



Darwin Initiative Capability & Capacity: Final Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":
(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/information-notes/>).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes.

Submission Deadline: no later than 3 months after agreed end date.

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

Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	DARCC051
Project title	Strengthening the capacity of community institutions within CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe
Country(ies)	Zimbabwe
Lead Organisation	Wildlife Conservation Action (WCA)
Project partner(s)	Community Campfire Association of Zimbabwe (CCAZ)
Darwin Initiative grant value	£92,216.00
Start/end dates of project	01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025
Project Leader's name	Dr. Moreangels Mbizah
Project website/blog/social media	www.wildlifeconservationaction.org
Report author(s) and date	Dr. Moreangels Mbizah, Togarasei Fakarayi, Tawanda Pesanayi, and Bella Nyamukure.

1 Project Summary

The project was implemented across five Communal Areas Management Programmes For Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) districts of Mbire, Nyaminyami, Binga, Chiredzi and Chipinge. These districts were beneficiaries of the CAMPFIRE, a programme that is coordinated by the CAMPFIRE Association of Zimbabwe (CAZ). CAZ is mainly dominated by the representatives from the Rural District Council where decisions on management of natural resources for CAMPFIRE areas are made. The local communities were not fully represented in decision making processes, yet these decisions affect their natural resources. The CAMPFIRE programme therefore had governance gaps that include failure to devolve rights and responsibilities to communities to sustainably manage natural resources in their areas. These challenges were identified from a site level assessment on governance and equity (SAGE) in October 2022, conducted in Mbire district by the Community CAMPFIRE Association of Zimbabwe (CCAZ) with support of IIED and Wildlife Conservation Action. The assessment established several governance capability challenges that include poor communication, limited knowledge and skills for representing themselves, leadership gaps and lack of knowledge in financial management. Due to limited knowledge and poor coordination at community level, the local communities from the CAMPFIRE areas were not actively involved in the governance of natural resources in their areas leading to poor management of these resources and loss of biodiversity. In an effort to improve coordination among communities, the community representatives created a Community CAMPFIRE Association of Zimbabwe (CCAZ) in 2021. However, CCAZ had limited capacity to engage and build capacity and capability of local

communities to be actively involved in the governance and management of the natural resources in their respective districts. This project led by Wildlife Conservation Action (WCA) and implemented in collaboration with the CCAZ sought to address the capability and capacity needs of CCAZ and the local community institutions involved in the CAMPFIRE programme in natural resources governance, leadership and communication. This was achieved through training of CCAZ staff and Board members in natural resources management, leadership, financial management and communication (Annex 1 [Financial management training](#)). The capability and capacity of local community institutions targeting mainly the Environmental Sub-committees (community committees), were strengthened in each of the five districts (Annexes 2-6 [Chiredzi Training Report](#), [Mbire Training Report](#), [Nyaminyami ESC training report](#), [Binga ESC training report](#), [Chipinge ESC training report](#)). A total of 254 (61 females and 193 males) committee members from the five target districts had their skills developed through training. CCAZ's capability and capacity on project management, stakeholder engagement and representing community voice in the governance of natural resources was enhanced during the project. The trained and informed community institutions have contributed to improved management of natural resources in their CAMPFIRE areas through collective engagement with the local authorities and the beneficiary communities. Improved coordination and communication among the community committees resulted from this training brought-in motivation and hope among the communities from the CAMPFIRE areas. The skills and knowledge including financial management, leadership and communication gained by local institutions from the training have also been adopted for improved management of revenue generated from CAMPFIRE areas for community use and poverty alleviation. This project has therefore contributed towards improved biodiversity conservation through enhancing the capability and capacity of local community institutions who are driving the sustainable management of natural resources across five districts in the CAMPFIRE areas. Below is a map showing the location of the five target districts where the project took place.

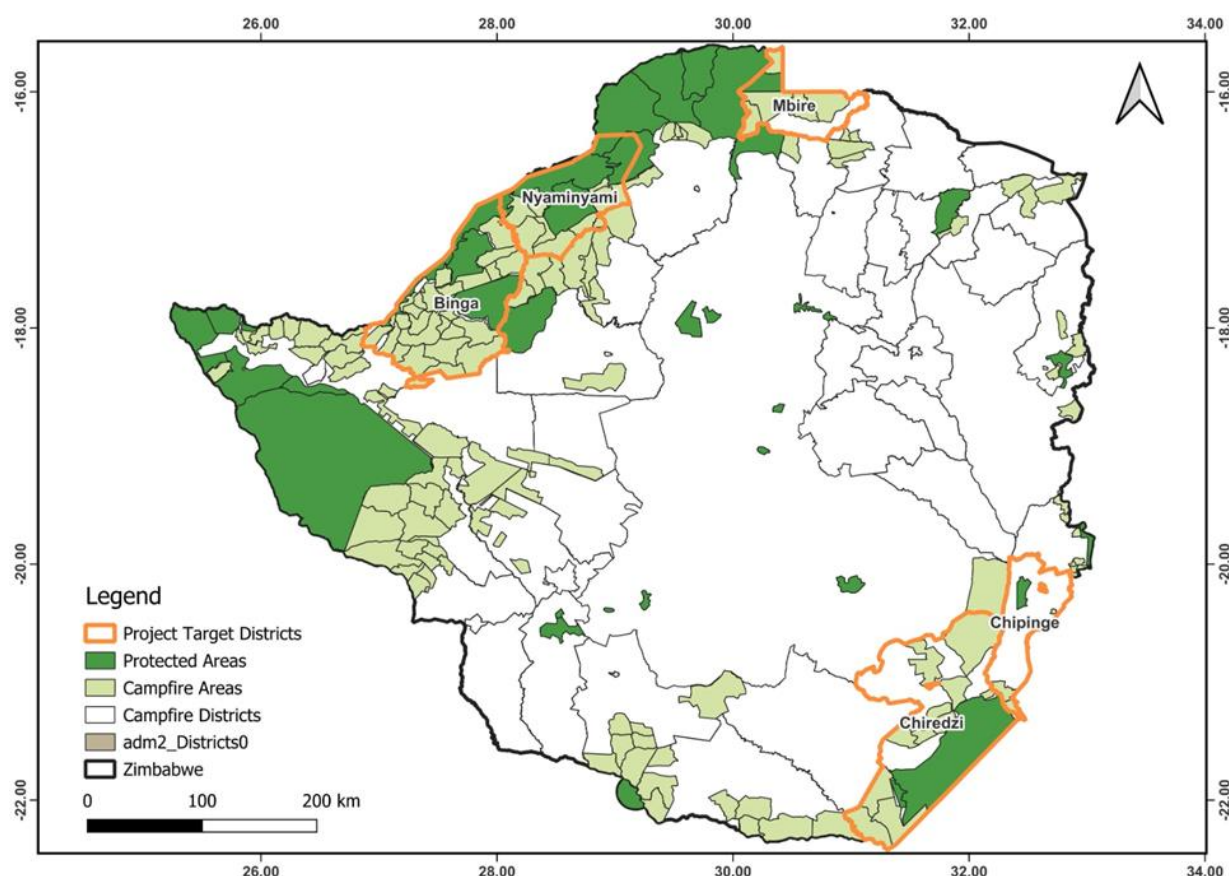


Fig. 1. Location of the five target districts where project interventions took place.

2 Project Partnerships

This project was implemented in partnership with the CCAZ, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and local stakeholders involved in natural resources management from each of the five Rural District Councils (RDCs). These stakeholders included the Rural District Councils (RDCs), Environmental Management Agency, Forestry Commission and the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority.

Roles and Responsibilities of partners: WCA and CCAZ were directly involved in project implementation including engaging with the communities and stakeholders during training. WCA also involved CCAZ in all planning and delivery of project activities during project implementation. Through the process, CCAZ gained skills in stakeholder engagement, project management and expanded networks with stakeholders, other civil society organisations and communities at both district and national levels. CCAZ was also directly involved in writing this report.

Role of International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED): Provided support remotely towards the development of the training materials for the community institutions. In February 2025 an IIED staff visited the country and trained CCAZ, WCA and a few other CSOs on governance assessment using Site Assessment of Governance and Equity (SAGE) tool. IIED also held a discussion with CCAZ and WCA and explored opportunities for future fundraising to scale-up this joint work in the five districts.

The Rural District Councils through their environment and natural resources departments played a pivotal role in co-facilitating the training, coordinating district stakeholders and communities in each district (Annex 7 [RDC Officer facilitating ESC training](#)). They also assisted in identifying the community committees from across the district wards for the training. The selection of the communities was led by RDCs and was done in consultation with WCA and CCAZ. The participants for the training were identified based on the need, geographic locations and information gaps. Priority was given to active CAMPFIRE wards in each district. The district authorities also played a key role in facilitating the training of the community committee meetings on natural resources governance with a focus on financial management, leadership and communication. The Environmental Management Agency provided technical support during the training of the committees mainly focusing on threats to the environment and possible solutions as well as legislative environmental framework (Annex 8 [EMA Officer facilitating training in Chipinge](#)). The Forestry Commission provided technical support during training of committees focusing on forest management for the CAMPFIRE areas. The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) was instrumental in educating community representatives about sustainable wildlife management in CAMPFIRE areas, and legislative framework on wildlife use and benefits (Annex 9 [ZPWMA Officer facilitating training](#)). The partnership in this project has brought diverse knowledge and ideas during training of the committees. The collaboration approach adopted by the partners and stakeholders during the training was instrumental in identifying key challenges faced by the communities and jointly discussed possible solutions to some of the problems. The different expertise brought together during the training and stakeholder engagement was useful in building a culture of coordination and collaboration towards natural resources management in CAMPFIRE areas. Beyond the project, the local stakeholders and communities expressed commitment to continue engaging regularly and make use of knowledge gained from this project to continue improving the governance of natural resources. The district stakeholders for Chipinge and Chiredzi in particular came out with a tentative calendar of meetings with communities.

The successful joint delivery of the training forms a key achievement from these partnerships and collaborations. The involved partners had professional personnel who were good at identifying community needs and co-develop solutions to the roadmap for improved governance of the target CAMPFIRE areas. During the project it was established that there are good technical personnel at district level who have capacity to provide effective training to local communities. However, most districts indicated that they lack resources for coordinating such meetings and training. Prioritisation of resources at district level is another challenge where insufficient resources are allocated to capacity building activities. It is essential for future engagements to organise workshops targeting high level district decision makers who include Chief Executive Officers, Finance Managers and Council chairs to raise awareness about the importance of community training as a tool for development and conservation of biodiversity.

3 Project Achievements

The project has successfully strengthened the capability and capacity of local institutions and communities in the five CAMPFIRE districts. A total of 31 committees from 31 wards across the five target districts were trained. The governance training conducted with CAMPFIRE committees have improved skills and knowledge among the local institutions in the governance of natural resources, financial management, leadership and communication. A total of 254 committee members who comprised 61 females and 193 males were trained from the five districts (Annexes 10-13 [Binga attendance register](#), [Chiredzi attendance register](#), [ESC training Nyaminyami, Chipinge list of workshop participants](#)). The skills development of the community committees have contributed to improved coordination among communities and management of CAMPFIRE areas. The governance training also provided a platform for government stakeholders to plan and coordinate with their communities for the improved management of their areas. The local communities gained knowledge on good governance, leadership, communication and financial management of revenue generated from the CAMPFIRE areas. Through the trained community CAMPFIRE committees, the local communities from the five campfire districts were empowered to actively participate in the governance of their resources at ward level. The communities became aware of their rights and obligations under the CAMPFIRE programme and using the knowledge gained, they are able to make informed decisions as they engage with their local authorities. The relationship between the local authorities and the communities was strengthened during this project.

The capability and capacity of CCAZ was strengthened during this project. The collaboration between WCA and CCAZ made it possible for CCAZ to engage with district stakeholders across the five districts. CCAZ has managed to secure two Provincial clearances granting CCAZ the authority to work in Matabeleland North and Mashonaland Central Provinces (Annexes 14 and 15 [Approval letter Mat North](#), [Approval Letter Mashonaland Central](#)). This means that CCAZ can now apply for MOUs with 8 Districts in Mashonaland Central and 7 districts in Matabeleland North. Since CCAZ was a partner during the project implementation, there was increased recognition of CCAZ by both communities and stakeholders. WCA also provided technical support for project management, community and stakeholder engagement and communication to CCAZ. During the course of the project CCAZ members attended at least 11 natural resources management events and meetings. These include the Human-Wildlife Conflict Relief Fund Indaba (15 April 2024) and the Climate change, carbon markets and sustainability Indaba held in Bulawayo (17-18 July 2024), International Leopard day (3 May 2024), National Community Conservancies Convention (31 October 2024), World Wildlife Conservation Day commemoration (3 March 2024), Kavango-Zambezi Performance Assessment Tool and Phase 4 Planning Tool (18-19 March 2025), EU Biodiversity through lens: A celebration of people and nature (2 October 2024), Climate Change, carbon markets and sustainability Indaba 17-18 July 2024 (Bulawayo) and interview with a national radio station (National FM) in Zimbabwe (Annexes 16 and 17 [CCAZ KAZA TFCA meeting invite](#), [CCAZ Radio interview](#)).

Technical support for development of the CCAZ website (<https://www.ccazim.org/>) was also another key milestone achieved during the project. Meanwhile, the CCAZ communication team trained by WCA are finalising content development for the website. The CCAZ staff also worked closely with WCA in other communication platforms. CCAZ managed to post <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61570094876265&mibextid=LQQJ4d&mibextid=LQQJ4d> in the social media during the project period.

The CCAZ board managed to convene meetings twice (May and November 2024) during the course of the project. They deliberated on issues that include progress on this project, organisational growth, governance, communication, financial management, review of the ZimParks Wildlife Management Bill, community coordination, fundraising and networking with other civil society organisations and government stakeholders (Annexes 18-20 [CCAZ Board training report](#), [CCAZ Board members training workshop report](#), [Report presented during the CCAZ workshop](#)). These meetings have contributed to improved coordination among community representatives from the CAMPFIRE areas as they managed to gather, share and reflect on challenges as well as discuss possible solutions for improved community engagement in

CAMPFIRE programmes. The CCAZ board members, currently (4 females and 4 males) were also trained on governance, leadership and financial management in Harare. The members also managed to engage with government stakeholders who include the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife. The CCAZ board also took the opportunity to conduct meetings with civil society organisations during their stay in Harare. This helped to increase visibility of CCAZ, opening up more opportunities for engagements. The CCAZ's capability and capacity to engage has improved significantly during the project. This organisation successfully represented the local communities at the national level with engagement of the Parliamentary Committee on the ZimParks Amendment Bill, contributing to the crafting of wildlife laws through advocacy and engagement and also utilizing the SAGE assessments for community needs. They also managed to disseminate information to their constituent districts to attend and meaningfully participate in the community consultations in Chipinge, Chiredzi, Hurungwe, Tsholotsho and Nyaminyami districts, ([photos](#)). CCAZ lobbied the government for laws modifications on behalf of the community, amplified the voices of the communities they represent to the national level and articulated interest from the active wildlife communities to the national level). As a result of this capability and development, CCAZ in partnership with IUCN (Biopama Programme) and Mucheni Conservancy conducted another SAGE assessment in Binga where governance gaps were identified. This also provides a great opportunity for CCAZ to engage and build relations with stakeholders. This project has contributed to increased recognition of CCAZ by various government, civil society and donor stakeholders through engagements and consultations. Currently, CCAZ was granted permission to operate in 11 districts in Mashonaland Central and Matebeleland North provinces.

3.1 Outputs

A total of 31 community committees from the CAMPFIRE districts namely Binga (7), Chipinge (6), Chiredzi (7), Mbire (6), Nyaminyami (5) were trained in governance of natural resources in their CAMPFIRE areas. In total 254 participants composed of 61 females and 193 males from these committees had their skills and knowledge in principles of good governance improved. Binga district had a total of 44 (35 males and 9 females) members trained, 29 males and 11 females were trained in Chipinge district, Chiredzi district had 26 males and 20 females trained, 18 females and 62 males were trained in Mbire district and 3 females and 41 males were trained in Nyaminyami district ([training workshop photos](#)). The trained community committee members gained skills and knowledge in group management, transparency, financial management and communication. These community representatives also gained knowledge about their rights and obligations under the CAMPFIRE program. This was measured through the pre and post training assessments conducted at the beginning of the training and at the end of the training ([link to the pre and post assessment form](#)). There was improvement of RDCs, CCAZ and community committees in terms of how they execute their duties. During the training, these local institutions managed to identify some governance and coordination challenges affecting the smooth operations in the CAMPFIRE areas. These challenges included poor coordination among the involved institutions, lack of clear communication, limited capacity among the communities to make informed and guided decisions. Through this training, the three institutions managed to strengthen working relations and identified key areas that need improvement. The local authorities 3 districts out of the 5 have improved in their planning and initiated mainstreaming of the CAMPFIRE programmes into district plans. The CCAZ gained visibility during these engagements. Its role in representing communities was clearly understood by the stakeholders who exchanged notes with CCAZ for future programming. The local community committees have established strong networks with both the local authorities, stakeholders and CCAZ. This project has established a platform for continuous engagement among these local institutions. Post-trainings, meetings conducted with the target communities helped to pass on the knowledge to the communities as well as gather views for improved decision making from village level through to ward level and district level ([Annex 21 evidence- post training evaluation report](#)).

This project has introduced CCAZ to key stakeholders at district and national levels. The district level engagements were done during planning and training workshop events. Prior to these

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engagements, the stakeholders and some communities could not distinguish between CCAZ and the CAMPFIRE Association (CA). However, roles and responsibilities of CCAZ in representing communities were clearly articulated. Through support of WCA, the CCAZ has participated at a total of 6 national level natural resources management events that include the Community Conservancies Convention Conference held in Harare on the 31th of October 2024, World Wildlife Conservation Day commemoration (March 2025), Climate Change, carbon markets and sustainability Indaba (17-18 July 2024), and Agroecological Day (6 September 2024). Development and submission of a position paper by CCAZ responding to the Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill was another key success achieved during the project (Annex 22 [CCAZ position document Wildlife Amendment Bill](#)). In this position paper CCAZ advocated for the community needs to be addressed under the Bill.

CCAZ's visibility has increased (from zero post and no social media account to six Facebook posts) and the setting up of a website during the course of the project. The organisation shared six posts on social media, conducted one radio interview in Bulawayo at a Carbon Credits Convention workshop on 18 July 2024. The National FM radio station had an interview with the CCAZ Board Chair Mr Elmon Mudenda who talked about CCAZ structure, its function and roles. The interview was held in Tonga the local language of Binga which is one of the Darwin Initiative sites

3.2 Outcome

The project has achieved its outcomes as indicated by a total of 254 members (61 females and 193 males) from the five community CAMPFIRE committees from across five districts who have adopted knowledge and skills from the training. Currently, the committees are applying the knowledge in conducting their work at the local level. This was revealed by the end of the project assessment survey compared with the initial survey conducted at the beginning of the project. The results of the survey indicated improvement of all the 31 trained community committees on how they execute their duties ([Evaluation Report](#)). The committees confirmed that they are applying the knowledge and skills gained from the training. A positive improvement on how CCAZ and RDCs conducted their duties was also realised as a result of this project. Networks strengthened between RDCs, local stakeholders and community committees have contributed to improved coordination among the stakeholders towards governance of CAMPFIRE areas. The adoption of new knowledge and skills was a key milestone in promoting a coordinated approach to management of wildlife areas in the communities. All the 31 committees from the five districts had increased knowledge on their roles, responsibilities and obligations in the governance of CAMPFIRE areas. Strengthening of CCAZ also brought in improved representation of local communities in policy decisions. CCAZ has managed to take the community voice to national level platforms including the Parliamentary portfolio committee on environment and natural resources. The CCAZ staff who was seconded to WCA under this project adopted the skills and knowledge gained in amplifying CCAZ's programme management and development and stakeholder engagement leading to increased visibility, professionalism and recognition of the organisation. The capability and capacity of CCAZ in community coordination was enhanced. In October 2024, CCAZ was instrumental in coordinating communities from the five target CAMPFIRE districts to participate at the National Community Conservancies Convention, a platform that allowed communities to share their views and challenges they face from their areas. CCAZ was also among the key presenters at this Convention, a pointer of increased recognition and capacity of this organisation (Annex 23 [CCAZ Speaker Appreciation Letter](#)) The community members used this opportunity to share challenges they face in their CAMPFIRE areas, putting across their voice to decision makers and development partners. Improved planning among the local authorities was also realised during the project where these stakeholders realised the importance of joint planning in CAMPFIRE areas. A total of 25 stakeholders actively participated in this project and have their capacity in governance and planning enhanced during the project.

3.3 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumptions were monitored throughout the project's implementation. As the logistics of the training in the five districts involved organisation by the local counterparts (members of the CCAZ board or of the community committees), there was a risk of unintended or unaccounted use of funds. This did not happen as financial management was done under the supervision of WCA and following WCA's Financial management policies. WCA's Finance officer worked with CCAZ and the local counterparts to ensure appropriate handling and reporting of expenses. There was a risk that during the training workshops there might be incidences of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment as the participants will be spending a few days together in one place. Facilitators from WCA and CCAZ were prepared for this and sensitized about the possible risks and tasked with monitoring and intervening should such incidents present themselves. WCA has safeguarding policies on sexual harassment, and the reporting procedures, and all participants were made aware of the policies. The capability and capacity of CCAZ was going to be strengthened mainly through training and there was a risk that some of the target participants might fail to avail themselves for the training. The support from CCAZ board and the project assistants communicating and mobilising their committees resulted in the training being successful as all the invited participants were in attendance. There was a risk that there might be some post-election political unrest in some parts of the country thereby hindering mobilization efforts for the training. The local situation in the targeted districts was monitored and remained calm. The schedule of local training sessions was handled with flexibility in order to adapt to the situation that could have emerged. There was also a risk that the government may not accept CCAZ as legitimate which could have possibly hindered some of the activities, because it could be seen as competition to the existing CAMPFIRE Association. Throughout implementation, the project ensured that there was early and regular communication with government entities at district and national level about the goals and usefulness of CCAZ. All assumptions were ranked as low risk and there were no changes to the assumptions during project implementation, and this has led to the assertion that the expected project pathway to change remains intact and true.

4 Contribution to Darwin Initiative Programme Objectives

Contribution to biodiversity conservation: Improved coordination among the trained committees, district stakeholders with support from WCA and CCAZ has contributed to improved biodiversity conservation in the CAMPFIRE areas. The trained community committees across the five districts are now actively involved in governance of their natural resources through informed and direct engagement in local decision making and management actions. This project also contributed to the Darwin Initiative objective of poverty alleviation through empowering communities in sustainable financial management of revenues generated from the CAMPFIRE areas. The trained communities have adopted skills for proper planning especially on the use of CAMPFIRE funds for improved community livelihoods, a major sentiment raised by participants at the Post Training Assessment focus group discussions.

4.1 Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

This project has contributed to national policy and international biodiversity and development conventions as follows,

The Constitution of Zimbabwe: This project, through training, provided the capability and capacity needed by the communities to exercise their rights to natural resources management and beneficiation. This participatory rights of communities in sustainable wildlife management are enshrined in Zimbabwe's Constitution 13(2) and 4.

Zimbabwe's Wildlife Policy (1992): The project has contributed to fulfilment of provisions of this policy that recognise the role of communities in wildlife management outside the protected area system. This project has targeted the CCAZ and the communities who are among the key actors for driving community involvement in wildlife management.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The Zimbabwe NBSAP calls for active participation and engagements of communities in natural resources management. However, in most cases the communities lack capacity to make informed decisions for improved governance

of their natural resources. Capacity development of local institutions under this project managed to put in place skills for effective participation

National Determined Contribution (NDC): The revised NDC document for Zimbabwe includes the need to preserve ecosystems, forests and sustainable land use as these will lead to increased capacity for carbon storage. The trained community committees, stakeholders and CCAZ play an important role in improving ecosystems and biodiversity and thereby contribute to the fulfilment of Zimbabwe's NDC implementation.

National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1 2021-2025). The strategy put a priority on environmental protection, climate resilience and natural resources management. The CAMPFIRE areas from the five target districts where the trained communities were drawn from are key priority areas for improving natural resources management and building resilience of local communities in Zimbabwe. This project contributed to knowledge and skills required for sustainable natural resources management, resilience building and active participation in decision making over wildlife and biodiversity in fulfilment of NDS1.

Zimbabwe Climate Change National Adaptation Plan: Through building capability and capacity of community committees from CAMPFIRE areas, this project has contributed to achievement of Strategic priority 1 (climate change adaptation mainstreamed and sustained) outcome 1.1 and Strategic Priority 2 (Effective and efficient climate risk management) outcome 1.1 of the National Adaptation Plan. The outcome 1.1. of strategic priority 2 of the NAP calls for ensuring institutional arrangements and capacities of institutions involved in climate change adaptation and climate risk management strengthened. The target local institutions involved in this project are key institutions responsible for spearheading response to climate change at district and local levels. The project also contributed to improved management of natural resources through knowledgeable local institutions where enhanced natural resources form one of the key strategies for communities to adapt to climate change.

Convention on Biological Diversity: Building capacity of local institutions in CAMPFIRE areas is instrumental in ensuring improved management of wildlife and biodiversity in wildlife corridors. This project therefore has contributed to attainment of Goal A of the Global Biodiversity Framework that calls for maintaining integrity and connectivity of ecosystems. The target CAMPFIRE areas where community committees have their capacity developed support important wildlife corridors. This project has also contributed to participatory planning and decision making in biodiversity areas, mitigation of human-wildlife conflict and protection of threatened species, management of biodiversity to benefit people, ensuring availability of information to communities and decision makers, promote gender inclusion in biodiversity conservation and community development projects thereby addressing Targets 1, 4, 9, 14, 21, 22 and 23 of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Global Goals for sustainable development: Improving biodiversity and ecosystems in CAMPFIRE areas contributed to sustainable management of the natural capital. The local communities in the target districts depend mainly on natural resources for their survival. Efforts towards biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation in a changing climate under this project has contributed to attainment of sustainable development Goals 1, 2, 13 and 15. Inclusion of gender in this project contributed to attainment of Goal 5.

4.2 Project support to biodiversity conservation and multidimensional poverty reduction

Contribution of project to higher level impact on biodiversity conservation: The project has empowered the community committees, enhancing their capability and capacity in sustainable natural resources management. These committees are instrumental in safeguarding biodiversity through improved planning, contributed to decision making towards biodiversity conservation and also played a key role in information dissemination across communities (Annex 24 [Minutes of Community feedback](#)). The committees were able to influence for improved management of natural resources in their areas, thereby contributing to improved biodiversity conservation. The adoption of principles of good governance by the 31 trained community committees from 31 wards across the five districts had a significant impact towards improving wildlife and biodiversity

in these CAMPFIRE districts. Improvements in transparency, accountability, communication and active participation of communities has been realised as a result of this project ([evaluation report](#)). The feedback meetings held by the CAMPFIRE committees in each ward demonstrated improved governance of CAMPFIRE areas with active involvement of communities. The committees exercised good leadership and committed to represent their community constituency as well as ensuring flow of information across the target community CAMPFIRE areas. However, more efforts are still needed to improve coverage at district level.

Contribution to human development and well-being (poverty alleviation). The project has contributed to improved management of CAMPFIRE areas through skills development of key institutions that drive developments in the communities. Capacitation of the community committees with the required financial management knowledge and skills made them more accountable on use of funds that accrue to them from the CAMPFIRE program. The effective and efficient use of these contributed to poverty alleviation in the CAMPFIRE areas. Following the training the local communities are better positioned in proper planning and engagement in community development project activities. Improved capability and capacity of CCAZ has amplified community voice at national level. CCAZ recent engagements at national level natural resources platforms enabled upward transmission of community voice across the different stakeholders including policy makers (evidence provided above). Key conservation and developmental challenges faced by communities have been communicated to decision makers, development partners and other national level stakeholders. This draws attention of these stakeholders and in some cases action in terms of resource mobilisation taken to target to reduce vulnerability of the communities.

4.3 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board ¹ .	The WCA Board is made up of 25% women.
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women ² .	WCA is led by a female scientist and 57% of WCA's senior leadership are women. The project coordination and delivery from the CCAZ partner was led by a woman.

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	X

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

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

Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	
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The project design was considered to reach out to community committees whose establishment was based on gender inclusiveness. Most of the community committees across the district in Zimbabwe are gender inclusive although male dominance in these committees is still common across districts. Chiredzi showcased the highest proportion of women 34% women, followed by Chipinge 25% then Mbire 23%. Nyaminyami District had the lowest representation of women at 8%. When selecting participants for the training, there was emphasis to ensure women participation, and this was communicated to community mobilisers ahead of the training. However, membership within the community committees is through community level election so communities were encouraged to elect more women in the committee roles. During the training, women were given enough space to contribute to the discussions. Women councillors formed part of the women who participated in the training and amplified the voice of women. Zimbabwe has a women's quota, and each district has women who are appointed as councillors through the women's quota, and they too participated in the community committee training workshops. Roles of women in CAMPFIRE activities were discussed, and women were motivated to take up the decision-making positions in the governance of the CAMPFIRE areas.

One of the key lessons learnt was that the role of women in CAMPFIRE programmes cannot be underestimated. The women were identified as key players for knowledge sharing across the CAMPFIRE areas. They have a better understanding of environmental and conservation issues at the local level than their male counterparts. However, their numbers are still low in the decision-making structures from Village level to Ward level.

4.4 Transfer of knowledge

The agenda for the first CCAZ Board members training workshop was to capacitate the Board members on financial management, governance and increase their knowledge on legal frameworks that have implications on their work especially the then debated Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill. The Board members reviewed this amendment bill and submitted a position paper to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for further consideration. After the review CCAZ Board members disseminated information about the amendment bill and mobilised communities for the community consultations scheduled by the Portfolio Committee across the country.

The project also facilitated transfer of knowledge and exchange notes between district stakeholders and the communities during the training. Through engagement with district stakeholders this knowledge has also been transmitted into policy decisions starting from the district level to national level.

4.5 Capacity building

The staff from CCAZ had their involvement in National level engagements increased during the project period. The recognition of CCAZ as a community-led organisation has greatly improved. During the project, CCAZ managed to participate in 1. National expert committees that included the IUCN Zimbabwe meeting on Human-wildlife Coexistence Program development held on 10 September 2024, 2. National Community Conservancies Convention held on 31 October 2024, 3. the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority technical meeting held on 5 July 2024, and 4. a workshop organised by CCAZ in Mbire District on 16 October 2024.

5 Monitoring and evaluation

There were no changes done to the project design. The approved indicators of success were upheld until the end of the project. Conducting pre and post training assessments after every workshop for both CCAZ board and ESC committee members proved to be useful in measuring changes in the knowledge gained by the participants. Reporting that was done at the end of every training workshop revealed whether there was successful knowledge transfer. The evaluation that was carried out at the end of the project was also instrumental in measuring the success of the project at community level, ESC committee member level, at stakeholder level and also at the CCAZ level. WCA, CCAZ and all key stakeholders in the 5 districts successfully shared training materials and post training reports. Both WCA and CCAZ played a part in the collection of training data and the sharing of lessons from the reports. Information was shared as reports over emails and there were social media postings by WCA and CCAZ. At the end of the project, an internal evaluation was carried out that assessed the situation after all levels were capacitated.

Key findings of the evaluation showed that there are improvements at CCAZ, Rural District Council (RDC) and Environmental Sub-Committee (ESC) levels on how they execute their duties. However, gaps remain in Transparency and Accountability especially in the cascading of information from ESCs to the communities. There are also missed opportunities for RDCs to regularly monitor functionality of ESCs and interactions with the campfire communities. With more capacity and capabilities training, these gaps can be successfully addressed. These findings will be useful as WCA, CCAZ, ESCs and key stakeholders continue to work in these CAMPFIRE communities.

6 Lessons learnt

What worked well: The involvement of CCAZ in project implementation was a great approach as it opened up opportunities for CCAZ to engage with the different stakeholders from the district to national level. Cooperation of local stakeholders was useful especially in conducting the training. This was particularly an advantage for WCA that leveraged on CCAZ's presence in landscapes where it was not very active such as Chipinge and Chiredzi. The stakeholder collaborative approach taken in the training made it possible to contextualise the training and address the local needs of the communities. The involvement of local stakeholders in facilitating the training helped to set a road map for continuous community engagement in addressing conservation gaps. Inclusive planning with partners and stakeholders made this project a success. The project built a sense of ownership by all involved parties through a participatory approach during project implementation. The project capacitated RDCs to effectively support CAMPFIRE committees in circumstances where RDCs were under-resourced.

What did not work well: More time than expected was required for WCA to organise for the training especially in Chipinge and Chiredzi district where the organisation had limited activities. The process of engagements was much longer as compared to the other three districts where WCA already has several ongoing activities.

What could be done differently: This training was identified as critical for the active community engagement in CAMPFIRE programmes hence it should have been conducted more than once per district. Resourcing permitting, this training would have been conducted beyond the once off training to increase effectiveness and increase outreach.

Recommendations: The local stakeholders recommended that the training process requires constant refresher courses and continuous monitoring for effective application of knowledge and skills gained by the communities. When new members are elected into committees, it is essential to ensure that they get adequate training before executing their duties. Some districts like Chiredzi have decentralised the committees to a village level resulting in a total of 35 committees across the district. The planned training under this project could not accommodate all the committees. Future programming should take into consideration increasing coverage for these important and valuable trainings.

Key lessons learnt: Clear communication among the project partners and stakeholders was a key driver to successful implementation of this project. WCA ensured inclusive planning with partners and stakeholders during project implementation. This created a platform for learning and skills development for newly established organisations like CCAZ.

7 Sustainability and legacy

The participating districts indicated that capacitating mobility and finances for those training workshops was an important exercise that should be done regularly to ensure that all the incoming elected community committee members receive adequate training before executing their duties. The Rural District Councils have indicated that they will continue providing technical support to the committees beyond the funding for improved management of the CAMPFIRE areas.

The CCAZ Officer hosted by WCA has gained skills and knowledge in project management and networking. During the course of the project, CCAZ visibility and capacity was enhanced. Enhancement of governance and capacity of CCAZ provided opportunities for this organisation to engage with other local organisations and fundraise. The CCAZ managed to secure seed funding to continue providing support to communities in Mbire district. CCAZ also managed to get into a consortium with WCA and other organisations, fundraising for more support for Mbire district. In Mbire, Nyaminyami and Binga, WCA continues to engage with the districts and provide technical support where it is needed as the organisation has ongoing interventions across these three districts. WCA is now in the process of getting into an MOU with Chiredzi Rural District Council so support to the district stakeholders and the committees can continue.

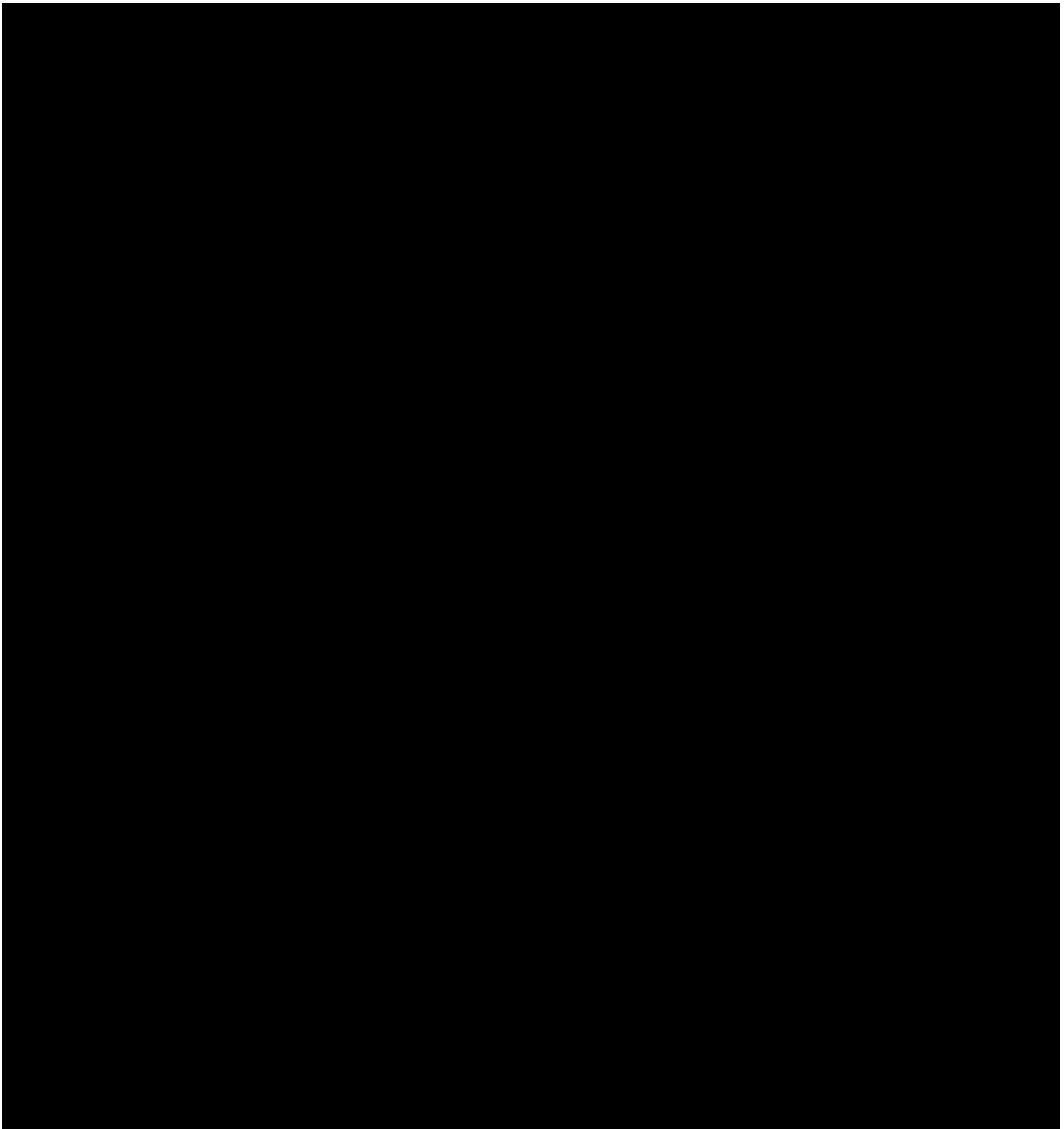
8 Darwin Initiative identity

The project used the Darwin Initiative logo on attendance registers ([ESC attendance register-Binga](#)). WCAs PowerPoint presentations during training also used the Darwin Initiative logo and acknowledged funding from the Darwin Initiative during each presentation. The Darwin Initiative logo was also used on Pre and Post evaluation questionnaire forms ([ESC assessment guide](#)). This project was implemented independently and the Darwin initiative fully funded the project and the project was recognised as a distinct project. The project partners and stakeholders had a better understanding of the Darwin Initiative because of their involvement in the project activities. All communication to partners and stakeholders mentioned the Darwin Initiative as the project funder. The WCA communication team also shared in newsletters and on social media (LinkedIn and facebook) updates about this project (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1EWMBPk5Ti/>).

9 Risk Management

There were no new risks encountered during the project implementation.

10 Safeguarding



11 Finance and administration

11.1 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				
Audit Fees				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	92,216.00	92,216.00	0	

Staff employed (Name and position)	Cost (£)
Moreangels Mbizah: Executive Director	
Tawanda Pesanayi: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer	
Simbarashe Chatikobo: Program Officer	
Bella Nyamukure : Projects Assistant	
Milliscent Matimbe: Finance and Administration Officer	
TOTAL	

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

Other items – description	Other items – cost (£)
Bank Charges Office accessories	
TOTAL	

11.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project	Total (£)
WCA staff time contribution	
CCAZ Staff time contribution	
IIED Staff time contribution	
TOTAL	

Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project	Total (£)
Building a Foundation for Sustainable Restoration and Inclusive Landscape Planning	
Utariri integrated and adaptive biodiversity, climate and livelihoods project in the Zambezi valley project	
Alongside Communities! Shaping Coexistence through Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation	
TOTAL	

11.3 Value for Money

More than 95% of the funds was channelled toward the capability and capacity training of CCAZ and the community communities (see expense report above). Little was used for overhead as WCA had funds from other sources covering the overhead costs.

12 Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere.

The design of the project was excellent and well-focused to a direct and urgent gap. There were no changes made to the project as all activities were carried out according to plan.

13 OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project (310-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

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

Wildlife Conservation Action in partnership with CCAZ and other local stakeholders successfully developed the capability and capacity of the local institutions in 31 wards across five target CAMPFIRE districts (three in Middle Zambezi Valley and two in Southeast Lowveld) in Zimbabwe. A total of 254 (61 females and 193 males) people from 31 committees acquired skills and knowledge in the governance of natural resources. These local institutions and communities are instrumental in the management of resources at the local level. Skills development in the governance of their natural resources including financial management, good leadership, ensuring transparency at community level and effective communication provides key ingredients for long-term conservation of biodiversity in these rich wildlife areas. Currently, the trained Environmental Sub-committees (ESCs) are making effective and meaningful engagements with the local decision-makers and the entire community, addressing critical conservation gaps. This capability and capacity development by WCA has brought in fresh thinking among the local institutions and communities, a development that is yielding benefits to both biodiversity and the communities at large. The CAMPFIRE committee's operations have also improved as they now do bookkeeping in an improved way and they are now more transparent and accountable to the communities that they serve. Developing capability and capacity of a civil society organisation was another key milestone achieved by WCA which created a huge impact in the conservation sector. Through stakeholder engagements and the creation of a website, CCAZ is now being recognized as a player in the field. CCAZ whose capability and capacity was strengthened during this project has amplified community voice for inclusive decision making in natural resources governance and

management. Through these inclusive and informative trainings and engagements, WCA created an opportunity for continuous collaboration and partnerships in these CAMPFIRE districts.

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)
JPEG	Binga ESC Training workshop participants_ DARCC051	Community representatives from Binga District posed for a photo after the Environmental Sub-committee training workshop in Binga, Zimbabwe_	https://www.linkedin.com/company/wildlife-conservation-action/ https://www.instagram.com/action4wildlife?igsh=MVVkOHI2MWRzeDlzZw== https://www.facebook.com/share/19Gg1wp8Yg/	Yes

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

Project summary	Progress and achievements
<p>Outcome</p> <p>The capabilities and capacities of local and national community institutions involved in CAMPFIRE are strengthened, leading to improved governance in CAMPFIRE areas.</p>	<p>The attainment of 254 members (61 females and 193 males) from the five community CAMPFIRE committees from across five districts that have adopted knowledge and skills from the training shows that the project surpassed its target to reach 145%. Currently, 77% of the committees are applying the knowledge in conducting their work at the local level. This was revealed by the end of the project assessment survey compared with the initial survey conducted at the beginning of the project. Key informant interviews with a sample of committee members confirmed that they are applying the knowledge and skills gained from the training. A positive improvement on how CCAZ and RDCs conducted their duties was also realised as a result of this project. Networks have been strengthened between RDCs, local and national stakeholders as revealed by the participation at 11 natural resources management events that by far surpassed the planned 2 events. All the 31 committees from the five districts had increased knowledge on their roles, responsibilities and obligations in the governance of CAMPFIRE areas. Strengthening of CCAZ also brought in improved representation of local communities in policy decisions. CCAZ has managed to take the community voice to national level platforms including the Parliamentary portfolio committee on environment and natural resources. This is further supported by a total of 65 stakeholders that actively participated in this project and have their capacity in governance and planning enhanced during the project.</p>
<p>Outcome indicator 0.1</p> <p>Number of CAMPFIRE committee members applying knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>134 committee members (46 Chiredzi, 44 Nyaminyami, 44 Binga) were reported to be applying the knowledge and skills gained during training. This is a 77% achievement of the planned 175 committee members. The Post Training Assessment report revealed that communities from 3 out of the 5 districts (Binga, Nyaminyami and Chiredzi) indicated that there was an improvement in the way the CAMPFIRE committee members conducted business and interacted with communities. There were indications of transparency in how they managed natural resources. This was supported by RDC staff key interviews across the districts.</p>
<p>Outcome indicator 0.2</p> <p>Number of CAMPIRE committee members with increased knowledge.</p>	<p>The project had a positive stride in increasing the knowledge amongst the CAMPFIRE committee members. The planned target was 175 committee members but the actual number of committee members with increased knowledge is 254 as was depicted in the pre and post training assessments done for principles of good governance and rights and obligations under the CAMPFIRE program. Discussions</p>

	with RDC staff and community members during the Post Training Assessment revealed that committee members exhibited an increase in knowledge as shown by how they conducted their business at Council office. communities from only 3 out of the 5 districts (Binga, Nyaminyami and Chiredzi) indicated that there was an improvement in the way the CAMPFIRE committee members conducted business and interacted with communities. There were indications of transparency in how they managed natural resources.
Output 1 The members of the community CAMPFIRE committees in five CAMPFIRE districts have the knowledge and skills to perform their governance roles more effectively and transparently.	
Output indicator 1.1 Number of CAMPFIRE committee members with increased knowledge in the principles of good governance.	254 CAMPFIRE committee members (61 females and 193 males) have increased knowledge in the principles of good governance as indicated by the pre and post training assessments that were carried out before and after the training workshops. The project actually surpassed the planned target of 175 committee members. The project fell short in terms of gender disaggregation where the target number of female committee members was 70 yet the total actual reached was 61 as shown in annex 3 below and by the attendance registers.
Output indicator 1.2 Number of CAMPFIRE committee members with increased knowledge about their rights and obligations under the CAMPFIRE program.	254 CAMPFIRE committee members (61 females and 193 males) have increased knowledge about their rights and obligations under the CAMPFIRE program as indicated by the pre and post training assessments that were carried out before and after the training workshops. The project actually surpassed the planned target of 175 committee members. The project fell short in terms of gender disaggregation where the target number of female committee members was 70 yet the total actual reached was 61 as shown in annex 3 below and by the attendance registers.
Output 2. CCAZ is recognized and accepted by key stakeholders as an important actor in natural resource governance and advocates effectively for the interests of local communities.	
Output indicator 2.1. Number of natural resource management events CCAZ attends and participates on behalf of local communities.	CCAZ by far surpassed the planned project target of attending and participating at 2 (two) natural resource management events by participating at an impressive 11 natural resource management events across the country. This has been a positive development for CCAZ as it has gained recognition and was largely accepted by key stakeholders as an important actor in natural resource governance that advocates effectively for the interests of local communities.

<p>Output indicator 2.2.</p> <p>Number of posts (print, digital or in-person) shared by CCAZ with local communities in the CAMPFIRE areas.</p>	<p>CCAZ now has an active website and a Facebook page. From the setting up of the Facebook page, CCAZ envisaged to post at least once a month. To this end CCAZ has met its target which was having 6 post by the end of the project period. These posts can be accessed on the CCAZ Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61570094876265&mibextid=LQQJ4d&mibextid=LQQJ4d and the CCAZ webpage is https://www.ccazim.org/</p>
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Annex 2 Project's full current indicators of success as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification
Outcome: The capabilities and capacities of local and national community institutions involved in CAMPFIRE are strengthened, leading to improved governance in CAMPFIRE areas.	0.1. Number of CAMPFIRE committee members applying knowledge and skills. [DI-A04] 0.2. Number of CAMPFIRE committee members with increased knowledge. [DI-A04]	Questionnaires for CAMPFIRE committee members at the beginning and end of the project period, attendance registers, training update reports, photos
Output 1 The members of the community CAMPFIRE committees in five CAMPFIRE districts have the knowledge and skills to perform their governance roles more effectively and transparently.	1.1. Number of CAMPFIRE committee members with increased knowledge in the principles of good governance. [DI-B05] 1.2. Number of CAMPFIRE committee members with increased knowledge about their rights and obligations under the CAMPFIRE program. [DI-B06]	Assessments of committee members before and after the trainings, assessment reports, attendance registers, photos
Output 2 CCAZ is recognized and accepted by key stakeholders as an important actor in natural resource governance and advocates effectively for the interests of local communities.	2.1. Number of natural resource management events CCAZ attends and participates on behalf of local communities. [DI-C15] 2.2. Number of posts (print, digital or in-person) shared by CCAZ with local communities in the CAMPFIRE areas. [DI-C15]	Reports and minutes of events, Newsletters, minutes of ward level community meetings, posts on social media or messaging platforms, household survey in CAMPFIRE communities at baseline and endline.
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 Structured trainings of CAMPFIRE committee members and community leaders in 5 CAMPFIRE areas on governance (including rights and obligations under CAMPFIRE, information sharing and financial management) 1.2 Development (during training workshop) of strategies for improved communication and information dissemination between CAMPFIRE committees and communities 2.1. Two half-yearly meetings of the CCAZ board 2.2. Two structured trainings of CCAZ board members on governance		

- 2.3. Two engagement meetings of the CCAZ board with national government and other key stakeholders
- 2.4 Development of a website, social media presence and members messaging platform for CCAZ
- 2.5. Project assistant staff position for CCAZ operations, hosted at WCA

Important Assumptions

- 1. CCAZ is able to mobilise members of local CAMPFIRE community committees to attend the trainings
- 2. The capability and capacity gaps in the five selected CAMPFIRE areas are similar to the ones identified in the Mbire area through the SAGE process
- 3. Government institutions at national and district level do not actively work against CCAZ as a new civil society institution
- 4. The CCAZ board members continue their engagement throughout the project period and beyond
- 5. CCAZ is invited in meetings and workshops on natural resources management in the country
- 6.CAMPFIRE community committees and Board absorb what they learn.

Annex 3 Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total achieved	Total planned
DI-A04	Number of CAMPFIRE committee members applying knowledge and skills.	People	Men	193			193	105
DI-A04	Number of CAMPFIRE committee members applying knowledge and skills.	People	Women	61			61	70
DI-A04	Number of CAMPIRE committee members with increased knowledge.	People	Men	193			193	105
DI-A04	Number of CAMPIRE committee members with increased knowledge.	People	Women	61			61	70
DI-B05	Number of CAMPFIRE committee members with increased knowledge in the principles of good governance.	People	Men	193			193	105
DI-B05	Number of CAMPFIRE committee members with increased knowledge in the principles of good governance.	People	Women	61			61	70
DI-B06	Number of CAMPFIRE committee members with increased knowledge about their rights and obligations under the CAMPFIRE program.	People	Men	193			161	105
DI-B06	Number of CAMPFIRE committee members with increased knowledge about their rights and obligations under the CAMPFIRE program.	People	Women	61			61	70
DI-C15	Number of natural resource management events CCAZ attends and participates on behalf of local communities.	Events		11			11	2
DI-C15	Number of posts (print, digital or in-person) shared by CCAZ with local communities in the CAMPFIRE areas.	Posts		6			6	6

Annex 5 Supplementary material (optional but encouraged as evidence of project achievement)

1. Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	✓
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	✓
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line. All supporting material should be submitted in a way that can be accessed and downloaded as one complete package.	✓
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 14)?	✓
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	✓
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors?	✓
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	✓
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	