in successful baseline survey. This strengthened cross-organisational ties also allowed best practices in finance and program management to be shared among themselves. This fostered national level consistency improving coordination for in Country collaboration and minimised duplication.

Facilitate structured cross-learning mechanisms among local partners to improve coordination and consistency in biodiversity and climate-related interventions.

The adoption of **open-source, offline-capable tools** like KoboToolbox and QGIS proved essential for long-term use in low-resource settings. These tools continue to be used post-project and were fully embedded into partners' M&E frameworks through internal training and replication.

The lessons confirm the importance of context-sensitive, participatory capacity building and structured follow-up to support local NGOs in becoming self-reliant leaders of complex environmental programmes.

The streamlining of the project into already existing projects for campaign awareness made it possible for LNGOs to roll out the awareness campaigns effectively reach high numbers of beneficiaries with their existing budget, thereby increasing the Darwin project impact.

While not a direct objective of this capacity-building project, the partnership-driven implementation also resulted in observable benefits at community level. These include increased community awareness of biodiversity conservation through NGO-led campaigns and enhanced trust in local organisations. These outcomes reflect the multiplier effect of strengthened local institutions in delivering grassroots change.

For challenges refer to section 2.5

Recommendations

Operational System Strengthening from the feedback from LNGOs requires more than a 15-Month Window to effectively happen. While the project successfully updated key systems and built significant capacity, partners would have benefitted from more time to institutionalise these changes fully especially in HR systems and safeguarding, which required Board approvals and rollout.

Cautionary note: Capacity-building timelines must account for the administrative processes and pace of LNGOs, especially when aiming for embedded policy change.

Complement formal training with follow-up mentoring and onsite technical assistance for longer-term impact

Put a second component of the project from knowledge to action, where after LNGOs have acquired the knowledge under this Darwin 29, the project would go further to provide support LNGOs to work with the communities to implement the knowledge gained on conservation and biodiversity conservation. In this case the communities are provided with access to the right

smart agriculture tools and equipment such as smart irrigation kits, rippers, drought tolerant seeds, access to finance to consolidate the knowledge gained.

The joint-implementation of the project among four partners was a great learning experience, each partner brought with them great experiences that boosted the project. While ACF has built the capacity of the local partners, the local partners also built the capacity of ACF through an opportunity to manage the three dynamic local partners. ACF design of future programs will not be the same, because of these great lessons through this project.

Provide institutional support to local Government to effectively backstop the projects. Government involvement in the project is key for project institutionalisation in the existing Government structures and smoothens project exit.

Building the learning into the project and future

ACF working with LNGOs designed projects focusing on actionable implementation of solutions to consolidate the knowledge imparted on the Darwin beneficiaries. Opportunities concentrate on access to the technologies to enhance adaptation to climate change and support the reforestation to promote biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction, and some funding have already been secured, among them a GIZ funded project called Climate Resilient Agri-Food Systems Euro 880,071.

The LNGOs appreciated the safeguarding trainings and are keen for the future projects to include safeguarding training for Government institutions that we are working with, as this could not be done under Darwin 29 due to budgetary constraints.

7 Actions taken in response to Annual Report reviews

The report strived to improve on evidence by using qualitative information and attaching various activity reports and links for publications to enhance evidence. The sex disaggregated data has been provided.

Continuously learning and adaptation-The project conducted the second gender training based on the feedback from the LNGOs. Gender focal point persons were appointed, this will enhance safe space for the staff to discuss power dynamic, biasness etc. The focal point persons will play a role of advocacy for colleagues in the organisations, contributing to attainment of gender rights.

The LNGOs were trained in safeguarding and safeguarding policies have been developed. ACF has a safeguarding policy, in ensuring that staff were safe amidst cholera, water and sanitisers were always provided during field visits, but also field visits were minimised and shortened. Staff awareness on cholera was conducted to increase the understanding of the risks.

Community groups were formed as part of exit strategy to oversee some of the project's activities, and these groups will continue after the project for sustainability. The teams are also responsible for management of infrastructure, and a system of raising funds for maintenance of the infrastructure is in place.

Community groups were trained in climate resilience, and they will continue using and sharing the knowledge with others, thereby ensuring smooth exit and continuity. Implementing partners have on going activities in the location as you may notice from the selection criteria of the LNGO. When the project was coming to an end, the local partners were written to informing them of the project closure. Thereafter, a meeting with all relevant stakeholders was called. The implementation also used government existing structures for continuity.

Lastly the close out reports from LNGOs were received. We will continue collaborations in with LNGOs involved, raising resources to scale up and consultation on ACF expansion of a project that is using the unrestricted funding.

8 Sustainability and legacy

The project's sustainability is anchored in the institutionalisation of systems and skills across the three LNGOs. Each partner updated and adopted Finance, HR, Procurement, and Safeguarding policies, now routinely used in their operations. Open-source tools like KoboToolbox and QGIS were embedded into ongoing M&E activities, with trained staff continuing to use them post-

project. Internal capacity is being maintained through a training-of-trainers model and archived resources for onboarding. While submitted proposals (e.g., to the EU and BLF) have yet to be funded, they reflect strengthened capability to attract future funding. All LNGOs are now integrated into provincial coordination platforms, enhancing their visibility and long-term relevance in Zambia's biodiversity and poverty reduction landscape.

The project's social and technical legacy includes improved organisational governance, gender-sensitive practices, and stronger donor readiness. All trained staff remain with the LNGOs and continue to apply the skills gained.

Resources such as laptops and templates remain in use. No major changes were made to the original sustainability strategy; instead, efforts focused on embedding capacity and promoting internal ownership of systems.

9 Darwin Initiative identity

The pop-up materials were made and were being displayed at various functions. The project printed and distributed branded t-shirts to the Government, local partners, and other stakeholders as a way of enhancing project visibility. The project aired on radio, climate change messages to broaden the project reach, and has been publishing on social media and print media.

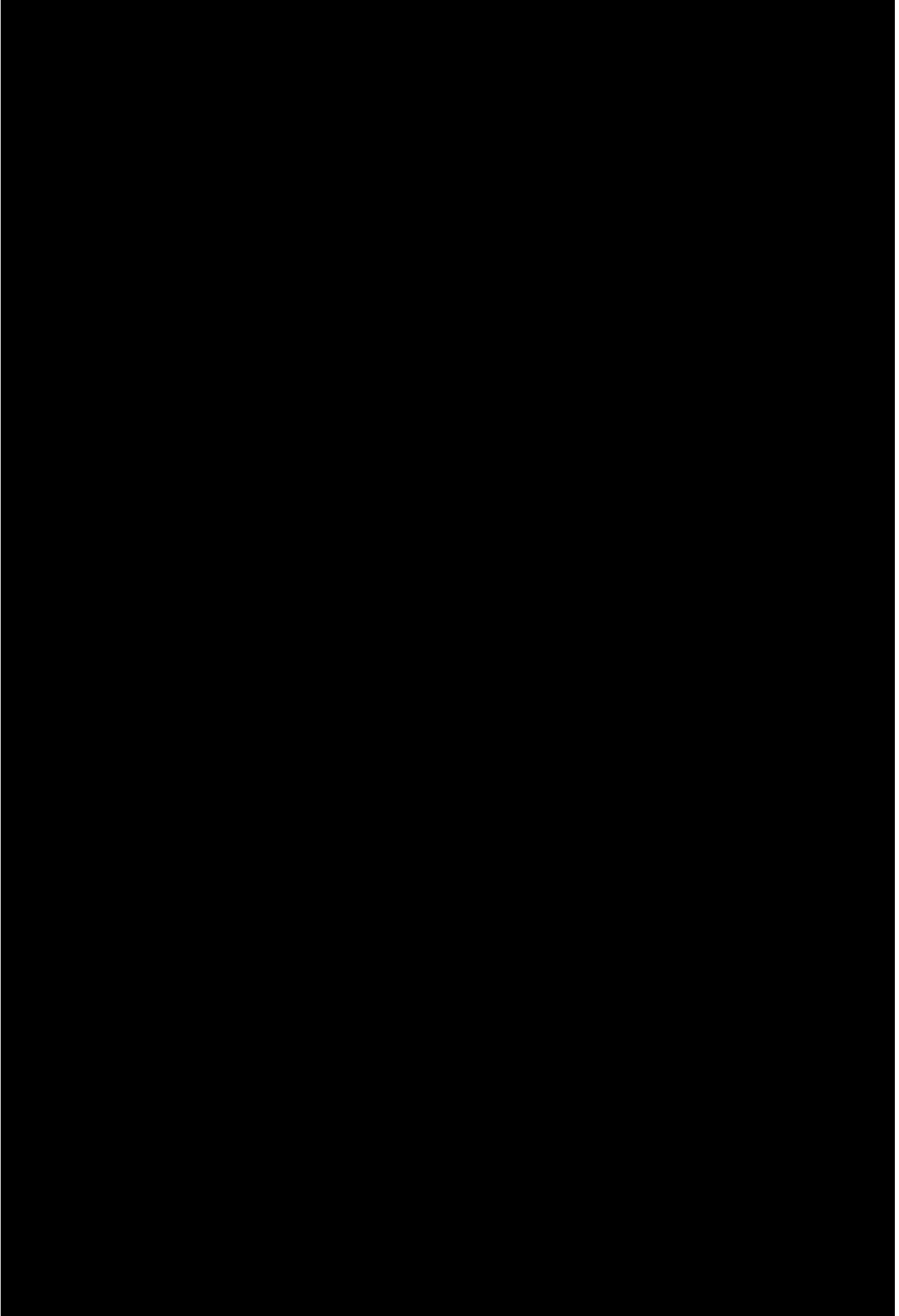
The UK's contribution was always recognised through the placement of logos on the materials, acknowledgement whenever engaging with Government, other donors, and Implementing partners. The project was identified as a distinct it had its own 100 % dedicated staff, it had its own resources dedicated and used specifically for Darwin Initiative. The monthly review meetings were being focusing solely on Darwin Initiative.

10 Risk Management

The Country experienced the worst drought in the last 40 years, with over 6 million people affected and in need of immediate assistance, including communities within the Darwin Project areas. As a coping strategy, people may start over-exploiting natural resources as a coping mechanism. The drought affected the community participation in the awareness campaigns that LNGOs were conducting. The communities started shunning away from the awareness campaign as they spend hours looking for food and water. To preserve the gains of ACF interventions that include Darwin initiative, ACF working with LNGOs and communities responded by abetting the impact slightly through setting up irrigation and back yard gardens as demonstration plots that cushioned the nutritional needs for some targeted communities. The project also reduced the number of hours for the awareness meetings to allow the communities time to cope with the stress of the drought and fend for the food needs.

The country faced a Cholera outbreak that resulted in Government putting up certain measures to curb the spread of the disease. Staff in all institutions had to take measures also to stay safe. Even though this was not part of the project design, it became necessary to take steps. The project incorporated a WASH component to minimise the risks of the spread of cholera and build long term capacity of the local organisations in WASH, because it had potential to affect the implementation of biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction. This was done through awareness messages on hygiene practices, and access to clean water.

11 Safeguarding



12 Finance and administration

12.1 Project expenditure

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2024/25 Grant (£)	2024/25 Total actual Darwin Initiative	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)				
Audit				
TOTAL	£34,192.87	£34,192.94		

Staff employed (Name and position)	Cost (£)
Cynthia Makunka/ACF Project Lead	
Mike Mukuwa/ACF Project Officer	
Enyster Womba/CFU HR Office	
Franklin Banda/CFU Logistics Officer	
Gideon Nyoni/CFU Project Officer	
Namukolo Mubita/CFU Finance Officer	
Oliver Bulaya/CFU Project Lead	
Paul Malambo/CFU MEAL Officer	
Kelvin Songolo/EAZ Project Officer	
Mbumwae Mulundano/EAZ HR Officer	
Mutinta Hamilemba/EAZ MEAL Officer	
Namo Chumo/EAZ Project Lead	
Sarah Nimuyandi/ EAZ Accountant	
Timothy Mumba/EAZ Logistics Officer	

Barbra Saikuba/KDF Accountant	
Gestine Hamuwele/KDF Project Lead	
Mabole Siabulanda/KDF M&E Officer	
Mwalye Chimbala/KDF Logistics Officer	
Prisca Miyoba/KDF HR Officer	
TOTAL	

Capital items – description	Capital items – cost (£)
TOTAL	

Other items – description	Other items – cost (£)
Fuel Gender workshop Senanga team Conferencing towards Gender workshop in Livingstone	
TOTAL	

12.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project	Total (£)
Match fund	
Capacity building in WASH and Nutrition by Regional Experts to Local Partners -estimated	
Government extension support throughout the project life cycle estimated:	
TOTAL	

Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project	Total (£)
GIZ is building on the Darwin Initiative, signed	
TOTAL	

12.3 Value for Money

The project largely covered the watersheds and built the capability of the organization to affect positively community livelihoods, which gradually contributed to the achievement of several SDGs, the overriding impact has contributed to biodiversity conservation.

The project used cost effective methods of implementation, including mainstreaming with other projects to increase the reach for the project enabling us to conduct climate change campaign awareness to over 4,738 beneficiaries within a limited budget, making really the unit cost per beneficiary very low. Furthermore, the Darwin project is being linked to other programs like the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) through our local partner - CFU by supporting beneficiaries in the Darwin location to set up group with a water tank and solar powered kits to support off season farming, using green energy source.

The project laid a strong base for funding to support biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction, ACF making great progress with some donors to scale up Darwin activities through GIZ support with support of Euro [REDACTED]

The project adhered to transparent procurement methods for both the Lead Organisations and its LNGOs in acquiring the project resources, ensuring quality and cost effectiveness.

13 Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

A notable outcome of the capacity-building support was the increased ability of LNGOs to apply participatory, context-specific approaches in their programming. For instance, Kaluli Development Foundation in Sinazongwe, after participating in the project's training on inclusive project planning, applied indigenous knowledge systems in a separate water access intervention. When an initial borehole siting using conventional hydro-mapping failed, the team engaged community elders who guided the identification of a new site using traditional ecological indicators such as ant mound positioning and specific tree species. The subsequent drilling was successful.

This clearly demonstrates how strengthened capacity in stakeholder engagement and locally rooted planning is now being applied by LNGOs in practice, which is one of the intended long-term outcomes of the project.

14 OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

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

The Darwin project exceeded expectations in strengthening institutional systems of grassroots NGOs across the Zambezi-Kafue watershed. It led to tapping into scalable innovations such as solar-irrigated demo plots and evidence-based biodiversity campaigns. Local partners not only updated governance tools but were empowered to independently lead funding proposals—some exceeding \$1 million. These results are a testament to the replicable and sustainable model of building biodiversity and climate leadership at community level.

[Image, Video or Graphic Information:](#)

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption, country and credit	Online accounts to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
Image	Earth Day		https://www.facebook.com/share/p/7vaPAkiAHRPoK6Nn/?mibextid=oFDknk	Image
Image	Stakeholders Engagement & Information		https://www.linkedin.com/posts/mike-mukuwa-64477912b_darwin-activity-7181766313910910976-kvwq?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop	Image

	Dissemination			
Image	Country Director's Field visit		https://www.facebook.com/share/p/jiQXY1huHxGbUQpm/?mibextid=oFDknk	Image
Image	Capacity Building Workshops		https://www.facebook.com/share/p/tGrpcx4YqR8a8sSz/?mibextid=oFDknk	Image
video	Zambia, Mwiya Mukumbuta	Main News Clip	https://web.facebook.com/share/v/UwDUXwr1ktUpU8zF/	video

Curate Supporting Documentation

To back up the revised narrative, we have rebuilt the annexes and ensured they contain the following:

New Annex No	Title	What It Should Contain	Linked Indicator
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Annex 1	Report of progress and achievements against final project indicators of success for the life of the project	Narrative of output achievements	All Output and Outcome Indicators
Annex 2	Project's indicators of success	project's full current indicators of success as presented in the application form	All Output and Outcome Indicators
Annex 2A	Logframe	Revised project indicators and assumptions	Cross-cutting across all outputs
Annex 3	Standard Indicators	Standard indicators and publications	Cross-cutting across all outputs
Annex 3A	Self-assessment Reports	Baseline organisational assessments by LNGOs/ Scoring sheets, assessment tools	Output 1.4, 2.3
Annex 4	Darwin Initiative Contacts	Contact details of ACF & LNGOs	Output 1
Annex 4A	Policy extracts/Financial & HR Policies, procurement	Updated internal policies for LNGOs	Output 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.3
Annex 5	Project Area Maps	Watershed maps developed with QGIS	Output 1.3, 3.3
Annex 6	LNGO Selection Report	Process of LNGO mapping and selection	Output 1
Annex 7	Resource Mobilisation Summary	Overview of all funding bids co-created with partner	Output 3, 1.1, 1.2
Annex 8	Visual Reports	Samples of awareness campaign materials	Output 2.2
Annex 9	Baseline Survey Report	Community and ecosystem baseline	Output 1.3, 3.4/outcome
Annex 10	Endline Report	Results of final outcome evaluation including M&E tool scores	Outcome Indicator/ output 3.4
Annex 11	Collaboration Agreements	Signed agreements with LNGOs	Output 1
Annex 12	Awareness Campaign Report	Report on outreach activities	GESI, Poverty Reduction
Annex 13	M&E Tools and Templates	Kobo form, QGIS maps (JPEG or PDF) logframes	Output 3.1, 3.2, 3.4
Annex 14 & 17	Training Attendance Sheets/Agenda	Workshop outlines, attendance sheets, topics	Output 1.8, 2.1, 3.1
Annex 15	Safeguarding Policy	Power Point of Training delivered	Safeguarding Section
Annex 16	Proposal Awards Summary	Summary of successful proposals	Output 1.1
Annex 17	Stakeholder Feedback	Feedback from local government and beneficiaries	Outcome, Lessons Learnt
Annex 18	Gender Policy Revisions	Gender inclusion documentation	GESI Section
Annex 19	Risk Register	Project risks and mitigation responses	Risk Management Section
Annex 20	Demo Plot Implementation Reports	photos	Output 1
Annex 21	Sample Budgets	Project & annual budgets used in proposals	output
Annex 21 K	Financial Reports	Sample Financial Reports	Output 3.2
Annex 21N	Summary of proposal submitted & status	List of proposals	Output 1.1

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against final project indicators of success for the life of the project

Project summary	Progress and achievements
Outcome The local NGOs are enabled to operationally and technically design and deliver biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction programmes in watershed communities of Zambia	At baseline, the three LNGOs had limited experience in biodiversity-focused conservation or ecosystem restoration techniques. by project close; 3 local NGOs trained and rolled out conservation and restoration interventions in target areas and report having increased knowledge on the same.
Outcome indicator 0.1 Local NGOs have knowledge on conservation and restoration approaches ideal for the watersheds	
Outcome indicator 0.2, Local NGOs have sufficient internal capacity in Finance, HR, M&E and programs to implement large programs of over £100,000	<p>All 3 LNGOs had undergone 3 targeted technical workshops on ecosystem restoration, soil rehabilitation, integrated water resource management, and community-based biodiversity strategies. Annex 14: Training Agendas and Attendance Logs).</p> <p>Each NGO successfully developed and submitted biodiversity-focused proposals incorporating restoration practices, theory of change, and logframes (see Annex 7/21N:</p> <p>Pre- and post-training assessments showed an average increase of 76% in technical knowledge scores (Annex 3: Assessment Tool and Score Summary).</p> <p>Field implementation included 8 climate-smart demo plots and community conservation activities that linked soil and water management with food security (Annex 20: Photos, Beneficiary Lists & Plot Management Plans).</p> <p>As regards Indicator 2, at baseline, partners relied on spreadsheets and ad-hoc systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 3 LNGOs updated or created their Finance Manuals, Procurement Policies, and HR Guidelines (Annex 17: Updated Policy Extracts). • Each partner NGO now prepares budgets and donor-ready financial templates (sample budget. • 9 staff (3 per LNGO) were trained in Finance, M&E, HR and Business Development

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All 3 LNGOs have independently managed and submitted donor concept notes and funding applications exceeding £100,000 in value (Annex 21n).• Partner staff now use KoboToolbox and QGIS to produce community-level data and maps (Annex 19: Sample Maps & Survey Instruments).• Safeguarding frameworks and complaints mechanisms are now in place (Annex 20: Safeguarding Policy)
Output 1 Training for local organizations on operational and technical knowledge that will empower them to implement projects that help communities in watershed areas	
Output indicator 1.1 Local NGOs develop at least one comprehensive project proposal with biodiversity and food security outcomes	All three NGOs developed proposals and six were funded; Evidence in Annex 21N Developed and submitted to ACGO Agriculture Foundation worth EUR450,000, “Building Resilient Adaptation to Climate Change through Agricultural Education (BRACAE).”
Output indicator 1.2, Local NGOs update their internal policies including safeguarding and operational manuals to support project design and implementation	Each local partner submitted \$1 million to Climate Clean Air Coalition focusing on t Household Energy, Transformative Agriculture, Transformative Waste Management. Also, partners led the submission of Darwin main The Local partners have also been part of other applications as subs to ACF, e.g ADB call on Climate Adaptation Window \$12 million, USAID PRM call \$3 million, SADC TFCA Funding \$3 million
Output 2. Local organisations empowered with functional tools for operations like accounting system, HR system and M&E data collection system	
Output indicator 2.1. Local NGOs are able to prepare comprehensive budgets and record accounting transaction that can be audited	Overall, progress towards achieving Output 2 has been substantial, with evidence of significant advancements in establishing functional tools for M&E within local NGOs. While some challenges may persist during the implementation phase, proactive measures and capacity-building initiatives have ensured positive momentum towards achieving project objectives. Continued monitoring and support will be essential to address any remaining gaps and sustain progress towards output targets. Local NGOs have successfully adopted Kobo Toolbox, QGIS, and Open HDS systems for data collection. These tools have facilitated the setup of baseline surveys, accurate community registration, and consistent data collection during field visits. Evidence includes baseline survey reports and ongoing data collection records from project follow-ups.
Output indicator 2.2. Local NGOs have a simple and easy to use HR systems including recording of staff time, leave tracking and payroll processing away from spreadsheets	
Output indicator 2.3. Local NGOs have comprehensive data collection tools that help in setting up baseline surveys and community registration and continuous data collection when project officers visit communities for follow-ups and trainings	
Output indicator 2.4. Local NGOs have Successfully prepared project budget and comprehensive annual budget	
Output indicator 2.5. Drafted HR manual Salary scale and participation in peer salary and benefit surveys	
Output 3. Strengthened organizational capacity of local organizations in financial management, human resources, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices.	

Output indicator 3.1 Increased financial capability among local organizations, as evidenced by the successful development and utilization of comprehensive budget templates and project budgets.	3.1 The local partners have shown evidence of capacity in preparing different donor budget templates
Output indicator 3.2 Enhanced financial transparency and accountability within local organizations, demonstrated by proficient use of the finance system for recording auditable accounting transactions.	3.2 The local partners have been able to provide financial reports to ACF, which has been also a basis for disbursement of funds under the collaboration agreement on this project.
Output indicator 3.3 Trained local organizations on HR systems and Implemented HR systems for staff time recording, leave tracking, and payroll processing	3.3 The HR systems are functional
Output indicator 3.4 Improved data management and decision-making capabilities within local organizations, as indicated by the successful integration of M&E systems with comprehensive data collection tools, leading to better baseline surveys, community registration, and continuous data collection during follow-ups and trainings	3.4 The training was conducted, M&E tools rolled out, baseline and endline surveys conducted successfully and findings disseminated. Report attached.

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

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification
Outcome: The local NGOs are enabled to operationally and technically design and deliver biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction programmes in watershed communities of Zambia	<p>Local NGOs have knowledge on conservation and restoration approaches ideal for the watersheds</p> <p>Local NGOs have sufficient internal capacity in Finance, HR, M&E and programs to implement large programs of over £100,000</p>	<p>Review of data collected using the M&E tools provided to the organization to generate reports on trends especially data on effectiveness of trainings, food security interventions adopted and yields, conservation efforts e.g. seeds and seedlings planted, etc</p> <p>Surveys conducted at the start of trainings for the organizations and by the organization at the beginning and end of the sessions evaluating knowledge of practice and policy and changes observed and needed at practice and community level Audit reports of organizations</p>
Output 1 Training for local organizations on operational and technical knowledge that will empower them to implement projects that help communities in watershed areas	<p>1.1 Local NGOs develop at least one comprehensive project proposal with biodiversity and food security outcomes</p> <p>1.2 Local NGOs update their internal policies including safeguarding and operational manuals to support project design and implementation</p>	<p>1.1 Pre and post training surveys for the Local NGO to test impact, understanding and knowledge of the participants</p> <p>1.2 Detailed project proposals with in-depth theory of change, log frames and monitoring strategies from local NGOs was done, and continue to do through responding to donor opportunities</p> <p>1.3 Local organisational policies, such as safeguarding policies are done.</p>
Output 2 Local organisations empowered with functional tools for operations like accounting system, HR system and M&E data collection system	<p>2.1 Local NGOs are able to prepare comprehensive budgets and record accounting transaction that can be audited</p> <p>2.2 Local NGOs have a simple and easy to use HR systems including recording of staff time, leave tracking and payroll processing away from spreadsheets</p> <p>2.3 Local NGOs have comprehensive data collection tools that help in setting up baseline surveys and community registration and continuous data collection when project officers visit communities for follow-ups and trainings</p>	<p>2.1 Drafted HR manual Salary scale and participation in peer salary and benefit surveys</p> <p>2.2 Organization is able to generate maps and reports</p>

	<p>2.4 Local NGOs have Successfully prepared project budget and comprehensive annual budget</p> <p>2.5 Drafted HR manual Salary scale and participation in peer salary and benefit surveys</p> <p>2.6 Organization is able to generate maps and reports</p>	
<p>Output 3 Strengthened organizational capacity of local organizations in financial management, human resources, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices.</p>	<p>3.1 Increased financial capability among local organizations, as evidenced by the successful development and utilization of comprehensive budget templates and project budgets.</p> <p>3.2 Enhanced financial transparency and accountability within local organizations, demonstrated by proficient use of the finance system for recording auditable accounting transactions.</p> <p>3.3 Number of Trained local organizations (staff) on HR systems and Implemented HR systems for staff time recording, leave tracking, and payroll processing</p> <p>3.4 Improved data management and decision-making capabilities within local organizations, as indicated by the successful integration of M&E systems with comprehensive data collection tools, leading to better baseline surveys, community registration, and continuous data collection during follow-ups and trainings</p>	<p>3.1 Successfully and timely submitted their financial reports and prepared project budget and comprehensive annual budget</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)</p> <p>1.1 Training Local organization to review past project reports on successes and recommendations</p> <p>1.1 Local Organization conducts baseline survey at community level to understand the ecosystem and the human element of the communities living in the watersheds</p> <p>1.2. Local organizations are taken through a workshop to do Self-assessment, objective setting and project planning</p> <p>1.2. Finance system training</p> <p>1.2. Train the local organizations to develop and update Procurement and Logistics policy and guidelines</p> <p>1.2. Train the local organizations to develop and update Human Resources policy and guidelines</p> <p>1.2. Train the local organizations to develop project Life-cycle training and tools development</p> <p>1.2. Training and trial runs on data collection, subsequent data collection, analysis, mapping and curating the data for reporting as well as archiving</p> <p>1.3 Conduct mid-term analysis on the use of data collection tool and the reports being generated by the organization to gauge communities appreciation of the competency of the local organizations and embrace jointly developed interventions in livelihood, conservation and ecosystem restoration</p>		

- 2.1 Conduct workshop where Local Organization develop comprehensive projects that are effectively planned, easily implementable with verifiable results on food security, value addition and marketing through collective invention by the communities.
- 2.2 Support the organization in developing visual reports to share with communities and stakeholders
- 2.3 Train and mentor the local organization update their internal policies especially on safeguarding as well as operational manuals to support elaborate project design and implementation
- 3.1 Conduct a budgeting workshop for the local organizations and have the teams develop comprehensive budget templates as well as sample project budgets
- 3.2. Train the account teams on using finance system acquired to record accounting transaction that can be audited
- 3.3 Train the local organizations to have simple and easy to use HR systems including recording of staff time, leave tracking and payroll processing away from spreadsheets
- 3.4 Acquire and support the local organization to integrate their M&E with comprehensive data collection tools that help in setting up baseline surveys and community registration and continuous data collection when project officers visit communities for follow-ups and trainings

Important Assumptions

- 1. The selected organisations have a close working relationship with local provincial and district administration in the respective watersheds
- 2. That there is acceptance from the communities where the organisations will be operating
- 3.
- 4. There is participation of key government actors like forest and wildlife department and energy regulatory board with local organisations
- 5. There is participation of and endorsement of traditional leaderships like the Barotseland Royal Establishment

Annex 3 Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-C17	Articles published by members of the project team	Number of unique papers published in peer reviewed journals	Number	None	1	0	N/A	1	1
DI-A03	Local NGOs have sufficient internal capacity in Finance, HR, M&E and programs to implement large programs of over £100,000	Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of project.	Number of organizations	Organisation Type.	3	0	N/A	3	3
DI-A04	Local NGOs have knowledge on conservation and restoration approaches ideal for the watersheds	Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.	People	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group: Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Nationals, public sector, civil society, private sector;	20	0	N/A	20	20
DI-A05		Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project.	People; Number trained	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group: Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Nationals, public sector, civil society, private sector.	20	0	N/A	20	20
DI-A07		Number of government institutions/departments with enhanced	Government institutions	Govt. Organisation Type (local,	5	0	N/A	5	5

		awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues		national, treasury, planning, environmental, agricultural, forestry).					
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Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, manual, 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)
Darwin Initiative Consolidated Baseline report	Journal	Leo Mukonka, Mutinta Hamilemba, Paul Malambo, Tabby Mabole Syabulanda, 2024.	Male(2) Female(2)	All Zambian	Action Against Hunger	Action Against Hunger (Annex 9 &17)
Action Against Hunger partners with local NGOs to drive sustainable irrigation initiatives - a call to action in the amidst of climate crisis	The Mast Newspaper	Dr. Oliver Kandela Bulaya, 2024.	Male	Zambian	The Mast Newspaper, Lusaka	The Mast Newspaper. The Mast, Tuesday March 12, 2024. Page 4
Action Against Hunger Partners with Government to address effects of Climate Change effects (Drought).	Main News Video Clip	Mrs. Chintu Nang'amba	Female	Zambian	ZNBC TV	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation - ZNBC
Action against hunger has trained one hundred women & youth farmers in Zimba district of Southern province on conservation farming methods and planting of drought resistant crops to address food security.	Main News Video Clip	Mr. Mwiya Mukumbuta	Male	Zambian	MUVI TV	MUVI TV Facebook: https://web.facebook.com/share/v/UwDuXwr1ktUpU8zF/

Action Against Hunger strengthens Local NGOs' capacity in Zambia	The Mast Newspaper	Dr. Oliver Kandela Bulaya, 2024.	Male	Zambian	The Mast Newspaper, Lusaka	The Mast Newspaper, Tuesday March 5, 2024, Page 4
Action Against Hunger and how they are preparing communities Against natural Disasters in Sinazongwe Districts	Local Radio Station	Gestin Hamuwele, 2024.	Male	Zambian	Sinazongwe	Sinazongwe Local Radio Station
Action Against Hunger ACF-USA meets various stakeholders from government, private sector, local and International NGOs working in the Kafue-Zambezi Watershed for knowledge exchange.	Linkedin Post	Mike Mukuwa, 2024	Male	Zambian	Livingstone	Stakeholder engagement: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/mike-mukuwa-64477912b_darwin-activity-7181766313910910976-kvwg?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
Meet Sidon Sabantu, a farmer thriving, thanks to Kaluli Development Foundation's and Action Against Hunger's Project!	Beneficiary video clip	Mr. Sidon Sabantu, 2024	Male	Zambian	Kaluli Development Foundation - KDF	Local Partner Facebook: https://web.facebook.com/share/v/S6mGDx1MKq4j8oEF/

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, 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 discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line. All supporting material should be submitted in a way that can be accessed and downloaded as one complete package.	no
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 14)?	yes
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 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.	