Strengthening Capacity for Biodiversity Conservation in West Africa

Final Project Report

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Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Final Report

1. Darwin Project Information

Project Reference No.	13/021
Project title	Strengthening Capacity for Biodiversity Conservation in West Africa
Country	Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone
UK Contractor	BirdLife International
Partner Organisation (s)	Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS), Guinée Ecologie (GE), Society for the Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL) and SOS-FORETS in Côte d'Ivoire
Darwin Grant Value	GBP 189435
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Project website	
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2. Project Background/Rationale

The project is located in the Upper Guinea Forest (UGF) region of West Africa, which extends from Guinea to Togo. These forests have among the highest diversity of mammals in the world and are recognised to be one of the 25 global hotspots for biodiversity conservation. It has also been recognised by BirdLife International as an Endemic Bird Area, to which 15 restricted range species are entirely confined, 11 of them globally threatened. Approximately 80% of the original forest cover has been lost and the remaining forest is highly fragmented. Only 3% of remaining forest in areas of highest importance for biodiversity is protected.

In 2001, BirdLife International published a book entitled *Important Bird Areas of Africa and Associated Islands*. The compilation of this book, undertaken in collaboration with BirdLife Partner organisations, resulted in a fuller appreciation of just how scanty and out-of-date the biodiversity information on the Upper Guinea Forest region was. Several factors contributed to this but one of the fundamental reasons was insufficient indigenous human capacity. The need to generate reliable and up-to-date information by nationals in the Upper Guinea Forest region has also figured prominently in other local conservation agendas, especially National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plans (NBSAPs), and the lack of local capacity has been recognised as an impediment to this desire. In consequence, capacity development has been identified as one of the key focus areas for biodiversity conservation in the NBSAPs of all countries in the UGF zone. Moreover, these countries have yet to begin implementation of these plans. The local partners in this project have taken an active part in the development of their respective NBSAPs. Through their contributions all Important Bird Areas (IBA[1]) have been included in the NBSAPs of their countries as sites of biodiversity importance and, in some

[1] Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are sites of global significance for birds identified using internationally recognised, objective criteria. Sites may be considered IBAs if they hold globally threatened species; restricted range species (world range <50,000 km^2); assemblages of biome-restricted species and/or congregations of significant numbers of the global population of one or more species.

countries, components of the plan have been earmarked for implementation by the BirdLife partners.

The IBA programme, which seeks to identify, document and work towards the conservation and sustainable management of globally significant areas for bird conservation, is one of the core programmes of the local BirdLife partner organisations. Some 87 IBAs have been identified in the five implementing countries. The capacity of the local partner organisations to work for the conservation and management of this large number of sites is however limited. Collaboration with other organisations and government agencies has therefore been identified as one of the strategies for ensuring that these sites are at least monitored. However, these other organisations are themselves faced with severe capacity limitations and this project has therefore sought to contribute to filling this gap through the training of staff both of partner organisations and government agencies in survey and monitoring skills and techniques, not just for birds but also for other key elements of biodiversity that occur at these sites. The importance of the project to the local partners and their commitment to it was evident through the active participation and support at all stages of project development, planning and implementation.

3. Project Summary

The project aimed to improve capacity of government staff, staff of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and of other relevant conservation institutions in tropical biodiversity survey and identification techniques, with a focus on birds, mammals and plants.

The project had four main outputs, namely:

1. Regional/national training programmes for biodiversity survey and monitoring are established and functional
2. BirdLife's World Bird Database (WBDB) is installed and regularly updated by NGOs
3. National IBA reports (inventories) are completed and/or updated
4. Biodiversity information is published and disseminated.

One hundred and ninety one (191) nationals from five countries in West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire; 31; Ghana; 34; Guinea; 58; Liberia; 30 and Sierra Leone; 38) were trained in tropical biodiversity identification and survey techniques over the three years of the project (1 April 2004 - 31 March 2007). The beneficiaries of the training courses were drawn from a variety of organisations and institutions such as government wildlife and forest agencies, national NGOs, academic institutions (mainly universities students) and some private individuals. Equipment and books estimated at 15,000 Pounds Sterling were distributed to the trained nationals and institutions in the five countries. These included 75 pairs of Viking binoculars, 75 copies of *Birds of West and Central Africa* (Borrow and Demey, 2004), 35 copies of the *Kingdon field guide to African mammals* (Kingdon, 1997), 30 copies of the *Field guide to the trees of Ghana* (Hawthorne, 1990), 90 copies of *Expedition Field Techniques* (Bibby & Stuart, 1998), 15 CDs of bird sounds (Chappuis), five telescopes and five portable tape recorders. Guidance notes on the preparation and execution of field surveys and identification training with a focus on birds, mammals and plants were developed and distributed (Appendix VI).

Participants from project implementing countries participated in an introductory and detailed training course in the use of the web-enabled BirdLife International World Bird Database[2] (WBDB). Follow-up national training sessions are being planned by BirdLife to teach other nationals within and beyond their organizations in the use of the WBDB. Information from 40 Important Bird Areas, surveyed during the project, has been used to update the WBDB.

Sierra Leone has published and launched its national Important Bird Area book. Updated IBA reports have been prepared for sites surveyed in Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Surveys in

[2] The World Biodiversity Database is an online database tool used to collate information about the Important Bird Area (IBA) programme, including monitoring, information which is later used to determine the status of the IBA and observable trends over time.

Ghana have provided updated information for ten of the 47 sites in their draft national IBA book, which will be published before the end of December 2007.

Information about the project was disseminated in a variety of ways. A poster of threatened birds of the Upper Guinea Forest (Appendix VII) was produced and distributed alongside a project brochure for education and awareness raising purposes. Another poster of key project results (Appendix VIII) has been produced for the continuing dissemination of results after the project's end. Nineteen press releases were produced of key project results over the project period. Twenty one radio/television interviews and features were organised. Several articles of project results and activities were carried in national newspapers, NGO newsletters and the regional BirdLife newsletter (*BirdLife Africa/Afrique*).

The project had three additional and significant accomplishments:

- The project provided a unique opportunity for 58 undergraduate students in Guinea to gain field experience and 14 postgraduate students to undertake field research in partial fulfilment of requirements for their degrees.
- As a result of the considerable interest shown by the students in ornithology, academic institutions in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea have resolved to include ornithology in their curricula once staff qualified to teach the courses are available.
- The project also contributed to the livelihood improvement of some trainees. Eighteen beneficiaries of the training courses have been employed by a number of organisations and projects to assist in biodiversity surveys and environmental education.

The Articles of the CBD which best describe this project are numbers 7, 12, 13 and 17.

4. Scientific, Training, and Technical Assessment

Although the project was not research oriented, many of the beneficiaries were students who took advantage of the opportunity offered by the project to undertake field research work in partial fulfilment of their university degrees/studies. The methodologies used were approved by the universities concerned and supervision was assured by university staff. The project provided logistic and managerial support in the field work. However, students who undertook ornithological research received additional supervision from the overseas ornithological expert of the project, due to the general lack of ornithological expertise at the universities concerned and indeed in the sub-region as a whole. Six of thirteen postgraduate students studying for master degrees have already completed their studies successfully.

- ***Training and capacity building activities*** –

The overall purpose of the project was to improve capacity of government staff, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other relevant conservation institutions in tropical biodiversity survey and identification techniques, with a focus on birds, mammals and plants. The approach adopted to achieve this was as follows: sixteen training workshops were organized (one sub-regional and 15 national). During the sub-regional workshop in Ghana, 15 nationals, three from each participating country, were trained as trainers by three international experts (one per taxon group). The 15 trainers then returned home and trained a total of 176 other nationals in their respective countries in a series of three workshops organized in each country – bringing the total number of participants trained by the project to 191.

The identification and selection of candidates was given considerable attention, bearing in mind that the skills and capacities of the candidates have a direct impact on the efficiency of the training course and performance of the trainee on the field. Some of the guidelines developed and used for the identification and selection of trainees were:

- Age (candidates <40 years were given priority and candidates near the end of their careers were not considered)

- Field experience (this was essential given the requirements of field work)
- Commitment (how committed was the candidate to conservation in his present job?)
- Interest (the benefit eventually to be derived by the candidate from the training was important to determine his/her interest and eventual likely commitment in the field)
- Level of knowledge (to avoid constituting a team with significant disparity in levels of knowledge)
- Current activities (was the candidate involved in activities that the training course will enhance?)
- Stakeholder category (candidates were selected from different categories of stakeholders to broaden the impact and benefits).

As regards the choice of location of field training courses, although the main criterion was the biological diversity and richness of the site, additional factors considered were:

- Accessibility
- Security
- Distance
- Accommodation facilities
- Climatic conditions during the period chosen
- Availability of information on the site
- Communication facilities at or near the site
- Health facilities (availability or proximity to health facilities)

The training courses were divided into three main stages: theory, practical (field work, laboratory) and feedback/reporting.

During the theoretical stage trainees were briefed on the project and information and documents were provided, including on the site to be used for the training course, logistic arrangements etc. The main focus of this stage was, however, on the methods

and the identification techniques to be used on the field. These methods and techniques were reviewed and trainees were provided with necessary materials and drilled on their use. The identification materials and methods used for the training courses (birds, mammals and plants) were based upon *Birds of Western Africa* (Borrow and Demey, 2004), the *Kingdon field guide to African mammals* (Kingdon, 1997) and *Field guide to the forest trees of Ghana* (Hawthorne 1990) respectively.

Daily activities during the field training courses were divided into three phases. The first was to plan the activities for the day. This included identifying the area of the site to be visited and assigning responsibilities to the group members. Phase two was the actual field work in which biodiversity was identified using the techniques discussed and agreed upon. In the evening, the day's activities was evaluated by each group and a report prepared by a group member. All group members took turns in the preparation of reports as part of the training course.

At the end of each training course an overall group report was prepared and a presentation made in a plenary session. The group reports were then consolidated by the trainers and submitted to the project coordinator for transmission to the project leader and other relevant stakeholders.

Two levels of assessment were undertaken at the end of each training course. There was an evaluation of the training course itself by the trainees and also of trainees by the trainers. The former was to help the trainers improve the organisation and implementation of subsequent training courses while the latter was to evaluate the level of understanding of the participants. Based on this evaluation, some trainees were re-selected for subsequent training courses. The results of the evaluation also constituted the basis for recommending some of the trainees for employment, as reported above.

In addition to the books mentioned above, other books and materials distributed to the trainees for the training courses included *Expedition field techniques* (Bibby & Stuart, 1998); *Biodiversity of West African forests* (Poorter *et al*, 2004); binoculars, rubber boots, telescope, portable tape recorders, CDs of bird vocalisations (Chappuis, 2000. *African Bird Sounds*).

More details of the training courses are found in the sub-regional training report in Appendix IX.

5. Project Impacts

The project provided a unique opportunity for undergraduate students in Guinea to gain field experience and for postgraduate students in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Sierra Leone to undertake field research in partial fulfilment of requirements for their degrees. The general lack of resources in many academic institutions in the sub-region has restricted tuition of students to theoretical aspects only with little or no practical work. In Guinea, 58 undergraduate students from three academic institutions (the *Département de Biologie de l'Université de Conakry*., the *Faculté de Science de l'Environnement du Centre universitaire de N'Zérékoré* and the *Institut de Faranah*) benefited from the training courses provided by the project and material support from the implementing NGO in Guinea, Guinée Ecologie. The relationship between Guinée Ecologie and one of the institutions (*Faculté de Science et de l'Environnement du Centre Universitaire de N'Zérékoré*) has been formalised to ensure long-term collaboration. In Côte d'Ivoire, five out of eight post graduate students of the *Université d'Abidjan*, Cocody, who undertook field research within the framework of the project for their Master degree have graduated. In Ghana, four postgraduate students were supported by the project, one of whom is studying for a Ph.D. One has completed his Masters. Two MSc students in Sierra Leone participated in the training courses organised by the project. Six of them have completed their MSc degrees and plan to publish some of the findings of their research work

Several academic institutions whose students have benefited from support provided by the project have indicated their intention to include ornithology in their curriculua once qualified persons to undertake the courses have been identified. There is little expertise in bird identification and ornithology in the sub-region. The project has therefore not only improved the capacity of nationals in these areas but has also raised awareness and interest in the discipline in the sub-region.

The project has also contributed to the livelihood improvement of some trainees. Eighteen beneficiaries of the training courses have so far found employment with a number of organisations and projects to assist in biodiversity surveys and environmental education: the Gola Project – Sierra Leone, 1; Compagnie Global Alumina – Guinée, 1; Compagnie Alcoa – Guinée (Boké), 1; Société BHP Billiton – Guinée (Lola), 1; Institut Jane Goodall – Guinée, 6; Ministére de l'Education Nationale – Guinée, 2 and Guinée Ecologie – 6. There is a high probability that many more trainees will find jobs in the near future, especially in Sierra Leone, where a big World Bank/GEF project expected soon to be launched which has a strong biodiversity identification component.

The project has established and/or strengthened cooperation in the sub-region between the five implementing countries and especially between the fifteen trainers that participated at the sub-regional training for trainers' course in Ghana. A total of 40 globally significant areas important for the conservation of birds and other biodiversity were surveyed by the project, with a focus on birds, mammals and plants. Biological data and other information, including pressures (threats), collected from these sites were used to populate the World Bird Database. In addition, participants from implementing countries have been trained in the use of this database. BirdLife International plans to roll out training in the use of the WBDB to other staff of the implementing organisations and beyond. Bringing together nationals from the five

countries in the sub-region provided an excellent opportunity for the exchange of information and experience.

Public awareness of the project was raised through the official project launches at sub-regional and national levels, to which high profile representatives from government and the diplomatic corps were invited, as well as the production and dissemination of advocacy and publicity materials and press releases etc. Data from the project will contribute to updates of the Red List Assessments of threatened species and provide information relevant to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its instrument, the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).

Overall, the project has increased and enhanced expertise in biodiversity survey and identification with regards to birds, mammals and plants in all the participating countries. This will have an impact on the quality of data and information collected and hence the credibility of information and quality of reports provided by these countries to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The project has also enhanced the relationships between the collaborating partners including the implementing NGOs and relevant government agencies, academic institutions and international NGOs. The ornithological expert to the project was the external supervisor for one of the MSc students in Côte d'Ivoire studying birds. The growing engagement and interest in the project was partly demonstrated by the increasing number of candidates proposed for consideration for the training courses by the relevant stakeholders. Increased collaboration between the local partners and government was indicated by the frequent invitations extended to partners to attend government-organised workshops on biodiversity conservation and forest related matters.

The most significant immediate social impacts of the project are probably the subsequent recruitment to paid employment of eighteen trainees as a result of the knowledge in surveys and identification acquired through the project.

6. Project Outputs

Project information was disseminated using a variety of methods. In view of the language differences (English and French) in the implementing countries, efforts were made to prepare documents in both languages. A bilingual brochure of the project highlighting its purpose, implementation approach, expected outputs and outcomes and donors was produced at the beginning of the project and distributed to NGOs for wider dissemination. Another bilingual document produced was a poster of threatened birds of Upper Guinea (Appendix VII). Other means through which project information was disseminated were press releases, television programmes/features, radio programmes/features, articles and publication in newspapers and newsletters, both at national and regional levels. Poster and oral presentations of project information were made at conferences and workshops attended by partners. BirdLife's annual Council for the Africa Partnership meeting provided a regular venue for information dissemination at the regional level, as well as enabling partners of implementing countries to meet and share lessons learnt.

The target audiences of the project varied depending on the level considered. At the site level, where the training courses were organised, the focus was on local communities. Activities were aimed at raising awareness on the global importance of the site and its biodiversity and possible negative impact of the pressures they exert on the site. At the national level, the focus was on relevant government departments, academic and research institutions, other NGOs, the media and the public at large. Within these, the advocacy objectives also varied with the particular target audience and included advocating for increased government resources for biodiversity conservation and site management, increased research by academic and research institutions, increased collaboration/partnership from other NGOs, strengthening of collaboration with the media and general awareness raising of the public. At the regional level, the target was mainly the conservation and donor communities where the aims were to share information and lessons learnt and raise more funds, respectively, for biodiversity conservation.

A poster has been produced of key project results for the continuing dissemination of project information after the end of the project (Appendix VIII). The fact that the project was implemented by BirdLife International's partner organisations will ensure mainstreaming and continuous dissemination of results within the BirdLife network, at least, after the project ends. Any further costs of information dissemination will be covered by BirdLife International and its network partners. In Guinea, a project proposal is already being developed by BirdLife and Guinée Ecologie for possible funding by Rio Tinto to enhance environmental education around Rio Tinto mining sites in the country.

7. Project Expenditure

Item	Budget	Expenditure	Balance

The variation in salaries resulted from an underspend for overseas experts, due to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's travel restriction to all the countries in the sub-region, with the exception of Ghana. Underspend on other budget lines is partly attributable to capacity problems with some implementing Partners.

8. Project Operation and Partnerships

An average of five local partners collaborated in the implementation of the project per country. These were the implementing NGO, relevant government agencies (e.g. forestry and wildlife ministries or departments), academic institutions (mainly universities), other national conservation NGOs and local community organisations. These partners all have a stake, and play varying roles, in biodiversity conservation. The lead implementing NGOs are environmental organisations with a focus on biodiversity conservation. In view of their long-term involvement, contribution and commitment to biodiversity conservation, they were all invited by their governments to contribute to the development of the NBSAPs in their respective countries. Their selection to lead in the implementation of this project was partly based on their role in biodiversity conservation at the national level. The forestry and wildlife department (or equivalent) is the legal government authority responsible for protected area conservation and management, some of which served as sites for the training courses. The academic institutions train and provide the technical manpower and expertise for biodiversity conservation and management while the research institutions focus on improving understanding and conservation of biodiversity as well as addressing biodiversity issues. There are several other NGOs in each of the implementing countries, in addition to those implementing this project, who also working for the conservation of biodiversity. The activities of these NGOs include education and awareness raising, biodiversity monitoring and site restoration and management. Local communities depend heavily on biodiversity resources for their livelihood and subsistence. They are therefore the primary users of biodiversity and consequently the most impacted when biological resources are modified.

The implementing partner was responsible for the overall planning, execution and management of the project. This included the day-to-day running, monitoring and evaluation, reporting on project progress at the national level and dissemination of results and information. The government forestry and wildlife agencies were closely consulted in the planning of the project since they were required to provide permission for the sites to be used for training courses. They not only willingly gave this permission, but actively participated in the planning and implementation of the project as well as benefiting from the training courses. Government forest guards provided assistance during the field courses and some government technical staff participated in them. In Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, where many students benefited from the project, there was significant involvement of the universities in project planning. In Côte d'Ivoire, the university provided transport and other logistic support for the field training courses. In Guinea, the training programme was implemented in collaboration with three academic institutions, the *Département de Biologie de l'Université de Conakry*, the *Institut de Faranah* and also the *Faculté de Science et de l'Environnement du Centre universitaire de N'Zérékoré* with whom Guinée Ecologie has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU permits the centre to use the offices and field facilities of Guinée Ecologie and Guinée Ecologie to contribute to the review and strengthening of the programmes of the centre. Both parties have agreed to exchange information and expertise on biodiversity conservation and other related subjects. Guinée Ecologie, in collaboration with the *Département de Biologie de l'Université de Conakry*, established a Technical Education Committee, to monitor and provide advice on the Darwin project. Prior to and after each training course, a meeting was organised with the local communities to inform them about the field activities and results respectively. Some local community members were recruited as guards and support staff during the training courses. Involvement of the other partners was mainly limited to provision of the candidates for the training courses.

During the lifetime of the project, collaboration was established and/or strengthened with a number of other biodiversity conservation projects and organisations in all countries. In Liberia, the project collaborated with another Darwin project on communal forests, implemented by Fauna and Flora International (FFI), at Sapo National Park. Data and information collected during the training course at this site were shared with FFI. The implementing partner in Liberia received technical and material support from NABU (BirdLife International Partner in Germany) during the second training course. Liberia also secured funds from the FAO's Telefood programme to assist local communities at one of the sites used for a training course. The trainers in Guinea and Liberia were involved in a Rapid Assessment Programme organised by Conservation International (CI) those countries. Kew Gardens-UK provided sponsorship for the botanical trainer in Guinea to travel to the UK and study for six months in 2006. The ornithological trainers from Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire took part in a sub-regional raptor survey organised by Afrique Nature Internationale (an NGO based in Côte d'Ivoire). In Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana the project collaborated with another, funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), on biodiversity survey of some key biodiversity areas. In Ghana, the Ghana Wildlife Society, with support from the project coordinator, was successful in securing funds from other partners/donors, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife partner in the UK) to survey potential sites with the globally threatened White-necked Picathartes (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*) and from Vogelbescherming (BirdLife Partner in the Netherlands) for conservation work focused on Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) and Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*).

A total of ten international partners contributed directly or indirectly to project achievements:

1 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife in the UK)
2 Vogelbescherming (BirdLife Partner in the Netherlands)
3 Fauna and Flora International
4 Conservation International
5 Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
6 Kew Gardens
7 Food and Agricultural Organisation of the Unite Nations in Liberia
8 Rio Tinto-Guinea
9 NABU (BirdLife Partner in Germany)
10 Afrique Nature International

Many of the local partnerships existed before the project started but the project has helped to enhance and strengthen them, as a result of the availability of resources for joint field activities.

As indicated above, all the implementing NGOs were actively involved with government in the development of the NBSAPs in their respective countries and some were even included in the document as potential implementers of components of the plan. The project has further strengthened this relationship, as demonstrated by the increased involvement of the NGOs in government policy discussions and other biodiversity related meetings during the implementation of the project.

The involvement of local communities in the management and monitoring of biodiversity is the most effective and efficient means of ensuring sustainability in biodiversity conservation. For this to be achieved, the local communities require, among other things, basic knowledge of the identification and survey of the biological resources to be conserved. Increased local community involvement in biodiversity surveys is therefore very important. However, this will only be feasible if there is sufficient capacity at the national levels.

The increasing demands for effective environmental management, partly triggered by growing concerns of the impact of climate change, has obliged the private sector to be more sensitive to the effects of their activities on the environment. Many have developed environmental policies and established relationships with conservation organisations for support and assistance to meet required environmental standards, established by governments. Some have even gone so far as to bring in house the necessary environmental expertise for the effective management and monitoring of their environmental impacts. The debate should therefore now be more about the degree of involvement of the private sector rather than whether they have a role. Support from the private sector, which is likely to be mainly financial in nature, would go a long way to support conservation in general and capacity development in particular.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation, Lesson learning

The project was monitored and evaluated through the review of project progress and training reports and periodic field visits from the project coordinator, over seas experts and the project leader. One review was made of the annual project report.

The information provided in the log frame (Appendix V) indicates how the outputs contribute to the project purpose and goal. The indicators of achievement and progress with their delivery are also provided in the log frame.

Some of the problems encountered during the implementation of the project were:

- **Communication**: Many difficulties were encountered communicating with some of the implementing NGOs, especially Guinée Ecologie and the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone. This was partly due to technical problems, such as frequent power outages and the breakdown of communication equipment both at national and NGO levels. This resulted in delays in reporting and transfer of funds, which affected project implementation. These problems were partially resolved through the use of wireless communication (cellular phone), although this incurred higher costs.
- **Inadequate funds within national NGOs**: Trainees (non-students) found it difficult to continue developing their capacity and/or to undertake surveys after the training courses because their organisations often lacked resources to complement the support provided by the project, which was insufficient to meet the needs for effective survey and monitoring. The resources leveraged from other sources helped to partially fill this gap.
- **Fuel price increases**: The increase in the cost of crude oil led to significant increases in the price of fuel (200% in the case of Ghana) and consequently the cost of goods and services. This significantly affected the budget of the project and consequently project activities. This in turn led to a reduction in the length of field training courses and reallocation of funds from underspent budget lines to the travel budget line.

Some of the lessons learnt over the 3 years of project implementation are:

- There were significant differences in the capacity of nationals in the five implementing countries, especially with regard to bird identification skills and aptitudes. This had an effect on the implementation of the sub-regional training course, which brought together trainees from the five countries. It is therefore important to place more emphasis on the knowledge and skill levels selection criteria of candidates for field training courses.
- Universities studies in the sub-region have limited capacity in the areas of field training and research work. This was demonstrated by the high number of applications for the field training courses received from university students, especially in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. Collaboration between similar projects and universities can go a long way to fill this gap.
- The interest and commitment of women to biodiversity conservation appears still to be very low. Only 7 % of the one hundred and ninety one beneficiaries of the training courses organised by the project were women.
- There is a need to institutionalise training in biodiversity surveys and identification in conservation orgnisations and relevant government agencies to ensure the credibility of data and information collection and dissemination by the countries.
- There is growing interest and desire among stakeholders to collaborate in the implementation of projects of common interest in order to maximise benefits from scare resources. This is evident from the number of organisations that participated directly or indirectly in the implementation of the project.

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

Two main suggestions were made in the annual report review:

1 "A strong focus on application of the training is required in the coming year to meet the targets relating to national IBA inventories, updating and use of the World Bird database, conference and other publicity events and public education targets."

2 "The half yearly report should clearly state the targets for the year and the progress."

The annual review was made of the 2006/2007 annual report. The issues raised under point one have been addressed and are reported on in this report. The issues under point two were addressed in the half yearly reported submitted in October 2006.

11. Darwin Identity

Branding is very important in the BirdLife International partnership for publicity and in recognition of their supporters and donors. BirdLife therefore requires that partners implementing its projects brand them properly and even provide guidance on how this should be done. The project branding also enables partners to distinguish between the different projects they are implementing. This project was locally branded as the "BirdLife/Darwin project".

Besides the branding, additional efforts were made both at the regional and national levels to publicise both the project and the Darwin Initiative. During the regional project launch and sub-regional workshop organised in Ghana, approximately 500 copies of each of the Darwin stickers, pins and postcards were distributed. Extra copies were given to the trainees for further distribution at national levels. A brochure summarising the project and carrying the Darwin logo was also distributed and copies were given to trainees for distribution at national level. The guest of honour at the launch was the Minister of Regional Integration and NEPAD of Ghana and the participants were high profile individuals from relevant government ministries, academic institutions, NGOs and the press. The British High Commissioner for Ghana was one of the guest speakers at the launch. All the speakers acknowledged the support of the Darwin Initiative and all the presentations made during the launch carried the Darwin Initiative logo. The project launch was sponsored by the British High Commission in Ghana.

Several requests for information were received during the course of project implementation from universities and other national NGOs on how to access funding from the Darwin Initiative. Reports and publicity materials produced by the project carried the Darwin logo and also included acknowledgements of the financial support provided by Darwin. Efforts were made during radio and television programmes/feature to recognise the support by Darwin and to explain the objectives of Darwin. Articles in newsletters and other publications either carried the Darwin logo and/or acknowledged the support provided by Darwin. The MSc students supported by the project acknowledged the support from the BirdLife/Darwin project and also carried the Darwin logo on their theses. Guinée Ecologie has named a facility at the Grande Chute IBA the 'Darwin Ecological Centre'.

There is no doubt that the project has increased knowledge of the Darwin Initiative in the project implementing countries. This is evident from the increases recorded in the number of applications received for subsequent training courses that were organised. During some of the monitoring visits, participants were identified by the Darwin Initiative pins on their dresses and stickers on their cars. A number of requests were received (mainly from universities and other NGOs) on procedures for assessing Darwin funds. The awareness about the Darwin Initiative is, however, limited to the conservation community and, to a limited extent, to the local communities where the training courses were held.

Capacity building for biodiversity conservation is one of the activities outlined to be undertaken in the NBSAPs developed by the implementing countries. The project was therefore considered to be very timely and complementary to the NBSAPs. Developing and implementing projects on capacity building for biodiversity conservation both by government and civil societies is one of the mechanisms for the implementation of the NBSAPs.

12. Leverage

A total of GBP 602,975 was leveraged over the lifetime of the project from various sources, either directly by partners, or facilitated by BirdLife International. The current project helped access these funds as it provided evidence of co-funding, helped demonstrate that partner capacity was available or being developed and showed that implementing partners had collaborative links in country or sub-region. The sum generated is more than four times the amount, GBP 150,000, which was anticipated by the project. GBP 547,975 was attracted from external sources and GBP 55,000 from partner contributions. The sources of funds were: GPB 7,000 from the British High Commission in Guinea for the management of the Botanical garden in Conakry; USD GBP 100,000 (USD 200,000) from Aluminium Company of America (ALCOA) in support of local communities at three IBA sites (Alkatraz, Tristao and Kapatchez) in the region of Boké in Guinea; GBP 20,000 from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

(RSPB, BirdLife –UK) for surveys of *Picathartes* breeding sites in Ghana; GPB 10,000 (USD 20,000) from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) as co-finance for the *Picathartes* surveys in Ghana; GBP 25,000 (Euros 30,000) from the BirdLife/DGIS/TMF project, for forest management at Afadjato IBA in Ghana; GBP 35,475 (Euros 42,570) from BirdLife/Vogelbescherming, Netherlands, for education and awareness raising for effective wetland conservation; GBP 330,000 (Euros 400,000) from the Dutch Embassy in Ghana for the development and implementation of a management plan for a community forest reserve which is an IBA; GBP, 10,000 (USD 19,000) from the CEPF for site surveys in Côte d'Ivoire; GBP 7,500 (USD 15,000) from FAO Telefood in Liberia in support of local communities at one of the sites used by the project for training courses; and GBP 3,000 from the Gola Forest project in support of one of the workshops organised at the site.

The implementing countries have also benefitted from UK expertise in fundraising. This included the provision of information on funding sources, guidance on project development and the review of draft project proposals. The lead implementing NGOs were also provided with copies of the BirdLife fundraising toolkit.

13. Sustainability and Legacy

A number of project achievements are likely to endure. These include:

- The establishment of a cadre of conservationists in the sub-region as a result of the training of one hundred and ninety one nationals in the five participating countries; fifteen as trainers during the sub-regional workshop and one hundred seventy three trained by the fifteen trainers at the national levels in their respective countries
- The production and launch of a national IBA book in Sierra Leone and production of national IBA reports in Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. In Ghana, information on ten of the 47 sites in the draft national IBA book has been updated.
- The incorporation of Information from 40 Important Bird Areas surveyed over the project period into the World Bird Data Base.
- The contribution to the improvement of the livelihoods of 18 young university graduates and the potential subsequent employment of others.
- The establishment and/or enhancement of relationships at both national and sub-regional levels.

All the lead implementing NGOs are members of the BirdLife network and therefore will keep in touch and meet at least once a year during BirdLife's Council for the Africa Partnership meetings. No additional staff were employed by the local partners to implement the project and hence the issue of continuing to find staff salaries after the project's will not arise. Indeed, it was the local partners who provided additional resources to support the project.

The conclusions and outputs of the project have generally been applied, at least by all the stakeholders who were involved in the implementation of the project. All implementing NGOs recognise the need for greater capacity in biodiversity survey and identification and have resolved to take appropriate measures to ensure the training of staff in this domain is institutionalised. NGOs have also resolved to build in adequate funds for capacity development with a focus on field work in all subsequent proposals for biodiversity conservation related work. All implementing countries can now update data on sites surveyed using the web-enabled BirdLife WBDB while BirdLife is developing plans to roll out the training courses in the use of the WBDB to non-BirdLife partner countries.

Wide-scale biodiversity survey and monitoring in the region is limited for a number of reasons including scarcity of resources, especially finance, insecurity in certain countries and inaccessibility of some areas.

A poster of key project results has been produced to ensure continuing dissemination of project information after the end of Darwin funds (Appendix VIII).

Fundraising in support of project activities was an integral part of the project. The funds leveraged so far are indicated under section 12. With the end of the project fundraising efforts have been stepped up, both at regional and national levels. Activities to be undertaken at national level differ from country to country but all with the ultimate aim of conserving biodiversity.

At the regional level, funding has been secured from GEF/UNDP to enhance further capacity for biodiversity conservation with a focus on site action which will involve activities in Liberia. Funding has been secured from Vogelbescherming (BirdLife Partner in the Netherlands) for a three-year project which will seek to develop a flyways approach to the conservation of migrant waterbirds in the region. A workshop will soon be organised to identify priority sites and focal migratory species in the sub-region. In the meantime, a small-grants programme has been launched, as part of this new project, to enable partners address some of the threats identified at sites during the implementation of the current Darwin project. Partners can be granted up to Euros 10,000 per year for the next 2 years. In addition, a concept note has been developed by BirdLife International aimed at establishing a trans-boundary project in the Gola and Lofa-Mano forest reserves between Liberia and Sierra Leone as a follow up to this project (see point 14).

At the national level Guinée Ecologie intends to submit a proposal to the CEPF for capacity building in nature conservation. This is in line with the NBSAP recommendation under the "in-situ and ex-situ conservation initiative". In Sierra Leone, CSSL in partnership with the National Commission on Environment and Forestry have submitted a proposal to the World Bank for biodiversity protection in five protected areas across the country. These include the three IBAs where the Darwin training courses were conducted. Ghana has secured funds from i) the RSBP for a detail survey of potential White-necked Picathartes (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*) breeding sites in the country; ii) the Dutch embassy in Ghana for the management of a community based forest reserve and iii) from the French embassy to develop the tourism potential of a wetland IBA.

14. Post-Project Follow up Activities *(max. 300 words)*

Post-project activities will be limited to two countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The aim will be to secure and conserve biodiversity at the Gola and Lofa-Mano Forest reserves in Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively, through the establishment of a trans-boundary Protected Area. The project will rely on the trainees from this project to undertake activities, especially biodiversity surveys and any further training that will be required. Specifically, the project will advocate and support negotiations and bilateral meetings between the governments of the two countries to establish an agreement for the trans-boundary project, identify and delimit the PA boundaries in collaboration with local communities, undertake baseline biodiversity surveys and other studies, produce site maps and other resource materials, develop a participatory management plan for the site and fundraise for the implementation of the management plan.

Both sites cover an area of 286,000 ha (Lofa Mano 210,000 ha and Gola 76,000 ha). The Gola site was used for one of the training courses in this project. A long-term conservation project is underway at Gola, implemented by the RSPB and CSSL in collaboration with the government of Sierra Leone. Although these forests share much the same biodiversity, the elephants that occur in Gola reside mostly in Lofa-Mano reserve. The lack of conservation action in Lofa-Mano risks rendering ongoing efforts in Gola forest reserve ineffective. The project will lower this risk by providing a wider and more secure area of forest cover for the movement and survival of the wildlife in these forests.

Some staff of CSSL are already working on attachment with the Gola project. The government of Liberia is in the process of expanding its protected area system (Lofa Mano is a proposed PA) with support from the World Bank/GEF. SCNL in Liberia is a member of the PA expansion committee.

15. Value for money

The project has achieved significant value for money. The amount of funds leveraged by the project, indicated in point 12, is more than four times the cost of the investment. The number of nationals who benefitted from the training courses was 27% higher than the number originally planned. The project has no doubt increased awareness in the sub-region as evidenced by the increasing number of applications received in response to calls for applications for the training courses. In addition, the project achievements have also resulted in a number of unexpected results and impacts including;

- The support provided to numerous students to gain field experience and complete their studies. More than 50% of the nationals who took part in the training courses were students; eighty six undergraduates and fourteen postgraduates, six of whom have already obtained their masters degrees.
- Academic institutions whose students benefited from support provided by the project have indicated their intention to include ornithology in their curricula once resource persons to teach the courses are identified. The project has therefore not only improved the capacity of nationals in these subjects but has also raised awareness and interest in ornithology.
- To date eighteen beneficiaries of the training courses have subsequently been employed by organisations and projects to assist in biodiversity surveys and environmental education

Appendix I: Project Contribution to Articles under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Project Contribution to Articles under the Convention on Biological Diversity		
Article No./Title	**Project %**	**Article Description**
7. Identification and Monitoring	50	The project trained 191 nationals from five countries in tropical biodiversity survey and identification techniques with a focus on birds, mammals and plants. During the course of the training a total of 40 Important Bird Areas were surveyed. In the course of the surveys information on the pressures (threats) and their potential causes at sites was also recorded. The data and information from these sites were used to update BirdLife International's World Bird Database.
12. Research and Training	20	The project enabled participants to review, discuss and apply survey and identification research techniques for bird, mammals and plants. It offered an opportunity for fifty eight undergraduate students in Guinea to undertake field work to complement their education and for 14 postgraduate students in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Sierra Leone to undertake field research work in partial fulfilment of their degrees. The project has enhanced capacity and increased the number of experts in field identification of biological diversity. This will improve the quality of data and information that will be collected and reported in the CBD.
13. Public Education and Awareness	20	The project was officially launched by high profile personnel both at the sub-regional and national levels, advocacy and publicity materials (posters, brochures) were produced and disseminated, several articles of project results and activities were carried in national newspapers, NGO newsletters and the regional BirdLife newsletter, articles were published in NGO and BirdLife International newsletters and a project poster has been produced of key project findings, for dissemination as the project ends.
17. Exchange of Information	10	At the end of each training course, reports were produced which included data and other information collected during surveys and identification. Copies of the reports were distributed to the participants and other relevant organisations.
Total %	**100%**	**Check % = total 100**

16. Appendix II Outputs

Please quantify and briefly describe all project outputs using the coding and format of the Darwin Initiative Standard Output Measures.

Code	Total to date (reduce box)	Detail (←expand box)
Training Outputs		
1a	Number of people to submit PhD thesis	Student is second year of a PhD in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. Topic of research is 'Biodiversity conservation in agro-ecological systems'. Her interest in the training courses was on birds and their identification and census techniques. Dr Erasmus Owusu, the Acting Executive Director of GWS, is one of her supervisors. She has continued to receive support from GWS in her field work since the end of the project.
2	Number of Masters qualifications obtained	Six students obtained Masters with field work done within the framework of the project. Five of them from the University of Cocody in Côte d'Ivoire and one from the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. This was not a planned project output.
4a	Number of undergraduate students receiving training	86 undergraduate students (Guinea, 58; Côte d'Ivoire, 22; Ghana, 4 and Sierra Leone, 2) benefitted from the project. The high number of beneficiaries in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire is as a result of the proximity of the implementing NGOs to two botanic gardens. The implementing NGO in Côte d'Ivoire is located in the University Botanic Garden found inside the university campus while that in Guinea is located very close to the Conakry Municipal Botanic Garden and university of Conakry. It was therefore easy for many students to be trained in plant (and indeed some bird) identification using these gardens.
4b	Number of training weeks provided to undergraduate students	Fourteen (14) training weeks (Guinea, 24; Côte d'Ivoire, 10; Ghana, 8 and Sierra Leone, 4) were spent providing support for graduate students.
4c	Number of postgraduate students receiving training (not 1-3 above)	Seven (7). (Côte d'Ivoire, 2; Ghana, 3 and Sierra Leone, 2). The two students in Sierra Leone have just registered for their Masters while those in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire are preparing their thesis.
4d	Number of training weeks for postgraduate students	Twenty two (22). (Côte d'Ivoire, 10; Ghana, 8 and Sierra Leone, 4).
6a	Number of people receiving other forms of **short-term** education /training (i.e not categories 1-5 above)	Fifty seven (57). Most of the persons who fall in this category were field staff from government and other NGOs.

Code	Total to date (reduce box)	Detail (←expand box)
6b	Number of training weeks not leading to formal qualification	Twenty six weeks. This was the time used for the training of field staff from relevant government departments and other NGOs.
7	Number of types of training materials produced for use by host country(s)	Guidance notes were prepared and distributed to help the trainers in the preparation and implementation of the training courses.
Research Outputs		
8	Number of weeks spent by UK project staff on project work in host country(s)	Fourteen weeks. This time was used to train the national trainers and in supervising and providing guidance to trainers as they train their fellow compatriots.
12a	Number of computer-based databases established (containing species/generic information) and handed over to host country	The Birdlife World Bird database has been web -enabled to facilitate use and the uploading of data and information collected by partners from IBAs during surveys and monitoring.

Dissemination Outputs		
14a	Number of conferences/seminars/workshops organised to present/disseminate findings from Darwin project work	Fifteen conferences/seminars/workshops were organised to present/disseminate project findings mostly at national levels. Over the three years, the BirdLife Africa Partnership meeting organised annually and which brings together about 100 persons from more than 30 nations, provided a regional venue for dissemination of finding of the project. It also offered an opportunity for national focal points to meet and share experience and lessons learnt on project.
14b	Number of conferences/seminars/ workshops **attended** at which findings from Darwin project work will be presented/ disseminated.	Project results were disseminated at sixteen conferences/seminars/ workshops both at national and regional levels. Dissemination mainly through presentations and the poster on threatened birds of the Upper Guinea Forest. The number of conference organised/attended (41) are slightly fewer than anticipated (51) in the original schedule. This is partly as a result of the increasing cost of travel to conferences and inadequate budgeting.
15a	Number of national press releases or publicity articles in host country(s)	Nineteen out of a total of 80 planned press releases were made. These captured, among other things, the numbers of trainees benefitting from the training courses and the opportunity the project had offered students to complement their studies. Also prominent were reports on the threats observed at the sites were these trainings courses took place. That significantly fewer press releases were made than planned partly resulted from the lack of new and news-worthy stories resulting from the different field visits, and some of the unforeseen costs involved in working with the press and publicity in the sub-region.

15c	Number of national press releases or publicity articles in UK	One. This was a press release on the project launch which was also picked and published by two other news websites. No press releases where planned for the UK in the project document.
16a	Number of issues of newsletters produced in the host country(s)	Three newsletters were produced, one in Guinea and two in Cote d'Ivoire. Production in the other three countries was hindered by financial constraints partly as a result of inadequate budgeting.
16b	Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the host country(s)	One thousand copies of each newsletter was produced and circulated.
17b	Number of dissemination networks enhanced or extended	The project enhanced collaboration with the media (print, radio and television) in all countries. Print and radio media were most used in all the countries. The low rate of television usage was partly due to the high costs .
18a	Number of national TV programmes/features in host country(s)	Seven television programmes/features carried reports on the NGOs from three of the five countries.
19a	Number of national radio interviews/features in host country(s)	Fourteen national radio interviews/features were reported by the implementing partners. Most focused on awareness of the importance of biodiversity, the rationale of the project and its contribution to capacity building in the country. The number of national radio interviews/features are rather fewer than was scheduled (20). This difference was partly due to the lack of new and newsworthy stories resulting from the different training courses, and the costs involved in organising these programmes which were not adequately budgeted.
Physical Outputs		
20	Estimated value (£s) of physical assets handed over to host country(s)	Fifteen thousand pound sterling worth of books and equipment was handed over by the project to trainees and institutions that took part in the project.
23	Value of additional resources raised for project	A total of GBP 602,975 was attracted over the life time of the project from various sources, either directly by partners or facilitated by BirdLife International. This is more than four times the amount, GBP 150,000, which was anticipated by the project. GBP 547,975 was attracted from external sources and GPB 55,000 was from partner contributions. Details of funding sources are indicated under point 12.

17. Appendix III: Publications

Mark (*) all publications and other material that you have included with this report

Type * (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	**Detail** (title, author, year)	**Publishers** (name, city)	**Available from** (e.g. contact address, website)	**Cost £**
Book *(Copy to be sent to Darwin by post)*	*Important Bird Areas in Sierra Leone: Priorities for biodiversity conservation*. Arnold D. Okoni-Williams, Hazell S. Thompson, Allie P. Koroma & Peter Woods. 2004	Conservation Society of Sierra Leone	Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, 2 Pyke Street, P.O Box 1292, Freetown, Sierra Leone cssl@sierratel.sl	

18. Appendix IV: Darwin Contacts

To assist us with future evaluation work and feedback on your report, please provide contact details below.

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Appendix V: Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework

Project summary	***Measurable Indicators***	***Progress and Achievements June 2004-Mar 2007***
Goal*:* To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to achieve • The conservation of biological diversity, • The sustainable use of its components, and • The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources		
Purpose To improve capacity for biodiversity surveys and monitoring in Important Bird Areas in the Upper Guinea Forest of West Africa.	• At least 150 nationals trained in biodiversity survey and monitoring in the sub-region	• One hundred and ninety one nationals trained which is 27% more than the original target of one hundred fifty envisaged. Fifteen were trained as trainers during a sub-regional workshop and one hundred seventy six trained by the fifteen trainers at the national levels in their respective countries.
	• National IBA survey and inventory reports produced and/or updated	• Sierra Leone has produced and launched its national (IBA) book. IBA survey and inventory reports have been produced and updated for sites surveyed in Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Surveys in Ghana have provided updated information on ten of the 47 sites in their draft national IBA book. Production and launch of the Ghana IBA book is envisaged in December 2007.
	• Updated database of biodiversity in the Upper Guinea forest zone	• Information from 40 Important Bird Areas surveyed over the project period has been used to update the web enabled World Bird Data Base.

Outputs	***Measurable Indicators***	***Progress and Achievements June 2004-Mar 2007***
Regional/national training programme for biodiversity survey and monitoring established and functional	• 150 nationals trained by end of year 2 of the project • Training materials and tools produced	• One hundred and ninety one nationals trained (Ghana, 34; Sierra Leone, 38; Côte d'Ivoire, 31; Liberia, 30; and Guinea, 58). • Equipment and books estimated at 15,000 Pounds Sterling were purchased and distributed to the trained nationals and institutions in the five countries. These included; 75 pairs of Viking binoculars; 75 copies of *Birds of West and Central Africa* (Borrow and Demey, 2004); 90 copies of *Expedition field techniques* (Bibby & Stuart, 1998); 15 sets of CDs of bird sounds (Chappuis) and 5 telescopes and five portable tape recorders.
World bird database installed and regularly updated by NGOs	• Number of organisations aware of the existence and using the database	• All organisations that participated in the training courses are aware of the existence of the database. The participants in all the countries were mainly from; government agencies, universities and other conservation NGOs. However, few are yet using the web-enabled World Bird Data Base due to communication difficulties.
	• WBDB populated and regularly updated	• Information from 40 Important Bird Areas surveyed over the project period has been used to update the World Bird Data Base.
National IBA inventories established and/or updated	• 5 National IBA surveys undertaken and inventories produced	• Sierra Leone has produced and launched its national Important Bird Area (IBA) book. National IBA survey and inventory reports have been updated for sites surveyed in Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Surveys in Ghana have provided updated information on ten of the 47 sites in their draft national IBA book and the production of the book is envisaged in December 2007.

	• At least 35 IBAs survey/ monitored by the end of the project	• A total of 40 IBAs were surveyed over the project period Ghana, (Ghana, 15; Guinea, 9; Liberia, 3; Côte d'Ivoire, 8; and Sierra Leone, 5)
Biodiversity information published and disseminated	• Sub-regional and national communication and publicity plans developed	• A sub-regional communication framework has been developed by a consultant in consultation with national partners. Copies have been distributed to national partners to adapt for national use.
	• Publicity materials produced and disseminated	• One thousand two hundred posters of threatened birds of the Upper Guinea Forest were produced and distributed alongside a project brochure for education and awareness raising purposes in year one. • One thousand copies of a poster of key project results have been produced to facilitate the dissemination of project results at the end of the project. • Nineteen press releases were produced of key project results over the project period. Twenty radio/television interviews/features were organised. Several articles of project results and activities were carried in national newspapers, NGO newsletters and the regional BirdLife newsletter (BirdLife Africa/Afrique). • Six monthly and annual project reports were prepared and submitted to the partners for information sharing on the whole project.

Note: Please do NOT expand rows to include activities since their completion and outcomes should be reported under the column on progress and achievements at output and purpose levels