

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	DIR30CC\1314
Project title	Scaling up capacity to mainstream wetland conservation in Southern Africa
Country/ies	Zambia, Zimbabwe
Lead Organisation	BirdLife International
Project partner(s)	BirdWatch Zambia, BirdLife Zimbabwe
Darwin Initiative grant value	£199,676.00
Start/end dates of project	1 April 2024 – 30 December 2025
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2024 – Mar 2025) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2024 - March 2025
Project Leader name	Megan Eldred
Project website/blog/social media	
Report author(s) and date	Megan Eldred, Mary Masala, Julia Pierini; 28 April 2025



1. Project summary

Despite wetlands' critical importance for biodiversity, climate regulation, and livelihoods in Southern Africa, they face increasing development pressures and policy challenges. This Darwin Initiative project aims to strengthen civil society capacity in Zambia and Zimbabwe to engage in and influence wetland conservation policy, particularly through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in conjunction with the planning for the Ramsar Convention on Wetland Conference of Parties (COP15) in Victoria Falls in July 2025.

By building civil society capacity for science-based advocacy, the project addresses the critical implementation gaps identified in both countries' Ramsar and CBD National Reports while supporting the implementation of regional and global biodiversity commitments. The project's beneficiaries include staff and volunteers of BLZ and BWZ, other regional CSOs, Local Conservation Groups, government staff, Convention Focal Points and ultimately local communities dependent on wetland resources. Through this work, we aim to ensure that wetland conservation priorities are effectively mainstreamed in updated NBSAPs and other policy frameworks, a critical barrier to wetland conservation. BirdLife International brings policy expertise and regional and global engagement and lessons, while BirdWatch Zambia and BirdLife Zimbabwe provide expertise in establishing conservation action in partnership with government and local communities, and provide vital biodiversity data on IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and Key Biodiversity Areas.

The project builds capacity through in-person and online training, enabling civil society organizations to translate scientific data into policy recommendations that enhance wetland protection under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), particularly Targets 1-3. It also seeks to advance commitments made by Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, through delivering on obligations under that framework (such as establishing National Wetland Committees) and aligning it with other processes to enhance actions. It strengthens and engages civil society as key partners in the delivery, implementation and accountability of these commitments. We focus on advocating for improved protected area management and wetland conservation through better planning processes.

Key project outcomes include:

- Coordinated advocacy at Ramsar COP15 and CBD meetings
- Stronger NBSAPs for Zimbabwe and Zambia, through enhanced engagement of civil society in the NBSAP process
- A free, online toolkit with case studies on engaging with policy processes to deliver effective wetland conservation
- Establishment of a region-wide Advocacy Community of Practice to share lessons and resources

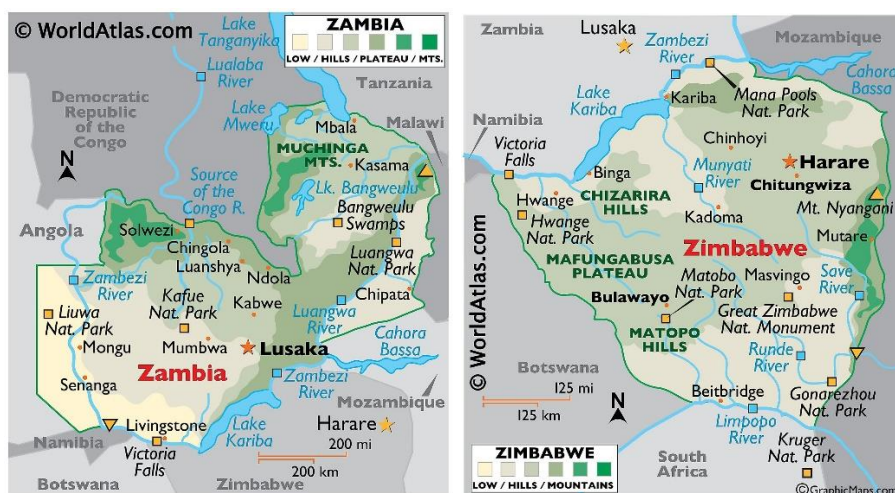


Figure 1. Detailed map of Zimbabwe and Zambia © WorldAtlas.com

2. Project stakeholders/ partners

BirdLife International, BirdLife Zimbabwe and BirdWatch Zambia are the three formal partners to this project. The project was developed based on the demand from these countries for (1) help to prepare for Ramsar COP15, in order to maximise the opportunity that this global meeting would provide the host country and region in advocating for enhanced attention to its vital wetlands; (2) support to engage in the NBSAP development and implementation in response to the adoption of the KMGBF. This demand was echoed in the national reports submitted by both countries which identified the challenge of harmonising policies which impact wetlands and their wise use, alongside significant gaps in implementation and oversight of existing policies for wetlands, exacerbated by limited monitoring. See Activity 1.1, 1.3 and Annex 25, 5.

BirdLife International is a global partnership of independent NGOs dedicated to bird and biodiversity conservation, this project involves staff from the global team with expertise in capacity development and wetland conservation and policy, as well as staff from the Africa office with expertise in regional policy processes and context. This structure allows the provision of world-leading technical support on wetland policy, combined with regionally appropriate communication and coordination to strengthen capacity, benefiting NGOs across the region and beyond, as evidenced by the fifteen NGOs that have participated in the Community of Practice (CoP) through Output 3 of this project. Partners such as BirdLife South Africa and the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) have been particularly active in sharing their own experiences or seeking advice from the project participants via the CoP. BirdWatch Zambia and BirdLife Zimbabwe are both well-established, nationally leading conservation organisations, responsible for providing leading data and conservation action within their own countries, and have provided insights and expertise on the challenges and opportunities for national advocacy on wetlands. They are notable in their strong engagement with local conservation groups and community-based organisations (CBOs), bolstering local voices in national and international conservation issues.

All three partners have been integral in guiding the direction and activities of the project, and also sought out inputs from a variety of partners, either at the local level through CBOs such as Harare Wetlands Trust or Dambari Trust (Matabeleland), the technical level with Wetlands International, or the international level with the CBD Secretariat or Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Focal Points, including the UK Focal Point (see Annex 6) and the British Embassy in Harare. This local-to-global work has been a major strength of the project, and their engagement has been informed through the comprehensive stakeholder mapping conducted at an early stage in the project (see Annex 25).



Figure 2. Logos of the key partners of the project.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Activity 1.1 Preliminary policy SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis conducted for Zimbabwe and Zambia

Complete: BirdLife International, in conjunction with BirdLife Zimbabwe and BirdWatch Zambia conducted the preliminary policy SWOT analysis to understand the policy landscape for wetland conservation in Zimbabwe and Zambia. This analysis provided a foundation for strategic engagement with the NBSAP processes in both countries and identified key entry points for civil society influence. Ramsar and CBD National Reports were reviewed in detail,

identifying the challenge of harmonising policies into sectors which impact wetlands and their wise use, alongside significant gaps in implementation and oversight of existing policies for wetlands, exacerbated by limited monitoring. National policies including National Wetland Water, and Environmental Policies and Development Control Processes were also reviewed. This was supplemented by the partners expertise on national biodiversity and environmental policies and safeguards, including existing practices and implementation, as well as advice from other project stakeholders, such as CBD and Ramsar focal points, and staff from the Ministries of Environments and National Park / Wildlife Management Authorities. See Annex 25, 5 and 7 for further evidence.

1.2 Assessment of institutional knowledge and capacity gaps in target institutions

Complete: Following the development of the SWOT analysis, this was corroborated with institutions involved in wetland conservation nationally. In Zimbabwe, BirdLife Zimbabwe led the establishment and management of the National Wetland Committee, one of the obligations under the Ramsar Convention, and held discussions to identify capacity gaps through engagement with stakeholders, including the government, CSOs, and CBOs. In Zambia, with the National Technical Sub-Committee on Biodiversity and Wetlands, we supported the development of guidelines of the sustainable utilisation of wetlands in Zambia through a 3-day consultative meeting, which enabled the scoping of capacity gaps. See Annex 25 and 8 for further evidence.

1.3 Detailed stakeholder mapping using a standardised protocol

Complete: A comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise was completed in both countries using a standard template on an influence-interest matrix following an online workshop which including training on policy and stakeholder analysis. BirdWatch Zambia completed a detailed stakeholder mapping process using the template, guided by early consultations with government counterparts, notably through a meeting with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) and the National Sub-Committee. In Zimbabwe, BirdLife Zimbabwe engaged with various stakeholders including government agencies (Environmental Management Agency, Ministry of Local Government), local authorities, community-based organizations, and other civil society organizations to complete their matrix and plan their engagement. This mapping exercise informed targeted engagement with stakeholders who have significant influence on wetland policies and NBSAPs, and enabled introductions to be made through international and national representatives of the project to enhance the lessons learned and networking among government focal points at international meetings. Following the mapping process, and through the process of engagement, further modifications were made as key stakeholders were able to be better identified and engaged. See Annex 9, 25, 7, 10 and 8 for further evidence.

1.4 Establish priorities for integration of tools/datasets into policies

Complete: The SWOT analysis and assessment of capacity gaps identified the need for additional technical support on identifying KBAs and integrating them into national policies and frameworks, notably the forthcoming CBD National Targets and NBSAPs, particularly as both countries sought to prepare them in time for launch ahead of Ramsar COP15. These were strongly informed by government priorities. In Zambia this took place through direct discussion with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, where presentations on KBAs and supporting tools were made related to the development of National Targets, and this project was also recognised for its contributions towards Target 14 on mainstreaming biodiversity into policies. In Zimbabwe this took place through participation several meetings, including to develop Actions and the Monitoring Framework for the NBSAP from 11-14 February 2025. In both instances the project partners were called on to provide technical and scientific expertise, particularly in the development of robust indicators. In partnership with BLZ and BWZ, BirdLife

International also directly engaged the CBD and Ramsar National Focal Points to assess capacity gaps in the context of the delivery of the Conventions, particularly towards the attainment of the KMGBF. See Annex 11, 12, 8 and 5.

1.5 Training(s) delivered by BLZ and BWZ to staff and volunteers and other CSOs

Ongoing: Trainings have been delivered through a mix of workshops and presentations at committees with relevant stakeholders. BirdLife Zimbabwe has led two key stakeholder trainings to advance wetland conservation and policy implementation in Zimbabwe. On 12 December 2024, a high-level “Wetland Policy and Legislation Indaba” was held to engage Parliamentarians, government officials, and environmental stakeholders on the importance of wetlands for biodiversity and urban resilience. The event promoted dialogue on legislative gaps, planning challenges, and Zimbabwe’s role as COP15 host. Key outcomes included commitments to a parliamentary wetland tour, a formal petition with policy recommendations, and a report to guide legislative discussions. Building on this momentum, BirdLife Zimbabwe convened a second meeting on 6 March 2025 with the Mayor of Harare, city officials, environmental agencies, youth representatives, and civil society to explore legal pathways for stronger wetland protection. The meeting produced a comprehensive set of action points, including the finalisation of wetland local plans, digitisation of wetland maps, revision of EIA regulations, coordinated urban planning, and steps toward accrediting Harare as a wetland city. These engagements have laid the groundwork for concrete policy reforms, strengthened local governance, and set the stage for enhanced national and international support for wetland conservation. In Zambia, the approach has been focused on sharing knowledge and training with members of the National Technical Committee for Biodiversity, which comprises equally of CSOs and government officials. Through this engagement and awareness raising they have succeeded in incorporating KBAs as a headline indicator for Zambia in monitoring Target 1 and 3 of the KMGBF. See Annex 8, 26, 16, 20, 21, 13 and 5.

1.6 In-person and/or online workshop(s) delivered on wetlands conservation and tools

Ongoing: Online workshops were held on preparations for Ramsar COP15 on 10 December 2024 and 6 March 2025 by BirdLife International. These were aimed at the project partners, but were attended by over 10 civil society organisations from the region. They focused on the opportunities of Ramsar COP15, and the scientific and technical tools (policy guidance and KBA and IUCN Red List Assessments available to support this. In Zimbabwe, multiple workshops were held, including the National Wetland Committee meetings on 10 January, 13 March, 19 March and 25 March 2025, bringing together representatives from various CBOs and CSOs in the preparation of both Ramsar COP15 and the development of Zimbabwe’s NBSAP. In Zambia, BirdWatch Zambia participated in the National Technical Committee on Biodiversity on 27 March 2025, and was also able to share its knowledge on wetland conservation and tools at the national sub-committee on wetlands and terrestrial ecosystem to the validation workshop on the development of guidelines for the sustainable utilisation of wetlands. An in-person workshop is being prepared for on policy and advocacy engagement and mainstreaming wetlands immediately ahead of the Ramsar COP15. We also plan to offer an in-person training on freshwater KBA identification for government and CSO focal points to support implementation of both the KMGBF and Ramsar Convention. See Annex 6, 8, 22, 23.

1.7 Develop a free, online toolkit and case studies

Ongoing: BirdLife International led the preparation of a comprehensive target-by-target *Guidance on including wetlands in National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs)*, as well as the production of slides, a webinar and other communication and additional training materials for CSO and Government Focal Points. It was further supported with a prioritisation of tools and datasets to a globally applicable standard. A free online toolkit is under development and will be shared ahead of Ramsar COP15. See Annex 17 and 27.

2.1 Development of an advocacy and engagement strategy

Ongoing: Work has progressed as part of the development of a partnership wide engagement on Ramsar COP15, informed by all partners, and the stakeholder engagement as a national, regional and international level. BirdWatch Zambia engaged with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, which recognized the project's relevance and encouraged the formalization of stakeholder roles through a detailed project document. This was also guided by the National Technical Committee on Biodiversity (NTCB), a technical body constituted by the Secretary to the Cabinet to advise the National Steering Committee on Biodiversity (NSCB), which provides a platform for influencing biodiversity policy. In Zimbabwe, BirdLife Zimbabwe engaged with parliamentarians and local government (see activity 1.6) in the execution of their engagement strategy. See Annex 22, 23, 28, 25.

2.2 Meetings with government stakeholders to present priorities/policy briefs

Ongoing: Several high-level meetings with government stakeholders took place including a World Wetland Day event at Kasibo wetland on 6 February 2025 with BirdLife Zimbabwe which offered an opportunity to engage in wetland advocacy at high level around wetland policies and NBSAP with the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Dr T. Chifamba - in the presence of the Secretary General of Ramsar. BirdWatch Zambia held an "introductory meeting with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in Lusaka to present the Darwin-funded project and identify overlaps with national wetland conservation agendas. To further support this, BirdLife International met with the CBD Focal Points at CBD SBSTTA in May 2025 and CBD COP16 in October 2025 to discuss the preparation of the NBSAPs and the need for alignment with the Convention on Wetlands, ahead of Ramsar COP15. These meetings included the sharing of project priorities as well as presentation of technical support to these governments. In the case of Zimbabwe, a high-level meeting with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Dr T. Chifamba, was held in Cali, Colombia on 28 October 2025 to present the priorities of the project partners and wider civil society for Ramsar COP15. See Annex 22, 27 and 28

2.3 Presentation to the Ramsar Strategic Plan Working Group

Complete: BirdLife International was nominated as the representative of civil society (International Organisational Partner's; IOPs) in the Strategic Plan working group. BirdLife has attended every meeting and made technical and strategic contributions, focused on aligning the 5th Strategic Plan with the KMGBF, using targets and indicators. This includes as the provider of metadata on KBAs and IUCN Red List of Threatened Species for birds. We presented feedback to the consultant in charge of leading the drafting and co-chairs on priorities for civil society. Pre-briefings with other IOPs and multiple BirdLife Africa Partners have informed these contributions. An additional element of this task is ongoing in supporting the Ramsar STRP to develop a draft indicator framework for the Strategic Plan. See Annex 6 and 17.

2.4 Events and communications organised for key stakeholders ahead of meetings

Ongoing: Several events have been organized to raise awareness and engage stakeholders. BirdLife International held an event with partners at CBD SBSTTA to demonstrate the opportunities and guidance for integrating wetlands into NBSAPs" and prepared to follow this up with an official CBD Side Event at CBD COP16 on 'Watering NBSAPs', and 'resources for integrating wetlands into NBSAPs' which were well attended by civil society reps, CBD, Ramsar and Ministry of Environment staff. BirdLife Zimbabwe organised a journalist tour to the Lake Chivero Ramsar Site in response to the immediate need to profile threats for wetland invasion within the Chivero Ramsar Site. A workshop with Harare editors on Ramsar COP15 and wetland issues was successfully conducted by BLZ, building awareness on the importance

of wetlands, their conservation challenges, and the role of media in raising awareness ahead of COP15. All three project partners co-developed and coordinated the submission of a side event for Ramsar COP15 on *Community-based Approaches for Effective Wetland Management: Lessons from Southern Africa*, including NGO partners from South Africa and Malawi. See Annex 24, 17, 18 and 19.

3.1 Establish a Policy Advocacy Community of Practice

Complete: The Community of Practice is up and running, known as the 'Southern African Wetlands Taskforce'. The Terms of Reference has been agreed and a WhatsApp group established as the preferred means of communication. BirdLife International prepared the Terms of Reference for a community of practice supporting the integration of wetlands into national priorities. To date the community of practice has met three times, bringing together various BirdLife partners and other stakeholders to share knowledge and best practices for wetland policy advocacy. See Annex 22, 23.

3.2 Online workshop to share lessons on site advocacy

Planned: Planning for this activity is underway, building on the networks and relationships established through the National Wetland Committee in Zimbabwe and the National Technical Committee on Biodiversity in Zambia.

3.3 Promote and share the toolkit ahead and during Ramsar COP15

Planned: The toolkit is in a draft stage, building on previously published guidance. Partners are preparing to share this and other resources at COP15. See Annex 17, 18 and 27.

3.4 Publish case studies and news stories on mainstreaming wetland conservation

Planned: Communication efforts have begun but will be focused on the run up to Ramsar COP15 at the end of July, with a communications focus from May-August. Further case studies and news stories are planned for the coming months.

3.4 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: CSOs have greater capability and capacity to integrate the importance of, threats to and priorities for key wetlands into NBSAPs and related policies in Zimbabwe and Zambia (and across Africa).

Baseline: Prior to the start of this project, the project partners all had no capacity to engage in NBSAPs and related policies, despite their well-known importance, any engagement was not resourced, nor was it coordinated at various levels of governance.

Changes to date: Significant progress has been made (refer to activities 1.1-1.7, many of which have already been completed), since then, and 10+ proactive engagements have been made across the NBSAP and wetland policy space by all the project partners. For evidence see section 3.2, paras 1.5 and 1.6, and associated annexes.

Comments: All engagements are being tracked and monitored to total knowledge gained by individuals on (1) MEAs and (2) wetland conservation, before/ after surveys will be completed where possible. Once the toolkit is published and promoted, download records and presentations will be counted. The project is on course to achieve this outcome by Dec 2025.

Output 2: Mechanisms and networks for sharing data and expertise are established, for developing and monitoring NBSAPs and for implementing synergies with other policies.

Baseline: In Zambia National Wetland Committee established but not included in NBSAP development. In Zimbabwe no relevant committees.

Changes to date: Sharing of data through National Committees in Zambia and establishment of a National Wetland Committee in Zimbabwe, secretariat by BirdLife Zimbabwe. For evidence see section 3.2, paras 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 3.1, and associated annexes.

Comments: The establishment of these networks have responded to a direct need. They have strengthened relationships between government and civil society in both regions, and contributed to the successful development of national targets, NBSAPs and preparations for an ambitious Ramsar COP15.

Output 3: A functioning Regional Community of Practice supports site-level and national advocacy around internationally important wetland sites.

Baseline: No international wetland focused policy coordination within the Africa region. Limited engagement between Ramsar and the CBD.

Changes to date: Establishment of a Community of Practice on wetland conservation and mainstreaming. Engagement across Ramsar and CBD. Guidance on wetlands in NBSAPs produced and widely communicated. See section 3.2, paras 1.7, 2.5 and 3.1 for evidence, and associated annexes.

Comments: Civil society is an essential aspect for a successful COP, through sharing guidance and best practice, as well as case studies and experiences. This output has put COP15 in a really strong place to ensure it delivers effective action for wetlands, not only in Southern Africa, but across the region and even globally.

3.5 Progress towards the project Outcome

This project aims to engage CSOs in the update of NBSAPs and have stronger advocacy capabilities to apply their tools to implement protections for key wetlands sites and enhanced regional knowledge sharing. Overall we are on track to achieve this outcome by the end of the funding. Activities plan to ramp up over the next quarter as Ramsar Cop15 approaches at the end of July. This marks an increased interest and engagement from stakeholders at all levels in the outputs and activities of this project, which we anticipate delivering.

OI-1 [DI-A03] At least 10 (5 in each country) local/national organisations from Zimbabwe and Zambia have improved capability and capacity to engage in policy advocacy for wetland conservation by the end of the project.

Baseline: At the beginning of this project, there was very limited coordination on wetland advocacy or policy mainstreaming within the project countries or regionally/ internationally, despite the existence of an international mechanism (the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands).

Progress: In Zimbabwe, this project has allowed BirdLife Zimbabwe to instigate the appropriate collaborative forum to bring together government, CSOs and CBOs to engage in policy advocacy for wetland conservation nationally, facilitating the advancement of technical knowledge and data, as well as collaboration towards the inclusion of wetlands in other policy documents and frameworks. In Zambia while the frameworks existed, BirdWatch Zambia, which held significant technical expertise and data did not have the capacity to engage in this process, and support decision makers, which this project has advanced significantly. However, in Zambia, while there has been strong engagement under this project and within the related activities, this capability is still very much in progress, so we would not yet say any local or national organisations yet have completely improved their capacity and capability in this regard. A strong focus on this will take place in the next quarter. For evidence see activities 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2 and associated annexes.

Comment: It is also worth noting that this project has had benefits significantly beyond these two countries, which are not captured by this or the other Outcome Indicators, although they do feature in the Output Indicators. The materials and trainings that have been developed and offered on integrating wetlands into NBSAPs, and mainstreaming wetlands into different policies and frameworks ahead of Ramsar COP15 have been shared not only with CSOs across Africa (particularly South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Guinea, and Morocco), but also to Ramsar and CBD focal points through webinars co-hosted with these MEAs, and during international meetings. As a result, the awareness of the

specific requirements for wetland conservation (compared to other biomes) is becoming increasingly recognised, particularly within the CBD process.

OI-2 [DI-A01] 40 people (20 per country) will have completed training/capacity building (estimated to be 10 personweeks) (40% women). By end of project.

Baseline: Training had been conducted on site casework through BirdLife Africa, but project partners had had limited capacity to engage in mainstreaming wetlands across national policies and plans.

Progress: A variety of trainings have been delivered to date, focused on government engagement as well as guidance to the project partners. In Zimbabwe the training component has been particularly active, with the number of organisations and number of participants for the project already exceeded. In Zambia the capacity building activities have so far taken on a different format (informal engagement, meetings and submissions), so this national and local level training will be a focus for the duration of the rest of the project. This is reflected in that the forthcoming reporting period will have an increased focus will be on engaging different stakeholder groups in trainings on MEAs and wetland conservation. For evidence see activities 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2 and associated annexes.

Comment: As above, the beneficiaries of this project have extended to multiple CBD and Ramsar national focal points, and other civil society organisations across Africa and globally. Given the multifaceted challenges facing the mainstreaming of wetlands, and the lessons learned so far, the training is also likely to take a more informal and broader approach to applying various tools and techniques to engaging in the NBSAP and policy making process.

OI-3 [DI-A04] 80% of surveyed respondents report that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training. By end of project.

Baseline: No before survey completed yet.

Progress: Work to enable partners to apply new capabilities is underway. For evidence see activities 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2 and associated annexes.

3.6 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 1: Stakeholders are engaged and committed to supporting the delivery of the NBSAPs and establishing synergies with Ramsar COP15.

Comments: This project was developed based on the anticipation that there was a significant opportunity to mobilise both government and civil society to act for wetlands ahead of Ramsar COP15. This opportunity, and the support we've been able to offer the government, particularly through BirdLife Zimbabwe as the host country and BirdLife International as a Ramsar IOP has surpassed our expectations. Engagement has been extremely high, and all Parties remain committed to delivering an NBSAP in synergy with Ramsar COP.

Assumption 2: Capacity needs can be addressed and embedded through workshops, guidance and online materials.

Comments: These methods to continue to be the critical mechanisms for addressing capacity needs, although the format of workshops (more interactive learnings) has been reviewed, as well as more interactive troubleshooting of guidance and online materials.

Assumption 3: There is sufficient capacity to engage in the Community of Practice.

Comments: In line with Assumption 1, the energy and capacity to engage in the Community of Practice, particularly in preparation for Ramsar COP15 has been extremely strong from civil society across Africa. The Community has grown from strength to strength, led by this project's partners.

Assumption 4: The project has synergies with wider and longer lasting initiatives that will complement this project and provide finance to support the long-term data gathering needed for effective monitoring of NBSAPs and related policies.

Comments: So far this assumption has been strongly emphasised as the governments have sought input and learnt on the project partners to deliver the NBSAPs and related policies. Assuming continued emphasis on NBSAPs and Ramsar this will continue the need for data gathering and synergies between initiatives.

Assumption 5: The economic benefits of conserving and/or restoring wetland ecosystems are increasingly accepted by stakeholders beyond the environment ministries.

Comments: This assumption has yet to be tested.

Assumption 6: Government remains open to engagement.

Comments: To date the government has been open and willing to engage at a national and international level, despite fluctuating national circumstances. Their interest continues to grow as we approach Ramsar COP.

3.7 Achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and multidimensional poverty reduction

This project is based on the understanding that wetland ecosystems in Zimbabwe and Zambia are vital for both biodiversity and economic development. However, these ecosystems face mounting pressures - even when formally protected or recognized as globally significant. Drawing on experience, the project emphasizes that well-defined biodiversity and environmental policies—when broadly supported, properly funded, cross-sectorally integrated, and effectively implemented and monitored—can lead to lasting improvements in ecosystem health and biodiversity. These improvements, in turn, directly enhance the health, wellbeing, and livelihoods of the communities who depend on these wetlands.

In the short term, the project's emphasis on strengthening and empowering Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and their partners at all levels is directed to improving a critical underpinning of human development and wellbeing – engagement in decision making and political processes to have their voices heard. The direct beneficiaries of the project are receiving the tools and guidance to engage in this in a technical level, but also the confidence and shared experience from the wider project and community of practice to engage in the policy making process.

Output 1 is delivering greater capacity among civil society to integrate the threats and priorities for key wetlands into national policy processes in both countries, a challenge that has been recognised by Target 14 of the KMGBF, as well as feedback from both governments. It supports the multilateral processes which drive ecosystem protection on the ground (Ramsar, CBD). It also increases participation in the decision-making, a particular challenge in Zimbabwe. Output 2 establishes the networks and mechanisms to share the data and expertise that underpins effective environmental policies, while conserving resources through identifying synergies. Output 3 shares those lessons throughout the region, increasing participation, awareness of the threats to wetlands and possible solutions. See Annex 8, 9, 13, 16, 22 and 23 for further evidence.

The project continues to raise awareness of the importance of healthy and functioning wetlands for people and nature, as well as the special nature of Ramsar Sites and priority wetlands within the two countries. This focus in the context of hosting Ramsar COP15 has brought attention to the need to reduce the threats and development on wetlands, as well as adequately mainstream and finance them nationally, benefitting thousands of people locally and millions nationally/ regionally, at a time of severe drought and water scarcity in the region, that is only likely to increase in the longer term.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

Conventions, Treaties, Agreements and the commitments that they embody are at their strongest when they have the engagement and participation of civil society at local, national, regional and international levels. An active and flourishing civil society plays an integral part in all democracies and serves to both support governments in the implementation of national policies, and in this way this project has provided direct technical support to these processes.

National Policies

NBSAP – this is the primary forum that the partners have sought to engage and influence through this project. Both countries' NBSAPs recognise the vital role that wetlands play in protecting biodiversity, but also the significant threats they face, with failures in monitoring, implementation and integration into key sectors failing to safeguard key sites. The project supports updates to Zimbabwe's 2014 NBSAP, and Zambia's planned update, as well as implementation/reporting/monitoring through the provision of technical expertise. This project is directly relevant to Targets 1, 3 and 14 of the KMGBF. To date, only Zambia's National Targets have been published, but key indicators from BirdLife International/ BirdWatch Zambia have been included to ensure the quality of the targets is achieved as well as the quantity. See Annex 20 and 21.

Ramsar National Commitments - As part of its Ramsar commitments, Zambia has developed a Wetlands Policy and Implementation Plan, while BWZ has supported the development of management plans for eight Ramsar sites. Zimbabwe also has a draft Wetland Policy, developed with support from BLZ, but requiring considerable improvement or amendment. This project has enhanced the development, implementation and monitoring of those policies, and strengthen synergies with NBSAP updates. BLZ has established a National Wetland Committee in Zimbabwe through this project, while BWZ has been able to add its voice and expertise to the existing framework.

International Biodiversity and Development Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

UN Convention on Biological Diversity – bringing together the focal points of different Conventions is an important way to ensure biodiversity is mainstreamed across conventions, and into national policies. Using the relative strengths of the KMGBF and the CBD focal points, combined with the technical expertise of the Ramsar focal points, who are often left out of NBSAP discussions, this project has sought to address this in Zimbabwe and Zambia as well as providing global guidance and support.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands - Ramsar COP15, being held in Zimbabwe in July 2025, provides a perfect opportunity to apply the skills and capacity gained through the project, to incorporate a strong civil society voice, highlight best practice, gaps and needs, and support Parties to implement their commitments under the Convention.

Links have also been made to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as other mechanisms that can support and require mainstreaming of wetlands into national policies and frameworks in order to address their commitments. See Annex 6.

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.	
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal	X

	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	

This project has strong female-led leadership across the three project partners, with the primary representative for all three organisations being female. In the early stages of this project we explored the demographics of those engaged in policy development, based on experiential and anecdotal evidence of inclusion and possible barriers and cumulative experience. This fed into stakeholder mapping, seeking out as much gender balance as possible in identifying beneficiaries of training, although noting that the project could not overturn existing inequalities.

However the project has increased the representation of women participating in policy and decision making processes at a variety of levels, facilitating equitable participation and influence. Through the gaps analysis this enabled the women engaged in the project, as well as the women who participated in training to understand capacity gaps, as well as the types of networks, forums and decision-making bodies, so they were better able to engage them, and share their technical expertise with a wider audience.

As the project continues to deliver more training with CBOs or LCGs (under activity 1.5), the project will seek to maintain a 40/60 split of women/ men participating. This may include reaching out to additional women-led groups outside of the immediate stakeholders identified. The project has also had significant success engaging young people and youth, who have been particularly engaged in training so far, and preparations for Ramsar COP15 through all three partners.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

The BirdLife International Project Leader, in partnership with the project leads from BirdLife Zimbabwe and BirdWatch Zambia have worked together to monitor the progress of this project very closely since the launch of activities, across all three outputs. As a result, the project has successfully established shared ownership across all the activities with mutual support, monitoring and evaluation as activities progress in different contexts.

Meetings of all the project team (Steering Group) have been held monthly, allowing for regular exchange and updates across all the different work strands, as well as providing the opportunity to review activities and opportunities regularly in the context of a changing political context. These meetings have held a standing agenda item to provide lessons learnt and feedback on the project management, assessing what is working well, for example in engaging stakeholders, and what issues may be upcoming that need to be addressed, for example a meeting opportunity with a new stakeholder. See Annex 14.

The addition of regular WhatsApp and email communication has enabled regular informal communication, and the tracking of the project implementation timetable, particularly during periods of rapid project development, such as during the NBSAP development workshops, or CBD COP16. This additional informal, regular communication has been particularly fruitful in monitoring the project and course-correcting.

The indicators of success have been reviewed regularly, particularly because of well-documented challenges and complexities of monitoring and evaluating policy and advocacy efforts (e.g. Chapman, J., (2002) Monitoring and evaluating advocacy. PLA Notes, 43: 48-52). However, through this process the project has found that in providing the combination of space and opportunity for discussion on a given issue, combined with the provision of expert advice and guidance through training materials and workshops, the indicators such as to number of people attending a workshop, or number of people participating in a community of practice, have supported a real impact in awareness and action on wetland conservation at a variety of scales.

9. Risk Management



10. Scalability and durability

Strengthening the capacity of leading civil society organizations in Zambia and Zimbabwe will yield long-term benefits not only for both countries but also for the broader region, particularly in enhancing policy advocacy efforts. By deepening understanding of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and how to leverage them, these organizations are better equipped to engage with and monitor the essential implementation of key environmental commitments over time.

The fact that within the first year of the project Zambia has included key tools and indicators within its national targets, and all partners have taken an active role in contributing to and developing the NBSAP demonstrate successful foundations for future engagement. The technical support that the project has been able to provide has been welcomed at a variety of levels (government, civil society and local groups), and consistently referenced and presented throughout the year, this demand shows no signs of reducing, as more stakeholders recognise the importance of wetlands for climate mitigation, adaptation and natural resources.

This capacity-building will be enriched through targeted training that links wetland policies with other relevant policy areas, fostering greater policy coherence and impact – with a legacy towards 2030 and beyond as countries work to achieve the goals and targets of the KMGBF. Efforts to mainstream wetland conservation will create new opportunities for advocacy, funding, and collaboration, while promoting the diverse values of wetlands, including their role in nature-based solutions. Now that the Community of Practice has also been established, connecting current and emerging environmental leaders to facilitate regional knowledge exchange and collaboration. The project's legacy will be supported by a freely accessible online toolkit and ongoing promotion of successful advocacy case studies, ensuring that best practices are shared, adapted, and scaled across the region.

The strength of the partnership model of BirdLife International means that the partners are grass roots organisations who have a track record of decades of conservation experience within the specific national context. They will continue to operate in country with their enhance capacity and capabilities despite changing political environments, and as nationally led organisations can establish better trust and capacity in Zimbabwe and Zambia than an organisation led from outside the country. BirdLife International will also continue in its role as an IOP of the Ramsar Convention to support all Parties to implement the conservation and wide use of wetlands.

The existing synergies with the establishment of the Africa-Eurasian Regional Flyway Initiative, given the reliance of migratory birds on wetlands will also ensure the continued engagement of the project partners, and provide a strong opportunity for continued and enhanced engagement in building policy and advocacy capacity at all levels, and advocating for the mainstreaming of wetlands in national policies and plans. Southern Africa remains a priority region for BirdLife, with Zambia and Zimbabwe being key players in this work already, with demonstrated scaling up initiatives in other regions. Work on Nature based Solutions, particularly for identifying funding opportunities for wetlands is also critical.

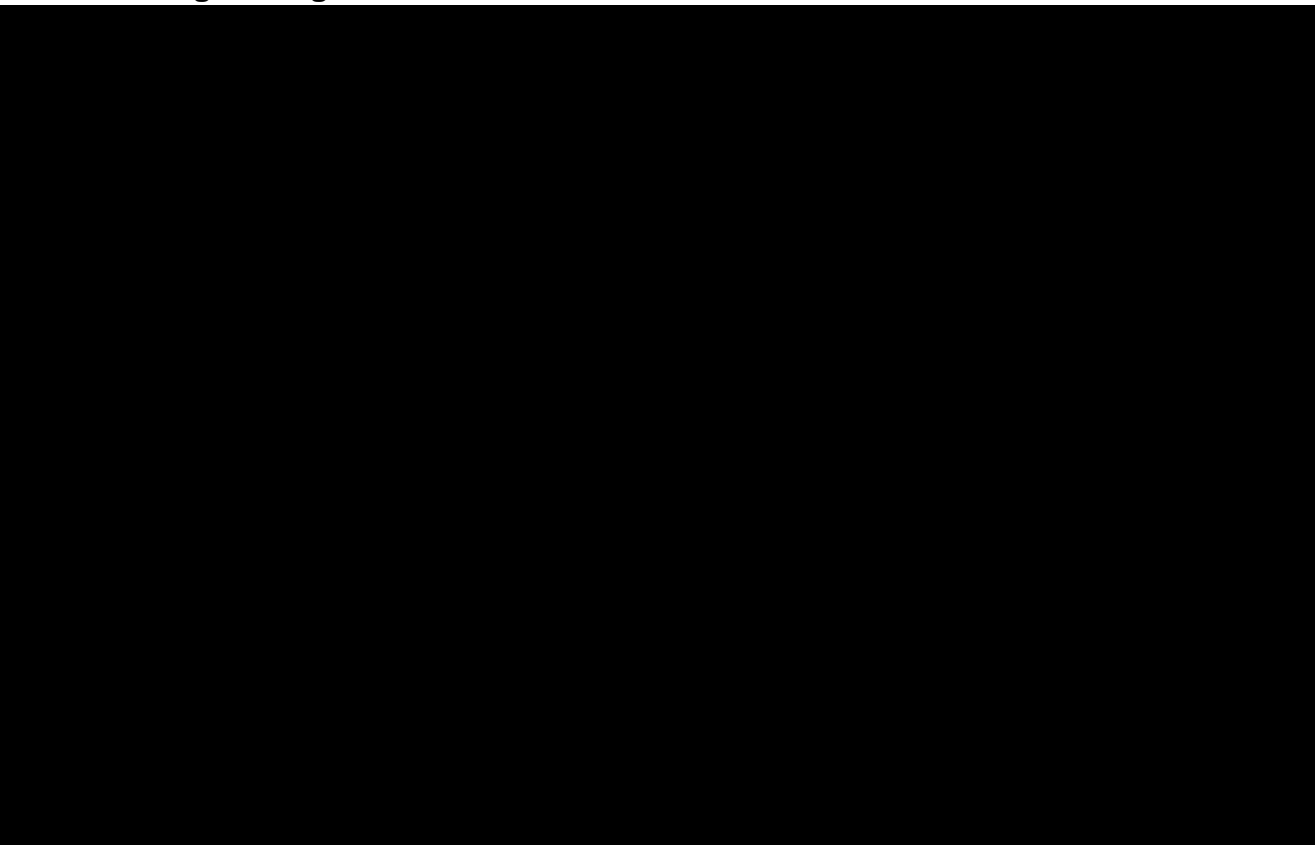
To further sustain this project, BirdLife International is in the process of developing a legacy project which further engages businesses and lenders to enhance safeguards and protections for wetlands sites, and seeks to directly bring Wetlands of International Importance across Southern Africa under effective management or restoration to deliver conservation outcomes and sustainable livelihoods for local communities. It will also look to build the capacity of BirdLife Partners and local conservation groups to implement nature-based solutions approaches to wetland management, using their advocacy skills developed under this project to advocate for the effective implementation of safeguards and wetland protections.

11. Darwin Initiative identity

Through national and international level engagements, we have raised the profile of the UK Government's support of this work to build capability around incorporating wetlands into NBSAPs and national policies, in support of the KMGBF. The UK Government's contribution was included in the NBSAP guidance, and the presentations at CBD SBSTTA and COP16 have included the Darwin Initiative logo. The engagement and technical support from BirdLife Zimbabwe and BirdWatch Zambia in the NBSAP process has been directly attributed to the Darwin Initiative in several face-to-face engagements, notably with the CBD focal points for both countries.

As we prepare our communications products for talks and side events at Ramsar COP15 we plan to further engage the UK Embassies in Harare and Lusaka, alongside our continued engagement with the UK Ramsar National Focal Point (see Annex 6).

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	111,290	66,875.18		

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

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 (£)			BirdLife International
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

While the methodology for this project is robust, finding indicators that can measure the success of policy advocacy continues to be a challenge, the Darwin Initiative Indicator Framework has made welcome adaptations to that end. The success of this project among the project partners but also the beneficiaries in the global MEA community, national governments and wider civil society are testament to the knowledge gap this project is trying to address is well established beyond these two countries. As we near the end of this project we will continue to review opportunities for refining these methods, communicating the particular lessons learned for wider policy advocacy work, and potential exit strategies.

Co-financing from BirdLife's Global Flyways Programme has also enhanced opportunities for the amplification of these key messages and trainings across wider civil society by facilitating the forthcoming participation of other NGOs from outside the project countries to the workshop planned in July. The work there on establishing regional governance mechanisms for the flyway is mutually beneficial for developing policy and advocacy skills, and reinforcing the key messages of this project around mainstreaming wetland conservation at the flyway scale.

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 (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

In this section you have the chance to let us know about outstanding achievements for your project or significant strides towards attaining a particular goal so far that you consider worth sharing with the wider BCFs community.

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
Image	Annex 24 – Photos from NBSAP Presentations	A presentation to CBD Focal Points on integrating wetlands into their	BirdLife International, BirdLife Zimbabwe, BirdWatch Zambia	Yes

		NBSAPs to meet their national commitments under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.		
Image	Annex 24 – Photos from NBSAP Presentations	Engaging in the MEA process	BirdLife International, BirdLife Zimbabwe	Yes / No

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 CSOs are engaged in the update of NBSAPs and have stronger advocacy capabilities to apply their tools to implement protections for key wetlands sites and enhanced regional knowledge sharing.		
Outcome Indicator-1 [DI-A03]: At least 10 (5 in each country) local/national organisations from Zimbabwe and Zambia have improved capability and capacity to engage in policy advocacy for wetland conservation by the end of the project.	To date, four government departments, five CSOs and 8-15 CBOs have participated trainings to improve understanding of wetland policies and frameworks across the two countries. See section 3.2, activities 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 2.2 for more info.	Continued capacity building activities for wetland conservation and policy advocacy. Renewed focus on local organisations, particularly in Zambia.
Outcome Indicator-2 [DI-A01]: 40 people (20 per country) will have completed training/capacity building (estimated to be 10 personweeks) (40% women). By end of project.	Training sessions are underway. See section 3.2, activities 1.5 and 1.6 for more info.	Continued training activities in project countries. Focus on local organisations and partnership building, particularly in Zambia.
Outcome Indicator-3 [DI-A04]: 80% of surveyed respondents report that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training. By end of project.	Survey to be sent after training complete.	Share survey with participants.
Output 1 CSOs have greater capability and capacity to integrate the importance of, threats to and priorities for key wetlands into NBSAPs and related policies in Zimbabwe and Zambia (and across Africa).		
Output indicator 1.1: At least 10 staff/volunteers from two national NGOs, BLZ and BWZ and 15 people from other CSOs gain knowledge of how MEA related policies are developed, implemented and reported on by end of Q4. (40% women)	Training and briefings on (1) wetlands in NBSAPs, and (2) preparing for Ramsar COP15 complete. See section 3.2, activities 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 3.1 and 3.2 for more info.	Webinar on MEA related policies, particularly Ramsar planned. Workshop planned ahead of Ramsar COP.
Output Indicator 1.2: At least 30 people from civil society (and government agencies) in Zimbabwe and Zambia (and maybe others) attend a workshop on wetland conservation, the application of relevant tools, and policy processes by end of Q4. (40% women)	Workshops held with a variety of audiences on wetland conservation and potential tools, as well as the opportunity of Ramsar COP15 for the region. Due to demand we have decided to continue to offer these trainings in Y2 (Q5/6) in preparation for Ramsar COP15. See section 3.2, activities 1.5, 1.6, 2.2, 2.3 for more info.	Focus on engaging wider civil society in Ramsar COP15 preparations through online webinars and in person trainings. Possible opportunity for technical workshops as well.
Output Indicator 1.3 [DI-C01]: A toolkit and case studies promoting effective management of wetlands through NBSAPs and other policy	Guidance has been published and shared through talks and workshops. Case studies side event submitted to Ramsar	Publication of toolkit and case studies. Contribution of case studies from the region.

mechanisms are developed, published and promoted to civil society audiences in Zimbabwe, Zambia and other African countries by Q6.	COP15, with project partners and community of practice. See section 3.2, activities 3.	
Output 2		
Mechanisms and networks for sharing data and expertise are established, for developing and monitoring NBSAPs and for implementing synergies with other policies.		
Output Indicator 2.1: Two national strategies for civil society engagement in NBSAP and related policy processes is developed for Zimbabwe and Zambia. By end of Q3.	Workshop conducted and strategies developed. See section 3.2, activities 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.1 for more info.	Complete.
Output Indicator 2.2: The engagement strategy is being implemented in Zimbabwe and Zambia. By end of project.	Strategy being executed. See section 3.2, activities 2.2 and 2.4 for more info.	Ongoing.
Output Indicator 2.3: BLZ and BWZ make presentations to at least one government agency each, involved in NBSAP process, and at least one government agency responsible for other sectors (e.g. mining, agriculture...)	Over 10 engagements have been made with four government agencies in total. See section 3.2, activities 1.6, 2.2 and 2.4 for more info.	Engagement with Ministries of Environment/ Natural Resources/ Wildlife/ Parks has been strong. Project will look to engage other Ministries.
Output Indicator 2.4: [DI-C05] Ramsar Strategic Plan Working Group is informed about challenges and priorities of civil society. (May 2025)	Representation of all CSOs in the Ramsar Strategic Plan Working Group at over 6 meetings, and wider consultations. See section 3.2, activity 2.3 for more info.	Preparation of indicator framework in consultation with technical experts.
Output Indicator 2.5: Priorities for wetlands and links to relevant policies are presented by BLZ/BWZ to key stakeholders leading up to Ramsar COP15 in July 2025.	Briefings shared within project countries and regionally. Two side events submitted on Lessons from Southern Africa and Effective Management for Ramsar COP15. Supported preparation of draft resolution, submitted by UK and Zimbabwe. See section 3.2, activities 2.4, 2.4, 3.2 and 3.3.	Awaiting confirmation of side event. Continued advocacy at all levels for Ramsar COP15. Coordination of BirdLife partners and wider civil society.
Output 3		
A functioning Regional Community of Practice supports site-level and national advocacy around internationally important wetland sites.		
Output Indicator 3.1: The Terms of Reference are agreed.	Terms of Reference. See section 3.2, activity 3.1.	Complete.
Output Indicator 3.2: 30 people sign up for and participate in the Community of Practice (40% women) from at least 10 CSOs. (Membership will depend on decisions about the Terms of Reference – region-wide, Africa-wide etc.)	15 African CSOs signed up to the Community of Practice. WhatsApp ground and bimonthly meetings established. 10+ CSOs engaged, over 50% women. See section 3.2, activity 3.1.	Ongoing, more regular (monthly) meetings and webinars of the community of practice planned ahead of COP15. In-person workshop planned.
Output Indicator 3.3: At least one workshop (using toolbox/case studies) on integrating wetlands into policy is held before end of project. (20 participants from mainly African CSOs.)	First webinar held 10 Dec on what is Ramsar, second webinar held 6 March on preparing for Ramsar with 25 live participants. See section 3.2, activities 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.	Two more online workshops/ webinars scheduled for May and June. In-person workshop scheduled for 21-22 July for CSOs attending Ramsar COP.

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: CSOs are engaged in the update of NBSAPs and have stronger advocacy capabilities to apply their tools to implement protections for key wetlands sites and enhanced regional knowledge sharing.	<p>OI-1 [DI-A03] At least 10 (5 in each country) local/national organisations from Zimbabwe and Zambia have improved capability and capacity to engage in policy advocacy for wetland conservation by the end of the project.</p> <p>OI-2 [DI-A01] 40 people (20 per country) will have completed training/capacity building (estimated to be 10 personweeks) (40% women). By end of project.</p> <p>OI-3 [DI-A04] 80% of surveyed respondents report that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training. By end of project.</p>	<p>OI-1 & 2 Participant lists, disaggregated by gender and affiliation and feedback from CSO participants of training and supported activities (including content, duration).</p> <p>OI-1 & 2 Policy briefs and reports from CSO participation in NBSAP process and other policy engagements.</p> <p>OI-3 Follow up email survey.</p> <p>Disaggregated by gender and affiliation.</p>
Output 1: CSOs have greater capability and capacity to integrate the importance of, threats to and priorities for key wetlands into NBSAPs and related policies in Zimbabwe and Zambia (and across Africa).	<p>1.1 At least 10 staff/volunteers from two national NGOs, BLZ and BWZ and 15 people from other CSOs gain knowledge of how MEA related policies are developed, implemented and reported on by end of Q4. (40% women)</p> <p>1.2 At least 30 people from civil society (and government agencies) in Zimbabwe and Zambia (and maybe others) attend a workshop on wetland conservation, the application of relevant tools, and policy processes by end of Q4. (40% women)</p> <p>1.3 [DI-C01] A toolkit and case studies promoting effective management of wetlands through NBSAPs and other policy mechanisms are developed, published and promoted to civil society audiences in Zimbabwe, Zambia and other African countries by Q6.</p>	<p>1.1 Participant lists, disaggregated by gender and affiliation.</p> <p>1.1 Content of trainings and follow up coaching.</p> <p>1.1 Feedback surveys.</p> <p>1.2 Participant list, content of workshop, feedback survey.</p> <p>1.3 Content of the toolkit, text of case studies, link to online location.</p> <p>1.3 Publicity/promotion record.</p> <p>1.3 Downloads/visitor numbers.</p>
Output 2: Mechanisms and networks for sharing data and expertise are established, for developing and monitoring NBSAPs and for implementing synergies with other policies.	<p>2.1 Two national strategies for civil society engagement in NBSAP and related policy processes is developed for Zimbabwe and Zambia. By end of Q3</p> <p>2.2 The engagement strategy is being implemented in Zimbabwe and Zambia. By end of project.</p> <p>2.3 BLZ and BWZ make presentations to at least one</p>	<p>2.1 SWOT analysis, Stakeholder mapping, notes of deliberations.</p> <p>2.1 Strategy documents</p> <p>2.2 Monitoring report on the strategy.</p>

	<p>government agency each, involved in NBSAP process, and at least one government agency responsible for other sectors (e.g. mining, agriculture...)</p> <p>2.4 [DI-C05] Ramsar Strategic Plan Working Group is informed about challenges and priorities of civil society. (May 2025)</p> <p>2.5 Priorities for wetlands and links to relevant policies are presented by BLZ/BWZ to key stakeholders leading up to RAMSAR COP15 in July 2025.</p>	<p>2.3 Records of written and verbal presentations, invitations to participate. Government agency concerned. Specifics of data provided.</p> <p>2.4 Records of written and verbal presentations, invitations to participate. Specifics of data provided.</p> <p>2.5 Records of written and verbal presentations, audience, invitations to participate. Specifics of data provided.</p>
<p>Output 3: A functioning Regional Community of Practice supports site-level and national advocacy around internationally important wetland sites.</p>	<p>3.1 The Terms of Reference are agreed.</p> <p>3.2 30 people sign up for and participate in the Community of Practice (40% women) from at least 10 CSOs. (Membership will depend on decisions about the Terms of Reference – region-wide, Africa-wide etc.)</p> <p>3.3 At least one workshop (using toolbox/case studies) on integrating wetlands into policy is held before end of project. (20 participants from mainly African CSOs.)</p>	<p>3.1 Terms of Reference</p> <p>3.2 Community of practice participants, activities, minutes, webinar recordings.</p> <p>3.3 Workshop content and presenters. Participant list. Feedback survey. Advocacy strategies, briefs, position papers, meeting minutes from partners involved.</p>
<p>Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)</p> <p>1.1 Preliminary policy SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis conducted for Zimbabwe and Zambia.</p> <p>1.2. Assessment of institutional knowledge and capacity gaps in target institutions (BLZ and BWZ, stakeholder CSOs, government agencies).</p> <p>1.3 Detailed stakeholder mapping (for wetland policies) using a standardised protocol (e.g. based on their relevance, interest and influence).</p> <p>1.4 Establish priorities as to how best to integrate KBAs, KBA State-Pressure-Response assessments, Toolkit for Ecosystem Service Assessment (TESSA) and other tools/datasets into policies to support development and delivery of key targets of the GBF and Ramsar.</p> <p>1.5 Training(s) delivered by BLZ and BWZ to staff and volunteers and other CSOs, including Local Conservation Groups and other stakeholders on the role of MEAs, the process, targets, strategies and actions in the NBSAP and linkages to other policies.</p> <p>1.6 In-person and/or online workshop(s) delivered to BLZ and BWZ staff and other CSOs, including Site Support Groups, (and potentially, government representatives) on wetlands conservation and the use of tools and datasets to support the development of NBSAP targets and actions as well as NBSAP monitoring and implementation.</p> <p>1.7 Develop a free, online toolkit and case studies, on engaging with and harnessing policy processes, particularly NBSAPs, but also National Development Strategies and National Adaptation Plans to deliver effective conservation and management of wetlands (applicable to other habitats).</p>		

2.1 Development of an advocacy and engagement strategy based on stakeholder analysis to define influence strategies and identify opportunities to generate wider civil society engagement with the NBSAP targets and actions and identify linkages to other policies.

2.2 Meetings with government stakeholders to present priorities/policy briefs and existing data, and to explain how tools and datasets, can support drafting, implementation and monitoring of NBSAPs/Wetland Policy/NAPs etc.

2.3 Presentation to the Ramsar Strategic Plan Working Group on synergies between NBSAP development and delivery and commitments under the Convention on Wetlands.

2.4 Events and communications organised to demonstrate challenges, progress and opportunities to key stakeholders ahead of CBD COP16/COP17 and/or to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSSTA/SBI) and, in particular, at Ramsar COP15 in Victoria Falls (July 2025).

3.1 Establish a Policy Advocacy Community of Practice, led by project partners including development of the remit (regional/ pan-African; wetland focused or broader remit), drafting and approval of the Terms of Reference, agreement on sharing platform (BirdLife's HATCH or other platform).

3.2 Online workshop to share lessons on site advocacy and integrating wetlands safeguards into NBSAPs and best practice on implementation.

3.3 Promote and share the toolkit, best practice and case studies on advocating for effective management of wetlands ahead and during Ramsar COP15 with civil society and government stakeholders nationally, across southern Africa and Africa-wide (globally if considered relevant).

3.4 Publish case studies and news stories on mainstreaming wetland conservation on BirdLife platforms.

Important Assumptions

Stakeholders are engaged and committed to supporting the delivery of the NBSAPs and establishing synergies with Ramsar COP15.

Capacity needs can be addressed and embedded through workshops, guidance and online materials.

There is sufficient capacity to engage in the Community of Practice.

The project has synergies with wider and longer lasting initiatives that will complement this project and provide finance to support the long-term data gathering needed for effective monitoring of NBSAPs and related policies.

The economic benefits of conserving and/or restoring wetland ecosystems are increasingly accepted by stakeholders beyond the environment ministries.

Government remains open to engagement.

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-A03	<i>Number of local or national organisations with enhanced capability and capacity.</i> At least 10 (5 in each country) local/national organisations from Zimbabwe and Zambia have improved capability and capacity to engage in policy advocacy for wetland conservation by the end of the project.	OI-1	Number of organisations	Country; Organisation Type (public, private, other)	Zimbabwe (13) Public/ community (13)			13	10+
DI-A01	<i>Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training.</i> 40 people (20 per country) will have completed training/capacity building (estimated to be 10 personweeks) (40% women). By end of project.	OI-2	Number of people	Country; Gender (men, women, other); IPLC status (IPLC, other)	Zimbabwe (52) Men (29); Women (23) Local Community (52)			52	40+
DI-A04	<i>Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) (or more) months after training.</i> 80% of surveyed respondents report that they are applying new capabilities (skills	OI-3	Number of people	Country; Gender (men, women, other); IPLC status (IPLC, other)					

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
	and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training. By end of project.								
DI-C01	<i>Number of best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed.</i> A toolkit and case studies promoting effective management of wetlands through NBSAPs and other policy mechanisms are developed, published and promoted to civil society audiences in Zimbabwe, Zambia and other African countries by Q6.	1.3	Number	Country, language	Global (3); Zimbabwe (2) English (5); French (1)			5	
DI-C05	<i>Number of contributions (incl. data, insights, and case studies) to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence.</i> Ramsar Strategic Plan Working Group is informed about challenges and priorities of civil society. (May 2025)	2.4	Number	Country; information type	13 Global (8); Zambia (2); Zimbabwe (3) Monitoring data, KBA data, insights from CSOs, insights from CBD and SDGs			13	10

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)

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 – however the Annexes exceed 10MB
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
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.	