

Darwin Initiative Extra Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the “Project Reporting Information Note”:
(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/information-notes-learning-notes-briefing-papers-and-reviews/>).

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

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2023

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

- **Darwin Initiative Project Information**

Project reference	DAREX002
Project title	Ensuring the socio-ecological viability of High Atlas cultural landscapes
Country/ies	Morocco
Lead Partner	Global Diversity Foundation
Project partner(s)	Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association (MBLA); University Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UM6P); Emerging Business Factory (EBF); École Supérieure des Arts Visuels de Marrakech (ESAV)
Darwin Initiative grant value	£949,269.00
Start/end dates of project	01 April 2022 - 31 March 2027
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2022 – Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Gary Martin
Project website/blog/social media	https://global-diversity.org/hacl-programme/
Report author(s) and date	Report authored by Tasnim Elboute, Gary Martin, Emily Caruso, Ugo D’Ambrosio, Hafida Mazoud, & Soukaina Rachidi.

1.

2. Project summary

Amazigh communities of the Moroccan High Atlas mountains and beyond have been managing their environment for millennia, shaping these iconic landscapes - and being shaped by them - through traditional practices of conservation. Our applied research shows that traditional High Atlas practices – including wild harvesting of plant resources, cultivation in terraced agroecosystems and the Agdal system of transhumant grazing – sustain landscapes, maintain biodiversity and provide livelihood benefits for thousands of households. The primary threat to maintaining these cultural landscapes and associated production systems is rural exodus coupled with the interrelated threats of climate change and biodiversity loss. With limited opportunities for building business skills, earning revenues and gaining employment, women and youth are migrating to urban areas to seek a better life. This leads to abandonment of land and traditional practices, resulting in degradation of cultural landscapes and the biodiversity they harbour and erosion of the millennial knowledge that sustains them. Over the course of a decade of work in the High Atlas, we have learned that the catalytic action needed is to provide new ways for High Atlas community members to develop revenue streams and other livelihood benefits that are compatible with managing cultural landscapes for both conservation and production ends.

Recent changes in Moroccan national law – simplifying the requirements for creating cooperatives and strengthening their governance and transparency – has enabled women in particular to create socio-economic associations in rural areas that spearhead remunerative productive activities linked to regeneration of cultural landscapes. Currently, diverse cooperatives that produce aromatic herbs, cheese, couscous, crafts, edible oils, natural cosmetics, nuts and many other goods in environmentally sustainable ways dot the High Atlas landscape. Based on community needs, our project sustains community-based regenerative practices; builds the skills of rural entrepreneurs; improves certification, labelling and packaging of local products; supports innovation of novel goods and services; and promotes digital entrepreneurship and platforms for effective marketing.

The aim of this project is to scale up our efforts across the Atlas as part of a larger programme, the High Atlas Cultural Landscapes Programme. We have long established conservation interventions in collaboration with Amazigh communities in Al-Haouz (Imegdale and Oukaimden communes) and Azilal provinces (Ait M'Hamed and Zaouiat Ahensal communes). Our area of work is expanded to the length of the Atlas corridor from Imilchil to Agadir.

3. Project stakeholders/ partners

Our programme is based on our longterm collaboration with our partner, the Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association (MBLA), a Moroccan NGO which was created in 2015 with sponsorship from GDF during a previous Darwin project. With MBLA, we expanded our work on regenerative approaches to conservation and cultural landscape management, and organised a High Atlas Food Market and training programmes in support of rural cooperatives.

The Higher School for Visual Arts in Marrakech, ESAV, has been a key partner for us as we sought to develop innovations in the branding and marketing of local products. This collaboration has been fruitful so far for both senior students and cooperatives benefiting from their services. The Emerging Business Factory, EBF, who are experts in entrepreneurship and project incubation, have been a strong ally as we work to support thriving rural economies. Their expertise is particularly key for our work on digital payment systems. Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, UM6P, is an academic partner supporting our work on regenerative approaches to conservation. We have supported interns and researchers from the university working on soil and agrobiodiversity in the High Atlas.

In addition to our official partners, we have continued our collaboration with Cadi Ayyad University Marrakech (CAU) through an internship program at the plant nurseries and through our continued support of the MARK Regional Herbarium, building on close collaboration with them in past Darwin projects. DEAFAL who are experts in social and economic empowerment of small-scale farmers and producers through sustainable agriculture projects, remain partners for our community-based agroecological interventions.

4. Project progress

All annexes mentioned below can found in [this Google Drive Folder](#).

4.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

GDF reports the successful launch of the 5-year project 'Ensuring the socio-ecological viability of High Atlas cultural landscapes' in its first year of implementation.

This first year, following a comprehensive process of needs assessment and evaluation, we have focused most of our energies on project planning, community-based regenerative approaches for biodiversity conservation and cultural landscape restoration (output 1) and rural entrepreneurship capacity building (output 3). We also launched our work on output 2 (Certification and labelling expanded for High Atlas cultural landscape products that meet established criteria and performance standards), with outputs 4 (Innovation of novel goods and services by rural entrepreneurs and cooperatives operating in High Atlas cultural landscapes incubated) and 5 (Digital entrepreneurship and platforms promoted to increase revenues from High Atlas cultural landscape goods and services) launching in subsequent phases as our scaling up develops further.

Throughout summer 2022, our team organised a series of kick-off workshops to manage the project's diverse activity streams. These were also key moments for the consolidation of partnerships and ensuring that all partners had clear tasks and timelines. The aim was to create detailed implementation plans and timelines for all outputs; these plans have been completed in-depth for outputs 1-3 and with basic planning completed for outputs 4 and 5.

The project's current community seed banks and nurseries are located in four partner communes: Imegdal, Oukaïmeden, Aït M'hamed, and most recently Zaouiat Ahensal. In September 2022, we initiated an in-depth evaluation of all 4 community seed banks and nurseries to review their status, assess their needs and establish action plans to implement improvements and developments. Since then, we have launched the process of expansion of the Oukaïmeden nursery with the objective of improving community engagement with the

space, including setting up spaces for convening to be used for training sessions and other community events (activity 1.1).

Activity 1.1. focuses on establishing 3 new community plant nurseries and expanding our 4 existing plant nurseries. As of February 2023, we have a total of 91,184 seedlings of 40 different species (including herbs, shrubs and trees) being grown across our 4 community plant nurseries in Imegdral (IME), Oukaimeden (OUK), Ait M'hamed (AMH) and Zaouiat Ahansal (ZAH). Our team has updated each nursery's plant lists, designs and photos (See plant nursery databases/maps and photos in Annexes 1-4), in addition to conducting an evaluation of seedling production at each site and identifying non-succulent species that could be successfully grown at each nursery. These evaluations focused on germination rates as listed in the current databases (Annexes 1-4); in the next reporting period the team will build a more comprehensive evaluation that takes into account several factors, the plant selection list, the cost of returns and the survival rate of seedlings. This will provide us with a more complete picture of the performance of our plant nurseries.

Our team is currently working with four interns from Cadi Ayyad University (CAU) in Marrakech to optimize the growing conditions of plant species that we were unable to successfully produce at our 4 nursery sites. The interns are focused on the optimization of the multiplication conditions for *Prunus dulcis* (Louz), *Cupressus atlantica* (Azal), *Thymus saturejoides* (Tazouknite), *Thymus broussonetii* (Tazouknite), which are produced at our plant nurseries. They will also investigate the effect of composting on the multiplication of some aromatic and medicinal plants, specifically *Salvia officinalis* (Salmia), *Origanum compactum* (Zaatar), and *Thymus wilddenowii* (Tazouknite) in the High Atlas region. These studies aim to lower the production costs of plants and minimize losses in peat, trays, and plastics. Furthermore, they aim to reduce the time and effort community researchers (CRs) spend performing these tasks.

Our team is currently working on a strategy to make our community nurseries more self-sufficient in the long-term. To initiate this transition, we have started to work on improving the appearance and marketing of the nurseries by a) erecting informational signs for visitors, b) showcasing the nurseries on the MBLA website, c) establishing new workshop and training spaces at each nursery and d) producing plant nursery booklets. Thus far, we have finished constructing the workshop and training spaces in Oukaimeden (See photos of the Oukaimeden Nursery in Annex 3). After upgrading all the nurseries and concluding our research collaboration with CAU, our team will begin evaluating Phase 1 in July 2023. This work will wrap up September 2023 so that our team can begin searching for suitable locations to establish 2 additional community plant nurseries, increasing the number of hubs and nurseries we operate in from 4 to 6.

Activity 1.2. focuses on implementing a strategy to ensure the annual distribution of 25,000 wild-harvested native plant species to local community members and institutions near our plant nurseries. Our 2023 Spring Plant Distribution began in March 2023 and is still ongoing. The plant distribution began on March 13 in the IME Nursery, March 14 in the AMH Nursery, March 15 in the ZAH Nursery and March 20 in the OUK Nursery (See [plant distribution photos](#) in Annex 15). The 2023 Spring Plant Distribution marked the ZAH Nursery's first participation in our annual plant distribution campaign. In May 2023, our team will select different individual and institutional beneficiaries at random to monitor the condition of the plant samples they received. A final report about the 2023 Spring Plant Distribution, our first plant distribution in the project, will be shared in the next reporting period.

Activity 1.3. focuses on enhancing our existing community seed banks and promoting the exchange of local seed varieties in communities in the 4 partner communes. In January and February 2023, our team conducted 8 focus group discussions in the villages of Ouarti, Annamer-Oukaimeden, Ait Iqaq and Ameslane in our Al Haouz Hub and the villages of Wabzaza, Suite n Ait Ounir, Amzaray and Agoudim in our Azilal Hub (See focus group report in Annex 16). During these focus groups, our team met with 102 farmers, including 12 women. Through the focus groups, our team aimed to a) explore new villages in the High Atlas Mountain region, b) introduce them to our plant distribution and seed exchange activities and c)

share the positive impact these activities could have on the productivity and prosperity of their villages. These focus groups also aimed to help our team gain a deeper understanding of the challenges that farmers in these villages face in order to adapt 1.2. and 1.4. implementation strategies to meet their needs. Furthermore, they allowed us to collect data on the production, collection and conservation of seeds and the seed conservation practices of each village, which we have used to further develop the implementation strategy of activity 1.3.

By the end of Phase 1, we aim to target and benefit 1,500 households (IME 400 households, OUK 400 households, AMH 600 households and ZAH 100 households) through seed exchange events (or fairs) that will be hosted in our 4 hubs. Our first seed fair will take place in June 2023 during the 2023 Biocultural Festival in Ait M'hamed, which is being co-organized with local authorities of Ait M'hamed commune and Azilal province. The following seed fair will take place in Imegdral in July 2023. MBLA is currently working with the Commune of Oukaimeden to introduce the idea of a Seed *Mousse*m (Arabic for seasonal festival) in Oukaimeden. Ideally, this seasonal festival would be hosted every summer and our team hopes that the first edition will be hosted in July 2023, so we can host our third seed fair during the event. Finally, in October 2023, our team will host the final seed fair of Phase 1 in Zaouiat Ahansal during their local moussem. A final report about the seed banks and seed exchanges in Phase 1 will be submitted in the next reporting period.

Activity 1.4. focuses on enhancing the irrigation, terracing and soil fertility of 500 agroecosystem parcels. Our team used the 8 focus group discussions conducted at the beginning of 2023 to learn more about the crop varieties, soil profiles and water management and cultural practices of the participating villages. In late February 2023, our team shared surveys with our CRs so they could begin the process of collecting information about the local farmers and parcels that will benefit from our project's agroecological interventions. Thus far, we have received survey responses from 5 villages (Ouarti, Ameslane, Wabzaza, Suite n Ait Ounir and Agoudim) representing a total of 47 farmers and 47 parcels (See data collection surveys in Annex 16), and we will be receiving a total of 105 survey responses from 105 farmers (IME 30 parcels, OUK 30 parcels, AMH 30 parcels and ZAH 15 parcels) by the end of June 2023.

Our team has developed a soil sampling protocol that will be used to assess the quality of soil in each of our participating villages. In May 2023, our team will take the soil samples to a laboratory to be analyzed so we can establish a baseline, which will be used to compare with future samples taken from the same sites. At the moment, our team is developing, with the support of our partner Deafal, the training content which will be used to build the capacity of the farmers who will participate in activity 1.4. (See training content outline in Annex 17). The ultimate aim of these training series is to help participating farmers maintain the agroecosystem interventions that our team is helping them to implement in their respective parcels and villages. This ensures direct promotion of agroecological interventions and their adequate monitoring. In May 2023, our team will start to deliver select trainings in select villages from the aforementioned focus group villages.

Activity 1.5. focuses on supporting the livelihoods of 1,000 transhumant pastoralists. The programme launched its work on livestock over the past year with in-depth work done on breed conservation, animal health and proposed livestock action plan for the future. A major gap in livestock management for herding communities is access to vaccinations for their herds. In September - October 2022, the programme held a vaccination campaign in Al-Haouz province (Annex 21).

In January 2023, our team shared a call for applications to start the process of recruiting local pastoralists to form a team of local eco-guides (See eco-guide social media post in Annex 18). In May 2023, our team will deliver a 3-4 day training that will benefit 20 pastoralists in Oukaimeden. During this training, we will work with participants to establish attractive ecotourism offerings for the N'Sidi Fars Agdal. Ultimately, we hope these ecotourism offerings will help the local community members who manage the Oukaimeden Agdal establish small

local tourism initiatives in the short to mid-term. MBLA is leading a complementary project – an eco-museum in Oukaimeden – whose construction began in December 2022 with tentative opening in August 2023 (See ecomuseum construction photos in Annex 19). Part of the ecomuseum’s exhibition will be dedicated to highlighting and celebrating transhumance pastoralism in the High Atlas region. In September 2023, we will begin working on restoring Ait M’hmed Agdal’s natural ecosystems and developing sustainable livelihood opportunities for the transhumant pastoralists of Igourdane. We aim to achieve these goals by a) delivering capacity-building activities for local pastoralists, b) restoring certain degraded areas of the Ait M’hmed Agdal, c) restoring the water reserves of the Ait M’hmed Agdal and d) providing assistance to the livestock breeders of Ait Atta.

For output 2, which focuses on expanding certification and labelling for High Atlas products, we have invested significant energy in growing our network and establishing a panel of experts to support the creation of the High Atlas label and on building our relationships and collaborations with cooperatives more broadly. As part of this process, we recruited communications consultant, Nabil Nadifi, to deliver the visual identity of the High Atlas Harvest label and a ‘communications playbook’ for its integration into the Harvest Festival (Annex 6).

We have had a series of exchanges with our Mediterranean partners GOB Menorca (Spain) and MedINA (Greece), who have established local certification programmes, to enable mutual learning and peer mentoring. We are currently finalising the planning of a community exchange on labelling featuring these partners, national actors on labelling from the Moroccan government and peer organisations, as well as expert organisations such as IFOAM, Preferred by Nature, and Fair Wild [tentative dates for exchange]. In addition, we are also contributing to the submission of a Darwin Initiative proposal by TRAFFIC on systems to render certification processes more accessible to wild plant harvesters.

Through our partnership with [ESAV](#), the Higher School for Visual Arts in Marrakech, we completed a pilot program on improving visual identity and packaging for cooperatives (activities 2.4 and 5.4). Seven senior design students from ESAV were matched with cooperatives to re-work their branding and packaging, providing new logos and packaging designs.

An initial label proposal is being prepared for the 2023 Azilal Biocultural Festival, one of the many events of the Spring 2023 Marrakech Harvest Festival. This presentation shares our to-date exploration of systems of participatory guarantee (SPG) as an alternative approach to traditional certification (activity 2.2). For activity 2.1., our team has further pursued registration of the label as a brand with the Office Marocain de la Propriété Industrielle et Commerciale (OMPIC). A report on this lengthy application process will be shared in the next reporting period.

Starting in November 2022, select cooperatives benefiting from the above-mentioned workshops applied for food safety certifications through ONSSA (National Food Safety Office), an essential step for their commercialisation and first contribution to activity 2.3, which supports the certification of an additional 100 cooperatives. The project provided financial support to this ONSSA certification process and cooperatives are currently preparing summaries of their experience with ONSSA.

Our efforts to expand support of rural cooperatives are moving forward through active networking with cooperative partners and identifying additional high-potential community-led cooperatives. Annex 9 tracks our progress in identifying cooperatives that engage in biodiversity-friendly land-use practices and exhibit equitable governance in our current areas of work as well as hubs for future expansion of the project, with a total of 356 cooperatives identified by the end of the reporting period. This allows us to evaluate cooperatives against our criteria to ensure we work with partners committed to conservation and community development. These cooperatives were identified through a survey disseminated through our networks including [Douar Tech](#), ODCO (Office of Cooperative Development), and INDH

(National Human Development Initiative). This network-building is foundational for all the activities of outputs 2-5.

We have made significant progress on output 3, which seeks to build the skills of rural entrepreneurs and High Atlas cooperatives to commercialise local biodiversity-friendly products from sustainable cultural landscapes. In this first year, we carried out two series of intensive capacity-building workshops (activities 3.1 and 3.2).

The first series consisted of 4 sessions facilitated by expert trainers. Sixteen participants, representing 16 cooperatives, participated in this series:

- Session 1 took place on 18 - 20 August, covering “Market Analysis & Testing” and “Brand Identity & Positioning.” These workshops were facilitated by [Ahmed Haouaria](#), a branding specialist.
- Session 2 (15 - 17 September) covered “Food Safety Practices & Quality Control” and “Certification & Product Labelling,” key training areas that will be further developed for ONSSA certification. These workshops were facilitated by [Abdelaziz Salih](#), an agro-food engineer and consultant.
- “Project Management & Administration” and “Grant Writing & Management” were covered in session 3, (7 - 9 October). These workshops were facilitated by [Imane El Ouizgani](#), President of “The Rawabet Foundation for Development & Research” and Professor of economics.
- Another session of workshops with [Meryem Elmoutassim](#) took place on 11 - 13 November, focusing on e-commerce and sales techniques for digital entrepreneurs.

The workshops form the basis of our business training for cooperatives (activity 3.1). The trainers recruited for this series are part of the growing network for the project, and key allies in our scaling-up efforts. The current set of cooperative beneficiaries will go on to spread these learnings through a trainer-of-trainers model in their respective regions and beyond as the project scales up. Please see annex 7 for more on these workshops.

The second series of training took place in March 2023 with the following training sessions: "Advocacy and Communication," "Conflict Management," "Human Resources Management," and "Leadership and Governance." See further details in Annex 7B.

In addition to this type of training, we launched our training on seed entrepreneurship with young women members of cooperatives in Spring 2023. This training will support cooperatives in engaging with plant nurseries and seed production to diversify their market activities and better manage wild harvesting (Annex 22).

At the start of the project in April 2022, we held a special edition of the [Harvest Festival](#) to celebrate Earth Day and Ramadan through a series of cultural events and *Ramadan Iftars* with urban partners. This special edition brought attention to High Atlas foodways and our work with cooperatives among other aspects of the cultural landscapes approach among the diverse partners of the Festival. In May 2022, we organised the Spring edition of Harvest Festival (activity 5.3). This two-week biocultural festival celebrates the High Atlas agroecosystem and connects rural cooperatives to Marrakech urban markets. With every edition of the Festival, events expand to better target diverse publics and our activities have grown in scope.

Another highly successful edition of the festival was held in October 2022 (activity 5.3). The Marrakech Harvest Festival is pivotal for our project. It hosts urban markets for High Atlas products, showcases the impact of our programme to the greater public, expands the network of our project, celebrates the High Atlas through cultural events, and most importantly puts rural producers into direct contact with urban consumers, restaurateurs and retailers, building the networks of rural-urban solidarity that we believe are key to the maintenance of cultural landscapes. Given the growing role of the biannual festival for our programme and its outreach, in Spring 2023 we decided to recruit a festival curator (Lorén Elhili) as a part-time GDF team member.

The October 2022 edition of the Festival included 2 market events (activity 3.3) hosted at local institutions, film screenings on key environmental themes, discussion series including a panel on food sovereignty hosted online to increase audience outreach, and workshops on relevant topics targeted at diverse audiences, including children.

Each Festival includes at least one market event (activity 3.3) where cooperative partners travel to Marrakech to sell their products and participate in capacity-building workshops. The Festival continues to contribute to rural incomes through marketing events and long-term sales opportunities, including through the addition of cooperative products to restaurant, hotel, and cafe menus and urban selling points, such as partners Bey 961 and El Fenn Hotel. As of March 2023, we have 53 urban partners to the Festival. Social media is a key tool for the promotion of the Festival and bringing attention to High Atlas producers and biodiversity-friendly products through online campaigns (activity 5.5). See annex 5 for an overview of activities of the May 2022 Harvest Festival and annex 11 for an overview of the October 2022 edition including plans for the May 2023 edition.

Our work in innovation of novel goods and services by rural entrepreneurs and cooperatives operating in High Atlas cultural landscapes (output 4) is mostly planned for further along in the project. However, the project has initiated work on activities that require significant lead-up times. We established a partnership with the [Melting Pot Foundation](#)'s Marrakech Project, [Um Mami Centre](#). The Center provides training for young chefs from disadvantaged background. In our first collaboration, we connected the center to cooperative products so that young chefs are integrating High Atlas local products into their training. We are exploring collaboration on product innovation (activity 4.1).

We have started collaborating with EBF to develop mobile and other payment service provider options (activity 4.4) by launching the process of recruitment of the experts needed to build these specific technological platforms, and we have organised a first workshop to establish the roadmap for this activity. Our collaboration with EBF also includes ongoing support of an innovative UNDP project of training rural women “digital ambassadors”, identifying innovative goods and services and seeking novel mobile payment options. Through this, our team has worked to brainstorm with them a list of 60 innovative business solutions, with many drawn from our experience with cooperatives (activity 4.1).

Efforts towards output 5, which focuses on Digital entrepreneurship and platforms, promoted to increase revenues from High Atlas cultural landscape goods and services are underway through our partnership with ESAV and ongoing Harvest Festival programming. Through our collaboration with ESAV, cooperatives are equipped with improved visual materials for their online platforms, social media and individual sites (activity 5.1). The Festival provides opportunities to cooperatives to increase exposure of their online presence at market events to grow their followings and connect to future sales opportunities. Our [Harvest social media](#) continues to grow its audience and is equipped to support communications of activities related to our larger programme of work (activity 5.5).

To build digital entrepreneurship skills, the project collaborated with 15 existing cooperative partners. These partners have received support in the creation of their social media accounts, and more advanced cooperatives have received support through the creation of individual sites. Annex 10 shares the links to social media accounts and websites for cooperatives that participated in these activities. Four cooperatives have individual sites, and 14 cooperatives received support to create and/or manage their social media accounts.

4.2 Progress towards project Outputs

The response to question 3.1 presents the activities within the frame of their output.

Throughout Output 1, which focuses on community-based regenerative approaches for biodiversity conservation and cultural landscape restoration, we aim to help High Atlas

communities develop revenue streams and other livelihood benefits that are compatible with managing cultural landscapes.

Output 1. Community-based regenerative approaches achieve biodiversity conservation and cultural landscape restoration while increasing agroecological productivity

We are confident that we will be able to achieve the regenerative goals identified in Output 1 by the end of the grant period. The first phase of work, which emphasised accurate planning for the 5-year project, has set us up to stay on track with our proposed timeline. Over the past several months, our team has worked tirelessly to develop community-adapted and -driven implementation strategies to achieve our ambitious regenerative goals.

Output 2. Certification and labelling expanded for High Atlas cultural landscape products that meet established criteria and performance standards

Work under this output is progressing well. We have a slight delay on activity 2.1 (Register High Atlas Harvest as an official brand and label with associated Moroccan national authorities) which will be finalised in summer 2023. This delay was due to our attention being refocused, right at the end of the reporting period, to two major opportunities for showcasing our programme at national and international events. These events required significant staff time and occurred at the very start of year 2. They will be reported on in October 2023, however we provide a short overview under question 12 - Sustainability and Legacy, on p.18 below.

Output 3. Skills of rural entrepreneurs built to enable High Atlas cooperatives to commercialise local biodiversity-friendly products from sustainable cultural landscapes

All activities under this output are moving forward according to the proposed timeline with two training series delivered in this period.

Output 4. Innovation of novel goods and services by rural entrepreneurs and cooperatives operating in High Atlas cultural landscapes incubated

Output 5. Digital entrepreneurship and platforms promoted to increase revenues from High Atlas cultural landscape goods and services

There are multiple activities under outputs 4 and 5 that will be implemented later in the programme timeline. However, foundational work on digital entrepreneurship has been underway with our communication team and consultant Nabil Nadifi (output 4). Our Harvest Festival has delivered beyond the indicators set in our project for this year's editions.

4.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Our project's Outcome statement reads as follows: 200 High Atlas cooperatives, comprising 5000 households in 7 regional hubs, increase revenues long-term through improved local product commercialisation while optimising agropastoral activities that regenerate cultural landscapes and conserve biodiversity.

We have developed 5 outputs that will help us achieve this outcome. We are confident that our project will achieve the stated Outcome and impact because all our outputs are designed to act at each stage of the market value chain to ensure that conservation values and livelihood benefits are embedded throughout.

The indicator for our 'regenerative approaches' output (output 1), reads "0.1: At least 1000 hectares of cultural landscapes restored through wild species replanting, agroecological cultivation and seasonal grazing within a 30,000 km² region of the High Atlas, leading to quantifiable conservation of 15 indicator plant species and crop varieties by project end". This adequately measures the intended Outcome because it sets specific and realistic goals for the amount of land and the number of plant species and crop varieties that can be restored and conserved, respectively, over the 5-year period of the grant. Output 1 focuses on improving production by promoting community-based regenerative approaches, which seek to ensure that local products can be harvested sustainably from wild-harvested areas, terraced

agroecosystems and other cultivated areas, and seasonally-grazed pasture lands (agdals). Our work on output 1, as evidenced in section 3.1 above, has been considerable. Thousands of plants have been distributed, one nursery has been significantly expanded, the health of multiple herds of livestock has been improved through a concerted vaccination campaign, and core strategies for agroecological management of terraced agriculture have begun. We are at an early stage to claim that the outcome has been achieved, but we are confident that our progress towards it is dynamic and resilient to challenges.

The subsequent indicators (0.2 - 0.5) also adequately measure the intended outcome:

- 0.2 High Atlas Harvest brand established by YR1, linked to established certification and labelling standards by YR3, and used on packaging of at least 200 local cooperative products by project end. Our experience, embedded in networks of consumers, restaurateurs and retailers in Marrakech built through the Harvest Festival, attest to the fact that a High Atlas Harvest brand and label will have a significant impact on the market prices for HA products as well as consumer preference for them.
- 0.3 Rural entrepreneurs trained in business skills and mentored, leading to 200 rural cooperatives, 80% of them women-led, with enhanced marketing and commercialisation capacity, experience and knowledge by project end. As evidenced by the priorities of the Moroccan government and state policies and initiatives (see section 4 on policies below), rural cooperatives are the leading edge of rural poverty reduction and income generation in Morocco. Our work with women-led cooperatives, in particular building their business and management skills, has already led to greater outreach and sales at the High Atlas direct markets we have organised, and greater confidence in negotiating and engaging with buyers.
- 0.4 Novel goods and services innovated by High Atlas rural entrepreneurs and cooperatives, generating 40 new products annually and 200 by project end, presented to domestic urban consumers by 200 digital ambassadors and original distribution and marketing services. We have confidence in this indicator, given the eagerness for novel foods and products in the emerging market that is Marrakech and other rapidly growing urban centres in Morocco. Having said that, we are at the very early stages of working on output 4, and do not have any evidence to claim progress yet.
- 0.5 An online marketplace, 150 e-commerce websites or social media accounts, 10 urban harvest festivals, improved branding and packaging and enhanced social media marketing achieved by project end, leading to an average 10% increase in local product sales annually and 50% by project end, increasing cooperatives' annual revenues by an average of 30% over the project period. Given the rapid and unabating growth of online retail, we are very confident that this indicator is an excellent proxy for the measurement of income increase for cooperatives (and therefore for households and families). We are in the very early stages of the implementation of output 5, having created websites for four cooperatives and developed the social media accounts for 14. However, the experience working with these cooperatives has provided us with a pilot for our approach, which we are fine-tuning to ensure smooth roll-out to a much greater number of cooperatives. The Digital Tiwizi site will be launched in the coming year, at which point we will have greater clarity on how it will be able to ensure the achievement of output indicator 5.

Although we have experienced some minor delays in Outputs 2-4, these are principally due to our team seizing key unexpected opportunities for visibility and network-building. We provide more detail on these under question 12 on Sustainability and Legacy. We have been able to correct for these delays by reworking our planned timeline of activities for the summer and autumn seasons, to ensure we catch up. We are firmly convinced that the visibility and outreach we achieved through these emergent opportunities outweigh the minor delays we have experienced.

We are currently also in the midst of a new recruitment drive to ensure the project's dynamic trajectory is enhanced and sustainable. This is a key process for us as we've identified the gaps in our team in order to achieve our ambitious goals. It is our main priority at the moment to complete recruitment of our rural coordinators who will act as liaisons in their respective hubs.

4.4 Monitoring of assumptions

All our assumptions hold true at this stage of project implementation.

4.5 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty reduction

Impact: In High Atlas production landscapes of high cultural and biodiversity value, cooperatives drive gender-aware and scalable improvements in conservation, equitable resource distribution and household revenue through sustainable value chain development.

Through our programming, High Atlas cooperatives are empowered to drive conservation, equitable resource distribution and household revenue through sustainable value chain development. Our project is designed to have an impact at each stage of the market value chain, ensuring that conservation values and livelihoods benefits are embedded throughout.

This project contributes to the higher goal of biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation by:

- In terms of regenerative approaches, our project aims to educate and empower our target communities and cooperatives to revive traditional conservation practices and embrace new ones to protect the biodiversity and ecological integrity of High Atlas cultural landscapes. At this early stage of a 5-year project, the impact on biodiversity is modest. Yet, with the thousands of plants distributed every year through the plant nurseries and planted out in wild and domestic spaces throughout the landscape, through the expansion of these nurseries and improvement in their management and monitoring of seedling productivity, through the growth of a seed exchange network to ensure the maintenance of traditional and heritage varieties, and through the agroecological training and support given to farmers to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem health, we are confident that we can already predict achievement of our stated impact.
- Our work with rural, mostly women-led cooperatives is the gateway to ensuring we achieve our stated impact with regards to human development and wellbeing. This work helps to build rural entrepreneurship capacities, allowing High Atlas community members to participate in niche markets for local, culturally-relevant and sustainable food products and thus improving rural incomes through the organisation of events such as the High Atlas Food Market and Harvest Festival Marrakech. Through engaging with urban buyers, retailers, chefs and urban agroecology initiatives, we build urban-rural solidarity and trade networks, brokering direct commercial relationships that contribute to community livelihoods and poverty alleviation. Innovation of food and other High Atlas products, alongside the creation of cooperative websites and a centralised online marketplace will consolidate the work we are currently doing to build the capacities and confidence of rural cooperatives (this work is planned to come to fruition in upcoming phases of the project). Currently at the early stages of this process, we can see that the business training we have provided these cooperatives, alongside multiple opportunities to showcase their products and sell them through markets and festivals, as well as the revision and updating of their branding and packaging, has boosted their confidence and expanded their horizons (Annex 13).

In the long-term, our project will be the foundation of a large-scale regional programme that will inextricably link biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction, thus providing an inspiring and homegrown model for socio-ecological production landscapes in Morocco and beyond. It also aims to build national capacity by mentoring and valorising the knowledge, experience and expertise of Moroccan civil society organisations, like our primary partner Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association (MBLA), and local communities in the High Atlas region.

5. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

Our projects interventions on biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods – monitoring biodiversity and maintaining community seed banks and plant nurseries, supporting cooperatives with beneficial environmental and land-use practices and small farmers with agroecological approaches, and creating opportunities for marketing local products – contribute to Moroccan national policies around sustainable development and in turn international biodiversity and development agreements.

Our interventions support the implementation of Morocco's National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) and the agricultural Green Generation (GG) Strategy. GDF's community-based regenerative approach to achieve biodiversity conservation and cultural landscape restoration, while supporting communities in increasing agroecological productivity, contributes to the implementation of the conservation targets of the NSDS. Ongoing monitoring contributes to assessment of conservation status for local plant species and crop varieties, informed by the IUCN Red List approach. Local agroecological product commercialization through community-led rural cooperatives plays an important role in stake 2 of the NSDS – the transition towards a green economy which supports the growth of green markets. Cooperatives offer significant economic potential, especially for women in rural areas with limited access to revenue streams. The success and impact of cooperatives in rural communities has resulted in their recognition within the Green Generation (GG) Strategy 2020 – 2030 as a key pathway for sustainable livelihoods and economic development. The establishment of rural cooperatives is integrated as a strategy for the formation of an agricultural middle class, the high-level goal of the GG.

National policy initiatives mirror targets within multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 8 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth and SDG 10 on reducing inequality are bolstered through the support of rural entrepreneurship and access to digital platforms and marketing for increased economic sustainability of cooperatives in the pandemic era. Furthermore, SDG 5 on gender equality is also strongly supported through women's economic development, with more than 80% of the cooperatives we work with being led by women. In general, our project's approach bridges environmental and social sustainability, reinforcing implementation of international legal agreements that Morocco is party to. The aims of biodiversity conservation, promotion of sustainable use, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from use of plant genetic resources within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) align strongly with GDF's regenerative approach to managing the High Atlas cultural landscape. Article 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) which promotes farmer's rights is directly supported in the project through the integration of local indigenous knowledge and community-led local product commercialization ensuring the right to participate in the sharing of benefits arising from the use of plant genetic resources. The project's network includes ITPGRFA focal point, Mr Moha Ferrahi, due to our interest in implementation of the treaty in Morocco and sought participation of diverse actors in past policy workshops. The support of rural agroecological enterprises is also aligned with the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing, and its harmonisation with implementing ITPGRFA's multilateral system for access. As our project embraces complexity taking on a cultural landscapes approach, we integrate community governance networks around collective management of resources in our active hubs. Scaling up the socio-ecological production landscapes approach is key for a more expansive reach of biodiversity conservation measures that also ensure sustainable livelihoods for thousands of rural households, integrating key approaches on conservation, sustainable use, and equitable access and benefit sharing as advocated in several national and international environmental policies.

6. Project support to poverty reduction

Through our capacity building for rural cooperatives in the High Atlas and our support in providing spaces and events for the sale of their products, we expect to significantly improve the monetary income of at least 5000 households by project end. This project supports the economic empowerment of rural women, as the large majority of the cooperatives we work with

are all female, which enhances the effectiveness of poverty reduction in our partner communities. In addition, our trainings and management of parcels to support implementation agroecological techniques for Amazigh smallholders are aimed at improving agricultural productivity for improved food security as well as increase in rural incomes. Our capacity building for rural cooperatives on themes such as pricing strategies, in addition to providing access to urban markets and consumers through the organisation of High Atlas Food Markets and the Harvest Festival are aimed at increasing cooperative sales which support local livelihoods. Beyond training, our programme has integrated digital entrepreneurship within our efforts to support cooperatives reach of diverse markets. Through creation of e-commerce websites, a collective online marketplace (Digital Tiwizi), and social media marketing for High Atlas products, we expect a greater impact on household incomes due to diversified marketing and access to these tools and spaces. We are monitoring changes in income for all cooperatives involved. These data will serve as a proxy for assessing poverty alleviation, complementing information on non-monetary benefits that accrue to communities through our Darwin project.

7. Gender equality and social inclusion

Our theory of change centres community participation and guidance of programming, of which women play a key part as community leaders, environmental stewards, and rural entrepreneurs. Gender equality is a guiding principle of our work and we take a gender-sensitive approach to all programme aspects. We simultaneously take into consideration the reception of our programmes and approaches by community collaborators, and bear in mind local concerns around gender to ensure community standards are respected while maintaining women’s equal participation and benefit. Women’s cooperatives offer culturally legible access to economic activities and often participate in key environmental management practices. The impacts of environmental resource use and limited access to economic opportunities for women in rural areas present a major challenge for sustainable livelihood building. The cooperative model of women organised into and owning rural enterprises represents one of few rural economic opportunities. Collaborating with autonomously organised women-led cooperatives supports the initiative of women from rural areas and their vision for economic development.

Centering cooperatives has been key to ensuring gender-aware conservation and livelihoods support. In general, in our collaborations with Amazigh communities, we work hard to ensure all community engagements are gender balanced. In areas where we cannot host mixed-gender events, we accommodate this local proscription by splitting events by gender to ensure our reach to both women and men. Our events, workshops, and trainings that are specifically targeted to women also help create spaces outside of those designated by male-dominated local authorities. This ensures their participation in decision-making and that their perspectives on projects and programs ideas are equally heard. Our commitment to gender equality is also reflected within our field team; we collaborate with women community researchers who act as community liaisons, are known within their community, and whose understanding of their community’s gender dynamics informs their work. Also, our GDF High Atlas Cultural Landscapes team is predominantly female (5 women to 3 men), and more broadly GDF’s team is 70% women. We collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data on all community engagements through accurate participant lists and in interview and survey data of our ethnobotanical and socioeconomic research. This data allows us to track our goals around gender equality and ensure our goals of gender parity are met.

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board ¹ .	The main leadership team for this project within Global Diversity Foundation is 60% women. Our team members include two men (Gary Martin, Ugo D’Ambrosio) and three
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¹ A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

	women (Emily Caruso, Tasnim Elboute, Hafida Mazoud).
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women ² .	<p>Our main partner, MBLA, has worked to reach gender parity within their team. In addition, they have made great gains around women's leadership with Najwa Essiari acting as chairwoman of the board.</p> <p>Currently there are 4 women in an implementation team of 8:</p> <p>Meryem Aakiri, Agroecology Field Coordinator</p> <p>Soukaina Rachidi, Grants and Reporting office</p> <p>Firdaouss Elidrissi, Local Products Liaison</p> <p>Ibtissam Bouseta, Communications officer</p> <p>Gender within leadership is more difficult to quantify for our other partners (UM6P, ESAV, EBF) who are much larger and more amorphous, and do not have the simple internal governance structures of GDF and MBLA which allow quick tallying of gender proportions.</p>

8. Monitoring and evaluation

We recognise effective Monitoring & Evaluation processes are necessary to ensure successful outcomes of this project. Therefore, we maintain an online M&E table, linked to all projects within the wider HACL programme, to track progress against indicators and outcomes. We also organise 3-monthly collective evaluations during which team members present progress against project activities and discuss any challenges and upcoming work plans. We hold weekly team meetings and bi-weekly meetings with our partner MBLA to maintain a good overview of project activities and plan for important events. In addition to the ongoing monitoring through meetings and internal evaluations, we organise yearly external evaluations for our High Atlas Cultural Landscapes programme, which includes this project. We have recruited [Sana Mezoughi](#) as an external evaluator and she is currently working on the evaluation of the past 3 years of work with our team. She is teaming up with Gary Martin, who will carry out an exhaustive internal review of the first year of this project for our own internal M&E and programme planning. We are also working with Professor [Imane El Ouizgani](#), who has been a workshop facilitator in our rural entrepreneurship capacity building, to evaluate our impact on cooperatives specifically.

Since the project was launched in 2022, the board of MBLA, consisting of three university professors and/or researchers and an environmental consultant, have sought to engage more directly and interactively with our work on regenerative approaches. MBLA has integrated one board member as an advisor for each of the specific themes we engage on in regenerative approaches who will support the M&E processes for those activities.

In addition to our bi-weekly all-team meetings, we have instituted additional regular meetings to look at our project progress more in-depth. These meetings are what we call 'HACL Management Team meetings' and take place among the leadership of both GDF and MBLA

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

and are explicitly focused on monitoring and evaluation. They allow us to better troubleshoot any issues with the project timeline as well as tackle any gaps in activities that we witness.

9. Lessons learnt

Our Darwin Extra project has pushed us to create an ambitious scope of work, building on and strengthening our existing High Atlas Cultural Landscapes programme. As expected, it has been a challenge to initiate scaling up and building expansive networks to grow our programme. And we have overcome this challenge through our intensive planning which breaks down our hub expansion process into phases.

Our local partner MBLA has really stepped into its organizational autonomy and has been challenged by the growing number of project invitations and proposals they wished to participate in, especially given the amount of strategic planning and fieldwork required to make our first year in this project a success. We have supported MBLA to identify gaps in the team so that our teams can grow together to meet the needs of our project. MBLA has since welcomed a grants officer who has helped with the growing work around project invitations and proposals. We continue to learn how to hone our relationship with MBLA to ensure the organisation feels fully autonomous and independent, yet also supported and mentored by GDF.

And lastly, because we aim to support 200 cooperatives by project end, we have been dedicating a lot of time to recruiting and evaluating possible partners. We have had to change our initial approach of direct networking as opportunities arise, to a more broad and encompassing approach that uses specific tools that can help us have a wider reach to possible collaborators. In particular, we have developed a survey that we disseminate across our networks to collect cooperative contacts. This has allowed us to build a large database of possible partners (~250 cooperatives) in our first phase.

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

n/a

11. Risk Management

No risks have arisen in project implementation so far.

12. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

13. Sustainability and legacy

Our approach to ensure project sustainability is focused on three aspects: strengthening of our main implementation partner MBLA, greater integration of community cooperatives, and strong fundraising vision.

GDF's incubation of MBLA, starting with its establishment in 2014, was the foundational element for ensuring the sustainability and legacy of the project. This project builds on this relationship, while continuing to evolve it to ensure we steer clear of dependency and truly honour the differences in approach and culture of both organisations. This partnership has been the bedrock of effective collaboration with communities, and has allowed us to build trust and long term relationships with them. While it has been a challenge to achieve and maintain these relationships, our consistent presence in the field and participatory approaches have allowed a shared ownership of our projects, which is key for long-term sustainability.

Our integration of community-led and -based cooperatives is also essential for project sustainability, as well as for scaling-up the programme given that we are working with autonomous networks of collective rural enterprises. Being able to engage with these networks is an important step for our initiative's sustainability as our activities are integrated into existing cooperatives.

Securing the Darwin Extra grant has also contributed greatly to the overall sustainability of the High Atlas Cultural Landscapes programme, which is now entering its second decade. This project has allowed us to take a 5-year frame as opposed to the shorter 2-3 periods of past projects. In the first part of 2023 we engaged with a new donor, [knodel foundation](#), who was keen to co-fund this project specifically. By end of March 2023, we had a grant agreement with them, and from 1 April 2023, they are officially co-funders of the programme by €50,000 per year for 5 years. We continue to seek new donors and diverse funding sources to support the programme, increase co-funding and ensure the long-term sustainability of our actions. We have also actively supported MBLA to establish new grants: we intensively mentored them through a process with the Audemars-Watkins Foundation based in Geneva, leading to a 3-year €200,000 grant that co-funds key aspects of the Darwin Extra grant. We expect MBLA to become the primary leader of the HACL programme by 2027, as they continue to gain financial and technical autonomy, with our support.

In terms of our project promotion, we have sought greater visibility at the national and international level through participation in conferences. Firstly, we worked with the British Embassy in Rabat to participate in the 2023 International Exhibition of Agriculture in Morocco (SIAM - Salon International d'Agriculture au Maroc). The UK was featured as the honorary guest and we seized the opportunity to showcase the impact of Darwin funds in Morocco. This meant all hands on deck for our team: in the space of 1 month, we produced a new programme video, as well as brochures and pamphlets on the High Atlas Cultural Landscapes programme. We had a large team present at the conference and we held public tastings of High Atlas local products. In addition, to engage with the greater public, we presented our programme to HE Lord Benyon, the UK Minister of State at DEFRA, Simon Martin CMG, the UK Ambassador to Morocco, and UK Consul General Tom Hill, amongst others. We shared an overview of our Darwin Extra project in each of these interactions and shared print copies of our ten-year report (Annex 20). The above-mentioned interlocutors were enthusiastic about the support from Darwin Initiative for our work. Our stand in the UK pavilion of the conference welcomed hundreds of visitors – we engaged with over 200 visitors during our public tasting of High Atlas products alone.

Shortly afterwards, we travelled to Agadir to participate in the national Argan Salon. There, we met with a forthcoming partner, [REFAM Project of ANDZOA](#) (Project for Women's Economic Empowerment in the Argan sector hosted at the National Development Agency for Argan and Oases), for our programming with cooperatives in southern hubs and visited the [new Taroudant permanent market](#) for cooperatives of that province.

14. Darwin Initiative identity

We recognise the support of the UK Darwin Initiative for this project through the development of a [dedicated project page](#) on our website, and we reference the Darwin Initiative across our blog updates where relevant and appropriate. We have also included the Darwin Initiative logo to our High Atlas Cultural Landscapes programme webpage, as this project is part of our wider Mediterranean programme. This year we had even greater publicity due to participation in national conferences as explained in question 12. In addition, GDF actively and regularly shares progress updates and news from our Darwin funded project as part of our wider High Atlas Cultural Landscape Programme on its stories page, social media profiles (4,200+ Facebook, 1,593 Instagram and 1,347 LinkedIn followers), and in GDF's Annual Reports. Please note that our 2022 Annual Report will be shared with Darwin following its online publication.

15. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	No
Have any concerns been investigated in the past 12 months	No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes, Lorenza Arnaboldi [REDACTED]
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	No (however she has attended them in the past)
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 13% [2] Planned: 20% [3]
<p>Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.</p> <p>We have had no issues with safeguarding in the past 12 months</p>	
<p>Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify.</p> <p>GDF is in the process of revising all policies and in this process has extended its Safeguarding Policy. All staff will be invited to attend a workshop during which the revised policy will be presented and the team will be asked to carry out small group work to ensure they understand the policy and how to implement it in their work.</p>	

16. Project expenditure

- Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2022/23 Grant (£)	2022/23 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)								
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)								
Others (see below)								
TOTAL					£181,268	£167,993	7%	

Table 2: Project mobilising of matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

	Matched funding secured to date	Total matched funding expected by end of project
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project.		
Total additional finance mobilised by new activities building on evidence, best practices and project (£)		

17. 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 Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

We have prepared a short summary of our experience participating in SIAM. This write-up and photos are uploaded in our [Annex folder](#).

• **Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2022-2023**

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Impact</p> <p>In High Atlas production landscapes of high cultural and biodiversity value, cooperatives drive gender-aware and scalable improvements in conservation, equitable resource distribution and household revenue through sustainable value chain development.</p>		<p>25,000 plants at risk of biodiversity loss planted and distributed to communities yearly; active management of community seedbanks to ensure local varieties are preserved and to encourage production of large variety of plants; cooperatives managing landscapes through sustainable wild harvesting; small producers integrating agroecological techniques for increased productivity and greater sustainability</p>	
<p>Outcome 200 High Atlas cooperatives, comprising 5000 households in 7 regional hubs, increase revenues longterm through improved local product commercialisation while optimising agro-pastoral activities that regenerate cultural landscapes and conserve biodiversity.</p>	<p>0.1: At least 1000 hectares of cultural landscapes restored through wild species replanting, agroecological cultivation and seasonal grazing within a 30,000 km² region of the High Atlas, leading to quantifiable conservation of 15 indicator plant species and crop varieties by project end</p> <p>0.2 High Atlas Harvest brand established by YR1, linked to established certification and labelling standards by YR3, and used on packaging of at least 200 local cooperative products by project end;</p> <p>0.3 Rural entrepreneurs trained in business skills and mentored, leading to 200 rural cooperatives, 80% of them women-led, with enhanced marketing and commercialisation capacity,</p>	<p>Established strategies working towards restoration of 1000 hectares of cultural landscapes, with expansion to new hubs starting in next phase</p> <p>High Atlas label proposed as a brand to OMPIC</p> <p>Two business bootcamps conducted in YR 1</p> <p>Phase 1 exploration of novel goods and services support with partners</p> <p>Website structure set up for online marketplace, Digital Tiwizi</p>	<p>Implementation of regenerative approaches strategies; going from 3/7 to 5/7 active hubs</p> <p>Finalisation of Harvest label as a brand; establishment of its standards and use of SPG processes</p> <p>Cooperative business bootcamps implements with newly recruited cooperatives and in new hubs</p> <p>Phase 2 of online marketplace development, Digital Tiwizi, to showcase the Harvest label and certified cooperatives</p>

	<p>experience and knowledge by project end;</p> <p>0.4 Novel goods and services innovated by High Atlas rural entrepreneurs and cooperatives, generating 40 new products annually and 200 by project end, presented to domestic urban consumers by 200 digital ambassadors and original distribution and marketing services;</p> <p>0.5 An online marketplace, 150 e-commerce websites or social media accounts, 10 urban harvest festivals, improved branding and packaging and enhanced social media marketing achieved by project end, leading to an average 10% increase in local product sales annually and 50% by project end, increasing cooperatives' annual revenues by an average of 30% over the project period.</p>		
<p>Output 1. Community-based regenerative approaches achieve biodiversity conservation and cultural landscape restoration while increasing agroecological productivity</p>	<p>1.1 Three rural plant nurseries and associated seed reproduction parcels established by YR3 and four nurseries and parcels expanded YR2;</p> <p>1.2 25,000 plants of wild-harvested native species distributed annually for five years;</p> <p>1.3 Seeds of local crop varieties exchanged among a total of 5000 households by project end;</p> <p>1.4 500 agroecosystem parcels with enhanced irrigation, terracing and soil fertility;</p> <p>1.5 Livelihoods support provided to 500 transhumant pastoralists, 50% of them</p>	<p>Implementation of regenerative conservation initiatives ongoing in current hubs with strategic plans established for each activity in output 1.</p>	

	women, in Agdal communal grazing areas	
<p>Output 1 Activities</p> <p>1.1 Establish 3 new community plant nurseries and expand 4 existing nurseries</p> <p>1.2 Implement annual plant distribution of 25,000 plants of wild-harvested native species</p> <p>1.3 Exchange seeds of local crop varieties among 5000 households</p> <p>1.4 Enhance irrigation, terracing and soil fertility of 500 agroecosystem parcels</p> <p>1.5 Support livelihoods of 500 transhumant pastoralists</p>		<p>Established strategies for activities 1.1–1.5</p> <p>Successful evaluation and improvement of 4 nurseries with evaluation processes established to initiate expansion of nurseries in phase 2</p> <p>Successful distribution in Year 1 of 25,000+ plants</p> <p>A seed exchange is scheduled in the Spring 2023 Harvest Festival events in Azilal province</p> <p>Field research conducted and concluded to identify agroecosystem parcels</p> <p>Engaged pastoralist network, with active planning for capacity building programming</p> <p>Implemented a vaccination campaign for livestock in Al Haouz province</p> <p>Launched training program around seed entrepreneurship for diversification of cooperative activities and better wild harvesting management</p>
<p>Output 2. Certification and labelling expanded for High Atlas cultural landscape products that meet established criteria and performance standards</p>	<p>2.1 High Atlas Harvest registered as a brand with the Office Marocain de la Propriété Industrielle et Commerciale and as a label with Institut Marocain de Normalisation by YR1;</p> <p>2.2 Participatory guarantee system for cooperatives established by YR3, 100 cooperatives certified by project end;</p> <p>2.3 Certification of an additional 100 cooperatives by Office National de</p>	<p>Planning towards launching a High Atlas Harvest Label is moving forward with in depth exploration of labelling, certification, and branding. Moving forward with proposals for integration of SPG processes.</p>

	<p>Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits Alimentaires by project end;</p> <p>2.4 Visual identity and packaging improved for 40 cooperatives annually, YRS 1-5</p> <p>2.5 200 products designated with High Atlas Harvest label by project end</p>		
<p>Output 2 Activities</p> <p>2.1 Register High Atlas Harvest as an official brand and label with associated Moroccan national authorities</p> <p>2.2 Establish participatory guarantee system (PGS) for cooperatives</p> <p>2.3 Support certification of an additional 100 cooperatives</p> <p>2.4 Improve visual identity and packaging for 200 cooperatives</p> <p>2.5 Designate 200 local products with High Atlas Harvest label</p>		<p>Branding application for the High Atlas Harvest label underway with OMPIC</p> <p>Proposal of SPG process presented to community members, researchers, and cooperative members at Spring 2023 Azilal Biocultural Festival</p> <p>Cooperatives benefiting from YR 1 capacity building supported through ONSSA application</p> <p>Cooperatives benefiting from YR 1 capacity building invited to improve visual identity and packaging (30 cooperatives)</p>	<p>Complete successful registration of Harvest label with OMPIC</p> <p>Convene label advisory committee to consult on status of label versus certification</p> <p>Work with current cooperative network on ONSSA certification, an essential step for participation in programming on digital entrepreneurship and access to urban markets</p> <p>Establish reference committee of cooperatives to advise on SPG processes</p>
<p>Output 3. Skills of rural entrepreneurs built to enable High Atlas cooperatives to commercialise local biodiversityfriendly products from sustainable cultural landscapes</p>	<p>3.1 Business skills training provided to members of 40 cooperatives annually YRS 1-5, with a total of 200 people, 80% of them women, by project end;</p> <p>3.2 Mentorship programme established and available progressively for a total of 200 rural entrepreneurs, 80% of them women, by project end;</p> <p>3.3 Three High Atlas direct trade markets organised in Marrakech annually YRS 1-5 for a total of 15 markets;</p> <p>3.4 Seven rural enterprise coordinators, the majority women,</p>	<p>Capacity building efforts moving forward according to proposed timeline with majority women leaders as participants. High Atlas direct trade markets offering regular market opportunities as part of ongoing Harvest Festival programming.</p>	

	<p>selected and trained by YR1, employed until project end;</p> <p>3.5 Consumer research capacity building given to seven rural enterprise coordinators and 50 cooperative managers by YR3</p>		
<p>Output 3 Activities</p> <p>3.1 Provide business boot-camp training to 200 cooperative members</p> <p>3.2 Establish mentorship programme for 200 rural entrepreneurs</p> <p>3.3 Organise 15 High Atlas direct trade markets in Marrakech</p> <p>3.4 Select and train 7 rural enterprise coordinators</p> <p>3.5 Provide capacity building in consumer research to 7 rural enterprise coordinators and 50 cooperative managers</p>		<p>Two series of business bootcamps have been delivered in YR1</p> <p>3 High Atlas direct trade markets organized in YR1</p> <p>Active recruitment process for coordinators in 2 hubs, with current CRs fulfilling this role in current hubs</p>	<p>Organization of capacity building programming for new cooperatives markets</p> <p>Organisation of mentoring programme for rural entrepreneurs</p> <p>3 High Atlas direct trade markets to be organised, including one during the Harvest Festival 2023 which coincides with GDF's organisation of the 18th Congress of the International Society for Ethnobiology in Marrakech</p>
<p>Output 4. Innovation of novel goods and services by rural entrepreneurs and cooperatives operating in High Atlas cultural landscapes incubated</p>	<p>4.1 40 novel goods or services identified, marketed and promoted annually YRS 1-5 for a total of 200 by project end;</p> <p>4.2 40 new digital ambassadors, 90% of them women, trained annually YRS 1-5 for a total of 200 by project end;</p> <p>4.3 Creation of rural digital marketing agencies promoted in the 7 regional hubs by project end;</p> <p>4.4 Mobile and other payment service provider options developed by project end;</p> <p>4.5 Distribution and transport services provided in each of 7 regional hubs by project end</p>	<p>The focus on innovation of goods and services comes at later stages of the project. However, active partnership-building for this programme component is underway through our collaboration with partner EBF and the support of a network of digital ambassadors.</p>	

<p>Output 4 Activities</p> <p>4.1 Identify, market and promote 200 novel goods or services</p> <p>4.2 Train 200 new digital ambassadors</p> <p>4.3 Create rural digital marketing agencies in the 7 regional hubs</p> <p>4.4 Develop mobile and other payment service provider options</p> <p>4.5 Support establishment of distribution and transport services in each of 7 regional hubs</p>	<p>Identification of innovation business solution underway in collaboration with EBF</p> <p>Training of digital ambassadors featured as part of ongoing capacity building offerings</p> <p>Payment service provider options explored for Digital Tiwizi platform as well as training for cooperatives on this matter delivered in YR1</p> <p>Established partnership with Melting Pot Foundation to explore food innovation</p>	<p>Using established plans for phase 2, develop in depth strategies to achieve indicators on novel goods and services</p> <p>Work with current partners and alumni of business bootcamps on digital ambassadorship</p> <p>Identify transport service challenges in existing hubs and hubs for expansions as scaling up progresses</p>
<p>Output 5. Digital entrepreneurship and platforms promoted to increase revenues from High Atlas cultural landscape goods and services</p>	<p><i>5.1 E-commerce websites and/or social media accounts created for 30 cooperatives annually YRS 1-5, contributing to an average 10% increase in annual sales per cooperative;</i></p> <p><i>5.2 Digital Tiwizi online marketplace fully operational with over 1000 products from 200 cooperatives by project end, contributing to an average 10% increase in annual sales per cooperative;</i></p> <p><i>5.3 Two 15-day editions of Harvest Festival Marrakech organisation annually, for a total of ten by project end, contributing to an average 10% increase in annual sales per cooperative;</i></p> <p><i>5.4 50 graphic design interns placed in creative agencies working with rural cooperative on branding and packaging by YR3</i></p>	<p>An initial group of cooperatives has benefited from website creation and direct support with social media. Partnership with ESAV key for this output to forge connections between designers and cooperatives.</p>

	<i>5.5 Social media communication campaign established in year 1 and maintained until project end</i>		
Output 5 Activities 5.1 Create E-commerce websites and/or social media accounts for 150 cooperatives 5.2 Support operations of the Digital Tiwizi online marketplace with over 1000 products from 200 cooperatives 5.3 Organise 10 15-day editions of Harvest Festival Marrakech 5.4 Engage 50 graphic design interns in creative agencies working with rural cooperatives on branding and packaging 5.5 Establish a social media and communications campaign to promote local products and Harvest Festival Marrakech		Pilot programme of e-commerce and social media account completed Establishment of website and social media materials for Digital Tiwizi platform completed 3 editions of Harvest Festival Marrakech organised Active social media presence for Harvest and other promotion of rural entrepreneurship maintained	Expansion of digital entrepreneurship support for cooperatives who have participated in capacity building efforts Further development of Digital Tiwizi platform 2 editions of Harvest Festival to be organised in YR2

18.

19. Annex 2: Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: In High Atlas production landscapes of high cultural and biodiversity value, cooperatives drive gender-aware and scalable improvements in conservation, equitable resource distribution and household revenue through sustainable value chain development.			
Outcome: 200 High Atlas cooperatives, comprising 5000 households in 7 regional hubs, increase revenues longterm through improved local product commercialisation while optimising agro-pastoral activities that regenerate cultural landscapes and conserve biodiversity.	0.1: At least 1000 hectares of cultural landscapes restored through wild species replanting, agroecological cultivation and seasonal grazing within a 30,000 km2 region of the High Atlas, leading to quantifiable conservation of 15 indicator plant species and crop varieties by project end 0.2 High Atlas Harvest brand established by YR1, linked to established certification and labelling standards by YR3, and used on packaging of at least 200 local cooperative products by project end; 0.3 Rural entrepreneurs trained in business skills and mentored, leading to 200 rural cooperatives, 80% of them	0.1 Baseline data of indicator species and crop varieties, datasets and results from annual ecological monitoring records, GIS maps of restored landscapes, photo essays 0.2 High Atlas Harvest branding guidelines and material, certification and labelling standards manuals, images of High Atlas Harvest label featured on product packaging, local press releases and announcements 0.3 Capacity building training reports, training programmes and materials, participant lists, blog posts	Community members are motivated and willing to participate in restoring their cultural landscapes and maintaining agroecological practices Cooperatives are interested in using the High Atlas Harvest label and engaging in associated certification Rural entrepreneurs are eager and available to receive and participate in training, mentoring and capacity building programmes Cooperatives are motivated to enhance their branding, marketing and packaging E-commerce websites, online marketplace and urban harvest festivals

	<p>women-led, with enhanced marketing and commercialisation capacity, experience and knowledge by project end;</p> <p>0.4 Novel goods and services innovated by High Atlas rural entrepreneurs and cooperatives, generating 40 new products annually and 200 by project end, presented to domestic urban consumers by 200 digital ambassadors and original distribution and marketing services;</p> <p>0.5 An online marketplace, 150 e-commerce websites or social media accounts, 10 urban harvest festivals, improved branding and packaging and enhanced social media marketing achieved by project end, leading to an average 10% increase in local product sales annually and 50% by project end, increasing cooperatives' annual revenues by an average of 30% over the project period.</p>	<p>0.4 Product lists and descriptions, marketing materials, product distribution records, photo essays</p> <p>0.5 Operational website for online marketplace, links of ecommerce websites, press articles on urban harvest</p>	<p>significantly increase local product sales and cooperatives annual revenues</p>
<p>Output 1. Community-based regenerative approaches achieve biodiversity conservation and cultural landscape restoration while increasing agroecological productivity</p>	<p>1.1 Three rural plant nurseries and associated seed reproduction parcels established by YR3 and four nurseries and parcels expanded YR2;</p> <p>1.2 25,000 plants of wild-harvested native species distributed annually for five years;</p> <p>1.3 Seeds of local crop varieties exchanged among a total of 5000 households by project end;</p> <p>1.4 500 agroecosystem parcels with enhanced irrigation, terracing and soil fertility;</p> <p>1.5 Livelihoods support provided to 500 transhumant pastoralists, 50% of them</p>	<p>1.1 Plant nursery design plans, plant lists, cultivation records, photo essays, blog posts</p> <p>1.2 Plant distribution records, beneficiaries lists, blog posts, local press articles</p> <p>1.3 Seed lists, records of seed exchanges, participant lists</p> <p>1.4 Datasets and records of ecological monitoring results, workshop reports, documentation of improved irrigation infrastructures</p>	<p>Community members are eager to establish rural plant nurseries and understand these offer an effective approach for biodiversity conservation</p> <p>Rural plant nurseries will produce sufficient plants for annual plant distributions</p> <p>Farmers are willing to exchange seeds of local crop varieties</p> <p>Farmers are available and interested to enhance irrigation systems, terracing practices and soil fertility</p>

	women, in Agdal communal grazing areas	1.5 List of supplies, educational services, veterinary care and transport assistance provided; photo essays	
Output 2. Certification and labelling expanded for High Atlas cultural landscape products that meet established criteria and performance standards	<p>2.1 High Atlas Harvest registered as a brand with the Office Marocain de la Propriété Industrielle et Commerciale and as a label with Institut Marocain de Normalisation by YR1;</p> <p>2.2 Participatory guarantee system for cooperatives established by YR3, 100 cooperatives certified by project end;</p> <p>2.3 Certification of an additional 100 cooperatives by Office National de Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits Alimentaires by project end;</p> <p>2.4 Visual identity and packaging improved for 40 cooperatives annually, YRS 1-5</p> <p>2.5 200 products designated with High Atlas Harvest label by project end</p>	<p>2.1 Official documentation confirming establishment of High Atlas Harvest brand and label</p> <p>2.2 PGS official documentation, list of 100 cooperatives</p> <p>2.3 List of 100 cooperatives that received certification</p> <p>2.4 Database and archive with visual identity and packaging material</p> <p>2.5 Product records with High Atlas Harvest label, photo essays</p>	Cooperatives are eager to use the High Atlas Harvest Label, to be certified and willing to improve their visual identity and packaging
Output 3. Skills of rural entrepreneurs built to enable High Atlas cooperatives to commercialise local biodiversityfriendly products from sustainable cultural landscapes	<p>3.1 Business skills training provided to members of 40 cooperatives annually YRS 1-5, with a total of 200 people, 80% of them women, by project end;</p> <p>3.2 Mentorship programme established and available progressively for a total of 200 rural entrepreneurs, 80% of them women, by project end;</p> <p>3.3 Three High Atlas direct trade markets organised in Marrakech annually YRS 1-5 for a total of 15 markets;</p> <p>3.4 Seven rural enterprise coordinators, the majority women, selected and trained by YR1, employed until project end;</p>	<p>3.1 Training reports, blogs, participant lists</p> <p>3.2 Programme documentation, photo essay, participant lists</p> <p>3.3 Market reports, blogs, social media posts, local press articles</p> <p>3.4 Training programme and reports, photo essay, participant list</p> <p>3.5 Capacity building workshop reports, participant list</p>	<p>Cooperatives are motivated and available to participate in business skills trainings and mentorship programmes</p> <p>Urban consumers in Marrakech are interested in participating in High Atlas product markets</p> <p>Rural enterprise coordinators are motivated and available to receive training</p>

	3.5 Consumer research capacity building given to seven rural enterprise coordinators and 50 cooperative managers by YR3		
Output 4. Innovation of novel goods and services by rural entrepreneurs and cooperatives operating in High Atlas cultural landscapes incubated	<p>4.1 40 novel goods or services identified, marketed and promoted annually YRS 1-5 for a total of 200 by project end;</p> <p>4.2 40 new digital ambassadors, 90% of them women, trained annually YRS 1-5 for a total of 200 by project end;</p> <p>4.3 Creation of rural digital marketing agencies promoted in the 7 regional hubs by project end;</p> <p>4.4 Mobile and other payment service provider options developed by project end;</p> <p>4.5 Distribution and transport services provided in each of 7 regional hubs by project end</p>	<p>4.1 Product and services lists, marketing materials</p> <p>4.2 Training programme, workshop reports, list of digital ambassadors</p> <p>4.3 Official records of agencies establishment</p> <p>4.4 List of developed payment services and associated documentation</p> <p>4.5 List of distribution and transport services and associated documentation</p>	<p>Cooperatives understand the importance of digital marketing</p> <p>7 regional hubs need digital ambassadors and marketing agencies to promote novel goods and/or services</p> <p>Consumers and cooperatives embrace alternative payment, distribution and transport services</p>
Output 5. Digital entrepreneurship and platforms promoted to increase revenues from High Atlas cultural landscape goods and services	<p>5.1 E-commerce websites and/or social media accounts created for 30 cooperatives annually YRS 1-5, contributing to an average 10% increase in annual sales per cooperative;</p> <p>5.2 Digital Tiwizi online marketplace fully operational with over 1000 products from 200 cooperatives by project end, contributing to an average 10% increase in annual sales per cooperative;</p> <p>5.3 Two 15-day editions of Harvest Festival Marrakech organisation annually, for a total of ten by project end, contributing to an average 10%</p>	<p>5.1 List and direct links to websites and/or social media accounts, cooperative sales records</p> <p>5.2 Link to online marketplace and product pages that features over 1000 products, cooperative sales records</p> <p>5.3 Festival programme, social media posts, videos, press releases and articles, blogs, cooperative sales records</p> <p>5.4 Internship agreements</p> <p>5.5 Campaign materials, social media posts</p>	<p>Cooperatives request effective e-commerce websites and/or social media accounts to increase their annual sales</p> <p>Cooperatives eager to participate in the Digital Tiwizi online marketplace and Harvest Festival Marrakech</p> <p>Cooperatives increase annual sales through participation in the online marketplace and Harvest Festival Marrakech</p>

	<p>increase in annual sales per cooperative;</p> <p>5.4 50 graphic design interns placed in creative agencies working with rural cooperative on branding and packaging by YR3</p> <p>5.5 Social media communication campaign established in year 1 and maintained until project end</p>		
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Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

- 1.1 Establish 3 new community plant nurseries and expand 4 existing nurseries
- 1.2 Implement annual plant distribution of 25,000 plants of wild-harvested native species
- 1.3 Exchange seeds of local crop varieties among 5000 households
- 1.4 Enhance irrigation, terracing and soil fertility of 500 agroecosystem parcels
- 1.5 Support livelihoods of 500 transhumant pastoralists
- 2.1 Register High Atlas Harvest as an official brand and label with associated Moroccan national authorities
- 2.2 Establish participatory guarantee system (PGS) for cooperatives
- 2.3 Support certification of an additional 100 cooperatives
- 2.4 Improve visual identity and packaging for 200 cooperatives
- 2.5 Designate 200 local products with High Atlas Harvest label
- 3.1 Provide business boot-camp training to 200 cooperative members
- 3.2 Establish mentorship programme for 200 rural entrepreneurs
- 3.3 Organise 15 High Atlas direct trade markets in Marrakech
- 3.4 Select and train 7 rural enterprise coordinators
- 3.5 Provide capacity building in consumer research to 7 rural enterprise coordinators and 50 cooperative managers
- 4.1 Identify, market and promote 200 novel goods or services
- 4.2 Train 200 new digital ambassadors
- 4.3 Create rural digital marketing agencies in the 7 regional hubs
- 4.4 Develop mobile and other payment service provider options
- 4.5 Support establishment of distribution and transport services in each of 7 regional hubs
- 5.1 Create E-commerce websites and/or social media accounts for 150 cooperatives
- 5.2 Support operations of the Digital Tiwizi online marketplace with over 1000 products from 200 cooperatives
- 5.3 Organise 10 15-day editions of Harvest Festival Marrakech
- 5.4 Engage 50 graphic design interns in creative agencies working with rural cooperatives on branding and packaging
- 5.5 Establish a social media and communications campaign to promote local products and Harvest Festival Marrakech

- **Annex 3: Standard Indicators**

The table regarding the new standard indicators is included in our [folder](#) of annexes.