

Darwin Initiative Capability & Capacity: Annual Report

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

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

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2025

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

Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	DARCC052
Project title	Small but mighty: Empowering Tajik conservation organisations through capacity building
Country/ies	Tajikistan
Lead Organisation	Fauna & Flora International
Project partner(s)	Center for the Support of Specially Protected Natural Areas of Tajikistan (CSSPNAT) Tourist of Mountain Maschov (ToMM) Youth Group on Protection of Environment (YGPE)
Darwin Initiative grant value	£199,913.00
Start/end dates of project	01 April 2024 – 31 March 2026
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2024 – Mar 2025) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	Apr 2024 – Mar 2025, Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Mr Ubayd Gulamadshoev
Project website/blog/social media	N/a
Report author(s) and date	Nasiba Khudonazarova, Muiz Mamadsaidov, Ubayd Gulamadshoev, Michaela Butorova-McGurk, with input from all project partners provided verbally 30 th April 2025

1. Project summary

Tajikistan, within the Central Asia Mountains Hotspot, is a globally significant region for biodiversity conservation. The country's rugged terrain encompasses a wide array of landscapes, ranging from semidesert foothills to alpine meadows, all intertwined with characteristic mountain forests. Tajikistan's unique geographic location, bridging Central and Northern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, has endowed it with a remarkable wealth of biodiversity, boasting over 23,000 species, approximately 1,900 of which are found nowhere else on Earth. The mountainous landscapes of Tajikistan alone harbour 0.66% of the world's animal diversity and 1.8% of its plant diversity.

Despite its ecological richness, Tajikistan grapples with economic challenges and is considered the poorest among the former USSR countries. Recent events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, have increased uncertainties and risks for Tajikistan. The

mobilisation of Russia in 2022 led to a decline in migration, subsequently affecting the country's remittances, which are crucial for its economy.

Unsustainable exploitation of species and habitats has created a vicious cycle where impoverished communities depend on natural resources for survival, yet the deteriorating state of these resources and a lack of capacity hinder the development of sustainable livelihoods. Many rare and valuable ecosystems have nearly vanished, with forest cover decreasing by over 50% in the last five decades, placing numerous species at risk of extinction.

The primary threats to biodiversity in Tajikistan include the conversion of natural habitats for agriculture and infrastructure, unregulated deforestation for fuelwood and timber, overgrazing by domestic livestock leading to degraded pastures, uncontrolled fires in arid desert areas, and illegal poaching.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a pivotal role in addressing various societal and environmental challenges within Tajikistan, encompassing the promotion of human rights, fostering rural development, biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and encouraging citizen engagement. In 2016, the government implemented regulations on humanitarian aid, mandating groups receiving foreign funding to notify the Ministry of Justice within ten days and register on a Registry of Humanitarian Aid. More recently, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been forced to close due to new requirements for each NGO to have active project funds at least every two years. These and similar restrictions have created a challenging operational environment for CSOs. Additionally, a recent banking and cash crisis has further hindered financing for local groups. While there are approximately 3,000 CSOs in Tajikistan, only 50 of them focus on environmental issues or possess significant expertise in conservation, and with more CSOs being forced to close, this group continues to narrow. Additionally, they often lack the necessary ongoing funding and resources to fulfil their mandates or support rural communities.

In light of these challenges, there is an urgent need to empower and connect CSOs involved in conservation and sustainable development with each other and with government agencies to strengthen their organisational resilience and lead conservation work across Tajikistan. To do so, they require skills and processes that allow them to initiate, obtain and successfully manage implementation of people-centred conservation projects that enhance both biodiversity and community wellbeing. As such, this project aims to enhance CSO Capacity and Capability in Tajikistan through a systematic approach encompassing training, mentorship, networking and peer-to-peer learning. By the end of the project, three Tajik CSOs will have the institutional and technical capacity to create, implement and sustain biodiversity conservation initiatives.

2. Project stakeholders/ partners

This project, “Small but mighty: Empowering Tajik conservation organisations through capacity building,” is a collaborative effort between Fauna & Flora and three local conservation CSOs:

- **Centre for the Support of Specially Protected Natural Areas of Tajikistan (CSSPNAT):** a national CSO focused on the conservation of plants and forests, specifically working with national reserves and parks in specially protected natural areas of Tajikistan.
- **Tourist of Mountain Mastchoh (ToMM):** a regional CSO focused on ecological tourism, raising environmental awareness and public health, with a special focus on young girls/women.
- **Youth Group on Protection of Environment (YGPE):** a regional CSO focused on eco-education events for different audiences within the communities where it works.

These three organisations were selected through a combination of desk research and recommendations from our in-country partners using the following criteria:

- Working within the biodiversity sector with technical experience in delivering conservation projects but lacking in experience in international funding application and management;
- Enthusiasm for engagement with our project, whether the proposed capacity-building topics will be pertinent to their needs and if they were already receiving support on these issues from other sources;

- Their status (national/regional) and project implementation geography, with a focus on those operating in remote areas where CSOs are less connected and have fewer opportunities to build their skills;
- Their relationship with the government;
- Their ability to involve local communities in their initiatives.

The partnership stemmed from demand from local communities to strengthen the ability of CSOs to design and manage conservation projects that benefit both biodiversity and people.

From the very beginning, each of our three CSO partners — CSSPNAT, ToMM, and YGPE — were not just recipients of the project, but active participants in shaping it. They were involved in every key step: discussing the project's overall goals, reviewing and signing the Memorandums of Understanding (please see Annex 4 Doc.1), taking part in baseline capacity assessments, including Organisational Resilience Check and SWOC (please see Annex 4 Doc.2, Doc.3 and Doc.4), and co-creating their own individualised development plans (please see Annex Doc.5). Photos from these organisational self-assessments illustrate the participatory and locally-adapted model that was used to support full participation of our CSO partners in these processes (please see Annex 4 Doc.6).

During the capacity assessment phase, we made efforts to involve as many staff members from each CSO as possible. All available team members at the time were encouraged to take part in all two days assessment sessions. In total, 22 staff members from the three CSOs participated in these assessments.

The assessments weren't just formalities — they became honest conversations about what each organisation does well, where they struggle, and what support would be most helpful and how they would like to develop. For example, CSSPNAT and ToMM conducted their assessment in the director's home because they didn't have functioning offices. That moment made it clear just how committed they were, and how critical our support is. Partners' openness allowed us to simplify and tailor training tools, especially for those with limited prior experience in proposal writing or project implementation.

Partners also played a role in shaping the training process, providing input that helped us better understand their needs and adjust our tools accordingly, both through the initial self-assessment meetings with each organisation and through follow-up conversations with project staff. These examples of close cooperation, building mutual trust and encouraging inclusive engagement at every step of the project, show real strength and achievement within the partnership.

However, we faced some real challenges too. The difference in capacity between our partner organisations was wide, as evident by the capacity assessment reports (see Annex 4 Doc.3). ToMM lacked even an email account at the beginning, and there is still no reliable internet in their village. But instead of letting that stop us, we delivered training materials by hand, used printed versions when needed, and made space for in-person workshops so no one was left behind.

From these partnerships, we've learned that simple changes — like adjusting the language in training slides or delivering handbooks in print — make a big difference when working with small or rural CSOs. We've also seen that motivation is stronger than resources — and when partners feel seen, heard, and included, they show up and keep going, even under tough conditions.

We also saw leadership emerge from within. YGPE, one of the more experienced CSOs, not only participated in the initial networking workshop, conducted under a parallel capacity building project with funding from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), but helped lead a session on proposal writing too. This peer-to-peer model allowed organisations like ToMM, who had never written a grant before, to see what's possible. One of ToMM's members shared that it was the first time they had ever seen an actual donor application form — and now, they can start submitting their first proposal in the coming year, as part of our project Activity 2.3.

Another strength was the flexibility of our team. After the needs assessments, it was clear that a one-day grant briefing, conducted as part of Activity 2.1, wouldn't be enough. So, we adapted. We invited all three partner CSOs to join a larger networking and learning exchange event alongside CEPF grantees, giving them exposure to more experienced peers and real project stories. We asked each CSO's director to consult with their teams and nominate participants who

would benefit most from the training and could apply the learning in practice. As a result, five representatives (4M/1F) from the three CSOs took part in the workshop. This change brought new energy into the room — many participants left with a clearer picture of where they could go and how to get there. Please see Annex 4 Doc.7 for report from this activity, evidencing how connections to other conservation CSOs helped bolster our partners' capacity to fundraise for biodiversity conservation projects.

Beyond the CSOs themselves, this project would not have moved forward so smoothly without the strong cooperation from national institutions. The Committee of Environmental Protection, the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, and the Forestry Agency gave their full support and helped us obtain the official permissions needed. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also played a key role in coordinating these permissions.

Our project also includes two government FSUs responsible for biodiversity management as participants in CSO training as additional beneficiaries, to enhance networking and experience-sharing. However, please note that these activities (1.8, 1.9, and 1.10) are scheduled to take place in Y2, and as such we will report more closely on these in the next Annual Report.

The project also benefited from wider networks. In January 2025, we invited our three CSOs to join the learning exchange and networking event conducted under similar capacity building project funded by CEPF. These groups shared stories from their projects — not only their successes, but also their lessons learned. It was a powerful way to encourage peer learning and show our newer partners what is possible.

Finally, our colleagues at Fauna & Flora's UK team, including Martha Kimmel, Technical Specialist, Partnerships & Organisational Development and Alejandra Pizarro Choy, Technical Specialist, Social Equity & Rights, helped design training content that fit the CSOs needs and local context in Tajikistan. They created materials that speak the language of small organisations, both literally (translated to Tajik and Russian), and in terms of clarity, relevance, and practicality (please see Annex 4 Doc.8).

This mix of local ownership, institutional support, peer sharing, and global expertise has been one of the most meaningful parts of this project so far. It's built a foundation of mutual respect — one that we hope will grow stronger in the years ahead.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Although the project was originally scheduled to begin on 1st April 2024, full implementation of the main activities began in September 2024 due to prolonged discussions between Fauna & Flora and Defra (via NIRAS) regarding a number of queries concerning the Defra T&Cs outlined in the initial Offer Letter, which resulted in a delayed signing of a revised Offer Letter on 16th August 2024. Through our Change Request submitted on 21st October 2024, we received a formal approval for a revised Workplan Timetable, adapting slightly our original schedule of activities.

Output 1: Three Tajik biodiversity conservation CSOs build their institutional capacity through a tailored training programme

Activity 1.1 – Sign MoUs with three CSOs

During the reporting period, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) (MoV 1.1.1) were successfully signed between Fauna & Flora and our three partner CSOs: CSSPNAT, ToMM, and YGPE, as evidenced by signed documents in both Tajik and English languages (please see Annex 4 Doc.1). Before signing, a series of one-to-one discussions were held to clarify the project goals, activities, and expectations. This built trust and created a strong foundation for future collaboration.

Activity 1.2 – Obtain formal permissions for project activities and cooperation with the Committee of Environmental Protection, National Academy of Science, and Agency for Forestry, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

All necessary permissions from the Committee of Environmental Protection, National Academy of Sciences, and the Forestry Agency were secured through the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These formal approvals helped avoid any future implementation barriers.

Activity 1.3 – Complete a baseline Organisational Resilience Check (ORC) and SWOT analysis with each of the three CSOs

In October and November 2024, the three Tajik conservation CSOs — CSSPNAT, ToMM, and YGPE, completed two-day comprehensive organisational capacity self-assessment and prioritisation for an individualised development plan (Indicator 1.1).

The assessment was done in-person with each CSO, with all staff members who were available at the time, with 22 people across the three CSOs involved in total. We used this opportunity not only to collect useful information, but also to encourage each organisation to reflect on their own strengths, challenges, and future goals.

We used four tools to guide this process, which altogether formulated the baseline capacity assessment report for the three CSOs (MoV 1.1.2):

1. Organisational Resilience Checklist (ORC) – simplified to be more realistic for small CSOs
2. SWOC Analysis – to assess Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges
3. Basic Needs Assessment Tool – focused on identifying the organisation's needs in line with its goals and direction
4. Individual Development Plan (IDP) was adapted to assess organisation capability (Organisational Resilience Plan), focusing only on the most relevant sections

Since CSSPNAT and ToMM are still developing their organisational structure and systems, we shortened and adapted the ORC and IDP tools to make them easier to complete. This helped all three CSOs — whether experienced or just starting out — to participate fully and benefit from the process.

The findings from this activity, as demonstrated by the results of each assessment (please see Annex 4 Doc.2, 3, 4, 5) also showed us that the three CSOs are at very different levels:

- YGPE, based in Khujand, is already managing several projects, has strong fundraising experience, and a well-equipped office. Their staff have taken part in many national and international trainings.
- CSSPNAT, based in Shahrinav, has a smaller team with limited systems in place, but is highly motivated and engaged.
- ToMM, from Mountain Mastchoh (Mastchohi Kuhi), is a very new group without a formal office or internet access. They have never received a grant before and are just beginning their journey.

These differences were important to recognise early on in the project. They helped us shape tailored support plans for each CSO and adjust our training materials to meet their specific needs.

This step gave us a strong foundation for the rest of the project. By understanding each organisation's situation clearly, we can now move forward with training, mentoring, and capacity building that fits them — not just in theory, but in practice.

Activity 1.4 – Using data gathered under 1.3, establish baselines of skills and knowledge of three organisations and collaboratively establishing an individualised Capability and Capacity development plan

Following the ORC, SWOC, and needs assessments conducted under Activity 1.3, we used all collected information to develop a clear baseline of organisational capacity for each of the three CSOs: CSSPNAT, ToMM, and YGPE (Indicator 1.1). This baseline covers each organisation's current level of skills, experience, and internal systems across key areas, such as project management, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation, staffing, and technical equipment (MoV 1.1.2).

The data was collected through a combination of four tools with all the data in it:

- Organizational Resilience Checklist (ORC)_(please see Annex 4 Doc.2)
- SWOC analysis_(please see Annex 4 Doc.4)

- Basic Needs Assessment Tool (please see Annex 4 Doc.3)
- Organisational Resilience Plan (please see Annex 4 Doc.5)

These tools provided both quantitative and qualitative insights and were adjusted to suit the capacity and structure of each CSO. The full set of tools and templates used during this process are shared as supporting documents in Annex 4 Doc.2, 3, 4, 5.

Using this baseline information, Fauna & Flora worked closely with each CSO to co-develop an individualised Capability and Capacity Development Plan (Indicator 1.1). These plans reflect each CSO's specific context and challenges, and are designed to guide training, mentoring, and resource support for the rest of the project. Some examples of priority needs identified during this process include:

ToMM (Tourist of Mountain Mastchoh):

- *Lack of experience in proposal writing and project coordination*
- *No prior grant history or financial reporting experience*
- *Limited access to internet and basic equipment*
- *Need for external training in communication and networking*

CSSPNAT (Centre for the Support of Specially Protected Natural Areas):

- *Gaps in project management systems and sustainable financing*
- *Need for staff development in M&E and strategic planning*
- *Interest in improving internal documentation and reporting*
- *Limited equipment for field work and office tasks*

YGPE (Youth Group on Protection of Environment):

- *More advanced in operations, but requested support with advanced proposal development and international fellowships*
- *Need for upgraded digital tools (computers, monitors)*
- *Interest in strengthening fundraising systems and graphic design skills*
- *Potential to serve as mentor/peer advisor to other CSOs*

These plans helped us decide what kind of training and support each CSO needs. Since they are tailored, each organisation can move forward step by step, based on its own level and priorities.

Activity 1.5 – Write report establishing training needs for each organisation.

As outlined under Activity 1.4, individualised Capability and Capacity Development Plan was prepared using the Organisational Resilience Plan tool, available for each CSO partner in Annex 4 Doc.5.

Activity 1.6 - Create training modules adapted to the organisation's needs (topics subject to ORC, but likely project design, prioritisation and work planning, proposal writing, good grant management, social safeguards, role of national regulation and multilateral environmental agreements in conservation) and to the Tajikistan context and based on 1.2.

As part of the project, a full set of training modules was developed and customised specifically for this project. These materials were based on the capacity needs identified during the ORC and needs assessments (Activity 1.3).

Building on materials originally developed in 2024 under a complementary, CEPF-funded project, each module has been reviewed, updated based on participant feedback, further expanded and tailored to the realities of CSOs in Tajikistan — focusing on simplicity, clarity, and practical application. Specific changes made to the content included:

- clarifying explanations of how to move from a project plan to a logframe, based on feedback from previous participants, and

- incorporating content around teamwork, based on the CSO baseline assessments.

Additional “Train the Trainer” module was also developed during the reporting period.

In total, four core modules were developed (MoV 1.2.1) (please see Annex 4 Doc.8):

- ✓ **Train the trainer** (only for Training-of-Trainers workshop (ToT))
- ✓ **Project Design & Social Equity**
- ✓ **Donor Research & Proposal Writing**
- ✓ **Good Grant Management**

To support the learning process, the following materials were created:

- ✓ **Facilitation Notes** for trainers to run the sessions confidently
- ✓ **PowerPoint presentations** for each module
- ✓ **Handbook for participants** for delivery of each training module as part of Activities 1.8, 1.9, 1.10
- ✓ **3-day workshop schedules** that ensure logical flow and balance between theory and practice.

All materials are in the process of professionally being translated into local languages (Tajik and Russian) and will be shared with participants during upcoming ToT (Activity 1.7) in both electronic and printed formats to make them easy to use regardless of internet access or location.

Activity 1.7 – Organise and deliver training-of-trainers for eight local organisation staff on the organisational management modules developed under 1.6.

During the reporting period, preparations for the Training-of-Trainers (ToT) took place, tailoring workshop content in response to CSO’s capacity development needs and using the training materials adapted in result. This activity is scheduled to take place 21-25 April 2025, and we will report more on its outcomes in the next report.

Activities 1.8 – 1.12

Not scheduled during the reporting period.

Output 2: Three Tajik conservation organisations and at least six CSO staff demonstrate increased capacity to fundraise for biodiversity conservation projects

2.1 Meet with the three organisations to set expectations and provide guidance on small grant opportunities (e.g., Rufford, MBZ, PBNF, etc.), including roles and responsibilities under Activity 2.3

As a first step towards Output 2, Fauna & Flora held a two-day workshop in Dushanbe on 20–21 January 2025, bringing together three of our partner organisations — CSSPNAT, ToMM, and YGPE. According to the original project plan, Activity 2.1 was meant to be a focused meeting with the three partner CSOs to set expectations and provide guidance on small grant opportunities such as Rufford, MBZ, and PBNF. However, after completing the Organisational Resilience Check (ORC) and SWOC analysis with each CSO, it became clear that two of the organisations had extremely limited experience with proposal writing and project implementation. Given this, we decided to adjust the format and content of the initial meeting to better meet the real needs of the CSOs.

Instead of just introducing grant opportunities, we expanded the session into a two-day interactive workshop that covered both small grant funding guidance and the basics of project design, proposal writing, and fundraising, as well as connected them with more experienced CSOs across Tajikistan. This more comprehensive approach aimed to give our CSO partners a stronger foundation before moving into more advanced training and mentoring stages of the project.

To maximise learning and exposure, we also strategically linked this event with a CEPF-funded networking and learning exchange workshop, which was held on 20 January 2025. This gave our CSO partners the opportunity to hear about real project experiences, learn from others' challenges and successes, and begin building connections with the broader conservation community.

In total, 23 participants attended, including representatives from our partner CSOs, CEPF-funded CSO partners, and other experienced national NGOs during the first day workshop, and five during the second day. Although the target was two representatives per CSO, one person from YGPE was unable to attend. The gender balance was 6F/17M on the first day and 4M/1F on the second day, reflecting current gender disparities in the conservation field in Tajikistan. Please see Annex 4 Doc.7 for detailed report on the workshop objectives, agenda, participants, and key highlights from both days.

2.2 Provide mentoring support to each of the three CSOs to develop funding proposals for the internal small grant opportunity under this project

As explained in detail under Activity 2.1, we have adapted our approach very slightly to respond to CSOs' capacity needs assessments, which showed that two of the organisations had extremely limited experience with proposal writing and project implementation. As such, we have adapted and expanded on the Activity 2.1 and included further training in project design and proposal development, using the skills of the more experienced of the three organisations, YGPE, to mentor the other two CSOs, sharing their experience, and encouraging peer-learning.

Additionally, all three CSOs benefited from being connected to the wider network of CSOs, who had recently completed their small-grant projects as part of the complementary, CEPF-funded project. This created opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and mentoring not just by Fauna & Flora staff, but through other, established and experienced Tajik conservation CSOs.

Our CSO partners will receive further mentoring support, specifically in developing their funding proposals for the internal small grant opportunity under this project, during the next reporting period.

Activities 2.3 – 2.10

Activities 2.3 – 2.10 were not scheduled during the reporting period.

Output 3: Three conservation CSOs strengthen their institutional capacity and comply with government regulations to operate in Tajikistan and collaborate with government agencies.

Activities under Output 3 were not scheduled during this reporting period.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Three Tajik biodiversity conservation CSOs build their institutional capacity through a tailored training programme

At the beginning of the project, the three CSOs — CSSPNAT, ToMM, and YGPE — were at very different levels of capacity. CSSPNAT and ToMM had never received external grants, lacked structured internal systems, and had limited staff experience in areas like planning, budgeting, or reporting. YGPE, while more experienced, still identified gaps in proposal quality, communication tools, and long-term fundraising strategies. None of the organisations had previously taken part in a structured capacity development programme focused on conservation project design and management.

During the reporting period, strong progress has been made towards achieving Output 1:

- All three Tajik CSOs signed an MoU with Fauna & Flora (MoV 1.1.1), included in Annex 4 Doc.1, showing clear commitment towards the project implementation and desire to cooperate on all project activities.
- All CSOs completed baseline capacity assessments, using tools including ORC, SWOC, Needs Assessment, ORP (as described in detail in Activity 1.3), involving 22 staff from the three CSOs in total. All completed assessments, including the baseline Organisational Resilience Check for each group (MoV 1.1.2) are included in Annex 4 Doc.2, 3, 4, 5, serving as evidence for achieving our Indicator 1.1.
- A full set of training modules was created and customised to respond to CSOs' capacity building needs and aligned with Tajikistan's NGO and conservation context (MoV 1.2.1), included in Annex 4 Doc. 8 to provide evidence of progress towards our Indicator 1.2. These modules were translated into local language and will be shared both digitally and in print during upcoming structured training modules. Engagement with our CSO partners to date, including through Activities 1.3, 1.4 and 2.1, indicate that all CSOs are keen to participate in the upcoming trainings, giving us confidence that we are on track to achieve this Indicator 1.2 fully.
- Preparations for the Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop were fully underway during the reporting period, with CSO participants selected, and date, location, agenda, and key presentation materials all determined (MoV 1.2.2), showing good progress towards achieving our Indicator 1.2 by project end.
- Further activities will take place in the next project period, but the smooth progress of all activities towards Output 1 to date gives us confidence for achieving Output 1 fully by the project end.

Output 2: Three Tajik conservation organisations and at least six CSO staff demonstrate increased capacity to fundraise for biodiversity conservation projects

As outlined in more detail under Activity 2.1, after completing the Organisational Resilience Check (ORC) and SWOC analysis with each CSO, it became clear that two of the organisations had extremely limited baseline experience with proposal writing and project implementation, and third organisation similarly identified areas for improvement in their fundraising capacities.

In response to this, a two-day workshop was delivered in January 2025, with targeted training on small grant opportunities, proposal development, and fundraising strategies, supporting our progress towards Indicators 2.1 and 2.2. Specifically, this was achieved through the following:

- CSOs were introduced to proposal formats, donor expectations, and tools like problem trees and solution trees, and they began working on early-stage proposal ideas during the group sessions.
- YGPE's Project Manager co-led the proposal writing session, offering peer support and helping guide less experienced organisations.
- In total, 5 CSO staff participated, with 2 invitees per organisation, but only 1 representative was able to attend from YGPE. Report with more information and evidence on these activities is included in Annex 4 Doc.7.

Additionally, progress was achieved towards Indicator 2.4, by inviting our partner CSOs to participate in a complementary, CEPF-funded networking and learning & experience exchange workshop in January 2025. This event brought together 23 participants for networking and peer-to-peer learning, including 3 partner CSOs from this project, 4 partner CSOs from complementary CEPF-funded project, and representatives from other conservation CSOs active in Tajikistan. While we will organise a specific networking event at the end of this project in Y2, strong progress towards Indicator 2.4 was already achieved through this earlier, complementary meeting, helping to connect conservation NGOs in Tajikistan and encourage collaboration and peer-learning. Report on this activity is included in Annex 4 Doc.7, serving as evidence towards this Indicator 2.4 too (MoV 2.4).

Further progress will be achieved during Y2 of the project, when the majority of Activities under Output 2 are scheduled to take place.

Output 3: Three conservation CSOs strengthen their institutional capacity and comply with government regulations to operate in Tajikistan and collaborate with government agencies

No Activities under Output 3 were scheduled to take place during Y1 of the project, and as such we will report on progress towards this Output in the next reporting period.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome: By the end of the project, three Tajik CSOs will have the institutional and technical capacity to create, implement and sustain biodiversity conservation initiatives

Conservation CSOs in Tajikistan play a pivotal role in addressing a multitude of societal and environmental challenges, yet face an increasingly restrictive operating context, with tightening governmental regulations and continued socio-economic hardships, leading to a large number of NGOs forced to shut down. With a narrowing number of environmental CSOs active in Tajikistan, there is an urgent need to empower and connect CSOs involved in conservation and sustainable development with each other and with government agencies to strengthen their organisational resilience and lead conservation work across Tajikistan. Through our project, we have set out to improve institutional and technical capacity of three Tajik CSOs to create, implement and sustain biodiversity conservation initiatives, by equipping them with essential skills, connections, and processes through targeted training, mentorship, networking and peer-to-peer learning.

During the Y1 of the project, we have laid strong foundations for achieving our desired Outcome by the project end.

Through comprehensive organisational assessments with each of our CSO partners, we established important baseline understanding of the organisations' current skills, strengths, challenges, and needs, enabling us to develop an individualised development plan for each CSO. These assessments and plans now guide the development of training materials and mentoring activities. A full set of training materials was developed and adapted to the Tajik context, covering project design, proposal writing, and grant management, and responding directly to CSO capacity building needs.

By deploying an adaptive management approach, we also capitalised on a complementary, CEPF-funded project activities and held a two-day workshop in January 2025, responding to the most critical needs of our CSO partners and their extremely limited experience with proposal writing and project implementation. The first day brought together a number of conservation CSOs across Tajikistan to enhance networking, knowledge sharing and peer learning, and the second day encompassed a practical training session for the three CSOs on identifying donors and writing funding proposals. As a result, all three CSOs now have a clearer understanding of project design and donor expectations. They've started taking steps toward creating their own proposals and have shown strong interest in learning more.

Whilst the Training-of-Trainers' workshop and further structured training modules will only be delivered in Y2 of the project, we have set strong foundation for ensuring that these trainings align with each CSO needs, and lead to improved capability and capacity to secure funding for their programming as a result of project (Indicator 0.1) and enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues (Indicator 0.2).

Through strong partner engagement throughout all activities to date, building of mutual trust and understanding, and facilitating connections to other conservation CSOs in Tajikistan, we have set early steps on pathway towards ensuring that CSO staff are confident in applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) by training others (Indicator 0.3).

Whilst it is still too early to fully assess our progress towards the project outcome, with majority of capacity-building activities set to take place during Y2 of the project, we have set strong foundations for eventual project success. We believe that the current indicators are appropriate

and sufficient for measuring whether the CSOs are becoming more resilient, connected and capable to lead conservation initiatives in Tajikistan.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 1: The current political and social stability in Tajikistan allows for safe travel within the country and the successful delivery of training sessions.

Comments: This assumption continues to hold true, with the current socio-political situation allowing for safe travel and effective delivery of all project activities. In March 2025, long-running border dispute between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was resolved, allowing travel in border areas and between the two countries to resume once again. Although this does not impact on our project geography directly, it signifies the favourable social and geo-political stability in the region.

Assumption 2: Organisations in Tajikistan continue to express a strong interest in enhancing their capabilities in biodiversity conservation and organisational development.

Comments: This assumption continues to hold true. Our engagement through this project to date, and through a complementary, CEPF-funded project, continues to confirm that there is clear, strong desire from CSOs in Tajikistan to access training and resources to develop their capacities and capabilities, and to connect with other NGOs across the country for peer-learning and collaboration.

Assumption 3: Government agencies are making staff and staff time available for active participation in formal training initiatives.

Comments: This assumption continues to hold true. With Fauna & Flora's positive relationship with key Government agencies, as evidenced by securing all required permissions for the project and their active participation in a complementary, CEPF-funded project, there is clear evidence that government agencies are willing to dedicate staff time and resources to participate in training activities, and see value in stronger connection to NGO network in Tajikistan.

Assumption 4: High passion and willingness of organisations in Tajikistan to take prevention measures/actions for mitigation any threats to biodiversity conservation.

Comments: This assumption continues to hold true. Our project activities to date demonstrate that Tajik conservation CSOs have keen interest to address the intertwined biodiversity and socio-economic development threats, and have desire to build their capacity further for implementation of projects that respond to these societal issues.

In addition to the assumptions included in our original proposal, we note the changing funding landscape that is challenging the ability of small Tajik CSOs to access funding for long-term operations. With large-scale cuts to US Government funding, and reductions in funding from other statutory sources, many larger NGOs in Central Asia have begun to close their operations, with inadvertent impact on smaller CSOs that would often benefit from such funding as co-implementing partners. As such, we recognise the risk arising from the decreased availability of global funding for conservation as an important factor influencing Tajik CSO's ability to create, implement and sustain biodiversity conservation initiatives.

3.5 Achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and multidimensional poverty reduction

With the majority of capacity-building activities set to take place during Y2 of the project, it is still too early to fully demonstrate an evidenced progress towards our higher-level objectives and short- and long-term changes. However, as reported in previous sections of this report, we believe that we have set strong foundations during the first year of the project for achieving eventual changes to both biodiversity and multi-dimensional poverty reduction.

In terms of expected short-term changes, we have completed important baseline assessment of three Tajik CSO capacities and capabilities, their organisational development needs, and created individualised Organisational Resilience Plans (as described in further detail in Section 3.1), setting out clear priorities to be addressed through structured training during the project. Tailored training materials were developed in response to the CSOs' capacity needs, including

project design, proposal writing, and grant management. These baselines will help us assess and compare any changes and improvements in **the capacity of key individuals from three conservation organisations in Tajikistan, disaggregated by gender, in understanding and applying people-centred approaches to biodiversity conservation** as a result of project's capacity-building activities in Y2.

Whilst dedicated, structured training in fundraising and grant management will be delivered in Y2 of the project, we have already begun to address the most critical needs of our CSO partners and their extremely limited experience with proposal writing and project implementation. As outlined in further detail in Section 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, all three CSO partners (5 people, 4M/1F) participated in a specific session as part of a two-day workshop in January 2025, on small grant opportunities, proposal development, and fundraising strategies. Whilst the improvement in capabilities will be measured only at the end of the project through endline capacity assessments, feedback from the workshop indicates strong results in building **awareness and knowledge of fundraising and grant management of the three CSOs in Tajikistan**. We note that despite efforts to encourage equal participation, we didn't achieve desired 50/50 gender ratio in this early training event. Many CSOs chose to send their senior leaders, who were all men, and in some cases, female staff were not available at all due to small size of CSOs. This highlighted a deeper issue within conservation-focused sector in Tajikistan. While the project couldn't fully address this in the short term, we will encourage more targeted outreach to support more inclusive participation of women in future project activities.

During this early training event, CSOs also began to develop early project ideas, and received mentoring, in writing proposals for the small-grant opportunities available in Y2 of the project. Our CSO partners also benefited from learning from other conservation NGOs active in Tajikistan and hearing their experience in implementing conservation projects as part of a complementary CEPF-funded project. This helped to raise awareness and set **our three CSO partners in Tajikistan** on a pathway towards **being able to effectively manage conservation projects that prioritise both people and livelihoods in their respective regions**.

Moreover, by being connected to four other small conservation CSOs and other more established conservation NGOs in Tajikistan, our **three CSO partners have established new connections and fostered a collaborative network** that encourages collaboration and peer-to-peer learning from an early outset of the project. Further networking event, planned at the end of this project in Y2, will solidify this short-term impact.

Finally, whilst full training on government engagement and compliance will only take place in Y2, the project has already established positive relationship with key governmental partners, as evidenced by securing all necessary permissions and their involvement in the early networking event. This serves as an important, albeit a small step, towards supporting our **three CSOs to achieve compliance with the government's reporting and procedural requirements**.

These early indications of progress towards short-term changes anticipated through the project help illustrate that our project remains on track towards achieving longer-term changes in biodiversity and poverty reduction too. However, as the majority of our capacity-building activities is set to take place in the next reporting period, we will report more fully on progress towards these in our next report.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

During the reporting period, we have made meaningful contributions to national and international biodiversity policy processes in Tajikistan, specifically the country's efforts to revise Tajikistan's National Biodiversity Targets to the Global Biodiversity Framework. At the formal request of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of Tajikistan, on February 18th, 2025, Fauna & Flora Tajikistan was invited to contribute to national consultations on aligning the revised National Biodiversity Targets. This reflects a significant recognition of the project team's technical expertise and established relationships with relevant government agencies.

Our engagement included providing high-level feedback on the draft national targets and indicators and suggesting how they could be strengthened through better alignment with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), such as the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and CITES. We have also highlighted the continued

need for greater capacity building and participatory engagement of local communities and CSOs in conserving biodiversity to support Tajikistan in reaching their national and international commitments.

Further contributions to national policy and reporting will be enabled in the next project reporting period, as part of CSOs' training in people-centred conservation approaches, as well as project management, monitoring and fundraising.

5. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

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

The project has assessed the GESI context through meetings and needs assessments with local CSOs, input from local staff, and through staff experiences implementing previous grants in the country. Project activities have been designed to gather more information about the GESI context of each CSO and their skills and knowledge in addressing issues related to GESI. The CSOs chosen to benefit from capacity building activities respond to GESI considerations: one is a youth group and two are small rural conservation and tourism organisations. The project includes increasing the capabilities related to social equity of local CSOs so that in the future they can design and implement conservation projects that consider and address the basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups in their contexts. The contents of this training have been adapted to the local context and trialled in previous projects to make sure they adequately represent Tajik experiences and respond to the context. The training is designed to be accessible for all participants.

Considering social inclusion, the project seeks to increase the capabilities of CSOs to deliver people-centred conservation projects, meaning projects that increase equitable access to assets, resources and capabilities for local communities, in particular women and marginalised groups. Within the project, CSOs will be introduced to social dimensions of conservation, such as social differences, social equity, social risks of conservation projects, and implementation of social safeguards. Representatives of the CSOs will be trained in considering how age, wealth, gender and disability affect local participation and in how projects can further increase inclusion, representation, and participation of women and marginalised groups. They will also be trained in how to consider equitable access and control of natural resources within conservation projects.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

The Project Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from Fauna & Flora, and our three main CSO partners has been responsible for monitoring the project's output indicators. Through regular communications, and convening alongside key project activities, such as the Networking & Learning Exchange Event and the ToT training, all project partners have had an opportunity to assess progress and ensure the project activities and outputs continue to contribute to the project outcome.

This year, our main focus has been on establishing the foundation for monitoring and evaluating the project. We used several tools and steps to make sure we are collecting the right information to track progress. For example, we carried out detailed baseline assessments with each CSO using tools like the ORC, SWOC analysis, and needs assessments, as described in detail in section 3. These helped us understand the starting point of each organisation and gave us a clear baseline to assess future changes in their capacity and capability.

We also collected participation data from trainings and workshops, kept detailed notes and photos from each event, and gathered feedback from participants to understand how useful the activities were. These small but important steps help us evaluate whether our activities are moving us closer to our desired outcome, and understand how responsive they are to CSO capacity building needs identified in their organisational development plan.

Furthermore, Fauna & Flora team has also carried out an After-Action-Review meeting, to understand any key lessons learnt and recommendations from our complementary, CEPF-funded project, which came to an end in January 2025. This helped our team feed any key insights into the implementation of capacity-building activities under this project, for example, the recommendation to conduct networking activities early on in the project, which informed our decision to invite our partner CSOs under this project to the networking and knowledge exchange event funded under CEPF, enabling a wider network of conservation CSOs to meet and learn from each other's' experience and successes.

We are not yet measuring big changes in capacity or performance, because most of the activities that can lead to those changes are scheduled to take place in the next reporting period.

The current approach is suitable for this stage of the project because it focuses on understanding each CSO's needs and tracking engagement and participation. It's simple and manageable but gives us useful data to build on. Our indicators of success continue to be sufficient and align with those outlined in our original project proposal.

7. Lessons learnt

This first year of the project gave us many helpful lessons, especially as we focused on building relationships, understanding the CSOs' needs, and laying the foundation for future activities.

An important lesson learnt was the need for flexibility when working with smaller or newer organisations. The decision to simplify the Organisational Resilience Checklist (Fauna & Flora's standard self-assessment of organisational strength) and Individual Development Plan template (an action plan for organisational strengthening priorities) was important in ensuring that the tools were appropriate for the scale and capacity of the three CSOs, which helped us make these tools more appropriate and useful for the three CSOs involved in this project.

Combining our project's first workshop with the CEPF-funded networking and learning exchange in January 2025 also worked very well. This gave the three CSOs an opportunity to connect with other, more experienced organisations from across Tajikistan. They were able to hear real stories, lessons learned, and challenges from projects that were relatable and relevant. For example, the presentation by one of the CSOs "Dunyoyi Javoni" sparked a discussion on using scientific evidence in proposals, and YGPE not only participated, but also led a session on proposal writing. Their support to CSSPNAT and ToMM was a good example of how peer learning can happen naturally and effectively.

One key lesson learned was that different CSOs need different speeds and styles of support. ToMM, for instance, needed help with very basic digital tools and had no reliable internet access. In contrast, YGPE is already thinking about international fellowships for their staff. This reminded us to stay flexible, patient, and ready to adjust — even small things like printed copies of materials and simplified exercises made a big difference.

Another area of learning was around planning participant involvement. During the January workshop, we invited two people from each CSO, but for various reasons, YGPE was only able to send one person. This limited their ability to fully engage in group activities. In the future, we will try to plan more follow-up or internal knowledge-sharing opportunities to make sure key learnings are not lost when fewer participants can attend.

For others working in similar contexts, especially with smaller or rural CSOs, we would recommend:

- Keep tools and language simple and practical, avoiding donor-heavy jargon
- Use real examples and peer stories to bring topics to life
- Don't assume prior knowledge — always start from the basics
- Be ready to shift your plan when the context demands it

We are already applying what we have learned. For example, as we prepare the Training of Trainers (ToT) and the next round of mentoring and workshops, we are planning to give more time for basic skill-building, more hands-on practice, and build in space for CSOs to share experiences with each other. We are also planning to offer more structured mentoring support, so that organisations like CSSPNAT and ToMM receive one-on-one help as they begin drafting their proposals. These changes reflect adaptive project management, whilst still aligning with our overall logical framework and original project outputs and indicators, and as such do not require a specific change request at this stage.

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

This is our first Annual Report, and we have not received any prior feedback on the project; as such, this section is not applicable.

9. Risk Management

As outlined in Section 3.4 earlier, we recognise a new risk related to the ability of small Tajik CSOs to access funding for their sustainable operations, arising from the changing global funding landscape. With large-scale cuts to US Government funding, and reductions in funding from other statutory sources, many larger NGOs in Central Asia have begun to close their operations, with inadvertent impact on smaller CSOs that would often benefit from such funding as co-implementing partners. As such, we recognise the risk arising from the decreased availability of global funding for conservation as an important factor influencing Tajik CSO's ability to create, implement and sustain biodiversity conservation initiatives.

In response, we will ensure that our training on Donor Research & Proposal Writing, scheduled to take place in Y2, will incorporate a diverse range of funding opportunities relevant to small CSOs operating in Tajikistan, and encourages CSOs to develop a mixture of income sources encompassing both statutory and philanthropic sources, as well as other financing mechanisms (e.g., nature-based enterprises) to support their sustainable operations into the long-term.

An updated Risk Register has been submitted as Annex 4 Doc.9.

10. Scalability and durability

As this is the first year of the project, we are mainly laying the foundation for future scale and sustainability. However, we have already taken steps to ensure that the work we are doing now can have a long-term impact, both within the three CSOs and more broadly in the conservation sector in Tajikistan.

To start with, the project has worked closely with key stakeholders from the beginning. We received official support and permissions from national institutions such as the Committee of Environmental Protection, Forestry Agency, National Academy of Sciences, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These bodies were involved during the early setup of the project and have continued to be informed and supportive of the activities. Their engagement builds trust and creates a strong base for scaling the project in the future.

We also brought together both our partner CSOs under this project alongside CEPF-funded CSOs during the January 2025 workshop, which allowed smaller or less experienced groups to connect with more established organisations (please see Annex 4 Doc.7). This kind of networking not only supports learning and collaboration, but also shows the wider sector how tailored, practical support can help CSOs grow. The feedback from the event participants also suggested great appetite for future collaborations, with opportunities for CSOs to scale up by working together. By building bridges for ongoing strategic peer networks, participant CSOs can sustainably support each other into the future. The participation of government partners and experienced national NGOs at that event gave them first-hand insight into the project's approach and early results.

One of the ways we are promoting durability is through the Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop. By preparing selected staff from each CSO to become future trainers, we are building local capacity that can continue even after the project ends. These trainers will be able to support their own teams and possibly other NGOs in their region.

We also focused on developing all materials in Tajik and Russian, and sharing them in both printed and digital formats. This makes the tools accessible, reusable, and suitable for organisations working in remote areas with limited internet access (please see Annex 4 Doc.8 for an English version of the materials, with translated materials available on request).

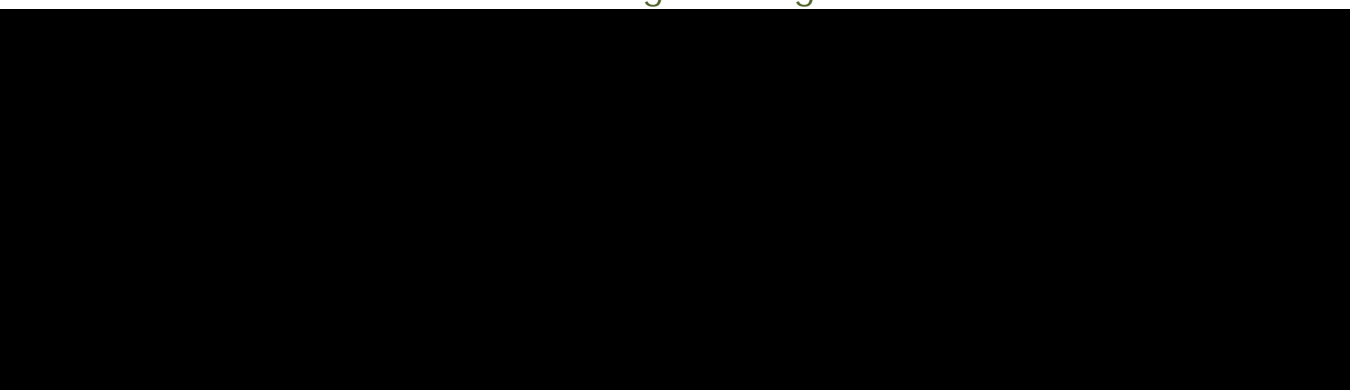
We have also held discussions between Fauna & Flora's Tajikistan and UK teams, to support our long-term strategy planning for future conservation capacity building activities in Tajikistan, and our role in supporting these through future projects. We have looked at other models, e.g., the Coastal Communities Network, facilitated by Fauna & Flora in Scotland, to evaluate what type of capacity building model might be most suitable and relevant for conservation capacity needs in Tajikistan.

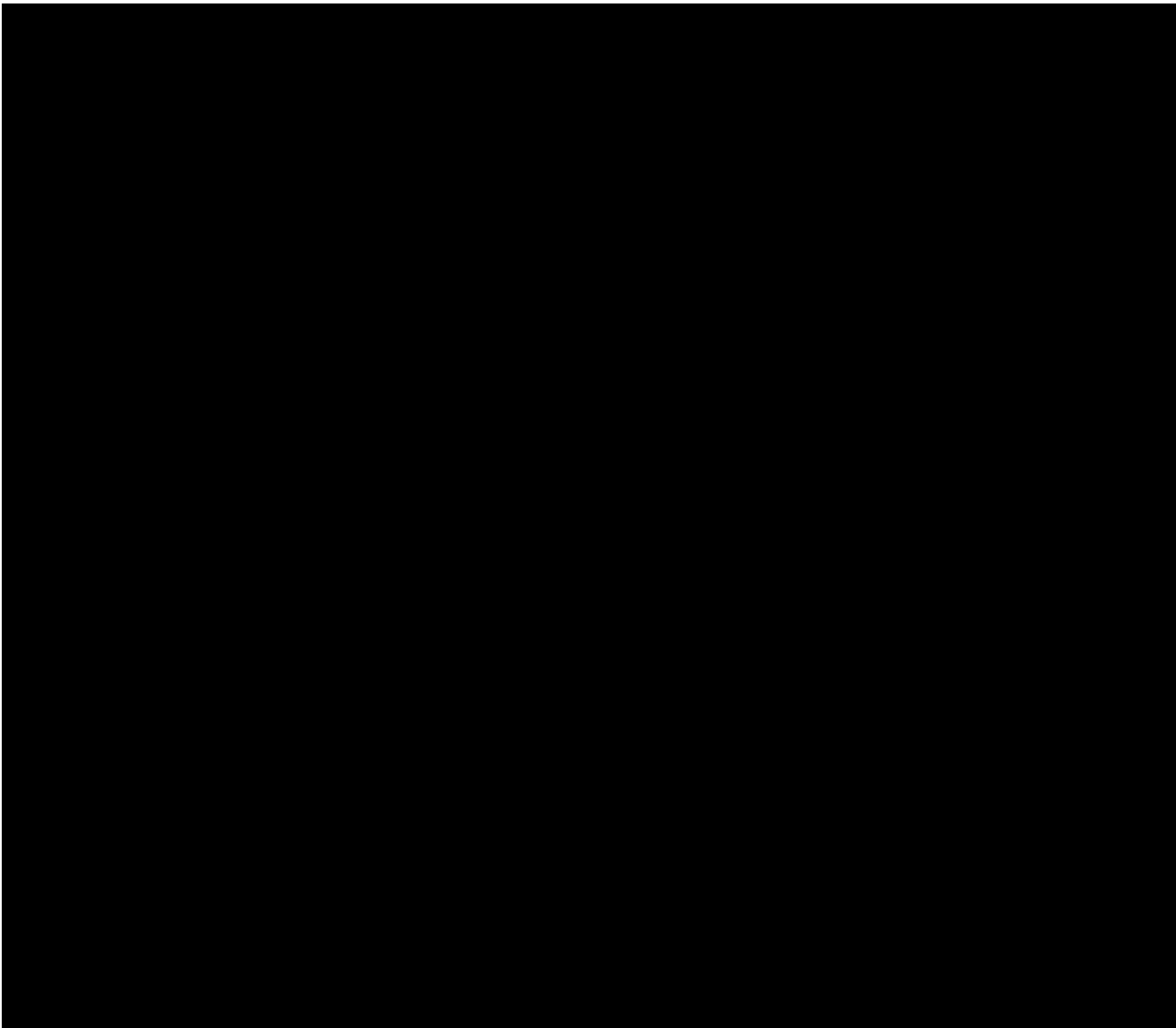
11. Darwin Initiative identity

The Darwin Initiative was introduced and clearly acknowledged during the signing of MoUs and capacity assessments with all three partner CSOs. In these meetings, we explained the project's goals, Fauna & Flora's role, and described in detail the funding provided by the UK Government through the Darwin Initiative.

So far, we have not used the Darwin Initiative logo in public materials, but all upcoming training modules, ToT materials, and printed handouts will include the logo and recognitions at the start. We also plan to share updates from future training events, including the ToT, as part of Fauna & Flora's internal and external communications on our social media and other channels, and will ensure to fully acknowledge UK Government's contribution to our project.

12. Safeguarding





13. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2024/25 Grant (£)	2024/25 Total Darwin 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)				
TOTAL	£78,486.00	£78,486.00	0%	

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			

14. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

As the project is still in an early stage of implementation, there are no further issues or comments to note, which have not been covered elsewhere in the report. No significant difficulties were encountered during the year, apart from slight initial delay in project start time, as explained in further detail in Section 3.

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

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes.

Our Darwin Initiative-funded project titled “*Small but Mighty: Empowering Tajik conservation organisations through capacity building*” has already made good progress in strengthening local conservation capacity and building foundation for long-term impact. A major early success has been the tailored, step-by-step support provided to three small but highly motivated civil society organisations (CSOs) working in biodiversity conservation [REDACTED]

What makes this achievement stand out is the project’s ability to reach organisations that have traditionally been overlooked in conservation capacity programmes. Two of the CSOs had no prior experience with external grants, and one does not even have a formal office space. Through simplified tools, in-person mentoring, and locally relevant training, the project has made it possible for them to engage confidently and begin building the core systems they need to grow.

In January 2025, a key moment came when all three CSOs joined a two-day networking and fundraising workshop alongside more experienced organisations previously funded through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). Through peer-to-peer learning, storytelling, and practical sessions, the participating CSOs began developing real project ideas and gained exposure to small grant opportunities, which will be developed during the upcoming Training-of-Trainers event. One CSO [REDACTED] even took on a peer mentoring role during the event — a strong sign of local leadership and sustainability.

The project also developed and translated a full suite of training modules: Train the trainer, Project Design & Social Equity, Donor Research & Proposal Writing and Good Grant Management, ensuring they are accessible in Tajik language and usable in low-resource settings. These materials will be used during the upcoming Training of Trainers to help CSOs build in-house knowledge that lasts beyond the project’s lifetime.

These achievements reflect the project’s strong start in advancing local conservation leadership, equity in opportunity, and sustainable impact in Tajikistan’s unique conservation landscape.

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against Indicators of Success for Financial Year 2024-2025

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Outcome By the end of the project, three Tajik CSOs will have the institutional and technical capacity to create, implement and sustain biodiversity conservation initiatives.		
Outcome indicator 0.1 Three Tajik organisations with improved capability and capacity to secure funding for their programming as a result of project.	Whilst the Training-of-Trainers' workshop and further structured training modules will only be delivered in Y2 of the project, we have set strong foundation during the reporting period for ensuring that these trainings align with each CSO needs, stemming from their capacity needs assessments and individualised development plans. Please see Section 3.1 and Annex 4 Doc.2, 3, 4, 5 for further evidence. A combined fundraising and networking and learning exchange event took place in January 2025, giving CSOs an early boost to their knowledge in identifying donors and formulating project proposals, responding to the clear lack of capability and capacity to secure funding identified through earlier needs assessments; please see Section 3.1 and Annex 4 Doc.7 for further evidence.	In the upcoming reporting period, CSOs will take part in ToT workshop and complete three structured trainings, including on Project Design & Social Equity, Donor Research & Proposal Writing and Good Grant Management, setting them up for success and building capacity for securing funding for their operations into the future.
Outcome indicator 0.2 Three Tajik organisations with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues.	Whilst the majority of training activities aimed at enhancing awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues will be undertaken in the next project period, three Tajik CSOs have participated in a networking event in January 2025, having the opportunity to learn from other conservation NGOs in Tajikistan about their projects, successes and experiences in protecting biodiversity and tackling rural poverty; please see Section 3.1 and Annex 4 Doc.7 for further evidence.	In the upcoming reporting period, three Tajik CSOs will take part in structured training, including Project Design & Social Equity, which will be essential in building their awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues.
Outcome indicator 0.3 At least eight people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training-of-trainers by training others.	As the majority of training activities will take place in Y2 of the project, we are not yet able to report progress towards this Indicator.	In the upcoming reporting period, at least 8 people will apply their new capabilities (skills and knowledge) to deliver three structured training modules in Y2.
Output 1 Three Tajik biodiversity conservation CSOs build their institutional capacity through a tailored training programme.		

<p>Output indicator 1.1</p> <p>Three Tajik CSOs complete an organisational self-assessment and prioritisation for an individualised development plan.</p>	<p>In October and November 2024, the three Tajik conservation CSOs: CSSPNAT, ToMM, and YGPE, completed two-day comprehensive organisational capacity self-assessment and prioritisation for an individualised development plan, involving 22 people in total. Please see Section 3.1 and Annex 4 Doc.2, 3, 4, 5 for further evidence.</p>	<p>At the end of the project, an endline capacity self-assessment will be completed to measure the change in capacity and capability of each of the three CSOs.</p>
<p>Output indicator 1.2</p> <p>Twelve people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training on institutional and technical capacity for biodiversity conservation.</p>	<p>Whilst the structured training is scheduled to take place in Y2 of the project, we have developed tailored training materials during the reporting period. Please see section 3.1 and Annex 4 Doc. 8 for further evidence. All materials are in the process of professionally being translated into local languages (Tajik and Russian) and will be shared with participants during upcoming ToT in both electronic and printed formats to make them easy to use regardless of internet access or location.</p>	<p>In the upcoming reporting period, participants from three CSOs and two FSU government departments will take part in three structured trainings, including on Project Design & Social Equity, Donor Research & Proposal Writing and Good Grant Management.</p>
<p>Output Indicator 1.3</p> <p>Two FSU government departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues.</p>	<p>Activities towards this Output were not scheduled during this reporting period, and as such we are unable to report progress.</p>	<p>In the upcoming reporting period, participants from three CSOs and two FSU government departments will take part in three structured trainings, including on Project Design & Social Equity, Donor Research & Proposal Writing and Good Grant Management.</p>
<p>Output Indicator 1.4</p> <p>Eight trainers trained reporting they have delivered training by the end of the project.</p>	<p>Activities towards this Output were not scheduled during this reporting period, and as such we are unable to report progress.</p>	<p>In the upcoming reporting period, at least 8 people will apply their new capabilities (skills and knowledge) to deliver three structured training modules in Y2.</p>
<p>Output 2</p> <p>Three Tajik conservation organisations and at least six CSO staff demonstrate increased capacity to fundraise for biodiversity conservation projects.</p>		
<p>Output indicator 2.1.</p> <p>Six people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training on project fundraising.</p>	<p>Whilst further structured training will take part in Y2 of the project, we have organised a two-day interactive workshop in January 2025 as early steps to build skills and knowledge in project fundraising. This workshop covered both small grant funding guidance and the basics of project design, proposal writing, and fundraising, as well as connected five staff from three CSOs with more experienced conservation NGOs across Tajikistan. This more comprehensive approach aimed</p>	<p>In the upcoming reporting period, participants from three CSOs and two FSU government departments will take part in three structured trainings, including on Project Design & Social Equity, Donor Research &</p>

	to give our CSO partners a stronger foundation before moving into more advanced training and mentoring stages of the project. Please see Section 3.1 and Annex 4 Doc.7 for more evidence.	Proposal Writing and Good Grant Management.
Output indicator 2.2. Three local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity on project fundraising as a result of project.	As above, please see progress reported against Indicator 2.1	In the upcoming reporting period, participants from three CSOs will take part in three structured trainings, including on Project Design & Social Equity, Donor Research & Proposal Writing and Good Grant Management. Through pre- and post-workshop feedback, we will be able to assess improved capability and capacity on project fundraising as a result of project.
Output Indicator 2.3. Eight trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project.	Whilst the structured training is scheduled to take place in Y2 of the project, we have developed tailored training materials during the reporting period. Please see section 3.1 and Annex 4 Doc. 8 for further evidence.	In the upcoming reporting period, 8 trainers will apply their new capabilities to deliver three structured training modules in Y2.
Output Indicator 2.4. Eight CSOs with additional connections to other conservation CSOs and specific plans for collaboration.	Although a specific networking event will be held at the end of Y2, strong progress was already achieved by inviting our partner CSOs to participate in a complementary, CEPF-funded networking and learning & experience exchange workshop in January 2025. This event brought together 23 participants for networking and peer-to-peer learning, including 3 partner CSOs from this project, 4 partner CSOs from complementary CEPF-funded project, and representatives from other conservation CSOs active in Tajikistan. Please see Section 3.2 and Annex 4 Doc.7, serving as further evidence.	A final, networking event will be organised at the end of the project in Y2, helping to bring together conservation CSOs from across Tajikistan, create connections and encourage plans for collaboration.
Output 3 Three conservation CSOs strengthen their institutional capacity and comply with government regulations to operate in Tajikistan and collaborate with government agencies.		
Output Indicator 3.1 Six people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training on government stakeholder engagement and compliance.	Activities towards this Output were not scheduled during this reporting period, and as such we are unable to report progress.	In the next reporting period, we will organise a specific training workshop on proper procedure and documentation for

		government reporting and checks.
<p>Output Indicator 3.2</p> <p>Three local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity on government stakeholder engagement and compliance as a result of project.</p>	<p>Activities towards this Output were not scheduled during this reporting period, and as such we are unable to report progress.</p>	<p>In the next reporting period, we will organise a specific training workshop on proper procedure and documentation for government engagement and compliance. Pre- and post-feedback questionnaires will help us assess the improvement in CSO capability and capacity.</p>

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: By the end of the project, three Tajik CSOs will have the institutional and technical capacity to create, implement and sustain biodiversity conservation initiatives.	0.1 Three Tajik organisations with improved capability and capacity to secure funding for their programming as a result of project. [DI-A03] 0.2 Three Tajik organisations with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues. 0.3 At least eight people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training-of-trainers by training others. [DIA04]	0.1 Three new people-centred biodiversity conservation initiatives designed and implemented by Tajik CSOs the end of the project. 0.2 Pre and post-training capacity self-assessment. 0.3 Training-of-trainers participant follow up surveys, results disaggregated by sex, age group, nationality, location and type of knowledge/skills.
Output 1 Three Tajik biodiversity conservation CSOs build their institutional capacity through a tailored training programme.	1.1 Three Tajik CSOs complete an organisational self-assessment and prioritisation for an individualised development plan. 1.2 Twelve people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training on institutional and technical capacity for biodiversity conservation. [DI-A01] 1.3 Two FSU government departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues. [DI-A07] 1.4 Eight trainers trained reporting they have delivered training by the end of the project. [DI-A04]	1.1.1 MoUs signed between FFI and the local organisations. 1.1.2 Capacity assessment report for 3 CSOs, including baseline Organisational Resilience Check for each group, undertaken twice (baseline and endline). 1.2.1 Adapted training materials for training. 1.2.2 Report on training-of-trainers workshop for eight people, including: date; location; agenda; participant list; presentation materials, and pre- and post-training assessments. 1.2.3 Report on trainings with the three organisations, including: dates; locations; participant lists; agendas; materials presented; pre- and post-training knowledge assessments, and CSO post-training plans (Aug 2024). 1.3 Training-of-trainers participant follow up surveys, results disaggregated by sex, age group, nationality, location and type of knowledge/skills.
Output 2 Three Tajik conservation organisations and at least six CSO staff demonstrate increased capacity to fundraise for biodiversity conservation projects.	2.1 Six people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training on project fundraising. [DI-A01]	2.1 Technical and financial proposals for small grant projects completed by each of the three organisations. 2.2 Final small grant technical and financial completion reports completed by each organisation in Tajik or Russian, supplemented by FFI site visit reports.

	<p>2.2 Three local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity on project fundraising as a result of project. [DI-A03]</p> <p>2.3 Eight trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project. [DI-A04,A05]</p> <p>2.4 Eight CSOs with additional connections to other conservation CSOs and specific plans for collaboration. [DI-B05]</p>	<p>2.3 Training-of-trainers participant follow up surveys, results disaggregated by sex, age group, nationality, location and type of knowledge/skills.</p> <p>2.4 Report on 1-day networking and learning exchange workshop on red listed species collaboration opportunities, for eight CSOs including: participant list; dates; location; agenda; materials, and next steps.</p>
<p>Output 3</p> <p>Three conservation CSOs strengthen their institutional capacity and comply with government regulations to operate in Tajikistan and collaborate with government agencies.</p>	<p>3.1 Six people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training on government stakeholder engagement and compliance. [DIA07]</p> <p>3.2 Three local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity on government stakeholder engagement and compliance as a result of project. [DI-A03]</p>	<p>3.1 Report on 1-day communications and media skills training workshop, for eight people from three CSOs, including: dates; location; participant list; agenda; materials presented; pre- and post-training capacity assessments, and next steps.</p> <p>3.2 Report on 1-day government compliance training, for eight people from three CSOs, including: dates; location; participant list; agenda; materials presented; pre and post-training capacity assessments; next steps, and CSO completion certificates.</p>
<p>Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)</p> <p>Output 1:</p> <p>1.1 Sign MoUs with three CSOs.</p> <p>1.2 Obtain formal permissions for project activities and cooperation with the Committee of Environmental Protection, National Academy of Science, and Agency for Forestry, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.</p> <p>1.3 Complete a baseline Organisational Resilience Check (ORC) and SWOT analysis with each of the three CSOs.</p> <p>1.4 Using data gathered under 1.3, establish baselines of skills and knowledge of three organisations and collaboratively establishing an individualised Capability and Capacity development plan.</p> <p>1.5 Write report establishing training needs for each organisation.</p> <p>1.6 Create training modules adapted to the organisation's needs (topics subject to ORC, but likely project design, prioritisation and work planning, proposal writing, good grant management, social safeguards, role of national regulation and multilateral environmental agreements in conservation) and to the Tajikistan context and based on 1.2.</p> <p>1.7 Organise and deliver training-of-trainers for eight local organisation staff on the organisational management modules developed under 1.6.</p> <p>1.8 Organise and deliver a 3-day training module on topic 1 (e.g., Project Design and Proposal Writing), for 12 people from three CSOs and 2 FSUs. Training will be focused on CSOs, and two FSUs will be invited to participate to strengthen networking and sharing among conservation actors.</p> <p>1.9 Organise and deliver a 3-day training module on topic 2 (e.g., Good Grant Management), for 12 people from three CSOs and 2 FSUs. Training will be focused on CSOs, and two FSUs will be invited to participate to strengthen networking and sharing among conservation actors.</p> <p>1.10 Organise and deliver a 3-day training module on People-centered Approaches to Conservation, for 12 people from three CSOs and 2 FSUs. Training will be focused on CSOs, and two FSUs will be invited to participate to strengthen networking and sharing among conservation actors</p> <p>1.11 Write report for each of the three CSOs, documenting training and providing an assessment of capacity gained and next steps.</p>		

1.12 Facilitate completion of endline ORCs with each of the three CSOs.

Output 2:

2.1 Meet with the three organisations to set expectations and provide guidance on small grant opportunities (e.g., Rufford, MBZ, PBNF, etc.), including roles and responsibilities under Activity 2.3.

2.2 Provide mentoring support to each of the three CSOs to develop funding proposals for the internal small grant opportunity under this project.

2.3 Three CSOs develop funding proposals for allocation of funding under this project (up to £3,300 per CSO), for specific activities relating to one aspect of their programs.

2.4 Three CSOs implement specific activities planned under their small grants.

2.5 Provide mentoring support to CSOs during grant implementation, through meetings and feedback.

2.6 Organise and conduct three site visits to each organisation's working site where activities are being implemented under the small grants.

2.7 Grantees prepare and submit short narrative and expenditure reports to FFI, on completion of activities under their small grants.

2.8 Provide feedback on CSO grantee reports, through meetings and written feedback .

2.9 Grantees prepare final versions of their reports, following FFI feedback under 2.9.

2.10 Organise and deliver a networking workshop focused on species conservation for the eight CSOs, including five CSOs engaged with FFI capacity building work through complementary funding.

Output 3:

3.1 Organise and deliver a one-day training module on project communications skills and approaches, for eight people from four organisations.

3.2 Design, organise and deliver a 1-day training workshop on proper procedure and documentation for government reporting and checks, for five people from 2 CSOs.

Important Assumptions

The current political and social stability in Tajikistan allows for safe travel within the country and the successful delivery of training sessions.

Organisations in Tajikistan continue to express a strong interest in enhancing their capabilities in biodiversity conservation and organizational development.

Government agencies are making staff and staff time available for active participation in formal training initiatives.

High passion and willingness of organisations in Tajikistan to take prevention measures/actions for mitigation any threats to biodiversity conservation.

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.

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 to date	Total planned during the project
DI-A01	Twelve people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training on institutional and technical capacity for biodiversity conservation.	1.2	People	Sex, Age Group, Nationality	0			0	12
DI-A01	Six people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training on project fundraising.	2.1	People	Sex, Age Group, Nationality	5 (4M/1F; 5 Tajik)			5	6
DI-A03	Three Tajik organisations with improved capability and capacity to secure funding for their programming as a result of project.	0.1; 2.2; 3.2	Organisation	New	0			0	3
DI-A04	At least eight people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training-of-trainers by training others. Eight trainers trained reporting they have delivered training by the end of the project.	0.3, 2.3 1.3	People	Sex, Age Group, Nationality, Location, Type of knowledge/skills	0			0	8
DI-A07	Two FSU government departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues.	1.3	Organisations	New	0			0	2
DI-A07	Six people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training on government stakeholder engagement and compliance	3.1	People	Sex, Nationality	0			0	6
DI-B05	Eight CSOs with additional connections to other conservation CSOs and specific plans for collaboration.	2.4	Organisations	Improved	7			7	8

Table 2 Publications

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

No publications were produced during the project reporting period.

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, scheme, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	Y
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please consider the best way to submit. One zipped file, or a download option is recommended. We can work with most online options and will be in touch if we have a problem accessing material. If unsure, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	Y
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.	N/a
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.	Y
Have you provided an updated risk register? If you have an existing risk register you should provide an updated version alongside your report. If your project was funded prior to this being a requirement, you are encouraged to develop a risk register.	Y
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 15)?	Y
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Y
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Y
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	