

## 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](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com) including your project ref in the subject line.

### Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	DARCC026
Project title	Mentoring GEN Fellows to incubate Global South biodiversity-livelihoods initiatives
Country(ies)	Kenya, PNG, India, Brazil, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Tanzania, Samoa, Nigeria, Zambia, Bhutan, Nepal, Peru, Bolivia, Indonesia, Belize, Guatemala
Lead Organisation	Global Diversity Foundation
Project partner(s)	The Human Edge, (formerly Mowgli Mentoring), Common Purpose, WildTeam, University of Cambridge, University of Kent, University of Edinburgh. Grassroots Global South CSOs represented by the 31 fellows of the Conservation and Communities Fellowship (from the above country list)
Darwin Initiative grant value	£199,957
Start/end dates of project	1 April 2023 - 31 March 2025
Project Leader's name	Emily Caruso
Project website/blog/social media	<a href="https://global-diversity.org/gdf-conservation-and-communities-fellowship/">https://global-diversity.org/gdf-conservation-and-communities-fellowship/</a>
Report author(s) and date	Youssef Rochdane, Francesca Masoero and Emily Caruso, finalised on 4 July 2025

## 1 Project Summary

This project addresses inequities in conservation funding flows to civil society organisations (CSOs) in the global south by building CSO capacity to access Global North funds. It supports CSO leaders to engage confidently with donors, develop high quality proposals, grow their organisations and programme management, and strengthen their implementation and reporting skills. We support donors by offering dialogue spaces and resources to help them adapt their processes and approaches to the needs of grassroots Global South CSOs.

While we were aware of these inequities, the importance of addressing them was cemented by the publication of reports highlighting the inequity of conservation funding flows, including Greening the Grassroots (Paul et al. 2022), Disparities in Funding for African NGOs (Layode et al 2021), Money Where it Matters for People Nature and Climate (Holland et al 2022), and more. We confirmed the relevance of our approach in dialogue with grassroots changemakers and with donors, who had expressed their frustration in not being able to provide greater financial support to grassroots CSOs in the Global South. On the one hand they noted the lack of CSO capacity

to manage grants and donor relationships, and on another they noted their own lack of capacity to manage many small grassroots grants and to offer their grantees the mentoring and training the latter needed. Our project builds CSO capacities through a 10-month online and in-person fellowship for Global South grassroots conservation changemakers and supports donors through the creation of learning and tools, as well as through offering spaces for dialogue between donors and grassroots CSOs.

The project addresses multiple poverty and biodiversity challenges, principal among which is the lack of funds and access to capacity-building among grassroots organisations and changemakers to implement local biodiversity and livelihoods projects. While these organisations and changemakers may have brilliant, locally owned and culturally appropriate solutions to the poverty and biodiversity challenges faced by their communities, they lack the funds and support they need to implement them and the capacity-building they need to make their projects a resounding success. Our project works directly with grassroots conservation CSOs in multiple Global South countries (cf country list) to address this pressing issue.

Since the launch of our project in April 2023, we transformed our original plans for this project. In dialogue with our partners (The Human Edge and Common Purpose), we made the decision to launch one singular 10-month Conservation and Communities Fellowship (CCF) programme for Global South CSOs to be implemented over the two years. We also decided to open it up to the public for application (rather than offer it only to Global Environments Network members), with applications opening 1 August 2023 and on 17 September. In that time, we received 627 applications (Annex 1: all CCF applications + application form) for the Fellowship and selected 32 finalists by end September. We collaborated with a total of 31 fellows, as one fellow dropped out for personal reasons in January 2024. This change led us to submit a project change request in October 2023, followed by an additional minor change request in December 2023; both of these change requests were accepted.

## 2 Project Partnerships

In our original proposal, we organised the partners according to type: grassroots CSOs, UK Higher Education institutions, expert organisations, and donors/foundations. As mentioned above, the partnerships with CSOs and donors emerged from the direct requests by actors from both spheres for us to develop this work. However, the specific partnerships with named CSOs emerged from the application process to the CCF, so they were not present as part of the design of the project. Our partnerships with Expert Organisations and UK HE Institutions were built for the purpose of project implementation. GDF is the sole author of the final report, although our Monitoring and Evaluation tools were co-developed by GDF, The Human Edge and Common Purpose.

We provide responses to the questions for each partner type below:

### ● Grassroots CSOs:

For the sake of completeness, we provide here the names of all CSOs we are connected to through the CCF fellows. While the focus of the CCF was on the individual fellows, we offered development support to the entire organisation through training in fundraising and project management and by inviting all staff members to join the Darwin Initiative Proposal-writing Clinic series offered by GDF as part of the fellowship. Although we have built closer relationships with some of these organisations through intensive individual mentoring sessions and the development of more long-term collaborations, including the development of toolkits and podcasts, we consider all of these organisations partners.

- [Hirola Conservation Program, Kenya](#),
- [Asociación SERES, Guatemala](#),
- [Kalpavriksh Environment Action Group, India](#)
- Vida Silvestre, Bolivia,
- [Green Governance Nepal, Nepal](#)

- [Fundação Príncipe, São Tomé and Príncipe.](#)
- [Instituto Socioambiental, Brazil.](#)
- [Arulagam, India.](#)
- [Ya'axché Conservation Trust, Belize.](#)
- [MKA AJI MPYA asbl, Democratic Republic of Congo.](#)
- [IMPACT Madagascar, Madagascar](#)
- [Tanjona Association, Madagascar](#)
- [Instituto Fronteiras, Brazil](#)
- [GEOYACHAQ, Peru](#)
- [Tanzanian Elephant Foundation, Tanzania](#)
- [Samoa Conservation Society, Samoa](#)
- [MENCERTC, Papua New Guinea](#)
- [Voice of Nature \(VoNat\), Cameroon](#)
- [Programa de Investigación felidos Bolivia, Bolivia](#)
- [GroundUp Conservation, India](#)
- [SW/Niger Delta Forest Project, Nigeria](#)
- [Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, Kenya](#)
- [Ogiek Peoples Development Program \(OPDP\), Kenya](#)
- [Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement & Conflict Transformation \(I.M.P.A.C.T.\), Kenya](#)
- [The Society for Alternative Learning & Transformation \(SALT\), Kenya](#)
- [BirdWatch Zambia, Zambia](#)
- [Selamatkan Yaki, Indonesia](#)
- [Royal Society for Protection of Nature, Thimphu, Bhutan](#)
- [Agriculture and Bio-conservation Organization for Youth Empowerment and Rural Development \(ABOYERD\), Cameroon.](#)
- [EcoPhilia Kenya, Kenya.](#)
- [Traditional Ecosystems Survival Tanzania \(TEST\), Tanzania](#)

While the fellows and their organisations were not part of the project planning and design process (given that they joined through an application process after the project started), they were core evaluators of the programme, through diverse evaluation and assessment mechanisms, which are discussed below. The second edition of the CCF, which begins in November 2025, has been re-designed based on the evaluations offered by the fellows. Moreover, two of the four CCF 2025 streams are being co-designed and co-delivered by 12 of the fellows from the first CCF edition. Eleven CCF alumni are contributing to the selection of CCF 2025 participants. We are also planning an alumni-led 2026 CCF 'light' edition for 50-60 applicants who do not make it to the final group of 30 fellows. We are currently establishing a CCF Steering Committee composed of CCF 2024 alumni (who will be partially and annually rotated with new edition alumni); the Steering Committee will oversee the design, delivery and M&E of the CCF in subsequent editions.

Besides these ongoing collaborations, we have begun working with a number of fellows post-fellowship and post-project to continue growing the fellowship and as training partners. For example, we submitted a R31 Darwin Initiative Capabilities & Capacities proposal that was written in collaboration with 3 fellows and two of the fellows' partner organisations. This grant proposal, which stems from fellows' reflections about equity in the conservation leadership training space, offers conservation leadership training to grassroots indigenous youth leaders (see [here](#) for a summary of this programme). We are currently still waiting for the final outcome of our collective grant proposal.

## - **UK HE institutions:**

We have built solid partnerships with:

- University of Cambridge Conservation Leadership MPhil;
- University of Edinburgh Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health MSc;
- University of Kent MSc Ethnobotany (discontinued since June 2024) and MSc Conservation Science;

- University of East Anglia, MSc Climate Change and Global Development (we did not organise MSc internships through this programme, but they joined the MSc workshop series).

We worked with the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh and Kent to organise 11 internships for their MSc/MPhil students, with 3, 5 and 3 internships organised respectively in collaboration with these institutions. Internships were held by MSc/Mphil students from these courses in fellows' organisations, where they carried out research and practicums related to the completion of their degrees (see below for more details). We were not able to establish a solid connection with the University of Oxford's MSc in Biodiversity Management and Conservation, as hoped for.

Please see [Annex 3](#) for all agreements between GDF, CSOs and MSc students, and [Annex 17](#) for the full list of MSc projects originally proposed by fellows + list of completed MSc internship projects.

In Year 2, we implemented a 4-part series for 15 MSc students from the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh and East Anglia entitled *Sowing Seeds - the MSc workshop series*. Please see below for more information and the MoV for this workshop series. We also supported our fellows to apply to diverse MSc/MPhil programmes, including two with our partner HE institutions (more information on this below).

### • Expert organisations

Our relationships with [The Human Edge](#) (THE; formerly known as Mowgli Mentoring) and [Common Purpose](#) (CP) have continued to grow thanks to the partnership we created to deliver the CCF. We planned and designed the entire programme with both organisations, and we are now designing the second edition of the CCF, which is due to begin mid-November 2025 and run for just over 6 months. Both THE and CP have decades of experience running training programmes, so these partnerships have been instrumental in GDF's growth and learning as a training delivery organisation. Our confidence, organisation, planning, management and evaluation skills in this field have benefited enormously from their experience, generosity and teaching. THE and CP were such close collaborators throughout the project that we were communicating weekly and constantly evaluating and assessing the process. We also carried out multiple debriefing sessions and a post-fellowship reflection session to assess the programme and brainstorm the next CCF.

We established a new partnership with WildTeam during the course of the project, and with them delivered 3 of the core capacity-building workshops of the CCF. With WildTeam matched funding, we were able to secure places on selected WildTeam courses for all of our fellows. We will continue to collaborate with WildTeam in the future, with a first step being to set up private CCF alumni and cohort rooms on the WildHub platform, which is an offshoot from WildTeam.

As mentioned in our prior report, our collaboration with Project In/Visibility (and therefore with Luc Hoffman Institute and Project Myopia) was paused as the Project In/Visibility team reevaluated their capacity and sustainability. This resulted in us leading on the publication of stories and the MSc training components (with the intellectual support of Project In/Visibility for the publication).

### • Donor organisations

We were able to establish excellent rapport with 5-6 key donors throughout the CCF, who actively encouraged and supported our work. Three donors joined the Leading Beyond Authority stream as guest speakers and interlocutors for the fellows. One Next Gen Philanthropist and 3 donor representatives joined the in-person event in Morocco in May 2024, participating in a facilitated, transformative dialogue with fellows about the challenges and futures of the conservation philanthropy model. Three donors joined the *Conservation Futures Dialogues*, which we launched with the Darwin Initiative grant funds (see below). As a result of our focused relationship-building, we were able to fully fund the second edition of the CCF (running November 2025 to October 2026). Moreover, with the support of one donor, in March

2025, we launched a 'Conservation Justice Flow Fund' through which we are able to fund 4 USD17,000 grants for CCF alumni. We expect to replenish the Flow Fund in future years to continue to fund 5-10 grants (ideally of USD20,000) for future cohort alumni.

### 3 Project Achievements

#### 3.1 Outputs

##### ***Output 1: 30 Global South CSO projects are incubated, generating lessons learned for immediate replication***

At the start of the project, the participating Global South civil society organisations (CSOs) lacked experience and confidence engaging with Global North philanthropic donors, and struggled to access funds for their projects and teams (evidence of this comes from the baseline survey, the results of which are summarised and analysed in the [Impact Analysis Report](#)). Most of them also lacked formal training in project design, management and monitoring. Throughout the Conservation & Communities Fellowship (CCF), which ran 1 November 2023 to 29 August 2024 (with an additional 3 months for those submitting Darwin Initiative proposals at the end of October 2024), we helped to strengthen their capacities, positioning them to launch or scale funded grassroots biodiversity-livelihood initiatives. Thirteen fellows submitted funding proposals to the Darwin Initiative in October 2024 (please see [Annex 7](#) for the full list of proposals submitted that were mentored by GDF). One fellows' DI proposal was successful in 2023. In 2024, only 1 of the fellows' Darwin Initiative proposals was not rejected (the one submitted by GDF but co-designed and written by 3 fellows, which remains pending response), we assessed that the unsuccessful proposals were of a very high quality.

In Year 2, twenty-nine CCF fellows informed us that they submitted a total of 125 grant proposals to various funders and donors ([Annex 7](#) contains the 'proposals submitted' surveys for both years 1 and 2). Of these, 58 proposals (46%) were successful, resulting in funding secured in multiple currencies and from a range of international donors. As reported in AR1, 94 proposals were submitted in Year 1, 24 (25%) of which were successful. It is likely that the CCF's intensive mentoring, training and support during and after the fellowship contributed to the proportional increase in success rate over time. Moreover, in the Yr 2 survey responses, an additional 18 proposals are still pending a response, indicating that the total number of successful applications may continue to grow. These figures reflect the fellows' active engagement in seeking support for their work and demonstrate increasing confidence, skills, and visibility in the competitive landscape of conservation funding. All fellows expressed how beneficial the fellowship had been in securing these grants (whether in the survey or in person/in chats to the organisers), either through the capacity-building workshops or the mentoring provided by Emily Caruso and Susannah McCandless. Specific quotes from the survey include:

*"The fellowship has definitely helped shape and strengthen our proposals. I was able to better articulate our goals, refine our strategies, and align them with the expectations of potential funders. Not only that the sessions help provided valuable insights and practical framework, I got more confident in pitching to the donors through emails and online meetings."*

*"The support from the fellowship has been very useful in developing the proposal, mainly through articulation the learning in the proposal. The workshops and resource materials specifically were very helpful."*

*"The fellowship was impactful in helping design the proposal and connecting with the donors. I have mostly learned from the fellowship the idea in developing the proposal"*



*and how we should keep the donor in loop. The regular workshops and mentoring were most useful.”*

This represents a significant excess compared to the original targets of indicators 1.1 and 1.2, which call for at least ten DI proposals and twenty proposals to other donors by Year 2.

Through mentoring and technical support, fellows have designed and begun implementation of projects that are now operational. Nine small grants were funded by GDF as part of its Seed Grants programme. An additional 4 grants were made by GDF through the support of a singular donor keen on supporting grassroots conservation organisations through a trust-based philanthropic mechanism. (The grants from the latter donor were instrumental in the creation of GDF's new Conservation Justice Flow Fund, which we continue to fundraise for and will use to support CCF fellows in coming years.) Alongside these 13 projects launched, we also are hoping to hear good news from the Darwin Initiative on a grant submitted by GDF, but ideated and led by 3 fellows for work within their indigenous communities in Kenya and India (see below for further information). Together, these 13 committed grants and 1 highly anticipated grant represent our achievement of indicator 1.3 - incubation of at least ten funded projects. In addition to these projects directly supported through GDF's own connections with donors, we have assisted many fellows in submitting project proposals to new donors through hours of individual mentoring and proposal review (see [Annex 7](#)). Some of these efforts cannot be quantified, given the ad hoc and continuous nature of this mentoring and support, which has run well beyond the original intentions and time-bounds of the project.

The toolkit (indicator 1.4) and podcast (indicator 1.5) have been reframed and rescheduled, respectively, and are both embedded within the [Conservation Futures Dialogues](#) process, described below under Output 3. They reflect and expand on lessons learned directly from fellows' experiences and other collaborators in the field of conservation, and offer a complementary, reflective and exploratory space of GDF's [Conservation Justice Programme](#).

### ***Output 2: 40 GEN Fellows and Advisers build mentoring skills and establish a peer-mentoring network for Global South CSOs***

At baseline, fellows were experienced community conservation practitioners, but most had not previously received formal mentoring and leadership training or had structured opportunities to engage in mutual peer learning. Through the ten-month Fellowship programme, all 31 fellows completed comprehensive training in mentoring, leadership, and project development. In particular, the Human Edge-led Mentoring Stream supported fellows to deepen self-awareness and develop mentoring skills, while Common Purpose facilitated leadership development and helped develop coaching skills through the Leading Beyond Authority stream. Fellows were paired in peer mentoring relationships midway through the Fellowship and continued these engagements independently beyond the graduation ceremony, demonstrating the emergence of a sustainable peer mentoring network (see [Annex 10](#)) (indicators 2.1 and 2.2). Additionally, 13 fellows submitted proposals to the October 2024 Darwin Initiative call for proposals, marking clear progress toward the target of 15 mentee submissions (indicator 2.3). We recruited 3 fellows to act as mentors to their peers for the submission of these proposals (contracts available upon request).

In May 2024, we organised the the Community Exchange (CE) and supported fellows' participation in the 18th International Society of Ethnobiology (ISE), both taking place in Morocco. These events offered fellows an invaluable opportunity for deep learning, cross-regional dialogue, and global visibility.

From 11-14 May 2024, 30 fellows gathered in Demnate, in the Moroccan High Atlas, for the in-person portion of the Fellowship. The Community Exchange was facilitated by [Emily Caruso](#) (CCF Lead), [Carolyn Finney](#) (External Facilitator), [Nessie Reid](#) (GDF Director), and [Youssef](#)

[Rochdane](#) (Programme Team), and guided by a programme rooted in creative reflection, deep listening, and knowledge sharing (see programme [here](#))

The Exchange included workshops on relationships with power, storytelling, and emergent questions in conservation practice. A highlight was the Donors and Fellows conversation, bringing together representatives from three key philanthropic foundations: ChanceMaker Foundation, Savitri Trust, and Salvia Foundation, with CCF fellows. The dialogue provided a unique space for both parties to share their contexts and reimagine more equitable, trust-based approaches to funding grassroots conservation. Fellows also participated in creative sessions to reflect on their journeys and explored local biocultural initiatives through a field visit to the Iminifri natural bridge and women-led cooperatives.

We have anecdotal evidence proving that the CE was profoundly transformative, described by many fellows as a life-changing experience that strengthened community bonds and reconnected them to the purpose behind their work (please see [the CCF video](#)). The following quotes were shared with us after the end of the in-person portion of the fellowship:

*"The time in Morocco spent with all of you has nourished me in ways I couldn't have imagined, and I have left with my heart full and my head buzzing with ideas. Each of you is an inspiration, and I hope that we continue to weave this rich tapestry of our collective conservation journeys through the coming months and beyond the Fellowship."*

*"It was such an indescribable honor to have had the opportunity to be with you, such amazing, powerful, and inspiring people in such a sensational place. I want to thank each one of you so much. Being with you has been (and I know it will continue to be because we remain together) a pleasure and a source of immense happiness and personal and professional growth. I carry each one of you in my heart and know that I am here for and with you!"*

*"To my fellow cohorts.... Each and every single one of you.... Words cannot express the joy that I hold in my heart over the time that we shared. Thank you all for the community, the laughter, the love. The dance of life is punctuated by the beats of a drum that must carry on, as was passed on to us by our ancestors for the generations to come. We hold this space today and it is an honor to stand by each and every single one of you as we build the future."*

Immediately following the CE, fellows participated in the [ISE Congress 2024 in Marrakech](#) (15-19 May 2024), an international gathering of nearly 400 ethnobiologists, community leaders and conservation practitioners. The Global Diversity Foundation was the lead organiser of the Congress, and the Conservation & Communities Fellowship was prominently represented through three panel sessions convened and led by fellows, with participation from across the Global South (see [Annex 32](#))

Fellows led the following panel sessions at ISE Congress:

- **Panel 1: Indigenous landscape and resource governance: Innovations, best practices and environmental justice (Thursday 16 May)**  
Convened by **Carlene Myvett** (Belize) and **Valery Binda** (Cameroon), this panel brought together six fellows working across Indonesia, Madagascar, India, DRC and Belize.
- **Panel 2: Documenting and protecting traditional knowledge: methods, ethics and respect for the sacred in Indigenous and local community-led initiatives (Thursday 16 May)**  
Convened by **Silole Malih** (Kenya) and **Asiem Sanyal** (São Tomé and Príncipe)

- **Panel 3: Unweaving the fabric of colonial conservation: local narratives, indigenous methods and plural perspectives (Sunday 19 May)**  
Convened by **Preety Sharma** (UK/India), **Karla Sessin-Dilascio** (Brazil), and **Ndimuh Bertrand Shanco** (Cameroon).

As part of the Congress, the fellowship also launched and distributed *Our Land, Our Stories: Voices from the Edges* (see [Annex 11](#)), a curated publication that weaves the poetic and political to amplify fellows' voices and their vital contributions to environmental justice. Over 100 copies were distributed to academics, funders, artists and conservation practitioners. As part of the publication's launch, all 30 fellows participated in a [Storytelling Circle](#) as part of the [Spring 2024 edition of the Harvest Festival Marrakech](#). This evening of storytelling was a chance for the fellows to share their stories with the Marrakech community.

Fellows engaged widely in other Congress activities, attending sessions and poster presentations and building new relationships across regions and disciplines (see [Annex 9](#)). The exposure significantly strengthened their networks, enhanced their confidence, and provided new avenues for collaboration and support. Participation in the ISE Congress and Community Exchange provided further in-person practice in mentorship, network-building and presentation skills, with all 31 fellows engaging in structured reflection, collaborative planning, and leadership exercises (indicator 2.4) (see [Annex 31](#) for a photo essay of the in-person portion of the fellowship, including the community exchange, the ISE Congress participation and Harvest Festival Storytelling Circle). These outcomes were tracked through attendance records, stream evaluations (see [Annex 8](#), [Annex 12](#), and [Annex 25](#)), and records of proposal drafts shared with GDF (available upon request).

### ***Output 3: Global North research institutions and donors promote equity in conservation research, practice and funding***

The project began with limited formal engagement between Global South grassroots leaders and Global North institutions in areas of funding equity, decolonising research, or ethical partnerships. Over the past year, the project has contributed to a shift in this dynamic. We offered a strong storytelling component to the curriculum, and provided mentoring and support for them to develop their own narratives. Nineteen of these were published in collaboration with Project In/Visibility in the Fellowship publication, *Our Land, Our Stories: Voices from the Edges* (see [Annex 11](#)). This curated story collection intertwines the poetic with the political to amplify their voices in recognition of the vital and brave role they play in sustaining our planet. This story collection was shared - distributed as hard copies - with over 400 academics, students, conservationists, philanthropists, changemakers and artists in the 2024 ISE Congress in Marrakech (revised indicator 3.1). We offered these stories and other items for discussion to 12 MSc students from the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh and East Anglia through the [Sowing Seeds workshop series](#) (see also [Annex 33](#) for the *Sowing Seeds* brochure) which took place in March 2025 (also indicator 3.1).

Furthermore, as outlined in our half year report, the toolkits and podcasts development (indicators 1.4, 1.5, 3.2 and 3.3) were re-envisioned and rearticulated through the creation of the [Conservation Futures Dialogues](#), an open inquiry on the futures of conservation developed especially in dialogue with [Dr Carolyn Finney](#) and CCF fellow Akshay Chettri.

The inspiration for this body of work emerged from the awareness of the existence (and recent publication) of various pieces of work that went in the same direction of our original Indicators 1.4 and 3.2 (respectively, a toolkit and podcast for GS grassroots leaders and a toolkit and podcast for GN donors and NGOs). For example, the Kenyan NGO Maliasili has published various reports in the past two years that provide insights and recommendations for conservation funding to shift its practices with regards to grassroots organisations - including



the recent report “[From Pledges to Practice: Shifting Conservation Funding Approaches to Better Support Local African Organizations](#)”. Moreover, there is a perceptible shift in the discourse around conservation, towards a more decolonial approach, which is marked in seminal publications such as Ej Milner Gulland’s 2024 piece in PLOS “[Now is the time for conservationists to stand up for social justice](#)”. We assessed that a toolkit on decolonising conservation funding, practice and research (indicator 3.2) would have represented a rehashing of existing discourses and resources, and that our contribution to this field needed to offer something new. On the other hand, we also feel that capacity-building spaces and initiatives to support grassroots organisations, such as [WildTeam](#), are growing and offering excellent resources. We did not wish to ‘reinvent the wheel’ with our proposed resource.

So, following exchanges with the conceptual adviser we hired to support us with these outputs, [Dr Carolyn Finney](#), and inspired by the feedback of our cohort of fellows regarding how crucial it was for them to come in direct conversation with donors during the fellowship, we realised our approach to the toolkits had to shift. Our original plan was framed according to a core dichotomy - Global North donors and practitioners on the one hand, and Global South grassroots conservation organisations on the other - that we realised we must strive to overcome if we are to achieve just conservation and foster open dialogue to that end. The field of conservation needs radical rethinking, informed by a profound cultural shift demanding dedicated time-spaces for it. Hence, instead of contributing to a crowded field with another set of recommendations and resources that may or may not be applied, we decided to create spaces for a collective inquiry gathering actors from diverse positions in the conservation arena wherein we will facilitate provocative, complex and ambitious conversations that radically reimagine diverse conservation futures (a 2-pager [presentation](#) is available here).

In this first iteration, The Conservation Futures Dialogues encompasses:

- **10 in-depth interviews** with conservation leaders, donors, and scholars, developed by Dr. Finney and Mr. Chettri over several months. The interviews have been transcribed ([Annex 22](#)) and are not meant to be published, but remain available as internal resources for our inquiry and for practitioners and scholars interested in further developing research or better strategise around this topic in the future (Indicator 1.4, 3.1, 3.2).
- Inspired and drawing from the above-mentioned interviews, Dr. Finney and Mr. Chettri developed an **extensive analytical essay**, which is temporarily available as a draft (see [Annex 35](#)), as the authors continue to finalise it. The final version of the essay will be published by mid-July as a component of the “[Harvest Repository](#)”, an online multimedia library hosted on the GDF website and making accessible the resources and outputs gathered in our inquiry. This **online platform** acts as a toolkit and is imagined as an ever-growing space gathering knowledge, models, discussions, and tools to rethink the conservation paradigm. It responds to Indicators 1.4 and 3.2.
- **A workshop series**, “Sowing Seeds”, facilitated by Dr. Finney with 16 master students and alumni from the University of Edinburgh, University of Cambridge and the University of East Anglia (Indicator 0.3; 3.1; 3.2) - [participants list here](#) and the [brochure here](#). Over the course of three workshops, we considered the past, interrogated our present and most importantly, imagined “conservation futures” that allow us all to stand in the right relationship with nature and each other (screenshots from the sessions available [here](#)). Participants were offered an expanded curriculum and list of resources to engage with (available [here](#)) as well as dedicated time and exercises facilitated by Dr. Finney. Students were also invited to offer creative contributions to our inquiry as part of our emerging Conservation Futures Dialogues Harvest Repository (see [here](#)).
- **A workshop series** “[Re-landing: Writing Eco-connections Within Speculative Frames](#)” led by scholar Sanabel Abdel Rahman (Indicators 1.4, 3.1, 3.2). As part of our re-envisioning of the Conservation Futures Dialogues as a long-term

project and inquiry, this workshop series expands beyond the time frame of this grant and is co-funded by Naia Trust to allow for a 3-month long process gathering 13 participants that will benefit from a 6-part online creative facilitation process (June & July 2025) followed by the creation of visual, sonic and textual essays edited in an **online publication** made available as part of our Repository and presented publicly with an online and in-person event in Marrakech in October 2025 as part of the Autumn edition of Harvest Festival.

The [selected participants](#) range from established conservationists, scholars, lecturers, writers, filmmakers and artists, including CCF fellow Asiem Sanyal and ISE Board Member Katie Kamelamela.

Given the outstanding quality and quantity of the applications received (over 60), number which conflicted with our capacity to offer the training to more than the selected 13 final participants, the online training sessions will be recorded to be made available to another 13 shortlisted candidates which will be invited to contribute to an upcoming edition of the Conservation Futures Dialogues planned for 2026.

The choice we made of partially reducing the number of trainings and their beneficiaries compared to what had been originally outlined in the logframe (indicator 3.1 especially) is a consequence, on the one hand, of the shift towards the creation of Conservation Futures Dialogues as a *long-term inquiry*, one building interest and its audiences over time. On the other hand, we were strongly advised to maintain participation numbers (especially of online workshops) to numbers close to the dozen, in order to allow for effective and more personalised learning and sharing experiences for all the participants.

Having said that, combined, the various training and pedagogical activities developed within the framework of Conservation Futures Dialogues have more than 40 direct beneficiaries.

- Two **public conversations**, curated in the form of GEN in Conversation, respectively entitled:  
[Part I: When Things Fall Apart](#), with Pat McCabe, Rachel Ikemeh & Neema P. Broome, moderated by Dr. Carolyn Finney  
[Part II: Sites of Experimentation](#), with Molemo Moiloa, Jocelyn Imani & Ameyali Ramos, moderated by Dr. Carolyn Finney

Both these dialogues were attended by around 25 people each time and are also available online as recordings and as part of our Repository (indicator 1.4, 3.2) for future and continuous engagements.

- The Conservation Futures Dialogues **podcast series**. Differently from what originally proposed (two single podcasts), this is now composed of:
  - A stand-alone episode "[Rooting Conservation](#)", part of GDF's programme "The Patchwork of Belonging", during which four CCF fellows were interviewed. It was recorded at the time of the ISE Congress in Marrakech;
  - A podcast series "Play-Grounds: Dialogues around the Futures of Conservation": this first season is composed of 4 episodes:
    - a) Episode i - sets the framework of the conversation and the series through the voices of Dr Carolyn Finney and project leader Emily Caruso, offering reflections around the current state of conservation and questioning its usefulness in times of great transformation and collapse;
    - b) Episode ii - digs into the reflections and experiences of Global South conservation leaders and activists through the voices of CCF fellows Valery Binda, Beatriz Moraes Murer and Reyni Palohoen, as well as Maliasili's senior policy analyst [Resson Kantai Duff](#), focusing especially on the politics of funding

in the field of conservation.

c) Episode iii - looks into the role of NGOs within the field of conservation, through a conversation hosted by CJP programme lead Emily Caruso with CCF fellow Preeti Sharma and Suriname indigenous activist and community leader Jupta Itoewaki.

d) Episode iv - is a commissioned creative sound piece developed by curator, researcher and educator Margarida Mendes drawing on her research into how sonic practices can be mobilised towards ecological and community reparation, proposing a series of ecopedagogical experiments for active listening, stewardship and connection.

All these podcasts are part of our [Repository](#) and we intend to expand it with more episodes as Conservation Futures Dialogues continues to grow. It is also available on our [podcast platform](#).

We have also delivered eleven graduate internships (indicator 3.3), through which MSc students from UK universities completed research or practicum internships (on average 2 months fieldwork) in Global South grassroots organisations from the fellowship. These internships have addressed strategic gaps in the host organisations while offering hands-on learning opportunities for students (see [Annex 23](#)). We are currently finalising the write up of the transcriptions of the interviews with host organisations, and these will be available upon request. Monitoring across this output includes participation lists (see [Annex 24](#)) and documentation of the dialogues and podcast production process.

Across all three outputs, we met or exceeded our targets by the end of the project. Indicators have been monitored through a combination of direct documentation (e.g., proposals, training materials, publications as listed throughout the text), evaluation surveys (see [Annex 8](#), [Annex 12](#), and [Annex 25](#)). Adjustments made during the implementation period strengthened rather than hindered the delivery of our results.

### 3.2 Outcome

***Outcome Statement: The biodiversity and livelihoods programmes of 30 Global South CSOs run by GEN members are enhanced, funded and supported by UK research institutions***

At the outset of the project, the baseline condition was that while these CSOs were already actively engaged in grassroots conservation, they often lacked the institutional tools, technical skills, and global visibility needed to scale their impact, secure major funding, or build reciprocal partnerships with Global North institutions. Over the two-year implementation period, the project has achieved substantial and measurable progress toward this outcome.

Against **indicator 0.1**, which sought to ensure that 30 GEN Fellows submit high-quality proposals for biodiversity and livelihoods funding (10 in year 1, and 20 in year 2), the project has fully met its target. As a result of the 16-part “Darwin Initiative proposal-writing clinic” series launched in June 2024, alongside the ‘tricks of the trade’ clinics offered throughout the fellowship and the mentoring and peer learning organised around proposal-writing, we were able to support the submission of a total of 13 proposals by fellows to the Darwin Initiative and a total of 219 proposals (94 in Year 1 and 125 in Year 2) to other donors. These proposals are grounded in well-developed theories of change and reflect the fellows’ strengthened capacity to articulate their work to donors. Please see section 3.1 for more details. This progress has been tracked through two annual ‘proposals submitted’ surveys, Darwin Initiative proposals submitted list (see [Annex 7](#)), and list of edited/reviewed proposals (available upon request).

For **indicator 0.2**, the target was that 30 CSOs would be implementing best practices in project management, M&E, impact measurement, and grant reporting. Through the Fellowship’s Capabilities & Capacities stream, comprising 37 technical sessions - both training sessions and ‘tricks of the trade’ clinics - on budgeting, logframe design, adaptive management,

safeguarding, and communications, all fellows gained robust and advanced access to core organisational development tools and associated training. These were followed up by over 100 hours of individual mentoring by GDF mentors to a large proportion of the fellows. The individual mentoring was optional, so not all fellows took advantage of it, however for those that did, the outcomes were significant.

*"The fellowship has been a big help in organizing the Geoyachaq team and improving how we write our proposals. The workshops on theory of change and the resources they've given us, especially on budgeting and team organization, have been very useful during this process."*

*"The fundraising strategy of my organisation has greatly improved thanks to the knowledge and skills gained from the programme. We are approaching really big foundations and it is promising"*

*"The fellowship was instrumental to help in building the kind of network, the kind of skill set not just in accessing funds or grant writing, but also in engaging with stakeholders, international donors or landscape stakeholders, as well as in helping us to assess peer-to-peer learning opportunities, not only with African grassroots."*

Fellows applied these tools directly to their own organisations through live exercises, followed up by mentoring. As a result, a majority of participating CSOs have introduced new adopted safeguarding protocols, or updated their internal documentation to better align with donor expectations. This has been verified through evaluation interviews (see [Annex 21](#)), streams surveys (see [Annex 8](#), [Annex 12](#) and [Annex 25](#)), graduation day survey (see [Annex 34](#)), and a participatory evaluation (see [Annex 26](#)).

Progress toward **indicator 0.3**, which aimed to ensure that at least three UK higher education institutions receive training in decolonial approaches to conservation research, funding, and practice, has advanced meaningfully through multiple channels. During the Fellowship, the project convened a four-part online webinar series titled [Conservation's Leading Edges](#), which explored practical and philosophical innovations in community-led conservation and directly addressed themes of decolonisation.

This 4-part series gathered practitioners and scholars to discuss practical and philosophical innovations in community-based conservation and tackled the following topics:

- Session 1: [Transforming conservation practice through indigenous-led M&E](#) - 29th May 2024, Wednesday | 20.00 – 21.30 CEST
- Session 2: [Harnessing emerging technologies for communities and conservation](#) - 7th June 2024, Friday | 14.00 – 15.30 CEST
- Session 3: [Restoring environments through seed banks and plant nurseries](#) - 28th June 2024, Friday | 14.00 – 15.30 CEST
- Session 4: [Rooting conservation in indigenous ways of being](#) - 8th July 2024, Monday | 20.00 – 21.30 CEST

These dialogues were attended (live) by a near total of 150 participants including students and researchers from several UK and US universities, including the University of Cambridge and University of Edinburgh, practitioners from both the Global North and Global South, donors and community members. The video recordings of the events, available on Youtube, have been watched a total of 551 times since publication. These webinars helped foster critical reflection on Global North–South dynamics in conservation. Following this series, project leader Emily Caruso and a CCF fellow Preety Sharma were invited to speak to the University of East Anglia's MSc Global Development and Climate Change students, offering a session on decolonising conservation practices. Additionally, GDF Director Nessie Reid and CCF fellow



Rosebell Abwonji participated in a panel at the Conservation Optimism Conference (see [Annex 27](#)) and another panel discussion at the [Spiritual Ecology Festival](#).

In parallel, we published *Our Land, Our Stories: Voices from the Edges*, a collection of first-person narratives authored by 19 CCF fellows, which highlights the complexity, strength, and context-specific knowledge of grassroots conservation efforts in the Global South (see [Annex 11](#)). This publication was widely disseminated, including during the ISE Congress and Harvest Festival in Marrakech.

A two-part workshop series for the benefit of UK university students and a two-part online GEN in Conversation series have also been organised under the umbrella of the Conservation Futures Dialogues. Please see section 3.1 for further details. The willingness to collaborate and open spaces for different epistemological approaches to conservation practice and leadership is definitely present within UK academic spaces, as these partnerships prove. Yet it is still timid. The Sowing Seeds workshop for instance received just as many (relevant) applications as the seats available (we accepted all 16 applicants). While the participation throughout it was consistent and engaged, the quality and eagerness of participation between alumni and current, younger, students could be remarked and speaks to how little focus on critical and plural discourses around conservation are still centered in the dominant curricula. More work seems therefore certainly welcomed and much needed in the future.

Under **indicator 0.4**, the project committed to establishing internship partnerships between at least three UK higher education institutions and ten CSOs by the end of year 2. Eleven internships were organised in 10 fellows' organisations across Bolivia, Cameroon, Guatemala, Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania, Bhutan, Peru, São Tomé and Príncipe. Interns contributed to strategic planning, fundraising, ethnobotanical field research, and organisational development. We partnered with the Universities of Cambridge (MPhil Conservation Leadership), Edinburgh (MSc Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health) and Kent (MSc Ethnobotany and MSc ConservationScience ) for these internships.

- Sam [REDACTED] was hosted by ABOYERD, Cameroon
- Iyanuoluwa [REDACTED] was hosted by IMPACT Madagascar
- Kacie [REDACTED] and Fran Crowther were hosted by Jucumari, Bolivia
- Shelby [REDACTED] was hosted by TEST Tanzania
- Casper [REDACTED] was hosted by SERES, Guatemala
- Borwen [REDACTED] was hosted by Masai Mara Conservancies, Kenya
- Joe [REDACTED] was hosted by Fundação Príncipe, São Tomé and Príncipe
- Maddie [REDACTED] was hosted by Geoyachaq, Peru
- Allistair [REDACTED] was hosted by Voice of Nature, Cameroon
- Mayra [REDACTED] was hosted by Royal Society for Protection of Nature, Bhutan

Although the University of Kent's MSc Ethnobotany was discontinued following the academic year within which the internships were organised, relationships with host organisations and other institutions remain active and will continue beyond the life of the grant. The internships have resulted in strengthened relationships between fellows' CSOs and UK institutions and are well documented through signed agreements (see [Annex 3](#)) and online stories (see [Annex 23](#)). One of the internships (Sam Rees's with ABOYERD in Cameroon) has resulted in a long-term partnership which includes co-fundraising between the intern and the organisation and the development of new collaborative projects to support the organisation.

Finally, **indicator 0.5** required that at least five Global North donors establish relationships with GEN Fellows. Through the Community Exchange in Morocco, we facilitated in-depth conversations between fellows and philanthropic representatives. These interactions have led to the emergence of multiple seed grants and co-designed project opportunities. In 2024 and 2025, GDF awarded 9 seed grants to a total of 10 CCF fellows. Two of these were provided by



the ChanceMaker Foundation (the founder and director of which participated in the in-person dialogue about the future of conservation philanthropy in Morocco) through their ChanceMaker Ecosystem Fund, following GDF's successful matchmaking between the ChanceMaker Foundation and seed grantees. In 2025, we also launched the Conservation Justice Flow Fund, a grant programme developed by GDF specifically with CCF fellows in mind and funded through the Kadoorie Foundation. All Flow Fund grantees were nominated by GDF, and four out of five are CCF fellows. In addition to funding, the Flow Fund provides grantees with ongoing technical support, mentorship, and fundraising guidance throughout the grant period. The proposals and grant agreements from these 9 Seed Grants and 4 Flow Fund grants serve as evidence of this evolving support pipeline (see [Annex 28](#)). This outcome reflects a start of a shift in how funders perceive and engage with Global South grassroots leaders, and the trust and visibility fostered by the Fellowship were instrumental to this success.

Besides these evident successes, we are also heartened by the high success rate (46%) of the proposals submitted by our fellows in year 2, and the significant increase in this success compared to year on (25%). One of our fellows, Valery, whom we interviewed as part of a sample set of post-fellowship evaluation interviews, offers the following reflections:

*I think the CCF transformed me. I am a better leader. Now I have developed conflict management skills within the team, and I have better communication skills, which is something that has always been very, very important for me as a conservation leader, as a team leader, as someone who works with indigenous communities and also fundraising. It was a huge problem, like I mentioned before, but I think that I got my breakthrough by participating in the CCF.*

*But with this [CCF], I developed other skills. I actually had the opportunity of talking one-to-one through the programme with a donor, a major donor, a foundation, you know. And through this, I developed other skills in donor engagement. I learned that you just don't have to sit and wait for calls. You need to engage those donors. You need to engage foundations. You need to engage businesses. And I can tell you that, well, I'm not sure if I can share the name of the company here, but we are in the process of establishing a collaboration with them that is going to support our project in the national park with a million euros. That is huge.*

The indicators selected for the project outcome were both appropriate and sufficient to measure the intended transformation. Nevertheless, as noted there was a significant shift in strategy at the start of grant implementation, for which we adapted the indicators with a project change request. These adapted indicators were good enough to measure our progress and achievements, and yet if we had written the indicators with the Fellowship in mind they may have been different. We are convinced that the shift we made towards the Fellowship in the early stages was an excellent choice which has resulted in a much more durable, scalable and impactful programme. Despite the shift, all outcome indicators have been met or exceeded, and the data gathered, from proposal tracking and organisational records to partner feedback and training documentation, provides strong evidence that the project has successfully achieved its outcome. Going forward, the project's alumni programme, the Conservation Futures Dialogues, the emergent grassroots projects we are collaborating on with fellows, and our success in replicating the funding needed to continue the CCF will sustain the momentum generated during these two years.

### **3.3 Monitoring of assumptions**

**Assumption 1:** GEN Fellows and Advisers working on biodiversity and livelihoods are committed to participate in our programme.

*This assumption holds true, although not precisely how we originally intended it because rather than offering the programme to GEN members we opened the application process out to all global changemakers – and advertised it widely. Interest in, and commitment to, the programme was first verified with the sheer number of applications that came through in 2023,*

*for the first edition of the fellowship: we received 627 applications for 32 places (31 stayed the course). Our application process for the CCF 2025 (2nd edition) yielded a total of 1490 applications (860 more than in 2023), indicating a rapidly growing interest for this programme.*

**Assumption 2:** Faculty members of UK-based universities are interested in learning about decolonisation practices for conservation research and practice.

*This assumption held true; our conversations with representatives from University of Kent, University of Cambridge and University of Edinburgh have been very positive. Furthermore, we received interest from University of East Anglia's Masters in Climate Change and Global Development, which resulted in a guest speaker engagement for Emily Caruso (Project Leader) and Preeti Sharma (CCF 2024 fellow), as well as participation of the UEA MSc students in the Conservation Futures Dialogues' MSc workshop series. As yet we have not been able to build a connection with Oxford University, however we expect to develop this for the next edition of the CCF in 2025.*

**Assumption 3:** Charitable organisations seek new CSO partners to fund directly in the Global South, and Darwin Initiative continues to offer Capability & Capacity, Innovation and Main grants for at least two more rounds.

*This assumption held true in 2024, particularly for DI round 31. As of now, there is some uncertainty as to the future of the Darwin Initiative (completely outside of our control) so we cannot comment on whether there will be a R32. Outside of DI, our conversations with donor organisations have been very enthusiastic about this project - expressing great interest in learning more about the programme and engaging with our fellows.*

**Assumption 4:** Fifteen GEN Fellows already engaged in the process have the resources to submit proposals, engage with mentors and travel to the ISE Congress training event.

*In AR1, we wrote: "This assumption is no longer necessary given that we ended up opening the applications out to the public, and did not need 15 GEN members to become involved. If we shift the assumption to 'Grassroots conservation leaders from the Global South seeking opportunities such as the CCF have the time and resources to engage with an intensive online and in-person fellowship and submit high quality proposals', then the assumption would hold. We had 627 applications for the fellowship – an indication of the high level of need for this kind of offering."*

*Our updated response, to the proposed new assumption, is that this assumption held. We were able to support the fellows' CSOs to submit 13 high quality DI proposals, requesting very intensive time investment from them both throughout the 16-part DI clinic series and then in the process of mentoring the proposal development. We also experienced a very high level of engagement with the fellows post fellowship - with 12 of them being recruited by GDF to co-design & -deliver the GDF-led streams of CCF 2025, another 11 of them reviewing applications as part of the CCF 2025 selection process, 9 of them receiving funds through GDF funding mechanisms, 3 of them engaged in the development of a new co-created project (a proposal for which was submitted to DI in October 2024) and many of them continuing to receive mentoring and support from the GDF team. The assumption is also upheld by the incredible interest we have received from grassroots organisations in the GS for the application process of CCF 2025 (1490 applications in total).*

**Assumption 5:** UK-based Conservation Masters students seek internships in Global South CSOs. *This assumption held true. In total we supported 11 MSc/Mphil students to carry out internships with GS CSOs. We received interest from many more students, but only had funding for those 11 internships. We have heard from the partner MSc/MPhil programmes that the cohorts from the subsequent year had heard about the programme and expressed great enthusiasm for it, despite the fact that we were unable to offer it for the academic year 2024-25. We now have the funds to continue offering this opportunity for the 2025-26 academic year.*

## 4 Contribution to Darwin Initiative Programme Objectives

### 4.1 Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

The importance of scientific and technical training is enshrined in the articles of all international biodiversity agreements. In all partner countries, the CCF's training and mentoring content addresses CBD article 12(a) and 12(b) on research and training and SDG 4 on promoting lifelong learning opportunities and ensuring quality education, SDG 10 on reducing inequalities, and SDG 16 for peace, justice and strong institutions. Evidence for this is found in the programme developed for the fellowship (Annex 5) and in the content of the proposals submitted to donors during this reporting period (Annex 7). However, the project did not focus specifically on countries' abilities to contribute to national policy directly – our work is indirect, through the process of building and strengthening CSOs – and enhancing the leadership of grassroots changemakers – to be able to lead on this kind of advocacy work at the national and regional level.

In countries where CSO partner organisations are working on agroecological innovations and associated capacity-building,<sup>1</sup> it addresses ITPGRFA article 13.2(b) and SDGs 1 on poverty, 2 on sustainable agriculture. In countries where plant conservation is the focus, it targets CBD article 7 and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation's objectives I and IV on documentation and awareness-raising on plant diversity through a focus on biodiversity databases. We address the CBD's article 8(j) and associated decisions in countries where our partners' focus is on traditional ecological knowledge transfer and participatory policy-making. More broadly, the project addresses the (draft) post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework's focus on ensuring 'adequate financial and other means of implementation', associated with capacity-building. This is salient to the GBF's Goal D.6(c) and associated milestone D.2, as well as 2030 Action Targets (AT) 17 and 19. The GBF specifically mentions the importance of increasing financial flows to developing countries that are aligned with biodiversity conservation (AT 14 and 19). Through a focus on research, training and dissemination of biodiversity education, the cumulative effects of CCF fellows' biodiversity and livelihood projects contribute to the 2030 milestones and longer-term 2050 vision for biodiversity recovery across diverse contexts that face parallel challenges.

### 4.2 Project support to biodiversity conservation and multidimensional poverty reduction

The direct beneficiaries of the project are the 31 fellows and their organisations. Of the 31 fellows, 16 are women and 15 are men, and 13 of the fellows self-identify as indigenous (7 of these women), all of whom work directly for their communities through grassroots indigenous organisations.

Through their participation in the project, the fellows grew as leaders and supported their organisations to develop both financially and in their capacity to execute impactful projects. We were able to obtain evidence of their fundraising success through two annual surveys carried out at the end of [Year 1](#) and [Year 2](#), within which they share how GDF's support was instrumental in their capacity-building in this sphere. We also have evidence of the impact on the growth and capacity of the individual leaders through the end-Fellowship survey (see [Annex 34](#)) and the post-Fellowship interviews, the results of which were summarised in the public-facing [Impact Report](#) and the more granular [Impact Analysis Report](#). Each of the 31 fellows

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<sup>1</sup> Asociación SERES (Guatemala), Instituto Socioambiental (Brazil), Ya'axché Conservation Trust (Belize), MKAAJI MPYA asbl (DRC), Tanjona Association (Madagascar), Instituto Fronteiras (Brazil), GEOYACHAQ (Peru), MENCERTC (PNG), Voice of Nature (Cameroon), Ogiek Peoples Development Program (Kenya), The Society for Alternative Learning & Transformation (Kenya), BOYERD (Cameroon), Traditional Ecosystems Survival Tanzania (Tanzania)

represents an organisation that has benefited directly from the fellowship through fundraising, visibility and direct organisational development support (see [Annex 21](#)).

Indirectly, these organisations have benefited, collectively, hundreds of communities in the locations they work in, and the biodiversity of these areas, through the implementation of well-designed projects to sustain biodiversity and livelihoods.

Here are some examples of the projects the fellows are implementing through successful grant proposals:

- Seeds of Resistance: Strengthening Local Networks and Agroforestry Reforestation, Brazil
- Women Sowing the Future - Sustainable Production Under the Forest Canopy, Guatemala
- Supporting the coexistence of humans and elephants in the Campo Ma'an National Park area, Cameroon.
- Improving compliance and enforcement effectiveness in Bladen Nature Reserve and Maya Mountain North Forest Reserve, Belize
- Strengthening Yaki Protection through Community Engagement and Awareness Campaigns in South Minahasa, Indonesia
- Upscaling Community Based Resilience to Climate Change in Samoa by securing the future of Samoas Community Conservation Areas, Samoa
- Capacity building for pirarucu (Arapaima gigas) management in the Upper Jurua region, Brazil
- Protecting dry and galleries forests of Northwestern of Madagascar-Kasijy Special Reserve and Proposed New Protected Area of Madiromirafy, Madagascar
- Fostering Andean Bear Coexistence in Cochabamba, Bolivia
- Restoring Hirola Rangelands: A Community-Driven Conservation Initiative in Eastern Kenya

The potential to scale our approach has already been tested:

- 1) Given the immediate success and interest the CCF garnered both from potential fellows and donors, we were able to raise funds from 4 donors (with one major donor) to implement a second edition of the CCF in 2025-2026. We are currently in dialogue with two further funders to secure core funding for CCF 2027-2028.
- 2) Based on deep conversations with fellows about equity in the sphere of conservation leadership training, three fellows submitted, with GDF's support, a Darwin Initiative Capabilities & Capacities proposal in October 2024 (currently still under review) for a project designing and delivering CCF-inspired conservation leadership training to indigenous youth, in their own language and based in their indigenous epistemologies and cosmologies. While we wait for the Darwin Initiative response on this proposal, we continue to seek funding elsewhere to implement the project, with the long-term aim of scaling this project outwards to indigenous communities throughout the CCF network.

#### 4.3 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
<b>Not yet sensitive</b>	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
<b>Sensitive</b>	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	

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
	and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	
<b>Empowering</b>	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	
<b>Transformative</b>	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	X

As mentioned above, of the 31 fellows, 16 are women and 15 are men, and 13 of the fellows self-identify as indigenous, all of whom work directly for their communities through grassroots indigenous organisations. Of the 13 self-identified indigenous fellows, 7 are women. Every fellow and their organisation has been granted equally significant time and resources to support individual and organisational growth.

While the above basic data would class our project as *Empowering*, which is how we classified it in AR1, we now consider our project to be *Transformative* (see [post-fellowship interviews report](#)). This is because we have very actively focused the components of year 2 of the CCF, and the Conservation Futures Dialogues, on a community-led approach to conservation that is rooted in justice. This can be evidenced through the outputs of the CFD (e.g. the podcasts, essay, GEN in Conversation events, MSc training on decolonising conservation, publication of Our Land, Our Story, and Speculative Fiction workshop series), which are [being curated on this web platform](#), as well as through the public [Conservation's Leading Edges](#) webinar series, as well as through all the CCF online and in-person sessions related to the topic of community-led conservation which are rooted in an ontology of indigenous and local community ownership of conservation projects. Through these means - in particular the CFD - we address unequal power relationships and what is needed to effect institutional and societal change towards justice. Additionally, in the CFD, the vast majority of our contributors were women, reflecting our commitment to centring diverse voices in conservation. Aside from our conceptual lead, [Dr. Carolyn Finney](#), all panelists featured in our two GEN in Conversation events were women of colour and/or Indigenous leaders: Pat McCabe, Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh, Neema P. Broome (Part 1), and Ameyali Ramos, Molemo Moiloa, and Dr. Jocelyn Imani (Part 2). Our two workshop series were also facilitated by women, Dr. Carolyn Finney and [Sanabel Abdel Rahman](#), and the majority of voices featured in the accompanying podcast series were women as well.

Regarding attention to gender, sixteen of our 31 fellows are women, many of them operating within highly patriarchal systems and societies. We were very moved by their applications where they cited gender discrimination and systemic misogyny as some of the key challenges they face in their everyday work lives. We also received a higher proportion of applications from women than from men, indicating the significant need that exists among women for this kind of nurturing and supportive long-term training and capacity-building process. A large proportion of the individual mentoring sessions offered by the GDF team and advisors have been with women from the fellowship, many of these conversations revolving around issues that are specific to women. The vast majority of our online session leaders/facilitators (including the Conservation's Leading Edges webinars, shared above) were women, which goes some way towards ensuring that women's issues are not invisibilised during the sessions. We also ensured that the issue of gender remains at the heart of collective conversations around leadership and equity, given the specific challenges women leaders face in the male-dominated (particularly in the Global South) field of conservation.



Through these mechanisms, we have sought to highlight representation: increasing participation, inclusion and power of women and marginalised groups. The fact that 13 of the fellows represent participating indigenous or indigenous-led organisations (who are increasing their access to funding through the CCF) also ensures that we are addressing the ‘resources’ component of GESI: increasing access and control over assets and services of marginalised groups, in particular women from these groups.

#### 4.4 Transfer of knowledge

The principal approach we have taken to transfer of knowledge is through the CCF, where knowledge (including new knowledge generated in diverse spaces, including DI projects) is offered to the fellows, and by extension their organisations and other team members, through the form of an international training platform and associated materials. The MSc internship programme also offers another opportunity for knowledge transfer: the MSc students fresh from their academic year interned with Global South conservation organisations at the end of the year (in preparation for their final project/thesis), directly transferring the knowledge they have learned to these grassroots practitioners. In return, they gained invaluable practical knowledge of what conservation looks like in the everyday, bringing this to their future careers as NGO or government employees, researchers, donors and policymakers. Available evidence (see [Annex 23](#) for the online stories; we are currently writing up our interviews with host organisations and these will be available upon request) shows that these moments of exchange and learning are profound and transformative.

The [Conservation Justice Alumni Programme](#), which brings together CCF alumni and other GEN alumni from across our conservation programmes, fosters ongoing knowledge exchange between past CCF fellows and the wider GEN fellowship community. It serves as a platform for continued collaboration, peer learning, and cross-cohort engagement. Notably, 13 CCF alumni are currently involved in shaping the next edition of the CCF, contributing valuable insights from their own experiences and helping to guide the programme’s evolution.

Our collaboration with the fellows also yielded a publication - [Our Land, Our Story: Voices from the Edges](#) - which was shared in print format with scholars and practitioners at the International Society for Ethnobiology Congress in 2024, and will continue to be shared at other international conservation events, including the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi in October 2025. This publication stands out as it tells the personal stories of how grassroots conservation practitioners come to do the work they do and their great learnings - mainly from their interactions with community members - and how this informs their work. These kinds of stories are rarely at the centre stage of conservation policymaking or practitioner dialogues, and our publication seeks to shift that.

Another form of knowledge transfer occurs within the [Conservation Futures Dialogues](#), which seeks - over time - to nourish direct connections between conservation actors who rarely connect directly with one another (e.g. donors and community members), offering these actors new perspectives and alternative understandings of how conservation and conservation finance works. The CFD was in itself a platform offering spaces of knowledge transfer and dialogue for some of the CCF fellows - for instance CCF fellow Rachel Ikemeh was invited as one of the panelists to one of our public in-conversations; CCF fellows Preety Sharma, Valery Binda, Beatriz Murer and Reyni Palohoen are all part of the CFD podcast series. Furthermore, the outputs of the CFD are presented on an internationally available web platform and include - for now - podcasts, webinars, videos and essays. More material is being developed currently and we expect the CFD platform to continue to grow well beyond the Darwin Initiative project.

Finally, both the knowledge gathered through the implementation of the CCF and of the Conservation Futures Dialogues has been, and will continue to be, shared through in-person events across different contexts in which GDF and its network is active. For instance, CCF fellow Rosebell Abwonji was part of two panels, one organised by the [Conservation Optimism Conference](#) (presentation available [here](#)) and the second more recently as part of the [Spiritual](#)

[Ecology Festival of St. Ethelburga](#) (London). In October 2025, as part of our upcoming edition of the Harvest Festival Marrakech, GDF will also host events sharing some of the outputs and outcomes of the CFD, such as the online publication developed through the workshop “[Re-Landing: Writing Eco-connections through Speculative Frames](#)” and the sound work commissioned to Margarida Mendes as part of our podcast series.

## 4.5 Capacity building

While we are not able to speak for all fellows as some of them have not yet communicated updates in this regard, the following individuals shared important news with us post-fellowship:

- Wangechi Kiongo (woman from Kenya) received two new job offers in quick succession, resulting in a significant promotion to Fundraising and Communications Coordinator at the organisation Natural State.
- Swithin Kashulwe (man from Zambia) received a job offer to a position of greater responsibility in a new (his dream) organisation - he is now Restoration Ecologist at the International Crane Foundation. He also received a Burnett scholarship to participate in the MSc Conservation Science at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at University of Kent. He credits both of these successes to the CCF and the individual mentoring he received around this.
- Rosebell Abwonji (indigenous woman from Kenya) was accepted to the MPhil Cambridge Conservation Leadership in 2024 and has since then become a Trustee for Global Diversity Foundation and was elected Secretary of the Indigenous Studies Discussion Group at University of Cambridge.
- Preeti Sharma (indigenous woman from India) was invited as a Keynote Speaker at the 5th Open Science Meeting - Global Land Programme, Oaxaca, Mexico and as a Guest Speaker at the University of East Anglia, both in November 2024. She also received a promotion within her organisation to ‘Regional Manager’.
- Arjun Bhusal (man from Nepal) was headhunted by ZSL Nepal post-fellowship, and has been working his way into a project management position in the organisation since then.
- Ndimuh B. Shanchó (man from Cameroon) was able to obtain membership for his organisation at the Alliance for Amphibians Survival (ASA), also crediting our mentoring and the training received throughout the CCF for his success.
- Samson Luari (indigenous man from Kenya) was accepted to the MSc Conservation Leadership at University of Guelph, crediting our support with his success.
- Valery Binda (indigenous man from Cameroon) was invited to present his organisation’s work as a Keynote speech at the 2nd Edition of the IUCN Small Initiatives Program (PPI) Exchange Forum, in February 2025 in Senegal. In an in-depth interview we conducted with him as part of [our evaluation process](#), he also explicitly mentioned the role the CCF had on the capacity for his organisation to grow stronger funding partnerships ensuring greater stability and long-term prospects to their work.

Moreover, 16 fellows presented their work to important audiences at the ISE Congress in May 2024 within 3 panels that they self-organised. This offered them an important opportunity to share their work with a large audience of over 400 academics, practitioners and donors from all over the world.

## 5 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential component of our project, because without it we would be unable to ensure that our offering is truly reflecting the needs of our beneficiaries. When we launched the fellowship, we carried out a baseline survey (see [Annex 18](#)) to help us (a) understand their current self-reported level of capability & capacity to be able to better measure improvement at the end of the fellowship and (b) to ensure that the design of the various CCF streams took into account their individual learning objectives.

During the fellowship we implemented:

- (1) 3 evaluation surveys at the conclusion of all three streams (see [Annex 8](#), [Annex 12](#) and [Annex 25](#))
- (2) A participatory evaluation during the course of the in-person event (see [Annex 26](#))
- (3) 2 'Proposals submitted surveys' (at the end of each project year) to assess how the CCF was supporting fellows and their organisations to enhance their fundraising capacities and success (see [Annex 7](#)).
- (4) A final evaluation, during which we both explored fellows' assessments of the fellowship itself, and also reprised the questions from the baseline survey to evaluate change resulting from the fellowship (see [Annex 21](#) for impact report and analysis, and [Annex 34](#) for final evaluation survey).
- (5) We continuously assessed our performance with fellows - through general questions at the end of collective sessions, individual conversations or WhatsApp conversations and polls - allowing them to guide us in improving the fellowship. Some results of this ongoing evaluation included, amongst others, the fellows deciding the topics of the 'Technical Assistance Clinics' and us designing and delivering the Conservation's Leading Edges webinar series to respond to their requests for more content about leading discourse, policy, practice and research in the realm of conservation.

Post-fellowship, we carried out long-form interviews with 4 fellows to deepen our understanding of the way they had perceived and 'lived' the fellowship. The interview transcripts are available in [Annex 29](#), and the write up from them is available in [Annex 21](#). The overall results of our M&E process resulted in two outputs: the public-facing [Impact Report](#) and the more detailed [Impact Analysis](#).

We shared all of the results of our M&E process with our partners and the fellows, and invited feedback every step of the way. All fellowship delivery partners share the responsibility of the M&E work, although each partner is responsible for their own component/stream. GDF remains overall responsible for collating responses and developing a final 'lessons learned' report at the end of the project for use in the design of future fellowships. The 'steering group' of the fellowship (a group of 8-9 delivery team staff members) met regularly on Zoom and a Whatsapp chat group to ensure everything was working well and we were adapting to changing needs. We found our process highly effective and complete, and we would use this same multi-pronged approach into the future. We may add a more formal survey of the in-person event in the upcoming CCF 2nd edition. We were unable to organise a formal external evaluation of the process, however selected GDF team members (who are not directly involved in the CCF) spot-participated in online and in-person sessions, offering useful 'outside' perspectives which then allowed us to orient and enhance the programme.

Due to the nature of the Conservation Futures Dialogues, our Monitoring and Evaluation process was carried out mostly through informal and inherent ways. Our team met with our conceptual and scientific leads every two weeks since September 2024 to reflect, design and implement the different components of the programme. Each activity, its contents and contributors were reviewed by the core team as well as by gathering feedback from peers and colleagues from the conservation field. The two In Conversation online events were organised in dialogue with all the panelists through preliminary meetings and email exchanges and concluded with follow up exchanges with the panelists. For the [Sowing Seeds workshop](#), we released an evaluation form to the participants to gather their feedback (available upon request).

Aside from the above, our M&E process relies mostly on a simple ongoing assessment of our achievement of the indicators in our logframe. This is because outside of the fellowship most of our indicators are for specific products (e.g. proposals, toolkits, podcasts, training materials).

## 6 Lessons learnt

In AR1, we provided significant detail regarding the lessons learned for the implementation of the CCF. We summarise the key lessons here, some of which we have begun to address as we prepare for the 2nd edition of the CCF, which begins in November 2025.

- *Time required to design & run the whole fellowship.* The time needed for fellowship design & our initial ambition to have 2 cohorts within 2 years. We have learned this lesson and began updating the fellowship design in February 2025 for a November 2025 launch of the 2nd edition. We are also planning to run the fellowship every 2 years rather than every year so that we can provide intense support & mentoring to each cohort, ensuring that they get the pastoral care needed to embed learning.
- *Length & intensity of the fellowship:* We received important feedback from fellows about the fact that it was too long (at 10 months) and too intense (with 56 total online sessions, often with 2 sessions per week). This lesson was also learned through some minor staff burnout after the first fellowship. The second fellowship will be 6 months long, with 20 obligatory online sessions and up to 10 optional ones. We will be offering more video material to review and more hours of individual mentoring.
- *Number of fellows.* Based on some feedback from some very engaged fellows who were disappointed in the presence of a handful of less engaged colleagues, we considered reducing the number of fellows to 24, in order to offer more direct support to each individual and ensure high engagement from all (we named this in AR1). However, given how many excellent applications we have received for the 2nd edition, we have decided to keep the number at 30, and recruit alumni as mentors and supporters to ensure new fellows are highly engaged and motivated.
- *Moving some of the fellowship components to post-fellowship.* We have implemented this lesson already for the 2nd edition: the MSc internships, publication and seed grants will be handled after the fellowship ends, ensuring that fellows can choose whether or not to participate in this and to ensure they do not feel overwhelmed by fellowship demands on their time.
- *In person event.* We learned that the in-person event is absolutely essential in the creation of a durable cohort - thanks to the event we organised in May 2024 - but have decided to have it right at the start of the fellowship in order to create the cohort 'glue' from the start. (This contrasts to the CCF we are reporting on, where the event was 6 months into the fellowship).
- *Space to discuss Conservation & Communities.* Our offering focused principally on leadership & mentoring training as well as technical capacity-building. It did not involve an in-built component where we offered space to the fellows to explore, debate and wrangle with policy, practice, research and discourse related to community-based conservation. We remedied this for the 2024 fellows with the *Conservation's Leading Edges* webinar series offered in June and July of 2024. However we will, in the future, include an entire stream dedicated to these discussions within the online component of the fellowship (the *Conservation & Communities Stream*, which will be run by CCF 2023-4 alumni).
- *The importance of giving space to fellows' contributions.* During the course of the fellowship we increasingly gave space to the fellows to lead clinics and hold sessions; this was much appreciated both by the fellow-facilitators and the fellow-participants. We have taken to heart the lesson that mutual learning is almost *always* more impactful than expert-led learning, so we have recruited a group of CCF 2023-4 alumni to design and run the two CCF streams that GDF is responsible for, in the next edition of the fellowship (that is the technical capacity-building stream and the stream dedicated to policy, discourse and research on community-based conservation, mentioned above). This requires more upstream work and organisation on our end, but we believe it will be much more effective as a learning process for the community of fellows upcoming.

Beyond the technical aspects of fellowship management and design, we also learned broader lessons around how to enhance and extend the impact of our support for conservation leaders from the Global South:

- *Forge connections with other conservation leadership networks.* One of the things we found very heartening throughout this project has been the significant connections we have made with other coordinators of conservation leadership networks (e.g. Whitely Fund for Nature, WildHub, CoalitionWild, EDGE Fellowship, National Geographic Explorers, Conservation Leadership Programme, and others). With many of these, the conversation moved from an exchange on emergent news and communications to how we can collaborate better. With a handful of these coordinators we are currently designing a 'network for networks' programme, to be launched in the latter half of 2025, through which we will support network coordinators and their members by structuring exchanges in skills and ideas for capacity-building; organising collective events, exchanges and programme offerings (including a shared calendar, donor database and learning materials); streamlining our offerings to reduce 'network-fatigue' among our members; and more.
- *Focus on women in leadership.* As mentioned above, we learned that the challenges facing women leaders in the male-dominated field of conservation are significant. We are carrying forward another lesson which is to offer specific spaces of discussion to support women leaders in particular. We plan to begin offering a specific women-in-leadership support programme through the above-mentioned cross-network initiative we are launching soon.
- *Take time to build rapport with donors around the initiative.* We learned that dialogues with donors, especially those regarding catalysing new relationships and connections with CSOs require more time and a tactful, mindful approach. We took the time to allow the results of the CCF to come to fruition before we began having conversations with donors, and as we shared the outputs, we found that gradually these conversations were started by the donors themselves. This feels like a much more productive approach to gaining donors' trust and support, even if it slowed down the process of 'matchmaking' between donors and fellows' organisations.

We would like to note that many of the practical and conceptual learnings harvested from the CCF have been implemented already in other GDF events, for example a Community Exchange we are currently planning in India for South and Southeast Asia activists and practitioners. It has helped our understanding of the daily work of Global South conservation practitioners and how to help them overcome and move outside of the blind spots of many Global North donors.

Outside of the fellowship, we were pleased to have made the decision to move away from the two toolkits we were poised to develop - which we felt congealed or even enhanced the unhelpful duality between 'powerful' donor and 'disempowered' grassroots organisation - in order to create the Conservation Futures Dialogues, where donor and community-based organisations reflect, imagine and embody *together* just futures for conservation. We luckily learned the lesson, from the fellows and fellowship, before launching the toolkit delivery process, so we were able to pivot without any 'wasted energy' towards a more empowering and relevant series of events and outputs. This seeking to move away from 'us versus them' type thinking is an important value of ours at GDF and one we try to bring to other areas of our work.

## **7 Actions taken in response to Annual Report reviews**

There were two principal comments made in the AR1 review. We share them here and provide our answers to them. We did not discuss these with partners as they were very much related to our management of the project and not to partnerships.

- 1) *There appears to be some delay in at least two Output Indicators and uncertainty about progress in one more. Given that this is only a two year project, more early clarity on progress would be helpful.*

We are glad to report that the delays have been fully resolved through the launch of the *Conservation Futures Dialogues* in late 2024; this project sought to gather the toolkits, MSc



training and podcasts in one coherent, collective project with the ambitious aim of reimagining conservation. We are satisfied that we have achieved the majority of our expectations with this project. Please see the rest of the report for further information on these outputs.

- 2) *94 project proposals have been submitted during the Fellowship period to date, with 24 successful. It is not immediately clear whether they were all started during the project period or some beforehand. Clarity on that would be helpful.*

In the first 'Proposals submitted survey' carried out in April 2024, we explicitly requested that the fellows report on proposals submitted during the CCF period which ran from 1 November 2023 to the DI reporting date of 31 March 2024 (therefore, this was well within the project period). The 'Proposals submitted survey' of April 2025 has explicitly requested that fellows respond with the list of proposals they submitted between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. While we cannot control for the veracity of their statements, we rely on the trust we have built with them throughout the 18 months of collaboration. As far as we're aware, self-reporting for the indicator related to proposals is the most appropriate and efficient way of obtaining the evidence needed for the indicator.

## 8 Risk Management

In AR1, we reported a few new risks we had not anticipated with regards to attendance within the CCF, which we summarise here: (1) poor internet connectivity, (2) individual (mental and physical) health issues of people working at the frontline of biodiversity and climate crisis impeding participation, (3) environmental and political events reducing attendance (natural disasters, conflict). In Year 1, we revised our risk register to include these risks (see [Annex 30](#)). We noted that these attendance-related risks were mitigated by (a) posting recordings of most sessions to our shared internal online platform so that individuals were able to catch up with any learning they may have missed and (b) close individual communication and mentoring (through email/whatsapp) of individuals who are greatest risk of missing sessions for connection/health/organisational/political/environmental issues.

More generally, we noted that by adapting our project to streamline our activities and outputs into one principal programme – the Conservation and Communities Fellowship, led by GDF, Common Purpose and The Human Edge – we have reduced to nil the fiduciary risk. We also had removed the activity that involved in-country fieldwork by GEN advisors, meaning that accident or injury within the programme was significantly reduced. The only area where our safeguarding risk remained in place was during the in-person event in Morocco. We took out insurance for the entire two-part event, to mitigate any risks.

We actively mitigated against the risk of staff overburden by increasing the dedicated delivery team from 1.5 to 3 people in yr 2. This significantly reduced the risk of burnout in the core staff, and ensured much higher quality outputs across the project.

Since year 1 we have not encountered any further or new risks, given that the second year of the programme was devoted to supporting the fellows submit high quality DI proposals and deliver the MSc internships and Conservation Futures Dialogues. These were much less complex to implement than the CCF overall. We are pleased to report that we encountered no adverse scenarios with the internships, having relied on host organisation risk management protocols. Nevertheless, we have recently reviewed our GDF grant-making policy, which the internship host organisations would have to abide by in the future, and any future internship grant to an organisation will now be preceded by a risk assessment and management plan which we will compile with the organisations.

## 9 Scalability and Durability

Over the past 2 years we have invested time and energy into ensuring that this project seeded longstanding and scalable programmes and processes. One of our primary actions in this regard has been delivering regular and high quality communications about the programmes we are running through the project (CCF and CFD). Through Social Media ([Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)) and our website ([www.darwininitiative.org](#)), we have shared our progress and achievements with a wide audience. We have also been working on developing a range of resources to support the project, including a handbook for fellows and a guide for host organisations. We are currently in the process of finalising these resources and will be launching them in the coming months. We are confident that these resources will be valuable to other organisations looking to run similar projects and will help to ensure the sustainability and scalability of the project.

[LinkedIn](#)), event participation, podcasts, a print publication and multiple stories published on the GDF website, as well as encouraging active dissemination on our behalf by project participants, we have been very successful in garnering interest and support for the project.

Besides the ongoing nature of our communications about the CCF, some examples of specific moments of sharing and communication include:

- [Our participation as a facilitator in the Cambridge MPhil Conservation Leadership](#) for a day-long workshop in November 2024 on personal resilience for Global South conservation practitioners
- Our participation as guest speakers, alongside fellow Preety Sharma, on the MSc Global Change and Development at University of East Anglia
- [Participation in the Conservation Optimism Summit in Oxford in September 2024](#) with a panel presentation on the CCF presented by fellow Rosebell Abwonji and GDF Director Nessie Reid.
- [Participation in the Spiritual Ecology Festival at St Ethelburga's](#) in London where the CCF and decolonising conservation was a core topic of conservation
- The [Rooting Conservation](#) podcast episode, which has just been made public.

One key outcome of this, and the word-of-mouth sharing that our fellows have told us repeatedly that they do for the CCF (they are truly the fellowship's best ambassadors!), is that in 2025 the total tally of applications for the 30 places on the CCF 2025-26 is **1490**, more than double the total from the 2023 applications (630), and an unusually large number for this kind of international conservation training programme. Further evidence for interest comes from the number of singular registrations for the 2 information webinars we held in May 2025 for prospective applicants, which tallied a total of just under 2000 (ultimately just over 400 people actually came to the live events; the others presumably watched the recording we shared with them).

We should add that we have anecdotal evidence, from direct communications with fellows, that the components of the fellowship - the MSc internship programme, the publication, the Conservation's Leading Edges series, the DI proposal-writing clinic series, the platforming through participation at the ISE Congress, and the Alumni Programme – have made this fellowship stand out among leadership training programmes. For this reason, we plan to offer the same - and more - at the next round.

One key component of our exit plan was the creation of a self-replicating process, whereby the fellows would become mentors and trainers in turn, allowing them to use their learnings to extend the number of indirect beneficiaries of the programme. We have anecdotal evidence - from ongoing conversations with fellows - that this is the case. We also have anecdotal evidence that many of the peer-mentoring pairs that were established as part of the fellowship continue to be active to this day, with some of them continuing to meet weekly. Furthermore, we have received information from the fellows that the mentoring training they received has been put to productive use within their teams and partnerships, resulting in better staff retention and more productive teams, where key tasks are finally being delegated by the leader/founder to other team members (founders/leaders holding all the resources, knowledge and power is a real structural problem in many small grassroots organisations).

More robust evidence of the scaling processes underway comes in two forms:

- 1) The fellows from CCF 2023-24 have been invited (and recruited) to join in:
  - a) The selection process for CCF 2025. We have 11 fellows supporting us with this process.
  - b) The design and delivery of the two streams GDF leads in the CCF 2025 (Capacity-building and Conservation & Communities). 13 fellows have been contracted to deliver this work.
  - c) As individual mentors for the CCF 2025 cohort, thus reducing the burden on the GDF team, practicing their mentoring skills and 'paying forward' the value they have received from the individual mentoring.

- d) The design and delivery of an emergent 'CCF Peer Circle' programme which aims to offer a light-touch version of the CCF programme to 70-80 applications who did not get accepted to the final 30 places for the CCF. This is a very important component of 'scalability and durability' as it seeks to make the key components of the fellowship accessible to a larger group of people. We hope to pilot this in parallel with the CCF 2025.
- 2) The DI grant proposal for the [Grassroots Leadership Programme](#) (the proposal is still under review by the DEC). This programme offers - through CCF fellows - locally-adapted conservation leadership training that is inspired by the CCF to indigenous youth associations. Should it be funded, it will be piloted in Nagaland and Uttarakhand in India and the Masai Mara in Kenya. This represents an important component of scalability and durability as it 'scales' the project to the grassroots, and establishes a set of structures and tools for other CCF fellows to deliver the programme with youth groups in their communities.

In order to ensure durability of the programme, we have established an [Alumni Programme](#), through which we offer ongoing mentoring, clinics and support to the CCF alumni to ensure that their learning is embedded over the longterm. One of the key components of the Alumni Programme is the ongoing mentoring that all alumni have the opportunity of receiving. GDF continues to grow its roster of vetted mentors to support this process. There is no 'deadline' or end game, simply the ongoing offer of alumni continuing to be supported, held and mentored as long as is needed. This actively contributes to ongoing capacity building within the host countries, as the individuals continue to grow and 'pay forward' their learning among their team, peers and partners.

In addition to scaling out the methods, process and content of our fellowship through community leaders, we also seek to build, with selected alumni, more long-term partnerships for incubation of their field programmes. This was mentioned in our original proposal and remains one of the key means we have to ensure long term sustainability of our work – by grounding it in the practical, everyday realities of field programmes. Unlike our current large, long-term field programme (also co-funded by Darwin Initiative), the [High Atlas Cultural Landscapes Programme](#), these 'incubations' would be light-touch and short (no more than 3 years), focusing GDF's contribution on local capacity-development, mentoring and strategy support rather than boots-on-the-ground implementation. The Grassroots Leadership Programme is expected to seed the beginning of a long-term, grounded fellow-incubation programme in Nagaland, with fellow Preety Sharma.

Finally, throughout the latter part of 2024 we dedicated significant staff time to designing and developing the full '[Conservation Justice Programme](#)' which the CCF and the CFD are both key components of. We are grateful for the Darwin Initiative to have helped seed this new core GDF programme. As part of this process, we developed a fundraising strategy and associated materials (which we share more about in the proposal section entitled 'Annex 5' below). We are very glad to report that early in 2025, through co-funding from diverse donors, we were able to gather over ████████ to implement a second edition of the CCF in 2025-2026, this time including seed funding for small grants. This ensures that the project's staff and resources continue to implement the programme seeded by this DI project - in fact we have increasingly internally reoriented staff to this new programme given how fast it has grown. We are very heartened by the interest that donors continue to show in both the CCF and the CFD, and are confident that we will be able to continue growing and enhancing both programmes into the future.

## 10 Darwin Initiative identity

The Darwin Initiative's support for this project is clear on the webpages of the [Conservation & Communities Fellowship](#) and the [Conservation Futures Dialogues](#). It is the only donor explicitly recognised on those pages, even though a handful of other donors provided minor contributions to the fellowship and the dialogues. This identity as the sole donor to this initiative is clear throughout our other communications, including the [Impact Report](#), our CCF story

publication entitled [Our Land, Our Story: Voices from the Edges](#), the CFD GEN in Conversation event videos (video for [event #1](#), and for [event #2](#)), essay, podcasts series and the [CCF video](#). We also mentioned DI throughout social media ([Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)) posts related to the CCF and Conservation Futures Dialogues.

One of the core teaching streams within the fellowship is dedicated to supporting fellows to develop Darwin Initiative proposals so the name features throughout any marketing or programmatic communications concerning the fellowship, including when the call for applications for the fellowship was launched on 1 August 2023 (this CFA had a very wide reach, resulting in 630 applications from people who had heard about it from multiple different sources and networks). In addition, our fellows and their organisations were well aware of Darwin Initiative support given the intense focus on the DI proposal-writing towards the end of the fellowship (early in year 2 of the project), through the 16-part DI proposal-writing clinic series run by Dr Gary Martin and Dr Emily Caruso of GDF. This series was open to all GEN members and at any one workshop we had between 30 and 45 people from different GS grassroots organisations attending. It included a full overview of the Darwin Initiative mission, approach and structure, as well as the use of multiple successful Darwin Initiative projects as case studies for teaching and learning.

More broadly, the UK government's contribution was highlighted principally through actively referencing DI throughout all aspects of programme implementation, and by partnering with UK Higher Education institutions for key components of the programme.

## 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 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)				
<b>TOTAL</b>	112,407	112,407	0%	

Staff employed (Name and position)	Cost (£)
Emily Caruso - Project Leader	
Nessie Reid - GDF Director	
Gary Martin - Project Leader	
Aarti Gor - Programme Manager	
Sana Mzoughi - Project In / Visibility Lead	
Lorenza Arnaboldi - Operations Lead	
Susannah Mc Candless - ISE Congress Coordination	
<b>TOTAL</b>	



Capital items – description	Capital items – cost (£)
None	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Other items – description	Other items – cost (£)
Audit costs	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

## 12.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project	Total (£)
Salvia Foundation	
Full Circle Foundation	
Hans Wilsdorf Foundation	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project	Total (£)
<b>TOTAL</b>	

## 12.3 Value for Money

Our project represents excellent value for money. With just under GBP [REDACTED] we were able to contribute to the organisational growth of 31 grassroots organisations from 19 countries, including countries that are rarely represented in international capacity-building programmes such as Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, and Guatemala. Evidence for this is widely referred to throughout this report, with the core piece emerging from the number of successful proposals submitted in both years of the projects that are directly the result of the capacity-building programmes we offered (see [Annex 7](#)). More concrete evidence comes from the quotes of the fellows themselves:

*“The fundraising strategy of my organisation has greatly improved thanks to the knowledge and skills gained from the programme. We are approaching really big foundations and it is promising.”*

*“The fellowship has been a big help in organizing the Geoyachaq team and improving how we write our proposals. The workshops on theory of change and the resources they’ve given us, especially on budgeting and team organization, have been very useful during this process. (...) From the entire Geoyachaq team in Peru, we are very grateful for the opportunity. We are a small NGO, but the results we are achieving with the communities we work with are making a big impact.”*

*“Yes, I received valuable support from the fellowship, particularly through the workshop learning sessions and the resources provided. These contributed significantly to improving the structure, clarity, and strategic focus of our proposals.”*

We also successfully launched the Conservation & Communities Fellowship (CCF), an entirely new leadership programme, which is now part of a long-term GDF Programme (the Conservation Justice Programme), both of which have since attracted significant funding from three additional donors.

Our operational model, with no central office and a fully remote team, enabled us to direct the majority of the budget to project implementation. We leveraged digital platforms to deliver high-quality training and mentoring through weekly online clinics, thematic series, and mentoring, which meant participants could access consistent support without the need for costly travel or infrastructure.

The depth and reach of this grant are best described through its impact:

- **Success of Submitted Proposals:** Fellows submitted a total of 219 proposals in two years, 82 of which were funded and 18 awaiting a response. These figures reflect a significant return and the efficacy of our capacity-building sessions.
- **Alumni-led Continuity:** Thirteen alumni are now contracted to co-lead CCF programme delivery in 2025, eleven are supporting the selection process, and a number of them will be mentoring the new cohort. Valuing the skills of the previous cohort and having them as an integral part of the programming creates a self-sustaining loop of expertise that ensures a multiplying effect from the original investment.
- **Expanded Reach:** We received 1,490 applications, more than double the number in 2023, for 24 available fellowship places, and nearly 2,000 people registered for our information webinars. This interest demonstrated the visibility, credibility and demand for such programmes.
- **Outcomes Through Peer Learning:** The mentoring relationships forged during the project have continued informally post-programme, contributing to cohesion within alumni’s teams, staff retention, and shared leadership within grassroots organisations. These are outcomes that are hard to fund but critical to long-term organisational longevity.
- **Leveraged Funding:** The credibility of our model, strengthened by the outcomes of this project, helped us raise over ████████ in early 2025 to continue and expand our work, including the addition of seed funding for small grants and the launch of an alumni-led ‘CCF Peer Circle’ programme to support the excellent applicants who do not make it to the CCF.

Finally, value is not only a financial calculation in the case of this project. This project has invested in people who are investing in others. We know that alumni are already mentoring peers, embedding new practices within their organisation, and co-leading programme activities. This is not just value for money, it is value that continues to grow, propagate, and root itself far beyond the life of the initial project.

### 13 Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

### 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 to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes.*

Darwin Initiative funding enabled us to design and deliver a unique and transformative learning experience for 31 grassroots conservation leaders from 19 Global South countries. The Conservation and Communities Fellowship was a 10-month immersive journey that included intensive online training, in-person workshops and panel discussions, internships in the fellows' organisations, a publication and incubation of 13 fellows' community-based conservation projects. Through mentoring, capacity-building and mutual learning, the Fellowship successfully achieved its core goal of increasing access of Global South grassroots organisations to Global North philanthropic funding. Its true impact goes well beyond this practical capacity-building objective. The Fellowship seeded projects, ideas, connections and collaborations that we never would have imagined. Its success built the foundation for the Fellowship's renewal and longevity through significant funding from diverse donors, all the while tailoring its content and delivery to the needs of its beneficiaries by inviting them to design and lead it. Alongside the Fellowship, Global Diversity Foundation launched an ongoing initiative entitled the Conservation Futures Dialogues. This project gathers diverse actors from across the conservation field to reflect, imagine and embody *together* just futures for conservation.

These two programmes set in motion original initiatives such as a new grassroots conservation leadership training programme dedicated to indigenous community youth, an international speculative fiction writers' collective and a self-sustaining, growing peer-mentoring network for Global South conservation practitioners. Together, these programmes are forging a new vision for conservation that is rooted in equity, justice and relationality.

During an event at St Ethelburga's (London) entitled *Our Land, Our Story*, Nessie Reid, GDF Director, shared the stage with a Kenyan CCF Fellow (Rosebell Abwonji), the coordinator of the Conservation Futures Dialogues (Francesca Masoero), and Mexican student from the Cambridge MPhil in Conservation Leadership (Maritza Prado). They discussed what has been learned, harvested and seeded during the Fellowship and the Dialogues, with Nessie arguing that:

*"Some of the most outstanding results of the CCF and the CFD are basically intangible. The fellows that I've spoken to talk about how the CCF gave them confidence in their knowledge and experience, and in using their voice to stand up for conservation equity. Many noted that it was the first global initiative they have been part of that explicitly flips the narrative on who has power and who gets to speak in the conservation sector.*

*There are not many initiatives out there that are set up to systematically address the systems of power and hierarchy that conservation has too-long been rooted in. These blind spots are what has kept Global South grassroots NGOs toiling away, fighting not only the ongoing immensity of biodiversity loss, extractivism and climate change impacts in their communities, but also fighting entrenched systems of inequality that keep them in a poverty and scarcity trap."*

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)
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Video	<a href="#">The Conservation &amp; Communities Fellowship 2024</a>	The Conservation and Communities Fellowship: supporting and connecting Global South grassroots conservation practitioners to increase their impact and visibility	<a href="#">The Human Edge Common Purpose</a>	Yes
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## Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against final project indicators of success for the life of the project

Project summary	Progress and achievements
<b>Outcome</b> The biodiversity and livelihoods programmes of 30 Global South CSOs run by GEN members are enhanced, funded and supported by UK research institutions	
<b>Outcome indicator 0.1</b> 30 GEN Fellows submit high quality biodiversity and livelihoods proposals to Darwin Initiative and other donors; 10 by end yr1 and 20 by end yr2	31 CCF fellows have submitted a total of 219 proposals to Darwin Initiative and other donors, 82 of which were successful and 18 awaiting a reply (evidence provided in section 3.2 of report and <a href="#">Annex 7</a> )
<b>Outcome indicator 0.2</b> 30 CSOs implement best practices in project management, monitoring and evaluation, impact measurement and grant reporting by yr2	31 CCF fellows have received intensive online training in best practices in project management, M&E, impact measurement and grant reporting at end of yr 1 (evidence provided in section 3.2 of report and <a href="#">CCF Miro Board</a> )
<b>Outcome indicator 0.3</b> At least 3 UK higher education institutions are receiving training in decolonial approaches to conservation research, funding and practice by end year 2	We have published a compendium of grassroots conservation stories which will be used in teaching and toolkits for decolonial approaches to conservation research, funding & practice (evidence provided in section 3.2 of report and <a href="#">Annex 11</a> )
<b>Outcome indicator 0.4</b> Partnerships developed between at least 3 UK-based institutions and 5 CSOs to enable Masters' internships by end yr1 and with an additional 5 CSOs by end yr2	By the end of year 2, partnerships have been developed between 3 UK HE institutions and 10 CSOs, for 11 MSc internship collaborations (evidence provided in section 3.2 of report and <a href="#">Annex 3</a> )
<b>Outcome indicator 0.5</b> At least 5 Global North donors establish relationships with GEN Fellows by yr 2	We facilitated relationships between CCF fellows and Global North donors by organising a 'donors and fellows conversation' at the Community Exchange in Morocco. This led to 13 grants (9 seed grants and 4 flow fund grants) awarded to CCF fellows (evidence provided in section 3.2 of report and <a href="#">Annex 28</a> ). CCF fellows' proposal success rate was also boosted from 25% in year 1 to 46% in year 2 (evidence provided in section 3.2 of report and <a href="#">Annex 7</a> )
<b>Output 1</b>	



30 Global South CSO projects are incubated, generating lessons learned for immediate replication	
<p>Output indicator 1.1</p> <p>At least 10 Global South CSO Darwin Initiative Capability and Capacity or Innovation proposals submitted by end Year 2</p>	<p>A total of 13 Darwin Initiative proposals have been submitted by yr 2. One Darwin Initiative Main Project proposal submitted by Rachel Ikemeh (SW Niger Delta Forest Project) was successful in R30 and one Capability and Capacity Project proposal (submitted by GDF but co-designed and written by 3 fellows) is still under review by the Darwin Expert Committee (evidence provided in section 3.1 of report and <a href="#">Annex 7</a>). GDF provided significant mentoring and support for these proposal throughout the CCF and a 14-session workshop on Darwin Initiative proposal-writing clinic for R31 of Darwin Initiative proposal submissions. (See <a href="#">Annex 6</a>)</p>
<p>Output indicator 1.2</p> <p>20 further small, medium or large grant proposals for biodiversity and livelihoods projects submitted by CSOs to other donors (10 submitted in yr1, 10 submitted in yr2)</p>	<p>A total of 219 proposals were submitted during this project cycle and 82 were successful (24 in yr 1 and 58 in yr 2 and 18 from yr2 are still pending review). GDF provided intensive individual mentoring on these proposals, in addition to working more generally on proposal-writing and donor engagement throughout the course of the fellowship. We have evidence that for some proposals the fellowship was instrumental in their success through individual feedback provided in the CCF proposals submitted survey (evidence provided in section 3.1 of report and <a href="#">Annex 7</a>)</p>
<p>Output indicator 1.3</p> <p>At least 10 funded projects launched and incubated during the project's lifetime, by end yr 2</p>	<p>Fellows have launched and begun implementing 13 projects during the project lifetime, with 9 seed grants and 4 flow fund grants (evidence provided in section 3.1 of report and <a href="#">Annex 28</a>)</p>
<p>Output indicator 1.4</p> <p>Toolkit for Global South CSOs for successfully funding and delivering biodiversity and livelihoods projects is completed in draft form by yr1 and published by Yr2</p>	<p>The toolkit has been reframed and rescheduled, and are both embedded within the <a href="#">Conservation Futures Dialogues</a> process, (evidence provided in section 3.1 of report). It reflects and expands on lessons learned directly from fellows' experiences and other collaborators in the field of conservation, and offer a complementary, reflective and exploratory space of GDF's <a href="#">Conservation Justice Programme</a>.</p>
<p>Output indicator 1.5</p> <p>Podcast on accessing funding, project management and impact measurement produced and broadcast by yr2</p>	<p>The podcast has been reframed as a series which is now embedded within the <a href="#">Conservation Futures Dialogues</a> process, (evidence provided in section 3.1 of report). It reflects and expands on lessons learned directly from fellows' experiences and other collaborators in the field of conservation, and offers a</p>

	complementary, reflective and exploratory space of GDF's <a href="#">Conservation Justice Programme</a> .
<b>Output 2.</b> 40 GEN Fellows and Advisers build mentoring skills and establish a peer-mentoring network for Global South CSOs	
Output indicator 2.1. 30 GEN Fellows trained as skilled mentors through the online Conservation and Communities fellowship in yr1	31 CCF fellows completed comprehensive training in mentoring, leadership, and project development throughout the duration of the fellowship (evidence provided in section 3.1 and <a href="#">CCF Miro Board</a> )
Output indicator 2.2. 30 GEN Fellows receive 15 months of mentoring and support from peers through the Conservation and Communities Fellowship by yr2	31 Fellows were paired in peer mentoring relationships midway through the Fellowship and continued these engagements independently beyond the graduation ceremony, demonstrating the emergence of a sustainable peer mentoring network (evidence provided in section 3.1 and <a href="#">Annex 10</a> ). Given that there is an uneven number of fellows, Emily Caruso mentored (and was being mentored) by one of the fellows (Moses Kerry)
Output indicator 2.3. 15 CSO mentees submit to GDF first drafts of proposals for donors by yr2	Fellows received intensive individual and group mentoring and proposal-writing support through individual mentoring calls, the Darwin Initiative proposal-writing clinic, and a general monthly fundraising and proposal-writing clinic that is still being organised after the graduation of fellows. 13 fellows submitted proposals to the October 2024 Darwin Initiative call for proposals and a total of 219 additional proposals were submitted by fellows to donors (evidence provided in section 3.1 and <a href="#">Annex 7</a> ). Specific proposals are available upon request.
Output indicator 2.4. At least 25 GEN Fellows receive in-person training and practice in network-building and peer-mentoring at the ISE Congress 2024 (Q1 Yr2)	The in-person event took place in Morocco from 11 to 19 May: 11-14 May was the CCF 'community exchange' and 15-19 May was the ISE Congress 2024 (evidence provided in section 3.1 and <a href="#">Annex 31</a> ).
<b>Output 3.</b> Global North research institutions and donors promote equity in conservation research, practice and funding	
Output indicator 3.1. 30 stories of grassroots community-based conservation experiences gathered and edited, and outline of training curriculum for training in decolonising conservation	19 stories of grassroots community-based conservation experiences were published in the Fellowship publication, <i>Our Land, Our Stories: Voices from the Edges</i> (evidence provided in section 3.1 and <a href="#">Annex 11</a> ). This story collection was

research, practice and funding developed by end yr 1; 80 students and 5 lecturers trained using the stories by end year 2.	shared - distributed as hard copies - with over 400 academics, students, conservationists, philanthropists, changemakers and artists in the 2024 ISE Congress in Marrakech.
Output indicator 3.2. Toolkit on Decolonising Conservation Research, Practice and Funding is published by yr2	The toolkit has been reframed and rescheduled, and are both embedded within the <a href="#">Conservation Futures Dialogues</a> process, (evidence provided in section 3.1 of report).
Output indicator 3.3. At least 10 UK-based conservation Masters students have completed internships with partner CSOs by yr 2	11 MSc students had internships with 10 partner CSOs (7 in yr 1 and 4 in yr2) (evidence provided in section 3.1 and <a href="#">Annex 3</a> and <a href="#">Annex 23</a> )
Output indicator 3.4. Podcast on decolonising conservation for donors, institutions and universities, produced and broadcast by yr 2	The podcast has been reframed and rescheduled, and are both embedded within the <a href="#">Conservation Futures Dialogues</a> process, (evidence provided in section 3.1 of report).

**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
<b>Outcome:</b> The biodiversity and livelihoods programmes of 30 Global South CSOs run by GEN members are enhanced, funded and supported by UK research institutions	0.1 30 GEN Fellows submit high quality biodiversity and livelihoods proposals to Darwin Initiative and other donors; 10 by end yr1 and 20 by end yr2 0.2 30 CSOs implement best practices in project management, monitoring and evaluation, impact measurement and grant reporting by yr2 0.3 At least 3 UK higher education institutions are receiving training in decolonial approaches to conservation research, funding and practice by end year 2 0.4 Partnerships developed between at least 3 UK-based institutions and 5 CSOs to enable Masters' internships by end yr1 and with an additional 5 CSOs by end yr2 0.5 At least 5 Global North donors establish relationships with GEN Fellows by yr 2	Proposals submitted  Project management documents, logframes and monitoring and evaluation strategies and grant reports  Partnership agreements signed between GDF and higher education institutions  Partnership agreements signed between UK institutions and CSOs for internships  Grant agreements between donors and CSOs
<b>Output 1</b> 30 Global South CSO projects are incubated, generating lessons learned for immediate replication	1.1 At least 10 Global South CSO Darwin Initiative Capability and Capacity or Innovation proposals submitted by end Year 2 1.2 20 further small, medium or large grant proposals for biodiversity and livelihoods projects submitted by CSOs to other donors (10 submitted in yr1, 10 submitted in yr2) 1.3 At least 10 funded projects launched and incubated during the project's lifetime, by end yr 2 1.4 Toolkit for Global South CSOs for successfully funding and delivering biodiversity and livelihoods	Submitted Darwin Initiative Capability & Capacity or Innovation proposals Proposals submitted Grant agreements between donors and CSOs signed Simple MoUs governing mentoring and incubation relationship between GDF and CSOs signed Toolkit published on GDF website and log of communications/ dissemination actions Podcast broadcast on GDF Anchor account and available on Apple, Spotify and YouTube

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	<p>projects is completed in draft form by yr1 and published by Yr2</p> <p>1.5 Podcast on accessing funding, project management and impact measurement produced and broadcast by yr2</p>	
<p><b>Output 2</b></p> <p>40 GEN Fellows and Advisers build mentoring skills and establish a peer-mentoring network for Global South CSOs</p>	<p>2.1 30 GEN Fellows trained as skilled mentors through the online Conservation and Communities fellowship in yr1</p> <p>2.2 30 GEN Fellows receive 15 months of mentoring and support from peers through the Conservation and Communities Fellowship by yr2</p> <p>2.3 15 CSO mentees submit to GDF first drafts of proposals for donors by yr2</p> <p>2.4 At least 25 GEN Fellows receive in-person training and practice in network-building and peer-mentoring at the ISE Congress 2024 (Q1 Yr2)</p>	<p>Mentoring Academy certificates</p> <p>Attendance records</p> <p>Mentoring training Zoom recordings</p> <p>Recordings of mentoring supervision</p> <p>Zoom meetings between mentoring pairs and GDF staff</p> <p>Draft proposals prepared by mentees</p> <p>ISE Congress report and video</p>
<p><b>Output 3</b></p> <p>Global North research institutions and donors promote equity in conservation research, practice and funding</p>	<p>3.1 30 stories of grassroots community-based conservation experiences gathered and edited, and outline of training curriculum for training in decolonising conservation research, practice and funding developed by end yr 1; 80 students and 5 lecturers trained using the stories by end year 2.</p> <p>3.2 Toolkit on Decolonising Conservation Research, Practice and Funding is published by yr2</p> <p>3.3 At least 10 UK-based conservation Masters students have completed internships with partner CSOs by yr 2</p> <p>3.4 Podcast on decolonising conservation for donors, institutions and universities, produced and broadcast by yr 2</p>	<p>Training materials</p> <p>Workshop reports and attendance records</p> <p>Published toolkit</p> <p>Individual internship learning journals/logbooks</p> <p>Partnership agreements signed between UK institutions and CSOs for internships</p> <p>Podcast broadcast on GDF Anchor account and available on Apple, Spotify and Youtube</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)

1.1 Implement weekly 'mentoring and incubation clinics' with all 40 GEN Biodiversity and Livelihoods Fellows and Advisers, focused on proposal writing, team-building workshops, project management labs, and communications coaching, supplemented by possible site visits to selected projects

1.2 Invite at least 10 GEN experts to mentor the CSO leaders - to support project incubation - in the first cohort throughout FY1 and the second cohort throughout FY2

1.3 Mentor individually 5 CSO leaders to submit Darwin initiative proposals in R30, and an additional 5 CSO leaders to submit Darwin Initiative proposals in R31, through online proposal writing clinics, with possible site visits to selected projects

1.4 Support all 30 CSO leaders to submit proposals for their biodiversity and livelihoods projects to other selected donors and open calls for application on an ongoing basis until project end

1.5 Produce and publish detailed Toolkit for CSOs on Funding and Delivering Biodiversity and Livelihoods Projects in the Global South by March 2024

1.6 Produce and broadcast podcast on accessing funding, project management and impact measurement by March 2024

2.1 Train the initial cohort of 20 GEN Biodiversity and Livelihoods Fellows and Advisers in mentoring skills through a 6-month leadership & Mentoring Academy held from June to November 2023

2.2 Pair trained mentors with 20 mentees in the second cohort who work in similar geographic regions or on similar topics by December 2023

2.3 Support the 20 mentor-mentee pairs through regular supervision with a member of the GDF team and peer-support group calls from January 2024 to March 2025

2.4 Request and review first draft grant proposals by the 30 GEN Biodiversity and Livelihoods Fellows to evaluate their learning on an ongoing basis until project end

2.5 Gather at least 15 GEN Biodiversity and Livelihoods Fellows and 5 Advisers at the ISE Congress for intensive in-person training and practice in network-building and peer-mentoring by May 2024

3.1 Publish Project in/Visibility online platform by May 2023

3.2 Develop Project in/Visibility training materials by November 2023

3.3 Offer 2 Project in/Visibility trainings for each partner research institution - 1st training by March 2024, second training by October 2024

3.4 Actively engage and collaborate with willing donor partners to help catalyse funding relationships between them and participating CSOs on an ongoing basis

3.5 Engage with three UK based higher education and ten CSO project partners to deliver at least 5 Conservation Masters Internships among partner CSOs (call for applications, collective selection process, M&E) in yr1 and 5 in yr2

3.6 Produce and publish a Toolkit on Decolonising Conservation Research, Practice and Funding by December 2024

3.7 Produce and broadcast a podcast on decolonising conservation for donors, institutions and universities by December 2024

#### **Important Assumptions**

- GEN Fellows and Advisers working on biodiversity and livelihoods are committed to participate in our programme
- Faculty members of UK-based universities are interested in learning about decolonisation practices for conservation research and practice
- Charitable organisations seek new CSO partners to fund directly in the Global South, and Darwin Initiative continues to offer Capability & Capacity, Innovation and Main grants for at least two more rounds

- Fifteen GEN Fellows already engaged in the process have the resources to submit proposals, engage with mentors and travel to the ISE Congress training event
- UK-based Conservation Masters students seek internships in Global South CSOs

# Annex 3 Standard Indicators

**Table 1 Project Standard Indicators**

Please see the Standard Indicator Guidance for more information on how to report in this section, including appropriate disaggregation. N.B. The annual total is not cumulative. For each year, only include the results achieved in that year. The total achieved should be the sum of the annual totals.

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total achieved	Total planned
DI-A01	Number of people from key local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training to improve their proposal-writing capacities	0.1	People	Women, IPLC Men, IPLC Women, non-IPLC Men, non-IPLC	7 6 9 9	7 6 9 9		7 6 9 9	7 6 9 9
DI-A01	Number of people from key local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training to improve their mentoring capacities	2.1	People	Women, IPLC Men, IPLC Women, non-IPLC Men, non-IPLC	7 6 9 9	7 6 9 9		7 6 9 9	7 6 9 9
DI-A02	Number of secondments or placements completed by individuals of key local and national stakeholders	3.3	People	Women, non-IPLC Men, non-IPLC Others, non-IPLC	4 2 1	2 2 0		6 4 1	6 4 1
DI-A03	Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of the project	0.2	Number	Grassroots and community-based NGOs and CSOs [Country list is from all partner communities above]	31	31		31	31
DI-A04	Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training	0.1	People	Women, IPLC Men, IPLC Women, non-IPLC Men, non-IPLC	0 0 0 0	7 6 9 9		7 6 9 9	7 6 9 9

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total achieved	Total planned
DI-C01	Number of best practice toolkits published and endorsed	1.4 and 3.2	Number	Language: English Country: Global	0	2		2	2

**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)
Our Land, Our Stories: Voices from the Edges*	Story Collection	Each story is authored by a different person, there is no one singular author.  Date: 2024	10 authors are women 9 authors are men	Multiple nationalities	Global Diversity Foundation	<a href="https://global-diversity.org/gdf-conservation-and-communities-fellowship/#flipbook-df_38746/1/">https://global-diversity.org/gdf-conservation-and-communities-fellowship/#flipbook-df_38746/1/</a>

- **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 <b>correct template</b> (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and <b>deleted the blue guidance text</b> before submission?	YES
<b>Is the report less than 10MB?</b> If so, please email to <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a> putting the project number in the Subject line.	YES
<b>Is your report more than 10MB?</b> 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 <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a> about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	NO
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, <b>do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 14)?</b>	N/A
<b>Have you included means of verification?</b> You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	YES
<b>Have you provided an updated risk register?</b> 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.	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.	