Darwin Initiative Main and Post Project Annual Report

Darwin Project Information

Project reference	DIR25S1\100186
Project title	Linking food security and forest conservation under REDD+
Host country/ies	Sierra Leone
Lead organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Partner institution(s)	Gola Rainforest Conservation (GRC)
	Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL)
	National Protected Area Authority (NPAA)
	Malema Communities in Sierra Leone
Darwin grant value	£347,758
Start/end dates of project	01 May 2019 – 31 Apr 2022
Reporting period (e.g., Apr 2019 – Mar 2020) and number (e.g., Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	Annual Report 1 (May 2019 – Mar 2020)
Project Leader name	Richard Dixon
Project website/blog/Twitter	https://golarainforest.org/new-page
	https://golarainforest.org/partners-support
	@RSPBScience Twitter
Report author(s) and date	Richard Dixon / Andy Brock-Doyle – 31st May 2020 (with key contributions from Fiona Sanderson (RSPB), Alessandro Albani (RSPB), Fomba Kanneh (GRC), Bjorn Horvath (RSPB), Bobson Kobba (CSSL), Sheku Kamara (CSSL) and Sorrel Jones (RSPB)

1.   Project Rationale

Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP), 68,515ha of the Upper Guinea biodiversity hotspot *(see Map 1 and Doc A)* supports 60 globally threatened species (GTS), including the regionally important western chimpanzee (CR) population, the largest known pygmy hippo (EN) population, forest elephant (EN), white-breasted guineafowl (VU) and white-necked picathartes (VU).
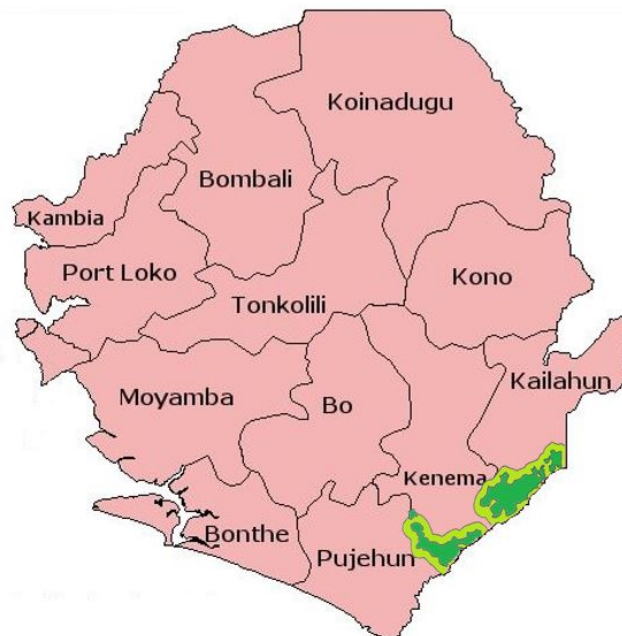

Map 1. Position of Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leone

The first REDD+ project in West Africa protects GRNP and surrounds by working with forest communities. A 4km leakage-belt encompasses 122 settlements and inhabitants are amongst the poorest in Sierra Leone. At the time the proposal was written the latest available data identified that the average annual household income was $150 with 77% of households relying on subsistence agriculture and 85% deriving income from one livelihood. Furthermore only 4% produced enough rice to meet their annual needs. Problems encountered included low yields, storage losses, poor market-access and gender-inequality (of the 19% female-headed households, only 42% had access to land) State of Food Security in Sierra Leone 2015 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Data collected September - October 2015. Increasing population and poor soil fertility drives agricultural encroachment into community forest which has no formal protection, but provides vital habitat for GTS and may link blocks of GRNP and Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) in Liberia.

Currently, communities receive REDD+ payments in exchange for not encroaching on GRNP. Under MoUs (2015-2021), communities also receive agricultural training, environmental education and training in establishing savings and loan schemes designed to improve livelihoods and reduce the need to exploit community forest. However, MOUs lack targets, and since 2015, deforestation-rates in community forests have risen relative to baseline.

Whilst some deforestation is inevitable, identifying and protecting High Conservation Value Community Forest (HCV-CF) would reduce negative impacts. Linking HCV-CF protection to tailored support and increased yields on existing farmland through revised MOUs (Conservation Agreements) could benefit both livelihoods and GTS. Embedding HCV-CF into Community Forest Management Plans (post-project) would secure an effective mechanism for reducing deforestation.

Project communities *(see Map 2 / Doc B)*, are 'squeezed' between GRNP and GFNP, threatening to encroach on important GTS habitat and corridors. This project will enable communities to demonstrate how the REDD+ project can help them conserve HCV-CF while meeting livelihood needs.
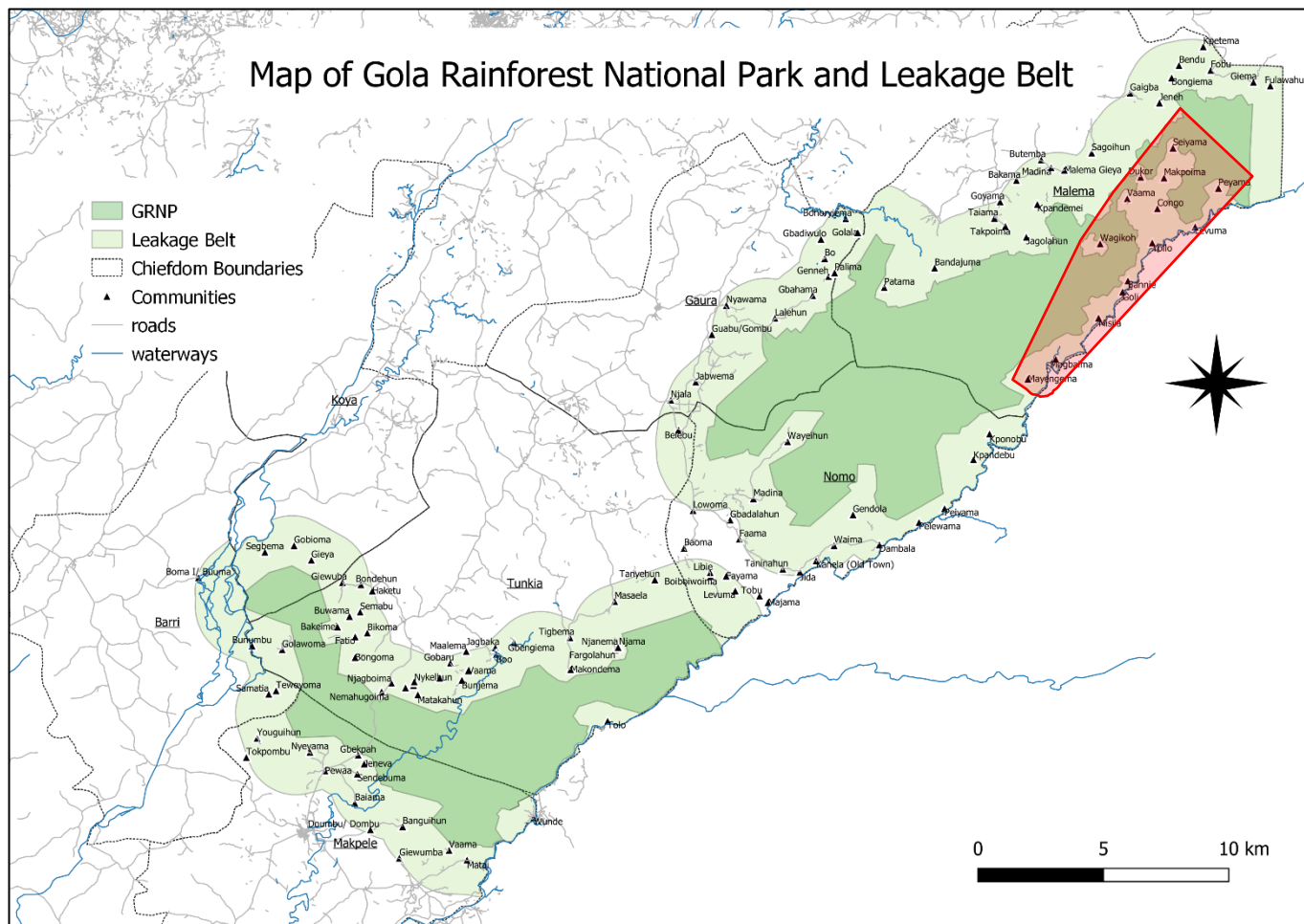
Map 2. Map of Gola Forest Edge Communities including Darwin Project communities (in red shaded area)

2.   Project Partnerships

Gola Rainforest Conservation (GRC) is a collaborative venture between all of the partners to this project:

- the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

- the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL)

- the government of Sierra Leone through the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA), and

- the 122 local communities around Gola Rainforest National Park (including the 14 communities in Malema Chiefdom who are the focus of this project).

GRC implements the Gola REDD+ project and the Directors (one from each partner) guide implementation by GRC of all REDD+ and project work. From a technical perspective GRC have staff trained in agricultural development, community development and ecological monitoring, who work on a daily basis in partnership with 2 RSPB Technical Advisors. As the leading conservation organisation in Sierra Leone and as a partner in GRC, CSSL work on the ground alongside GRC in a number of projects including this one.

GRC works in close collaboration with the 7 chiefdoms around Gola and has Community Development Relationship Officers working within each of the Chiefdoms. The philosophy and approach is one of inclusivity, with funding for community projects decided by the communities themselves as well as the way in which funds are used from Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs).

A key strength of the partnership comes from the fact that RSPB, CSSL, GRC and NPAA have worked together for a significant period of time and can bring this understanding and different strengths to the delivery of the project.

Overview of Partnership Achievements this Year

Over the course of the last year the partnership has evolved and strengthened in a number of ways, including:

- Initiating a strategic review of the management of the Gola area and what that means for the partnership going forward. This reflects a desire to ensure greater local ownership and capacity within in-country institutions such as GRC and CSSL. The identification of priorities in Feb 2019 *(see Doc C)* has been followed up by a series of stakeholder consultative meetings in Sierra Leone and Liberia (Nov 2019).

- Increasing focus on a broader Gola landscape approach that includes partners on both the Sierra Leonian and Liberian sides of the border. This has included the initiation of a new cross-border project funded by the EU (started in Jan 2020), and a reconfirmation of the Memorandum of Understanding *(see Doc D)* between the governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia (Feb 2020).

- Improving partnership co-ordination through holding quarterly GRC Director's meetings to discuss strategic direction and address escalated operational issues and through co-ordination meetings to address operational issues.

- Improving GRC and CSSL co-ordination with government Ministries, Departments and Agencies at a national, provincial and district level.

- Gaining approval from communities for the Darwin project and working together to maintain good collaboration and working relationships, and during the year building greater awareness of the roles of CSSL and GRC as partners.

- Strengthening project management capacity in both GRC and CSSL, through project familiarisation and training sessions as new projects have started and continued support from the International Finance Office in RSPB in submitting reports.

- Supporting development in specific areas, including ecotourism, cocoa development and HR where a new staff handbook for GRC has been updated and training provided on safeguarding through RSPB HR resources.

- Collaborating in the development and submission of funding opportunities for both CSSL and GRC and through continued sustainability of GRC through increased carbon credit funding.

- Broadening of in-country support with the creation of the RSPB Country Manager post towards an operating model that is more focused on RSPB supporting the strategic development and improved partnership working with both GRC and CSSL.

- During the current COVID-19 crisis the partners are working together to co-ordinate their response across the Gola communities to ensure they are supported in key areas such as sanitisation and food security as well as increasing community awareness of COVID-19 and addressing potential conservation impacts.

Role of the Darwin Project in Developing Partnership and Collaboration

The Darwin Project has played an important role in the development of the GRC partnership over the course of the year through:

- Increasing the opportunity for, and improving the way in which, partners collaborate on the ground. For example:

  o Whilst RSPB has led the collation of biodiversity information from a technical perspective this has required significant collection of data on the ground. This activity has been undertaken by the

GRC Research & Monitoring Department with the support of the RSPB Research Technical Advisor (TA), who has provided a link between GRC and the Conservation Science Team in the UK who are analysing the data. The CSSL Biodiversity Officer has also been integrated into the GRC Research team for the Darwin project.

- o Monitoring protocols for research were developed by the RSPB Conservation Science Team with input from the GRC Research and Monitoring Department *(see Doc 1.3)*. The GRC Research team were trained on these protocols, including setting of camera traps, by the Research TA and helped refine the protocols in the field to ensure that they were workable, increasing their experience in designing and planning fieldwork.

- o The delivery of radio programmes and road shows is being led by CSSL but undertaken in consultation with the GRC Community Development team to ensure a co-ordinated approach and alignment.

- o Increased community understanding of, areas such as community forestry, high conservation value areas and the link between conservation and food security and increased community participation in the work that the partnership is undertaking.

- o And through the roles that the Darwin Initiative helps to fund.

- Strengthening partner co-operation in project planning, monitoring & evaluation and in decision-making through:

  - o The partners developing the plan together at the beginning of the project.

  - o The GRC Senior Management Team allocating staff and co-ordinating work plans around project activities.

  - o Addressing strategic partnership issues and project progress through the GRC Directors meetings each quarter.

  - o Working together in establishing the project with communities through a series of consultative meetings *(see Docs 3.3-3.4 and 3.7-3.8)* that were held to inform people about the project and to discuss project implementation.

- Providing the opportunity for forming new partnerships with other local organisations, like implementing the livelihood baseline survey with enumerators from the Agricultural University in Kenema to ensure that the survey was independent.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges and lessons during Year 1 of the project in terms of partnership working and development have included:

- Limited involvement of CSSL in implementation decisions at the start of the project, due to delays in recruitment. This has now been rectified with full recruitment of CSSL resources for the project and through basing at least two of these resources in Kenema rather than them working out of Freetown, improving the ability for closer co-ordination.

- Delayed recruitment of the Project Social Scientist. To address this an experienced consultant was hired to implement the baseline survey to avoid delay and initial data analysis was conducted by the RSPB Conservation Science team in the UK and presented in the Half Year Report. A more complete analysis was conducted by the Project Social Science following her recruitment *(see Doc 3.1)*. However, this delay in deployment has had a knock-on impact in terms of delaying some other activities where a combined team is required.

- Community wariness of camera traps. Communities did not initially want camera traps set up in community areas, being concerned about surveillance. This required in-depth discussion and explanation to convince communities that cameras are being set to monitor species and would not be used to monitor community members. In Feb 2020 when one of the villages in Malema suddenly withdrew permission for camera traps to be placed in the community forest, the GRC Community Development team along with CSSL arranged two sensitisation meetings *(see Doc 2.1)* to discuss the issues concerning the community and successfully resolved the issue.

- Financial reporting and project management. As this is a new project there have been challenges with setting up timely and effective financial reporting, exacerbated during the course of the year through a limited staff capacity in both the RSPB International Finance Unit and in the GRC Finance Department. In addition, the need for a project manager in country has been identified to strengthen risk management, drive implementation on the ground and to quickly address emerging issues. As such the project will be proposing a change in project management for Year 2.

- Changes in personnel. During the course of the year the RSPB Chief Technical Assistant, the Research TA and the Cocoa Project Manager left and whilst all these positions / equivalent positions have been filled it has meant that there have been some challenges in terms of clarity around project responsibilities.

- Partnership working in the field. Part of the partnership model in establishing GRC was to give CSSL, as the BirdLife partner and leading conservation NGO in Sierra Leone, a clear partnership role in the management of Gola and allow it to grow its capacity through this partnership position. As such whilst CSSL is a long-term partner at the Director level in GRC, collaboration in the field is relatively new. Through this project and another project started in Jan 2020 we are looking to improve this collaboration and the operating model between the two organisations.

- Community expectations. Communities have high expectations of the project and there is a clear need to continue to address those expectations and to channel them to strengthen the link between forest conservation and food security.

- Community involvement. GRC staff are from the communities and there are close working relationships with MPs, PCs and other community leaders. However, communities have had a prominent role in the planning and implementation of project activities this has served to generally enhance good relationships and involving community members in areas such as research and monitoring activities is providing a valuable avenue for greater community ownership of the project.

- Gender empowerment. Ensuring that women are involved in decision-making, mainstreaming gender throughout all project activities and having a focus on gender through having a Gender Co-ordinator who is also in charge of delivery of elements of the project in the field helps to increase the participation in project activities.

3.   Project Progress

3.1   Progress in Carrying out Project Activities

Note that project activities are likely to be impacted by restrictions on travel and safe working practices due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, a change request is being submitted in line with this report to request approval for a project extension, including mitigation measures that we are looking to put in place. This is further expanded on in the Monitoring of Assumption (see Section 3.4) and Other Comments on Progress not Covered Elsewhere (see Section 11).

Output 1: Areas of community forest of High Conservation Value (HCV-CF) in target area are identified and current rate of loss quantified, and future deforestation risk modelled

1.1 Use existing species records and landcover data to map and assess target area (4,000-6,000 ha) to identify potential HCV-CF sites used by globally threatened species and present results in a baseline report of potential HCV-CF sites.

Records of globally threatened species (GTS) across the target area from 2008-2019 were collated and mapped *(see Fig 1, Annex 4).* These were derived from previous surveys of Western Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes verus* and White-necked Picarthartes *Picathartes gymnocephalus* carried out as part of the REDD+ biodiversity monitoring programme, from Pygmy Hippo *Choeropsis*

liberiensis surveys, and from the bird point counts and camera trapping carried out under Darwin project 20-022, "Enhancing habitat connectivity through sustainable development around the Gola Rainforest". Opportunistic observations were also included.

Several of these surveys were species-specific and none covered the entire project area, with the north-east part completely un-surveyed for High Conservation Value (HCV) bird or mammal species by any method. These records established that a wide range of HCV species have occurred in the project area in the recent past but were insufficient to indicate which areas are most important for their conservation.

We therefore relied primarily on a new landcover map *(see Doc 1.1)* identifying potential HCV community forest to select areas to further survey HCV mammal and bird species. A land cover classification was generated by training a random forest algorithm to predict land cover classes in Google Earth Engine, with additional data from the Shuttle Radar Topography Mission digital terrain model, and the global forest change map (Hansen *et al.*, 2013, Hansen/UMD/Google/USGS/NASA Tree Cover Loss and Gain Area; https://www.globalforestwatch.org/). This identified 3,201 ha of potential HCV community forest to be targeted for biodiversity survey within a project area of 5,984 ha (c. 53% of the project area). Full methods have been provided *(see Annex 4)*.

Habitat data were also collected on the ground to enable future ground truthing of the map to improve classification during a field visit to plan bird and mammal surveys in Nov 2019 and the GRC Research team continues to record community forest boundaries and areas of non-forest habitat within the forest when travelling to and from camera trap locations.

The community forest area included isolated forest fragments which would be insufficient to support large-bodied HCV species alone, and therefore whose protection without additional protection of modified adjacent habitats (such as shade cocoa) would be insufficient. As protection or management of such modified habitats cannot be implemented under the current project, we confined biodiversity surveys to larger and more connected community forest only, to gain the most relevant data to inform this project. Resulting surveys were therefore designed to cover all forest fragments in the project greater than 5 ha in size in a stratified manner to maximise the possibility of detecting hotspots of GTS.

1.2 Use remote sensing data (gathered under activity 1.7) to assess deforestation rates in potential HCV-CF sites and present results in a deforestation survey report.

The 2018 Global Forest Watch dataset (https://www.globalforestwatch.org/) was used to quantify forest loss (with forest classified as any area with at least 65% forest coverage according to the 2000 global forest cover map). Annual percentage forest loss per village was quantified as the amount of the forest lost scaled by the village area. In 2014, five years pre-project, mean annual forest loss in all Malema chiefdom communities within the leakage belt was 1.5%, compared to a mean annual loss of 3% in comparable villages (e.g. those matched in criteria such as population) outside the leakage belt *(see Fig 2, Annex 4 and Doc 1.2).*

Currently available data do not suggest any significant future variance in deforestation risk with which to inform prioritisation of specific areas.

1.3 Conduct surveys of forest birds and of GTS mammals and forest indicator species in target area (in particular chimpanzee, pygmy hippo, elephant) and habitat surveys. This will allow us to quantify which sites support most GTS and model species-habitat relationships to help guide prioritisation of HCV-CF. Results presented in a species report.

We are in the process of surveying possible HCV-CF sites using camera trap grids, bird point counts and opportunistic surveys. We designed a more spatially intensive camera trap survey protocol *(see Doc 1.3)* than the standard 1km camera trap grid normally used in REDD monitoring in order to collect as much data and cover as much of the area as possible within a short time. We placed a sampling grid spaced at 500m across the project area, and selected sampling points which intersected with forest areas greater than 5 ha and were more than 50m from the habitat edge (to

avoid edge effects). This resulted in a grid of 88 sampling points covering all potential HCV-CF areas in the 14 project target communities *(see Fig 3, Annex 4)*.

To date we have deployed 48 camera traps in 8 communities (Dukor, Makpoima, Seyama, Peyama, Levuma, Congo, Yollo and Vaama). Images have been recovered from 43 of these cameras, with those from the first 14 having been processed and species identified. These include five globally threatened or near threatened large mammal and bird species *(see Table 2, Annex 5)*. Bird point counts are being conducted at the same 88 locations. So far, 48 counts have been completed and the data recorded. 117 species have so far been recorded, of which 9 are globally threatened or near threatened and 27 are highly dependent on forest habitat *(see Table 1, Annex 5)*. Bird point counts have been carried out by a GRC Research Technician who was trained in the methodology during the Darwin project 20-022, which enabled him to become an independent ornithological surveyor.

A number of additional GTS have been observed in unprocessed camera trap images *(see Annex 4)*. Relevant habitat data are being collected at camera trap and point count locations and, when all data are collected, this will allow us to model species-habitat relationships to better understand the drivers of GTS distribution. Retrieval of the remaining cameras currently deployed, the deployment of a further 40 cameras, and the final 40 bird point counts in 6 project communities will be undertaken in the first quarter of Year 2 (travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 outbreak allowing) as well as continued data entry and analysis.

This activity has taken longer than planned primarily due to delays in transporting the camera traps to Sierra Leone *(see Section 9)* and with issues with one community who withdrew permission for camera traps to be deployed on their land, resulting in the need to delay deployment of further camera traps until this issue was resolved *(see Section 3.1).*

As many of the target species are rarely captured on camera traps due to their low density, we have supplemented the surveys above by adapting our transect survey method for primates used within the Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP) to undertake opportunistic surveys in community forests. Normally transects require vegetation removal and are therefore inappropriate for use on private land. We have therefore used similar methods to those we normally use to collect data on the presence of primates but have done this along routes used to access camera trap locations, so that no additional disturbance to, or vegetation removal on, community land is necessary. To date 6 opportunistic surveys have been completed on which GRC Research Technicians record their routes and any records (sight or sound) of the following primate species:

- Diana monkey *Cercopithecus diana*,
- Western red colobus *Piliocolobus badius*,
- Black and white (western pied) colobus *Colobus polykomos*,
- Olive colobus *Procolobus verus*,
- Lesser spot-nosed monkey *Cercopithecus petaurista* ,
- Campbell's monkey *Cercopithecus campbelli*,
- Sooty mangabey *Cercocebus atys*,
- Green monkey *Chlorocebus sabaeus*,
- Western chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes verus.*

1.4 Capture local communities' knowledge of globally threatened species in target area and participatory mapping of globally threatened species/community conflict 'hotspots'

The GRC Research team collected information on the location of GTS observed by community members during the opportunistic primate surveys *(see Activity 1.3)*. Data collection will continue in Year 2 as the rest of the opportunistic primate surveys are undertaken, but community members have so far provided location details on sightings of Diana monkey, Black and white colobus and a group of Western chimpanzees. No conflict 'hotspots' have been reported.

As this activity is being undertaken alongside the setting of camera traps and the opportunistic primate surveys it has been subject to the same delays *(see Activity 1.3)*. A full participatory mapping exercise will be undertaken next year to provide further data, with the support of the Project Social Scientist (once travel restrictions from COVID-19 allow deployment to Sierra Leone). The importance of ensuring the robustness of this activity and therefore conducting it with the input of the Project Social Scientist has lead us to postponing this activity until Year 2 following the later than planned recruitment of the Project Social Scientist for which a Change Request was submitted in Dec 2019 *(see Doc C)*.

1.5 Undertake a camera trapping study of key biodiversity hotspots along the Malema/Liberian border to establish pygmy hippo areas of activity and potential elephant and chimpanzee migration routes and presents results in a migration report. This will allow us to identify sites that are vital for connectivity and assess the extent to which individuals move across the border.

This work was due to start in March 2020 after completion of the survey of forest birds and GTS mammals *(see Activity 1.3)* so that both GRC Research Technicians and camera traps would be available (note that the current timetable has an error in it identifying that this activity would start towards the end of 2019). Because of delays in, and priority of, completing the surveys it has not been possible to start this work this work. Furthermore, with the requirement to repatriate the Research TA to Italy following the COVID-19 outbreak means that this activity will be further delayed. However this activity was not on the critical path of the project and had always been identified as an activity that would be input at a later date to corroborate / adjust the location of the HCV-CFs rather than being part of the data relied upon to initially identify them. We will seek to start this activity when the COVID-19 situation allows the Research TA to be redeployed.

1.6 Use joint species distribution modelling to combine biodiversity and habitat data, deforestation risk data and data on HCV-CF patch size and connectivity generated in output 1 to identify and map potential HCV-CF areas in project target area and their priority for conservation and those to be targeted by the project in the trial (output 3) This will be further refined with additional data from 1.5 when it becomes available

It has not yet been possible to undertake this activity as not all the relevant species data have been collected *(see Activity 1.3)*. Building appropriate distribution models and mapping the potential HCV-CF sites remains a high priority given the other activities that are dependent on this and therefore this activity will be prioritised as soon as we have sufficient data to do so, with additional data being incorporated later as required.

1.7 Assess deforestation rates in HCV-CF targeted by the project 5 years pre-project (baseline)/at EOP in project/matched control areas in a Before-After-Control-Intervention design

The deforestation rates within the Malema part of the Leakage Belt prior to the project have been assessed, together with control villages within the same chiefdom outside the leakage belt as planned *(see Fig 1.2, Annex 4)*.

Output 2: Malema communities are aware of the importance of maintaining forest and biodiversity for the REDD+ project and take an active role in their conservation and monitoring as a tool for long-term sustainability.

2.1 Run 2 education road shows and 5 radio broadcasts in project area annually

The meetings to introduce the project in October 2019 and get verbal approval from the different levels of stakeholders for the project *(see Activity 3.1)* has been followed up by sensitisation

meetings in Q4 (Jan-Mar 2020) with a focus on further embedding project understanding, reintroducing all project partners to the communities (CSSL were not part of the meetings in October) and addressing issues raised by the communities.

This included sensitisation meetings held in Makpoima and Madina (Feb 2020) *(see Annex 4 and Doc 2.1)* with over 100 community members present. During sensitisation meetings specific issues with the setting up of camera traps were effectively addressed allowing activities detailed under Output 1 to continue. Other concerns such as a perception by communities that community land is being taken for the National Park, the impact of the project on artisanal mining activities and why the 14 communities were selected were also addressed.

2 radio programmes were also recorded and broadcast on the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) radio station on 93.5 FM in Kenema. These shows were an hour each in length. More radio broadcasts were scheduled for March but due to the deteriorating situation with the COVID-19 outbreak were cancelled.

2.2 Train 2 Champions for globally threatened species (Pygmy Hippo, Forest Elephant or Western Chimpanzee depending on species present) in each village and support them to lead community surveys for species signs including mid-term and EOP surveys

The GRC Research team initiated the training of 2 champions in 6 communities (Dukor, Makpoima, Seyama, Peyama, Levuma and Congo) and of 1 champion (due to the smaller size of the communities) in the remaining 2 communities visited (Yollo and Vaama) during the course of conducting field research into mammals and birds (*see Activity 1.3*) and has therefore been subject to the same delay. In line with setting up the remaining camera traps initial training will be provided for identified champions in the other 6 project communities during the first quarter of Year 2.

Training, which covered aspects of GTS ecology and conservation, took place in communities, and where it was possible in the field during camera trap setting and bird point counts to give the champions an understanding of this work. During the course of the provision of this training in Year 1 it has become clear that further training will be required around deforestation as well as around survey / patrol techniques and the recording of evidence in Year 2 before surveys / patrols can be properly undertaken.

2.3 Support HCV champions to establish and run HCV-CF patrols to identify any deforestation in HCV-CF areas

It is envisaged that the same champions who undertake the GTS surveys will also undertake work on the identification of deforestation. Whilst the specifics on how this will operate have not yet been agreed, it is assumed that both activities will be undertaken together so that patrolling will record both deforestation and presence of GTS. Given the delays in completing the camera trapping *(see Activity 1.3)* and the need for additional training, patrols which were timetabled to start in the second half of Year 1 have not yet begun within community areas. It is now envisaged that these patrols will only take place once the HCV-CF areas are identified *(see Activity 1.6)* so that there is a clear understanding of where these patrols should be focused.

2.4 RSPB Forest Cover Analyst tests forest patrol efficacy against satellite-detected deforestation and GRNP spot-checks at end of Y2 and EOP

No activities were scheduled for Year 1. However given that the undertaking of this activity is dependent on the establishment of forest patrol activities *(see Activity 2.3)* and that these will need to be re-planned in line with the identification of the HCV-CF areas *(see Activity 1.6)* the first spot-check will also need to be re-planned.

2.5 Carry out an EOP assessment in control/intervention villages to assess project impact on local communities' knowledge of the importance of maintaining HCV-CF to the REDD+ project

No activities were scheduled for Year 1.

Output 3: Communities in target area develop village community land use and agricultural training plans to regulate natural resource use in HCV-CF areas whilst increasing yields in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on community forests.

3.1 Use FPIC to develop General Agreements in the 14 villages in the target area to develop provisional Village Land Use Plan

Consultative meetings were held at district (17 Nov 2019), chiefdom (01 Nov 2019), section and village levels (07 Nov 2019) to introduce the concept of village land use plans including the aims and objectives *(see Doc 3.4)*.

These meetings followed formal protocols with invitations to key stakeholders and agreed agendas *(see Doc 3.2-3.3 and Doc 3.7-3.8)* and were attended on the project side by the Community Development Research Officer (CDRO) for Malema as well as the GRC Co-Management Officer, the Monitoring & Evaluation Co-ordinator and the relevant Village Savings and Loan Agreement (VSLA) and Agriculture Extensions Officers. In addition, there was representation from the Research & Monitoring Department.

On the community side there was representation from all town chiefs from the 14 Darwin project communities, from all section chiefs and from the paramount chief at the relevant level meetings. In addition, there was representation from the Gola Community Development Committees (GCDCs), from landowners, from youth and women leaders and for government from the District Forestry Officer (DFO) and District Council members.

Verbal consent was given at all levels for the project to be implemented including from:

- the District Council Chairman, relevant councillors (Councils 16 & 17 of Malema District) and from the DFO as the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture & Forests at the District level,

- the Paramount Chief, the Mammy Queen (women's representative at Chiefdom level) and the Chiefdom Speaker at the Chiefdom level,

- from town chiefs, women and youth leaders and landowners at the section and village level.

A number of other sensitisation meetings have been held to support these initial meetings, including:

- introducing the Darwin project team to 4 key project communities (15 Nov 2019) *(see Doc 3.9)*,

- meetings with local government agencies such as the DFO and Malema District Council *(see Doc 3.5)*,

- sensitisation meetings by the GRC Research team as camera traps have been set *(see Doc 3.6)* in Jan-Feb 2020 and a sensitisation roadshows in Feb-Mar 2020 *(see Activity 2.1)*.

During Year 2 the project will look to formalise these verbal agreements in advance of developing Village Land Use Plans.

3.2 Map community boundaries and land use zones using PRA and GRP in 14 villages

Maps currently exist of community boundaries but these are not accurate. The Project Forest Cover Analyst was planning a trip to Gola in March 2020, delayed from earlier in the year due to a need to focus on developing a landcover map *(see Activity 2.1)* and identifying deforestation rates *(see Activity 1.2)* to undertake work on ground truthing these but the trip was cancelled due to the COVID-

19 outbreak. This will go ahead as soon as it is feasible in Year 2 as will the mapping of land use zones. This delay however will allow for clearer alignment with a new project funded by the EU which is addressing land use planning at a landscape level across the whole of the Gola Landscape (Sierra Leone and Liberia).

3.3 Facilitate focus groups in each village to set specific agricultural targets

Project communities have received cocoa training from 2015 and targets were identified in May 2019 with elected leaders and buying officers (including representatives from the project communities) through the Malema Chiefdom Cocoa Farmers Association with an agreed target of 30 metric tonnes for the 34 communities for the 2019/20 season.

GRC has also been working with the project communities since 2017 as part of the REDD+ programme, providing training in agricultural techniques in the cultivation of wetland rice, groundnuts and vegetables. Whilst targets were due to have been set with the project communities at the start of last year, this unfortunately coincided with the resignation or movement of 3 senior staff in the Community Development and Cocoa Departments resulting in a loss of leadership in this area at the time when this activity (which is timebound as it needs to occur before the planting and the rainy season) should have occurred *(see Section 9)*. As a result the setting of targets in this area was not undertaken in 2019 but will be undertaken in 2020 with input from the analysis of the baseline survey into food security and dietary diversity *(see Activity 3.7)*.

In the project plan this was due to be an activity that was carried out once at the beginning of the project. However we feel that this activity should be undertaken annually so that lessons can be learned and improvements made year on year with the support of the Project Social Scientist, and this will form part of the change request be submitted in line with this report.

3.4 Facilitate development of village specific land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs to be protected and farms to be intensified) through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process

This activity has not yet been undertaken in Year 1 as planned for a combination of reasons. This include the turnover of key staff in relation to community development work in the first two quarters of Year 1 *(see Section 9)*. As a result of this there was a lack of capacity to address the need to align on the approach to this activity including agreeing the extent and categorisation of land use plans. In addition to this there was an expectation that the Project Social Scientist would be recruited and could support the process in terms of understanding and strengthening effectiveness of participatory, inclusive and gender sensitive processes. However the Project Social Scientist did not become available until February 2020 *(see Doc J)* and has not been able to deploy to the field due to restrictions on travel from the COVID-19 outbreak. Furthermore, the identification of HCV-CFs *(see Activity 1.6)* means that an important input into this activity is currently outstanding

As such this activity will need to take place in Year 2. This delay however will allow for clearer alignment with a new project funded by the EU which is addressing land use planning at a landscape level across the whole of the Gola Landscape (Sierra Leone and Liberia).

3.5 Facilitate development of village level agricultural training plans through a participatory, inclusive process

In line with the setting of specific targets *(see Activity 3.3)* this activity did not take place in Year 1 as was originally planned. As in the activity above there was an expectation that the Project Social Scientist would be recruited and could support the process both in terms of the analysis of the baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity *(see Activity 2.7)* as well as in understanding and strengthening effectiveness of participatory, inclusive processes.

As such this activity will be started in Year 2 and like the setting of targets, we will be looking at reviewing these plans annually to identify and put in place improvements, especially as the Project

Social Scientist will not be able to be deployed in the field as planned at the beginning of Year 2 due to travel restrictions because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

3.6 Use qualitative social science techniques to understand factors that constrain participation in project focusing on non-participants in target group

No activities were scheduled for Year 1. However given that the undertaking of this activity is to a large extent dependent on understanding participation in other activities that might have been delayed, and that you cannot fully undertake this activity under lockdown conditions which restrict participation it is likely that there will be some delay in implementing this activity in Year 2.

3.7 Carry out baseline/end of project sample household surveys on food insecurity/dietary diversity (using the Food Insecurity Access Scale and Household Diet Diversity Score).

A baseline survey on food insecurity and dietary diversity was carried out in Aug-Sep 2019, and baseline results have been analysed by the Project Social Scientist. The survey instrument was developed by RSPB and GRC staff with the input from Agricultural University of Kenema students, and implemented the same students lead by a local consultant, Daniel Schroeder. To deliver the strongest possible chance of discerning project impacts, the survey employs a powerful Before-After-Control-Intervention design.

The survey was conducted across the 14 target (project) communities in Malema and a set of 14 similar control communities (12 from Malema and 2 from the neighbouring chiefdom of Gaura) located outside the Leakage Belt at the start of the project and will be repeated at the end of the project. Control communities were selected to match the intervention communities in terms of road access and size, and the sample of control households had similar characteristics in terms of size and compositions as the intervention group.

Food insecurity and diet diversity was measured using a Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) and Household Diet Diversity Score (HDDS) across a sample of 292 households in project communities, and 243 households in control communities.

The baseline survey was analysed and written up by the Project Social Scientist *(see Doc 3.1)*. Key findings included:

- Across both control and intervention households, approximately 80% of households were severely food insecure, and the remaining 20% of were moderately food insecure. This is high compared to Kailahun district as a whole, *(CFSVA (2015) State of Food Security in Sierra Leone 2015, Comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis. World Food Programme and contributors)* as these are rural communities that are remote and hard to access.

- Most households had consumed food from 5 food groups, revealing dietary diversity was similar to national averages.

- For most measures of food insecurity and diet diversity, control and intervention samples were similar. Slightly higher household food insecurity access scale in control villages is unlikely to have consequences for detecting project impacts.

- Variables describing household size, village size and enumerator experience did not predict food insecurity or diet diversity, and there was relatively high inter-enumerator variability. The EOP survey could therefore be improved by identifying and measuring factors which determine food insecurity outcomes.

The survey also assessed non-timber forest product (NTFPs) use, awareness of forest protection concepts and involvement in activities related to forest protection, and found that:

- An estimated 73% of target households used NTFP's, and on average 2.8 NTFPs were utilised per target household

- 59% of target households were aware of the general concept of forest protection, and

- 36% of target households had engaged in some type of forest protection activity.

In all cases there was no difference was recorded between target and control households. In 2019 GRC also hosted a student who undertook a study of the NTFPs around GRNP including the project area *(From Bush Yams to Kola Nuts: The Role of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) in Rural Livelihoods Around the Gola Rainforest National Park, Sierra Leone – Thomas Meijer (Wageningen University, April 2020)* which will provide further baseline information for the project.

Output 4: Target communities trial implementation of land use and agricultural training plans which regulate natural resource use in HCV-community forest whilst increasing crop production/diversification in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on HCV-community forest.

4.1 Establish community demonstration/on-farm research plots (1 per village) and inputs (e.g. quality seeds for target value chains Rice, cassava groundnuts, vegetables and cocoa) provided through Farmer Field Schools (FFS)

Farmer field schools for cocoa were first established in 2015 with agriculture demonstration plots established between 2017-2019 with a focus on rice, groundnuts and vegetables under the REDD+ programme. As part of the ending of the REDD+ cycle in Malema, including in the project area, 2 bushels of groundnut seeds (enough for 2 acres) were provided to farmers who had gone through training as well as to 28 pro-poor households (2 per community) between Mar-May 2019. A pro-poor household is a household that did not take part in the training but is nominated by those who did.

As part of the cocoa rehabilitation in the Darwin communities a total of 3,216 seedlings for economic trees were bought *(see Doc 4.2)*. These are trees that support cocoa activities by providing shade and which over time can be used to reduce non-sustainable logging in the community forests. In line with the establishment of targets and training plans *(see Activities 3.3 and 3.5)* further activity in this area was not undertaken in Year 1 as planned because of the need to analyse the baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity *(see Activity 2.7)* in order to inform what specific community demonstration / on-farm research plots should be established.

As such this activity, in line with the setting of targets and development of training plans will need to be undertaken in Year 2. As the analysis on the food security and dietary diversity was undertaken in Feb 2020 the findings from this will be fed into the process. Given the need to align this activity with the setting of targets and development of training plans we will be looking to stagger this activity over Years 2 and 3 so that any changes in targets and plans can be supported where required through the establishment of these plots.

4.2 Train farmers from target households (50% men, 50% women) in improved agricultural production/marketing techniques and skills through (gender sensitive FFS training), and support them to put at least two of these techniques on their own farms

Whilst agricultural targets and improved training plans *(see Activities 3.3 and 3.5)* were not developed and no demonstration or research plots were established training was provided in line with the REDD+ programme in the 14 communities around cocoa production where a total of 108 farmers (54 male and 54 female) were trained on sustainable shade grown cocoa agricultural practices. Training initially focused on 38 farmers (16 female and 22 male) who were being trained under the USAID WABiCC programme identified as co-funding, but this was expanded to 108 farmers (54 female and 54 male) once Darwin funding in training in 2020 *(see Doc 4.2)*. Training has covered the following areas:

- Cocoa rehabilitation and management (Feb 2019) – 38 farmers

- Outplanting of cocoa and other economic tress (inc bananas and plantain) (Apr 2019) – 38 farmers
- Best Master Farmer training for rehabilitation monitoring (Jun 2019) – 3 farmers
- Cocoa processing and quality control (Sep 2019) – 38 farmers
- Nursery establishment and management (Nov 2019) – 38 farmers
- Rehabilitation and environmental management (Feb 2020) – 108 farmers

This activity was supported by cocoa rehabilitation food for work schemes *(see Activity 4.5)* and training was provided on rehabilitation.

2 cocoa farmers were elected as Buying Officers for the 14 communities (some communities are covered by other buying officers from outside the project area and received training on the cocoa buying process (target setting, quality assessment , procurement, storage and logistics) from the Fairtrade registered Malema Cocoa Farmers Association (MACFA).

Further training during Year 2 will be adjusted in line with the development of new agricultural targets and training plans *(see Activities 3.3 and 3.5)* based on input from the analysis of the food security and diet diversity survey training.

4.3 Train farmers in new forest-based livelihoods and supports implementation (at least one in each target village)

This activity which is only due to be completed by the end of Year 2 was not started in Year 1 as planned because of the need to facilitate focus groups in each of the project communities to set agricultural targets and to identify training plans *(see Activities 3.3 and 3.5)*.

As such this activity will need to be established in Year 2 based on the identification of targets and plans and being informed by the analysis of the baselines survey of food security and dietary diversity *(see Activity 3.7)* that is now available. Depending on timing in relation to planting and harvesting support for implementation will need to be continued into Year 3.

4.4 Establish a savings and loan scheme in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women, with at least two women in leadership roles

Village Savings & Loan Association (VSLA) activities were started in all 34 communities in Malema Chiefdom including the 14 project communities from Apr 2019. This included identifying which communities to support and contacting key stakeholders for the launch. The launch took place at the Chiefdom headquarter town of Jojoima in May 2019 *(see Doc 4.1)* with 120 participants overall, including from the project villages across the Chiefdom. Participants included the Paramount Chief, women and youth leaders, famer field school members, cocoa association members, religious leader, and societal heads from all the 34 communities across Malema.

In total 8 women have been appointed to VSLA leadership roles across the 14 communities (5 in chairperson roles with the others acting as treasurers or key holders). Note that the measure here needs to be revised and will be input into a change request to increase the target of women in these leadership roles.

During the launch event the purpose of VSLAs were explained (aims, objective and mandate) and consent and approval of all the key stakeholders for the implementation of the VSLA project was secured and training on VSLA management and principles including by-laws was given. During this event VSLA kits and materials were also handed out to all communities This included metal boxes for keeping cash, ledger books, padlocks and boxes to support the establishment of the groups *(see Doc 4.1)*.

Further training on establishing and running small scale businesses was provided between Oct-Dec 2019 for 420 members (229 male:195 female) across the 34 communities in Malema including the 14

project communities. At the same time 9 of the Darwin communities are looking at setting up second VSLA schemes and group members have been identified. Training and provision of VSLA kit will be provided in Year 2. Loans are not available for the first year from the VSLA scheme, as this year is used to build up savings, but may start to be available from Year 2.

4.5 Establish 'food for work' schemes in each village. Food for work schemes are an established way of facilitating completion of tasks that benefit the whole community

A cocoa farm 'cash for work' rehabilitation scheme was established to demonstrate how good agriculture practices can improve yields. Youth gangs were paid to do pruning, shade management and under brushing. A total 268 people (c. 1/6th of the population) across the 14 communities benefitted by getting financial support of 100 000 SL (c. 8.30 GBP) in return for rehabilitating 1 acre of land. In total 214 acres was rehabilitated resulting in a total payment of 21 400 000 Leones SLL (c.1,783 GBP).

Further food for work schemes / cash for work schemes will be undertaken in Year 2, following the establishment of new agricultural targets so that the specific schemes can be aligned to these targets and to benefit as large a section of the communities as possible

4.6 Run 'food for work' schemes that improve access trails allowing local goods to reach markets

Initial meetings were held by the Cocoa team with project communities and different options for improving access trails were identified. This was then discussed as part of the Darwin Working Group. Final decisions on specific interventions will be made at the beginning of Year 2 and trails improved accordingly.

Note that Activities 4.5 and 4.6 has proved slightly confusing as to whether the former is focused on establishing and running all food for work schemes with the exception of trail improvement or whether the former was based on the establishment of schemes and the latter on the running of those schemes. This was particularly true in the plan submitted where the former was identified as an activity focused on the first year and the latter as an activity running across all three years although the measurable indicator identified completion of trails by the end of the first year. Therefore as part of the change request being submitted in line with this report, there will be an identification of the need to focus Activity 4.5 on the establishment and running of food for work schemes, with Activity 4.6 focussing specifically on access trails.

Output 5: 14 Target communities have committed to protect HCV-CF in return for tailored agricultural training/ equipment to increase yields sustainably provided by the GRC REDD+ project through Conservation Agreements (revised MOUs) which will be embedded, post-project, in Sierra Leone's Community Forest Laws.

5.1 Support village communities to develop bylaws to protect HCV-CF

No activities were scheduled for Year 1 in relation to this activity. It is still anticipated that this activity which is scheduled in Year 2 will take place in Year 2 but if the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak lasts for a significant amount of time it may mean that this activity is not fully completed in Year 2. Extension of this activity will be sought as part of the change request being submitted.

5.2 Support village communities to establish a HCV-CF committee with representation from all forest user groups

The concept of establishing HCV-CFs committees was raised at the consultative meetings held in Nov 2019 but significant further work is linked to completing survey work *(see Activity 3.1)* and mapping of the HCV-CFs *(see Activity 1.6)*. As this work is likely to be further delayed at the start of Year 2 due to the restrictions due to the COVID-19 outbreak it is envisaged that this activity could take all of Year 2 to complete. Extension of this activity will be sought as part of the change request being submitted in line with this report and ways of mitigating the impact will be addressed including drafting potential governance structures and defining roles and responsibilities whilst the lockdown is in place.

5.3 Facilitate development and agreement of 5 year conservation agreements between the 14 target communities and GRC

No activities were scheduled for Year 1.

5.4 Facilitate communities engagement in the Community Forest process, for example, forming and registering community forest associations with a view to developing Forest Management plans (with project HCV-CF sites included as 'zero-deforestation zones) post project

No activities were scheduled for Year 1.

5.5 Write and disseminate paper to the FDA and other relevant audiences

No activities were scheduled for Year 1.

Output 6: GRC (proponent of the Gola REDD+ project) reviews/refines their model for providing livelihood support to communities in the REDD+ leakage belt to deliver greater impact for biodiversity and livelihoods.

6.1 Facilitate visits by representatives from all 6 neighbouring chiefdoms to Darwin project villages

No activities were scheduled for Year 1.

6.2 GRC organises and hold a Darwin project review meeting reviews/refines their model for providing livelihood support to communities in the REDD+ leakage belt to deliver greater impact for biodiversity and livelihoods

No activities were scheduled for Year 1.

Output 7: Project partners increase their capacity to implement the Gola programme.

7.1 CSSL in partnership with GRC staff develop a post project plan for community development in Malema chiefdom

No activities scheduled for Year 1.

7.2 CSSL in partnership with GRC staff and build Gola project activities into their annual workplans

No activities scheduled for Year 1.

7.3 RSPB finance staff continue to build GRC staff capacity in financial reporting

RSPB staff from the International Finance Unit work on an ongoing basis with the finance staff at GRC to complete quarterly financial reporting for the organisation with respect to core funding from RSPB and carbon credits from REDD+, as well as specific project reporting that is required (currently GRC report against this project and two other projects).

As such the emphasis this year has been on working with the finance team in GRC to improve the submission of information with a focus on accuracy, timeliness and ensuring that it is supported by required evidence. As part of this process, reports are checked thoroughly and there is an emphasis on ensuring paperwork is received before including in the claim to the funder. However, there is still some way to go in this activity as reports are often late with incorrect calculations or missing paperwork that routinely needs to be followed by the International Finance Unit

Whilst there is an intention under this activity to provide more specific training to GRC finance staff this has not been possible this year, primarily because the International Finance Unit (which is only 3 people strong) has been short-staffed due to an unexpected resignation and another staff member being off on long term absence. However in January the RSPB Country Manager started a capability review of the whole of GRC, including the Finance Department. This work through a series of interviews with superintendents *(see Doc 7.1)* identified key issues to address and is currently ongoing in terms of identifying current capabilities and where these need to be developed. Initial analysis has highlighted the need within the Finance Department to strengthen key processes such as budgeting and forecasting, financial and management reporting and workforce planning (in conjunction with HR). Activity to support this will take place during Year 2. Additionally one of the key issues facing GRC is the current lack of a finance system and to this end RSPB has started the process of hiring a new Technical Advisor to work with GRC to establish a finance system, to train financial staff on this and to help standardise reporting for all project partners, although recruitment for this position is currently on hold due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

7.4 Presentations on the importance of measuring social impact of conservation projects/ value of social science to conservation projects made to project/RSPB/CCI staff

Presentations were given by the Project Social Scientist and the Head of People Science at the RSPB Annual Science Meeting in November 2019, describing planned social science activities on the Darwin project, and outlining the value of recent findings from work conducted in Gola on the Liberian side. A presentation describing the role of social science in the Gola Landscape was given by the Project Social Scientist to the wider conservation community at the Zoological Society of London in March 2020.

7.5 GRC/CSSL staff trained in the use of social science techniques

No activities scheduled for Year 1. This activity will be undertaken by the Project Social Science once travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 outbreak are lifted and it is possible to deploy to the field.

3.2   Progress towards Project Outputs

1. *Areas of community forest of High Conservation Value (HCV-CF) in target area are identified and current rate of loss quantified*

Community forest location, size and connectivity has been mapped (Indicator 1.1) under Activity 1.1 and biodiversity surveys to assess occurrence of GTS and forest indicator species (Indicator 1.3) is around 50% complete based on the setting of camera traps, bird point counts and other surveys being undertaken in Activity 1.3.

In addition to this progress has been made in capturing local community knowledge of GTS (Indicator 1.2), where baseline knowledge for 8 out of the 14 communities has been captured through Activity 1.4. This will continue in Year 2 in line with species survey work and will be enhanced by further participatory work with the Project Social Scientist once she deploys to the field. Whilst there have been delays to this work *(see section 3.1)* we expect to complete this in Year 2 as well as undertake camera trap studies along the Malema / Liberian border (Indicator 1.5) under Activity 1.5 as long as current restrictions due to the COVID-19 outbreak allow.

Work is also ongoing during field activities throughout the project to further ground truth the land use map. With an accurate land use map and having completed the baseline identification of deforestation rates for 2014 under Activity 1.2, we can use freely available Global Forest Watch data to track changes in tree cover in community forest and therefore quantify past and current loss (Indicator 1.2).

Overall therefore we expect to achieve this output, although with some delay to the current timetable, for which a change request will be submitted. In doing this we will consider the impact on other areas and identify potential mitigation measures, such as whether HCV-CF areas can be provisionally identified before the final set of camera traps are placed in the 14th community Wagikoh (which is in an enclave in the middle of GRNP, and feeding in the work on participatory mapping under Activity 1.4 alongside camera trapping along the Malema – Liberian border under Activity 1.5 again following the provisional identification of the HCV-CF areas.

2. *Malema communities have increased awareness of the importance of maintaining forest and biodiversity for the REDD+ project and take an active role in their conservation and monitoring as a tool for long-term sustainability*

All the project communities have identified a willingness to take an active role in the conservation and monitoring of their community forests. This has been aided by both the initial project meetings that took place under Activity 3.1 but also sensitisation meetings (roadshows) and radio broadcasts (Indicator 2.2) conducted under Activity 2.1. Whilst we were only able to complete 2 radio broadcasts in Year 1 we expect to increase this to 5 in Year 2 and to focus the roadshows more specifically on specific areas of work and linking protection of HCV-CFs having now introduced the work of the project.

Training of champions for GTS (Indicator 2.3) has started under Activity 2.2, but as this is an activity that is being rolled out in line with the survey work in Activity 1.3 this has so far only been done for the 8 of the 14 communities that survey work has been undertaken. We are planning to continue this training in Year 2 as survey work in the other communities is completed, and then to provide further training around deforestation and effective survey methods / patrolling. Patrolling to identify deforestation (Indicator 2.4) has not yet taken place but will be put in place following completion of training in Year 2.

Overall, whilst certain activities have been delayed, which will impact when interim indicators will be achieved, we expect to achieve this output in line with the change request we are submitting for an extension to the project because of the impact of COVID-19.

3. *Communities in the target area develop village community land use and agricultural training plans to regulate natural resource use in HCV-CF areas whilst increasing yields in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on community forests*

Significant progress was made towards achieving this output in two keys areas during Year 1. Getting general agreement for land use planning (Indicator 3.1) was achieved through a series of consultative meetings at the start of the project under Activity 1.1 although we will be looking to build on this in Year 2 to get this approval formalised and to identify how this will be integrated into overarching REDD+ agreements.

In addition to this the baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity was undertaken and this information has now been fully analysed. However because this was undertaken in the last quarter of the year due to delays in the start of the Project Social Scientist, for which a change request was written and approved *(see Doc E)* follow-on activities to deliver against this output have been delayed. It was hoped that the Project Social scientist would be able to deploy to Sierra Leone in March and that we would be able to advance some of this activity at the end of Year 1 but the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that this has proved impossible. Therefore, the setting of village specific targets (Indicator 3.3) and training plans (Indicator 3.5) will now need to take place in Year 2 when travel restrictions are lifted.

Some progress has been made on the mapping of land use zones and community boundaries (Indicator 3.2) through the ground truthing work that has been undertaken under Activity 3.2 but the planned trip of the Forest Cover Analyst which was scheduled towards the end of the year also has meant that completion of activities to achieve this indicator as well as the development of land use plans (Indicator 3.4) will be delayed.

Overall, whilst certain activities have been delayed for which we will submit a change request, we expect to achieve this output by the end of Year 2 (with the exception of EOP elements of work).

4. *Target communities trial implementation of land use and agricultural training plans which regulate natural resource use in HCV-community forest whilst increasing crop production/diversification in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on HCV-community forest*

Progress has been made in this output in two key areas. This includes the provision of training in improved agricultural production and marketing techniques (Indicator 4.2) to 108 farmers in training on sustainable shade grown cocoa production. More work is due to be undertaken in Year 2 in line with the plan to ensure that 50% of farmers being trained are female, as well as adjusting support based on the information from the food security and dietary diversity study and the consequent establishment of new training targets and plans *(see Output 3)*.

In addition savings and loans schemes (Indicator 4.4) have been established across all 14 project villages. Although this delivers this indicator some more work in this area will be carried out in Year 2 where there is demand for expanding the number of savings and loans schemes.

However in areas where there is a clear need to input information from the food security and dietary diversity survey activities have been delayed because this study was only undertaken in Feb 2020. This includes the establishment of community demonstration / on-farm research plots (Indicator 4.1) due to have been delivered by the end of Year 1 and the development of new forest-based livelihood schemes (Indicator 4.3) which was due to start in Year 1. In addition to this there have as yet been no improvements to access trails for any of the 14 villages (Indicator 4.5) and this activity will need to be undertaken in Year 2.

The final indicator for this output that 75% of target villages will meet their agricultural targets on land adjacent to protected HCV-CF (Indicator 4.6) will only start to become measurable at the end of Year 2.

Overall, whilst certain activities have been delayed for which we will submit a change request, we expect to achieve this output by the end of Year 3 (with the exception of activities designed to run over the duration of the project and EOP elements of work).

5. *14 Target communities have committed to protect HCV-CF in return for tailored agricultural training/ equipment to increase yields sustainably provided by the GRC REDD+ project through Conservation*

Agreements (revised MOUs) which will be embedded, post-project, in Sierra Leone's Community Forest Laws

No elements of this output were due to be delivered in Year 1. However the start of the activity to establish HCV-CF committees (Indicator 5.2) has been delayed due to delays in the identification of the HCV-CF areas *(see Output 1)* as it would be counter-productive to set up committees ahead of the identification of the HCV-CF areas. As such it is likely that there will be a slight delay in achieving this element of the output but it is expected that both this and the identification of by-laws (Indicator 5.1) can be undertaken at the same time. The development of 5 year conservation agreements (Indicator 5.3) is not currently impacted, as the activity to start this was not due to begin until Year 2.

Overall, whilst certain activities may be slightly delayed for which we will submit a change request, we expect to achieve those elements of this output relating to the establishment of committees by the end of Year 2 and the development of the 5 year conservation agreements in line with the change request we are submitting for an extension to the project because of the impact of COVID-19.

6. *The GRC (proponent of the Gola REDD+ project) reviews/refines their model for providing livelihood support to communities in the REDD+ leakage belt to deliver greater impact for biodiversity and livelihoods*

No activities were planned for Year 1 to deliver this output. It is still expected that visits from other chiefdoms (Indicator 6.1) and an end of project meeting with Directors to review the project (Indicator 6.2) are achievable.

7. Project partners increase their capacity to implement the Gola programme.

None of the measures for the achievement of this output were related to Year 1 implementation and only two of the five activities were due to start in Year 1, both of which are ongoing activities throughout the course of the project. As such there has therefore been limited progress towards the achievement of Output 7 but the project is still on course to achieve the overall output.

Whilst the original intention was for a Community Development Co-ordinator to be recruited from CSSL to co-ordinate all of the community development work on this project (Indicator 7.1) and therefore support the integration of work between GRC and CSSL, it was not possible to recruit someone with the overall capability to be act as the overall Community Development Co-ordinator and therefore a slightly different approach has been taken. This has meant that a full-time facilitator has been recruited who is responsible for co-ordinating the work of CSSL in the project and for liaising more broadly with the GRC Community Development team around other community development work being delivered through the Darwin project and more broadly throughout Gola. By having a Project Manager on the ground (a change in Project Manager is being requested for Year 2 onward) and through greater involvement of the RSPB Technical Advisor for Conservation Enterprises there will not be the need for an overall co-ordinator of community development work, but the output will still be achieved in terms of increasing integration of GRC and CSSL. Going forward the project is on course for CSSL to include Gola activity into its annual workplans by the end of the project (Indicator 7.2), especially as CSSL has a significant role in another Gola project that started in Jan 2020 alongside GRC.

Two presentations have been given in related to the importance of measuring social impact of conservation projects and the value of social science to conservation projects made to RSPB staff and the broader conservation community (Indicator 7.5). These have included presentations to the RSPB Annual Science Meeting and at a meeting organised at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). Both of these presentations have focused on work that the Project Social Scientist has undertaken on the Liberian side of Gola, but using techniques that will be equally applicable on the Sierra Leone side. In Year 2 presentation will start to focus on the work being undertaken under the Darwin project.

No activities to progress GRC/CSSL capability in deploy social science techniques (Indicator 7.6) have taken place in Year 1 as the Project Social Scientist has not deployed to the field. However, we are confident that this will be fully achieved by the end of the project. Also despite limited financial intervention in Year 1, the increased focus in this area in Year 2 of the project means that the project is still on course to ensure financial reporting from GRC is on Darwin templates by the end of the 2nd quarter of Year 2 (Indicator 7.3) and undertake its own financial reporting to other donors (Indicator 7.4).

3.3   Progress towards the Project Outcome

1. *By EOP deforestation rates fall to zero in 1,000-1,500ha of HCV community forest (ca.25% of target leakage belt area) and remains below 2.5% (REDD+ threshold) in the rest*

   The first step to achieving this is to identify HCV community forest. Having mapped all community forest and having gathered habitat data to enable ground truthing, we expect to have identified the most important areas for biodiversity when Activity 1.3 is complete. Our mechanisms for tracking deforestation rates are in place. As communities have generally proved willing to engage with the project, we expect to be able to achieve the above deforestation rates by EOP (with measurement taking place in line with data availability following the project).

   However in order to achieve this it will be important in Year 2 to make progress in areas such as the establishment of HCV committees and by-laws, the establishment of effective community patrols on the ground, the continued provision of training and implementation of forest friendly agriculture techniques and the further development of understanding of the link between forest conservation and livelihoods. Please see note at the end of this section about reviewing indicators.

2. *By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1,045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are engaged in forest-protection activities compared to a baseline of less than 10% (to be confirmed by baseline (Year 1) Household survey)*

   The baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity *(see Document 3.1)* showed that 36% of target (project) households reported they were engaged in forest-protection activities. Whilst this is significantly higher than the unconfirmed baseline it may be that the increase in the baseline survey may be due to the way that questions were formatted and a broader understanding of what can be constituted as a forest protection activity than was originally envisaged. Additionally, respondents may have wanted to present a good image of themselves and their communities. As such we feel that the indicator of 70% is still an ambitious indicator, and we will ensure that the EOP survey will measure the concept in more detail than the baseline, underpinned by further social research conducted with focus groups throughout Years 2-3. Please see note at the end of this section about reviewing indicators.

3. *By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are food secure (have a HFIAS score of less than 11) compared to a baseline of 4%*

   The baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity *(see Document 3.1)* showed that 34% of target (project) households have a HFIAS score of less than 11. Whilst this is significantly higher than the 4% reported in the proposed baseline this may be due to differences in communities surveyed or differences in the way that enumerators were trained and asked and recorded set questions. The fact that food security is subject to external markets, weather patterns and epidemics which could also account for some of the variance. As such the EOP target of 70% is still very ambitious, as it implies over a third of households improving their HFIAS by 1 to 4 points (average = 2). See note at the end of this section about reviewing indicators.

4. *By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1,045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) have increased the diversity of their diet and the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) is 3.3 by EOP*

The baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity *(see Document 6.1)* showed that 82% of project (target) households have a household diet diversity score (HDDS) greater than 3.3. HDDS measures the number of food groups that have been consumed over the previous 24 hours (out of a total of 12 major food groups) and the baseline diet diversity median is 5. The indicator that at EOP 70% of households have a HDDS of 3.3 or above is inappropriate, because this is already the case at the start of the project (which may to some degree reflect the work that has been carried out by GRC over the previous 2 years in Malema Chiefdom). Please see note at the end of this section about reviewing indicators.

5. *By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are aware of the 'forest protection for increased food security' concept and wish to continue forest protection through the REDD+ project compared to a baseline of less than 5% (to be confirmed by a baseline (Yr1) Household survey)*

The baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity (Document 6.1) showed that the level of awareness about the general concept of forest protection was 59%. Again the fact that this is significantly higher than the assumed baseline of less than 5% could reflect the fact that the survey focused on whether people identified that they were aware of the concept but was not designed to understand the extent to that awareness and therefore it is possible that real awareness of the concept could be significantly lower.

As GRC has been working with the project (target) communities since 2017 on agriculture extension and from 2015 on cocoa production both linked to forest protection there would be an expectation that awareness was in the target (project) communities would be higher. However, there was no significant variance in the two populations to support this.

The EOP survey, supported by qualitative data collected in Years 2-3 by the Project Social Scientist, will measure awareness in a more informative way, seeking to understand what people think it means and what aspects they are not aware of. See note at the end of this section about reviewing indicators.

6. *By EOP GRC directors (including the Paramount Chief representative) hold a Darwin project review meeting at which they agree to a) roll out the 'forest-protection for increased food security' concept across the remaining 19 villages in Malema chiefdom. b) pilot the concept across 3 other chiefdoms*

This project outcome indicator is planned for Year 3 following the majority of work being carried out which will need to feed into the review meeting. This project outcome is still on course to be delivered by the end of the project.

Reviewing Indicators. The analysis of the baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity undertaken by the Project Social Scientist in February 2020 has identified that whilst the scope of the indicators is adequate there is a need to build on to these targets in two ways going forward.

The first is to develop a more granular understanding of the concept of engagement in forest protection (Indicator 2) and awareness of the link between forest conservation and food security (Indicator 5). For Indicator 2 this will allow an improved understanding of what forest protection activities people are engaged in but also what activities people consider to be protective of the forest. For Indicator 5 this will allow the declaration of awareness of the link between forest conservation and food security to be tested and not be taken at face value.

The other key area that the results from the survey identified was the potential to target the indicator around diet diversity (Indicator 4) on the more marginalised in society in line with the indicator on food

diversity (Indicator 3). For example an improved target would be that 70% of households have achieved the median HDDS of 5 or above. This would imply that the 50% of households with lowest HDDS have improved. An EOP target for 70% of households to have improved their diet diversity is likely to be unreasonable, because it requires households who already have relatively high HDDS to increase the number of food groups in their diet.

In addition to this it is felt that the target of 25% of community forest land being designated as HCV-CF with a 0% deforestation needs to be further examined, to identify if there is a more graduated way in which this could be achieved.

This work is currently ongoing and will be included within the change request being submitted in line with this report.

3.4 Monitoring of Assumptions

Outcome Level Assumptions

a) *Malema communities willing to engage in this project. We think this will hold true because we have worked in the area for the past 5 years and target communities are now requesting more tailored livelihood support from the REDD+ project.*

Through the initial sensitisation meetings that were held in October 2019 *(see Activity 3.1)* there was a clear willingness to engage in this project.

During the course of Year 1 we had a single issue with one community - Makpoima, who denied the project permission to deploy camera trap in their community forest. An additional sensitization meeting was therefore held with the support of CSSL to better explain the ongoing research activities *(see Activity 2.1)*, and this was attended by stakeholders from the neighbouring communities (Dukor, Seyiama, Peyama, Levuma, Yollo, Congo and Vaama).

The issue was successfully resolved and communities confirmed their willingness to continue to engage in the Darwin project. This has since been followed up by further sensitisation roadshows in February and March 2020. As part of the COVID-19 response GRC is providing a high level of support across all 122 communities around GRNP and therefore we expect this assumption to continue to hold true.

b) *Agricultural yields can be increased enough to enable communities to protect 25% of their forest. We think this will hold true because our work so far with communities suggests that yields are so low that they can be transformed with sustainable methods.*

Experience from the promotion of good cocoa agricultural practices in other chiefdoms has led to an increase in cocoa yields of 100% per acre in a 3 years period. We believe that significant increases in yield can be reached with other food crops and that as a result of this a clear link can be made between the protection of community forest and food security so that communities will be enabled to protect 25% of their forest. As such we expect this assumption to hold true.

c) *Exchange rates do not devalue the grant/cofunding available such that the project cannot meet its objectives. We think this will hold true because the general pattern (2015-2018) is that the value of the Leone in respect to GBP has fallen. This means an underspend is more likely but we have costed our budget conservatively.*

Although there has been a gradual increase in the value of the British Pound (GBP) against the Sierra Leone Leone (SLL) from just under 1:12500 at the start of the project to just over 1:12500 at the end of Year 1 this represents less than a 2% shift. As such during the course of the project there has not been significant devaluations as experienced in 2016 which saw the Leone value against the pound almost half.

In GBP strongest point in February 2020 saw it reach a value of 1:13000 against the SLL representing less than a 5% strengthening at its highest point.

However in March 2020 the GBP weakened significantly from 1:12,800 to 1:11,300 in the course of 2 weeks (a drop of over 11%) but has recovered since then to just over 1:12500. This does therefore demonstrate that whilst we expect this assumption to hold true in the longer term there is a higher risk of uncertainty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

d) *No external influences on deforestation – e.g. immigration, external development pressures. We think this will hold true because the forest across the Liberian border is comparatively sparsely populated. In addition, the governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia recently signed a MoU to mark their intention to collaborate to patrol transboundary forest.*

There have been some pressures on GRNP over the course of the year including around Gola North and Gola Central where the Malema Chiefdom is located. These pressures have involved:

- illegal logging along the boundaries of the National Park, mainly by local communities, which on some occasions have resulted in the logging inside GRNP, although this is sometimes difficult to clearly ascertain when there is a lack of clarity around boundaries
- increased pressure from artisanal mining within forest edge communities

However, there has only been one reported instance of illegal activity during the course of the last year in the project area. This was in Mogbaima when a hunter from Liberia was identified and later arrested in Liberia. This area has also seen some pressure from artisanal miners.

Whilst GRC does not verify population numbers, it gains an overall picture from working with households and to date has not seen a significant increase in the population overall although some communities such as Mogbaima and Mayegema (the southernmost communities in the project) have increased and others such as Peyama have seen a reduction in population.

As such, and despite a potentially greater risk of illegal logging during the COVID-19 outbreak, we expect this assumption to hold true

e) *GRC and Malema communities willing to revise MoUs. We think this will hold true because the current programme of agricultural support ends in 2021 (Y2) This provides a natural point at which GRC and communities will evaluate and revise the MoUs.*

Activity to sign revised MoUs has not yet taken place. However, based on feedback from current work on the ground in terms of setting up VSLA schemes and training there is no reason to believe that this assumption will not hold true. During the COVID-19 outbreak GRC is stepping up its outreach across Gola, including in the 14 project communities to ensure that good relations persist. As such we expect this assumption to hold true.

Output Level Assumptions

f) *Survey methods/equipment are appropriate to terrain. We have already trialled survey techniques and equipment as part of REDD+ monitoring and under Darwin Initiative project 20-022 (e.g. chimpanzee nest counts, camera trapping, pygmy hippo surveys, bird point counts).*

Our survey techniques were based on those previously used, successfully, by the research team under the REDD+ monitoring programme and Darwin project 20-022. Where we made small modifications to the methods, we trialled and refined these in the field to ensure the use of methods and equipment are appropriate to the terrain. As such this assumption holds true.

g) *Community members willing in engage in awareness raising and conservation/monitoring activities. We think this will hold true because We have trailed the Champion approach successfully in other chiefdoms and community surveyors will be paid a stipend (for 3-4 days per month). Stipends form part of the conservation agreement. We recognise that improving knowledge is only one tool that can change behaviour. None the less, it is it essential for the long-term sustainability of the REDD+ project that communities continue to link REDD+ agricultural support with forest and biodiversity conservation.*

The training of the community champions has started on a voluntary basis and, for the moment, without compensation. All the visited communities proved to be interested in learning about GRC's conservation and monitoring activities. Stipends as part of the conservation agreement, will be an incentive for community champions to play an active role in conservation, and will be funded after the project where required from the sale of carbon credits under the REDD+ programme . As such we expect this assumption to hold true, although we will have further clarity on this during the course of Year 2 of the project.

h) *Inputs provided by project e.g. rice mills can be replaced with no further donor funding. We think this will hold true because we will have supported communities to establish Village Savings & Loan Associations – we will provide equipment to the Associations who will lend out equipment in return for a small share of the processed harvest, which will be sold to fund repair/replacements of equipment.*

The 'farming as business' approach introduced has led to farmers being aware of the need for investments to be able to maintain tools and equipment. Normally they form a committee responsible for running and maintaining equipment with anyone using the equipment paying a fee for its use.

As such we expect this assumption to hold true but it can be made clearer as the project does not provide equipment, such as rice mills, to VSLAs to lend out. However where equipment is bought as part of a VSLA loan the owner is being trained on charging enough to ensure that replacement can be covered when needed.

i) *Training can be maintained i.e. passed on to other farmers in community.*

The Farmer Field School model and particularly the role of master farmers promotes this approach. In addition organizing farmers and promoting training on good governance helps creating ownership and knowledge transfer in the communities. As such we expect this assumption to hold true.

j) *Security does not deteriorate significantly and the rural population maintains access to land. We think this will hold true because the political situation is stable.*

The political situation continues to be stable However upcoming pandemics like the past Ebola and current Corona can create upsets in landowning households. Therefore whilst we expect the assumption to hold true in the true in the longer term there is a higher risk of uncertainty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

k) *Communities respect by-laws. We think this will hold true because we will have made communities aware of the importance of HCV-CF to the REDD+ project and they are already supportive of the REDD+ project.*

Our experience from some communities is that it is important to regularly monitor that the elected leaders are having a dialog with the community members and keeping them informed to avoid misunderstandings. Communication through handouts e.g. posters and radio programmes will help creating understanding. As such we expect this assumption to hold true as long as we continue to effectively engage with all community members and can clearly demonstrate the link between protecting community forests and food security.

l) *Communities are willing to and have the opportunity to engage in the Community Forestry process as it develops in Sierra Leone. We think this will hold true because RSPB and the Society for Nature Conservation in Liberia have been working (with EU funding) to support Liberian communities to engage in the new Liberian Community Forest Management process. We have found communities are keen to engage in the CF process as it protects their traditional rights over their land. In addition, we are already working with one community in Sierra Leone to develop a pilot community forest management plan funded by the USAID funded WABiCC) programme (2017-2020). Lessons from this work will guide the Darwin project.*

One lesson learned from the USAID WABiCC funded programme is that community ownership is built in early through establishing the community forest committee and that this is done with relevant local officials integrated into the process. As such through the participatory process that we are employing we expect this assumption to hold true.

3.5   Impact: Achievement of Positive Impact on Biodiversity and Poverty Alleviation

Biodiversity

The project application identified two key impacts the project is intended to have on biodiversity, namely that 60 GTS (including western chimpanzee, pygmy hippo, forest elephant, white-breasted guineafowl and white-necked picathartes) will benefit from habitat conservation. Additionally, by the end of the project deforestation rates should fall to zero in 1000-1,500ha of HCV-CF (c.25% of the target area) and remain below 2.5% (REDD+ threshold) in the rest.

The Gola forest in Sierra Leone, together with contiguous forest in Liberia, is the largest extant remnant of the Upper Guinea forest biodiversity hotspot. Whilst GRNP is the stronghold of many of these GTS, previous work in the project target area has demonstrated that many of these species also occur in the community lands within these area, particularly within community forest, and some species occur at higher density on community land than within the National Park *(Hillers et al 2017, Oryx 51, 230-239, Darwin project 20-022)*.

This project therefore seeks to develop a mechanism whereby the most important forest for GTS is identified, forest protection is specifically linked to poverty alleviation, and communities do not need to / are not motivated to, remove species-rich forest on their land. In addition, the project will help to reduce human-wildlife conflict, by identifying key habitats in community forests and monitoring these. Furthermore, an improved understanding of the species inventory in community forests will aid enforcement and control of illegal trade in wildlife.

Achieving agreements with communities to protect targeted forests would therefore be of global benefit to biodiversity, especially as this would then allow this approach to be replicated on a wider scale both across the Greater Gola Landscape and as an exemplar beyond that.

The data already collected through biodiversity surveys *(see Activity 1.3)* and the mapping of the forest extent *(see Activity 1.2)* demonstrate that this is a heavily forested area that supports a range of GTS, and therefore establishes that achieving Conservation Agreements will be extremely important to conservation in this region. The purchase and planting of 3,216 economic trees in Year 1 as part of the cocoa rehabilitation programme will also directly reduce the pressure from unsustainable logging in community forests going forward.

<u>Poverty Alleviation</u>

The project application specifically linked poverty alleviation to food security and diet diversity, identifying that the project expected to close the hunger gap experienced by the target population so that 70% of the 182 target households (i.e.127 households, 1,045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are food secure (have a HFIAS score of less than11) and have increased diet diversity (measured by the HDDS) to at least 0.33 by the end of the project.

Although it has improved over the last 10 years food security continues to be a significant issue in Sierra Leone and the communities around the GRNP are some of the least food secure in the country. Through this project we aim to improve agricultural extension work by applying social science techniques to improve the effectiveness of interventions, as well as creating a clear link for local communities around the protection of forest resources and the food security benefits that can be derived from this protection.

As such the project should provide clear lessons that cannot only be applied across the Gola landscape in Sierra Leone and Liberia but which should be able to be applied where communities live along the boundaries of protected rainforests to increase food security and dietary diversity.

Due to the nature of the project evidence around the actual impact of the project on poverty alleviation will only be able to start to be quantified from Year 2 onwards.

4.   Contribution to the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

The Gola REDD+ project contributes to eight of the SDGs. These are:

- SDG 1: No poverty
- SDG 3: Good health and well-being
- SDG 4: Quality education
- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG 13: Climate action
- SDG 14: Life below water
- SDG 15: Life on land

However, whilst this project will contribute to a number of these SDGs, it specifically addresses two SDGs. These are:

SDG 2: Zero Hunger, and in particular:

- Target 2.3 to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

- Target 2.4 to ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

    In Year 1 the project has contributed to these targets through:

    - The establishment of VSLA schemes in all 14 project communities *(see Activity 4.4)*. Although it is not required for people using these schemes to use them to improve food security or to promote sustainable agriculture a significant amount of the funding is used for this purpose. The schemes provide a way for villagers to increase their income and provide a level of security for villagers should they need it. Additionally, VSLA loans are often used to help people either to stay afloat during emergency situations or to provide improved education, both areas which like food security, lead to a general improvement in well-being and livelihood security.

    - Training of 214 farmers in sustainable agricultural techniques in the growing of cocoa *(see Activity 4.2)*. This will lead to the development of more resilient farming methods and increased agricultural productivity as well as a diversification in the type of crops grown. Furthermore, it will the diversity and cropping techniques all contribute to increased soil fertility and reduce the need for slash and burn, thereby protecting ecological services that the forests provide.

SDG 15: Life on Land, and in particular:

- Target 15.2 to promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

    In Year 1 the project has contributed to this target through:

    - Gathering conservation data on indicator and threatened species that will ensure community forests can be established where they will maximise coverage of areas of high conservation value *(see Activity 1.3)*.

    - Developing an improved understanding of rates of deforestation in areas where high conservation value community forests may be established to allow for more effective development of food security activities to reduce deforestation *(see Activity 1.2)*.

    - By identifying and training champions for globally threatened species in project villages *(see Activity 2.2)*.

    - Training villagers in improved agricultural techniques that support the sustainable management of forests such as through the growing of cocoa under forest canopy thereby making the association between food security and forest conservation stronger *(see Activity 4.2)*.

It is expected that there will be more specific contributions to these targets over the remaining years of the project.

5.   Project Support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

The project contributes directly to the following conventions, treaties and agreements:

- The second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) (2017-2026) of Sierra Leone - Strategic Objective B1 which states that "Practical Methods and Mechanisms are Enhanced and Functioning to Safeguard Biodiversity Resulting in Improving Conservation Status of Threatened and Rare Species" (and appears in response to the Convention on Biological Diversity Strategic Goal 2 which is to "Reduce the Direct Pressure on Biodiversity and Promote Sustainable Use").

    The project has directly contributed in Year 1 to the following areas of the NBSAP:

- The objective of adopting alternative measures that have the lowest ecological footprint [Strategic Objective B1 (ii)] through undertaking training and supporting the introduction of cocoa farming in the 14 project villages *(see Activity 4.2)*.

- The objective of undertaking inventories to ensure sustainable utilisation of forest biodiversity [Strategic Objective B1(v)] through assessing species data and conducting surveys of forest birds and camera trap surveys of mammals and forest indicator species to identify potential areas to establish high conservation value community forests (HCV-CF) in the project area *(see Activity 1.3)*.

- The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) / The Convention on Biological Diversity collaboration on REDD+ projects, and in particular

    - The application of safeguards for biodiversity

    - Indicators to assess the contribution of REDD+ to the objectives of the CBD

    - Monitor the impacts of REDD+ projects on biodiversity

    The project has directly contributed in Year 1 to these areas by:

    - Increasing the understanding of biodiversity in the community forests of the project area and identifying where the key areas of high conservation value are so that the future establishment of HCV-CFs can maximise the safeguarding of biodiversity *(see Activities 1.3 and 1.4)*.

    - Working with local farmers to train them on sustainable agriculture practices that both reduce deforestation and tie in the sustainable agricultural practices with conservation of forest resources, such as through the growing of cocoa under forest canopy *(see Activity 4.2)*.

6.   Project Support to Poverty Alleviation

The key beneficiaries of the project in terms of poverty alleviation are community members in the 14 project villages. In particular the project benefits some of the most marginalised in these communities including:

- Households with the greatest food insecurity and lowest dietary diversity, by clearly understanding the issues and putting in place actions aimed directly at increasing this security and diversity *(see Activities 3.3, 3.5 and 3.7, 4.1-4.3)*.

- Women, through a gender inclusive approach and an emphasis on inclusion in leadership and governance roles *(see Activities 3.4, 3.5, 4.2 and 4.4)*.

- Farmers, through:

    - o direct agricultural training to increase yields, diversification in crops to improve nutritional value, improvement in techniques around production and harvesting as well as decreasing loss from climate change and pests. Further training will address post harvesting to reduce food or quality loss to enable storage and decrease the hunger season *(see Activities 4.1-4.3)*.

    - o training on farming as a business, including processing, marketing and improving access to markets to increase income *(see Activity 4.2)*.

- Youths and others in the project communities with the lowest income, through food / cash for work schemes *(see Activities 4.5-4.6)*.

The project also contributes to the alleviation of poverty across whole community by:

- Improving access to communities and to markets *(see Activity 4.6)*.

- Protecting access to ecosystem services through protecting community forest and through developing more inclusive governance *(see Activities 5.1-5.4)*

- Increasing access to finance through the establishment of saving and loans schemes to develop enterprises and diversify income *(see Activity 4.4)*.

- Facilitating improved governance including increasing the voice of different parts of the community in decision making and training in the development of democratic organisations *(see Activities 5.1-5.2)*.

The project has been designed so that direct benefits will be realised during the course of the project specifically for the project communities but also to a degree to surrounding communities through increased trade. The project also provides indirect benefits through the commitment to review and understand the outcomes and apply them as appropriate to the other 108 communities supported by GRC around GRNP.

We expect the project's participatory approach will create ownership and gender inclusive governance structures and the "training of trainers" approach is expected to create long term sustainable impact on food security and income.

During Year 1 of the project the major achievement in poverty alleviation has been through

- The establishment of VSLA schemes in all 14 communities *(see Activity 4.4)*.

- The training of 108 farmers on improved production techniques for cocoa farming *(see Activity 4.2)*.

- The running of a food for work scheme to support the rehabilitation of land for cocoa farming with 268 beneficiaries *(see Activity 4.5)*.

7. Consideration of Gender Equality Issues

A key figure during key launch events such as launch of VSLA activities *(see Doc 6.8)* and the consultative meetings at the start of the project was the Mammy Queen, who acts as the representative for all women in the Chiefdom. As such getting her support was a key component in signalling the intent of the project in terms of gender inclusivity.

Both GRC and CSSL undertook gender training in Sep 2019 and as a result of that GRC has drafted a gender policy and is currently going through the process of approval so that it can be embedded in the organisation. GRC already has a Gender Co-ordinator in the organisation who works with the Access to Gender Action Learning System (AGALS) and she is also the supervisor for the work of the cocoa team in the field. As such a gender inclusive approach is embedded in all community work undertaken by GRC and is also a cornerstone of this project given the critical role of women in terms of food security in the project communities. However, as well as addressing gender equality issues through the focus of the project work on food security, the project also directly addresses gender inequality through some key activities and indicators such as through:

- Establishing land use plans through a participatory, gender sensitive approach (Indicator 3.4)

- Training farmers in improved agricultural production and marketing techniques and skills with 50% of the targeted 182 farmers being female (Indicator 4.2)

- Establishing village savings and loan schemes in the 14 communities to support both men and women, with at least 2 women in leadership positions (Indicator 4.4)

- Supporting communities to establish HCV-CF committees with representation from all user groups (Indicator 5.1). This includes women as one of the key user groups.

During Year 1 of the project some significant progress has been made in supporting gender equality but more needs to be done in Years 2 and 3.

The establishment of savings and loans schemes in all 14 project communities *(see Activity 4.4)* by the end of year 1 will enable women to access finance. Of the 14 groups that were established 5 women have been elected as chairs (36%) with another 3 in leadership roles. This is lower than was anticipated and therefore will be a focus of work going forward in Year 2.

Training of farmers in Year 1 *(see Activity 4.2)*, during 2019 when WABiCC co-funding was used was 42% female but this has been increased to 50% female in 2020 on training funded directly by Darwin *(see Doc 4.2)*.

There is already a gender co-ordinator in place in the cocoa farmers association for Malema and a focus on gender equality in the project area over the last year has meant that the percentage of women selling cocoa to the farmers association is 37% compared to an average of 23% across the Malema Chiefdom as a whole *(see Doc 4.2)*.

In Year 2 we are aim to launch gender training targeting one member from each community on gender awareness and approaches, who will then be the gender champion training others and contributing to gender awareness and inclusion in village and project planning meetings. Furthermore we will also be modelling a female only cocoa farmers field school, and possibly other agriculture crops, to encourage more female farmers to engage in cocoa farming and other cash crop businesses.

8.   Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation is occurring during the course of the project in a number of ways.

In terms of project reporting a half year report *(see Doc F)* and this annual report have been submitted. A separate detailed financial report is also being submitted for Year 1. In addition, where there has been a need for a significant change to resourcing or redirection of expenditure a Change Request has been submitted and approved *(see Doc E)*.

At the project management and workstream management level project kick-off activities departmental meetings were held in July 2019. This was followed up by a meeting that was held by the RSPB Conservation Science team when they were in Gola to familiarise GRC staff with the planned research and to establish research protocols *(see Doc 1.3)*. A full project kick-off meeting was then held with GRC staff in Nov 2019.

A Darwin Working Group was also established towards the end of Jan 2020 bringing together staff working on the project from the Community Development Department, the Cocoa Department and from CSSL. This group has been meeting on a two-weekly basis (COVID-19 restrictions allowing).

One of the key learnings from the project in Year 1 *(see section 9)* is the need to have closer project management co-ordination to address risks and issues and drive progress on the ground, underpinned by more detailed project planning to ensure that there is an alignment in understanding how activities will be undertaken and clarifying responsibilities and timelines, as well as increased visibility around project progress and evaluation of project impact. This will be instituted from the start of Year 2. In addition to this more time will be spent on holding review meetings to understand not only what worked well or did not, but to provide more focus on understanding if the outcomes of the project are being achieved and not just the outputs.

No separate Monitoring & Evaluation Plan has been established for the project as it was agreed that the project should continue to be implemented in line with the REDD+ monitoring framework established in 2013 and under which significant elements of this work fits, such as establishment of VSLA schemes, agricultural training, developing research and demonstration plots as well as food for work schemes.

A report is produced annually for the REDD+ programme, and the latest of these was produced in Jul 2019 immediately following intervention on the REDD+ programme across the whole of Malema, including the 14 project communities. As such this, along with the REDD longitudinal survey in 2019 (a repeat of the baseline survey from 2015) should provide a good baseline for the project as does the baseline survey on food insecurity and dietary diversity *(see Activity 3.7)* carried out in Year 1.

Evidence is collated under the REDD+ monitoring protocols, on which project staff have been trained for the last 6 years, through activity reports that are submitted on any meeting *(see Doc 3.6)*, training or other interaction with communities and include an update of the purpose and outcomes of the activity, the participants per community as well as the gender split and any required actions where relevant. This is backed up for training by attendance sheets. A physical filing system has also been established to allow Darwin evidence to be kept separate from other work to support reporting.

There is currently a push, in terms of building capacity, ownership and sustainability, to increase the level of monitoring undertaken by the communities themselves. To this end a Best Master Farmers Monitoring Tool on Rehabilitation has been established to allow Master Farmers to monitor the implementation of training in their areas *(see Doc 4.3)*. This tool has been developed incorporating pictures so that it can be used where people cannot read or write. Three master farmers from the 14 Darwin communities were trained on the tool in June 2019.

9.   Lessons Learnt

Outputs 1-2:

- There were delays in commencing fieldwork due to difficulties in importing camera traps. Although this has not proved a problem previously (e.g. in Darwin project 20-022), we are now aware of the difficulty and would incorporate more time for camera importation into our planning in the future. The old camera traps that we were forced to use due to a delay in importing the new models proved to be unreliable and gave consistent results in only 70% of cases.

- Initial results from camera trapping and bird point counts *(see Activity 1.3)* suggest that considerably more data on GTS can be rapidly collected from bird point counts. Whilst camera trapping is necessary to census particular species, combining the additional data from bird point counts with camera trap, opportunistic and habitat data may help us develop better modelling between species distribution and forest extent, location and patch size, which may help us to make more rapid assessments over the Greater Gola Landscape where detailed species surveys are impossible.

- Participatory mapping of GTS sightings with communities *(see Activity 1.4)* was difficult due to cultural differences in the way communities make use of maps. This work would be best carried out with the input of a social scientist to find better ways to access the information that communities have on GTS, and this is something we are looking to incorporate into the Project Social Scientist's workplan later in the project.

- The delay in the implementation of the livelihood component of the project *(see Outputs 3-5)* caused difficulties for local communities to fully understand the link between forest protection and food security. Whilst this is inevitable due to the nature of the project, we need to strengthen this going forward.

- Training of community champions to effectively patrol and survey *(see Activities 2.2 and 2.3)* will need an ongoing programme to:
    - Increase knowledge around biodiversity, ecology and deforestation from a scientific point of view
    - Increase knowledge around how to patrol / survey effectively (including reporting)
    - Support the effective establishment of patrols / surveys through active participation of GRC staff as they are started

- The delay in identifying CSSL resource meant that the roadshows and radio programmes *(see Activity 2.1)* was undertaken in the last couple of months of Year 1. Going forward we will look at having this spread out more across the year to ensure that this work has a continued momentum and that we collate more information around the effectiveness and impact of these with local communities

Outputs 3-5:

- Some of the targets for the Outcome Indicators *(see Section 3.3)* could be more detailed to understand and test responses and more focused to target the most vulnerable in the project communities.

- The baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity *(see Activity 3.7)*, was purposely limited in its design, and therefore some of the information that it has provided needs to be further developed

through more qualitative data to be collected during Year 2-3 and through improved understanding of some of the high level responses.

- Elected members of the Darwin communities were involved in discussion on cocoa targets at the Chiefdom level *(see Activity 3.3)*. We hope that lessons from 2019 season can be used to discuss targets at the community level going forward.

- Of the 214 community members trained on agricultural activities only 37% were female *(see Activity 4.2)*. As such we believe we need to undertake more gender focused trainings and activities will help increase female participations further.

- The delay in the start of the Project Social Scientist has had a greater knock on impact than was envisaged due to the number of activities reliant (or strengthened by the input of this role). Whilst we believe the right decision was made in terms of waiting for this person to become available because of their experience in this type of work in the Gola area and their understanding of local issues, this delay when coupled with the loss of most of the final month through to the COVID-19 outbreak has impacted progress on the project.

- Similarly some activity has been delayed because the analysis of the food security and dietary diversity survey *(see Activity 3.7)* took place at the end of Year 1 rather than earlier. As such we will seek to ensure the deployment of the Project Social Scientist as early as possible in Year 2 (as soon as COVID-19 travel restrictions allow) to re-establish momentum in this area and identify how we can accelerate work where needed.

- The turnover of staff and advisors in key positions in relation to Community Development had a bigger impact in delivering work in this area in 2019 than had been anticipated. This included the departure of:
  - o The Superintendent of the Community Development Department (resigned)
  - o The Acting Superintendent of Community Development (moved to become Monitoring & Evaluation Co-ordinator)
  - o RSPB Chief Technical Advisor (end of contract). This role was replaced by the RSPB Country Manager who was due to start in Sep 2019 but delays in recruitment meant the role was not able to deploy until Jan 2020
  - o Project Manager Cocoa Department (which necessitated the TA for Community Development moving roles to become the TA for Conservation Enterprises

- The involvement of two different departments within GRC (the Community Development and the Cocoa Departments) has meant that the need for co-ordination in terms of roles and responsibilities, as well as co-ordination in the field is important. However, with changing roles (as identified above) there has been less clarity in this area than there could have been. From Year 2 we will increase focus around effective workstream management especially across these three output areas.

- The inability to recruit for the role of Community Development Co-ordinator and the recruitment of a role with a more limited scope means that there needs to be clearer identification of activity / output owners going forward.

- Currently village loans *(see Activity 4.4)* can be granted for any activity. We plan explore the potential of linking village saving and loans groups more closely to investments in agricultural to ensure a more measurable and direct contribution to overall food security and farming as a business approach.

- Access to the project communities remains a significant challenge as the communities are remote, with half of them being across the other side of the GRNP and on the Liberian border from the main access points. As such to enable easier access to market for the communities but also to improve the general access for project activities improving access trails *(see Activity 4.6)* will be prioritized in Year 2.

Outputs 6-7:

- Whilst the project has helped to integrate the work of CSSL and GRC through the inclusion of a CSSL position in the GRC Research team and increased co-operation has been evident through the

Darwin Working Group there is more opportunity through the project to provide opportunities for GRC and CSSL staff involved in the project to drive improved collaboration. This will be done through closer project management and greater alignment on roadshows and radio programmes content *(see Activity 2.1)* going forward in Year 2.

- There is a continued need for greater financial capacity and capability development within GRC *(see Activity 7.3)*. The team is small and has had a vacancy for a significant part of the year and whilst the International Finance Unit at RSPB can support in improving project reporting, they do not have the capacity to address transformation in key finance processes. As such this will need to be a focus area for the RSPB Country Manager in Year 2 and the installation of a new finance system needs to be prioritised.

Administration / Management / Monitoring & Evaluation:

- Implementation of core project management tools in areas such as planning, critical path identification, risk and issues management as well as more regular progress tracking and reporting will create better understanding and alignment within the project team.

- The development of clear project ways of working including regular team meetings will create greater ownership of the project and an improved team culture.

- Monitoring and evaluation is currently very focused on output attainment rather than outcomes. In Year 2 with the Project Social Scientist on board there will be an opportunity for a clearer focus on outcomes measurement.

- There are a number of clear strands of work within the project. These include:

  o the collation of biodiversity and deforestation information

  o training and support for local communities in patrol and survey community forests

  o research into food security and dietary diversity

  o training in forest friendly agricultural production techniques

  o establishment of structures to support the management of HCV-CFs

During the second year the links and dependencies between these different workstreams need to be better understood to maximise the effectiveness of the project

10.   Actions Taken in Response to Previous Reviews (if applicable)

Section not applicable as this is Year 1.

11.   Other Comments on Progress not Covered Elsewhere

The project is reporting on 11 months of activity rather than 12 as the start of the project was moved back to May 2019. Therefore between this and the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak two months of Year 1 have been lost or compromised in terms of normal operations.

The project has been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak in a number of ways. These include:

- The cancellation of deployment of 2 RSPB staff who were due out in Mar 2020 to undertake mapping and social science work.

- The repatriation, also in March, of 3 RSPB staff (of whom one was subsequently furloughed) who work with GRC staff on a daily basis in advisory positions.

- Limitations in terms of travel for GRC staff where passes are needed to travel between GRC headquarters in Kenema and the project communities in Malema

- New ways of working within GRC operational locations with limits to the number of staff in the office and meetings that can be held

- Increased challenges in terms of remote working as internet reliability is not always guaranteed in Kenema

- Stopping any activities where social distancing is not possible or there are likely to be large audiences

- A refocussing of GRC effort to ensure staff safety as well as COVID-19 awareness and conduct outreach

As such, and mindful of a number of delays in Year 1 implementation a change request will be submitted in line with this report, following a thorough review of activities.

The change request will be based on the assumption that international travel will not be possible until October 2020 at the earliest and that whilst some activities will be able to continue in the meantime these will take twice as long to complete as normal due to lockdown effects.

With this in mind a review of activities that it is possible to undertake in Year 2 under COVID-19 working restrictions has been identified and a replanning exercise has been conducted resulting in a revised draft plan.

Once there is a clearer understanding around the timing of restrictions being lifted the replanning exercise will be revisited to ensure that the assumptions hold true and that there is not an overload of activity in the final two quarters of Year 2 of the project

12.   Sustainability and Legacy

Project Profile

The project was discussed at the GRC AGM in 2019, when the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, the President of CSSL and the Head of Global Land for RSPB along with the 4 GRC Directors were present and all were very supportive of the project and the approach to develop community agreements with the aim of protecting HCV areas.

The project design was also presented to the Members of Parliament and Paramount Chiefs (PCs) who represent the seven chiefdoms around Gola. The PC and MP for Malema offered assistance to improve awareness of the project with participating communities and to intervene if any misunderstandings arose. The project was also presented and discussed with the Resident Minister, an influential official in the area, who was very supportive and updates will be included in an Annual Report to all stakeholders.

A number of key donors have been informed about the project, but not in detail. We plan to present project results through a workshop at the end of the project.

Exit Strategy

The planned exit strategy is still valid, although the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak will impact the timing for the end of the project and mean that it is necessary to put in a request to replan the project. As identified this has been drafted *(see Section 11)* and is currently out for stakeholder input and alignment before the request is submitted.

There is no expectation of a change in outputs or outcomes at this stage and this is reinforced by the positive engagement with communities during Year 1. However in this regard Year 2 will be more informative as work will begin on the establishment of longer term solutions that will need to be sustained once the project is complete, such as community patrolling (see Activity 2.2), establishment and running

of HCV-CF committees *(see Activity 5.2)* as well as more focused work to drive the achievement of Outcome Indicators 2-4 *(see Section 3.3)*.

One of the benefits of the partnership is that there is a long term commitment to working in the area and there will therefore be ongoing support for sustainable community forest development and improved agricultural production once the project has finished thereby allowing lessons from the project to continue to be implemented as well as outcomes to be measured.

It is also still the plan to review the project outcome and use the understanding to implement similar work across the other 108 communities within the 7 chiefdoms around Gola or to make adjustments to ongoing work.

13. Darwin Identity

This is not the first Darwin grant that Gola has received and as the UK is the biggest bi-lateral donor in Sierra Leone it is likely that there is a higher than average recognition of the Darwin Initiative in Sierra Leone. The following audiences are likely to be familiar with Darwin

Familiarity with the Darwin Initiative
Probable High Level of Recognition
• Community leaders (e.g. Paramount Chief, village and section chiefs, Women Leaders, Youth Leaders, VSLA Committees and Farmers of the 14 local communities in Malema Chiefdom that are the direct recipients of Darwin funding)   • Local government officials (e.g. the Resident Minister, local MPs and Forestry Development Officer through participation in Darwin project meetings)   • GRC Directors, Senior Management Team and GRC / CSSL staff directly involved in the project   • INGOs in Sierra Leone
Probable Medium Level of Recognition
• The rest of the 14 local communities in Malema Chiefdom that are the direct recipients of Darwin funding   • Ministry officials within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry   • GRC and CSSL staff not involved directly in the project
Probable Lower Level of Recognition
• NGOs in Kenema   • Forest edge communities in the 7 chiefdoms and communities on the way to Malema (through day to day visual sighting of the Darwin project vehicle)   • CSSL members through meetings and newsletter

The Darwin Initiative and this project have been publicised in the following ways during Year 1:

- On the vehicle and computers purchased with Darwin funds. The project vehicle is the most visible publicity space not only for the 14 communities involved in the Darwin project but also for the general population in Kenema and for other communities that GRC work with on the way to Gola.

- The Darwin Initiative has been acknowledged at all community meetings, including the consultative meetings in November and sensitisation meetings *(see Annex 4)* and on radio broadcasts in Feb and Mar 2020.

- The Gola Rainforest National Park website has been updated to include the Darwin logo as one of the key donors for GRNP.

- An article was included in the CSSL newsletter (Nov 2019-Feb 2020) on the Darwin project *(see Doc 0.G)*.

- During a field trip by the RSPB Conservation Scientists in Nov 2019, considerable use was made of Twitter to publicise the project. Tweets were linked back to the Darwin Initiative and to the @RSPB Twitter account, which has a considerable following in the conservation science community. A blog was also written *(see Doc H)*.

- An internal RSPB talk on the project took place in Nov 2019 where the Darwin logo was used on slides.

- Several meetings have taken place with local DFID and British High Commission (BHC) personnel in Freetown to update them on the overall work at Gola and on the Darwin funding. The BHC was instrumental in securing the shipping of the camera traps for the project.

The Darwin project is recognised as a distinct project in its own right but is also contextualised in communication as part of a broader programme around the conservation of the Gola Landscape and specifically in terms of helping to deliver improved outcome on the REDD+ project.

Further work will be done on the project to ensure that the UK Government's contribution is recognised. This will be done in line with project achievement so that the impact is clear and discernible. In Year 2 channels for increasing awareness will include but not be limited to:

- Ensuring clear recognition on any conferences, seminars or workshops where the work is presented

- Working more closely with the BHC and DFID staff in Sierra Leone to ensure that they are able to discuss the contribution in any discussions they have.

- Developing a project page for the GRNP website, linking to social media as well as providing identification and acknowledgement on all partner websites and on the Gola Landscape website.

- Developing more articles for publication either internally through partner publications and/or externally.

- During any field trips by RSPB Conservation Scientists continue to use social media channels to promote the project.

14.   Safeguarding

The RSPB Safeguarding policy was last updated in Dec 2019 *(see Doc K)*. All staff (and appropriate volunteers) who join RSPB are required to undertake and pass Safeguarding Level 1 training within the first three months of joining and must refresh their training every 3 years. This includes the development of a plan of action around their jobs that needs to be agreed with their line managers. Staff who are in regular contact with children and vulnerable groups are required to undertake and pass Safeguarding Level 2 training. All RSPB staff involved in this project have undertaken and passed their Safeguarding Level 1 training but are not required to undertake Safeguarding Level 2 training.

The responsible roles in RSPB for safeguarding are defined within the policy and include:

RSPB Safeguarding Group

The role of RSPB Safeguarding Group is to provide safeguarding strategy, policies, procedures and training that enable families, children and vulnerable and protected adults to engage with the RSPB free from harm/abuse, intimidation and bullying, where their dignity is respected. Through doing this we will also protect our staff from potential allegations of abuse/inappropriate behaviour.

Safeguarding Advisers

The RSPB Safeguarding Group is supported in its role by a team of Safeguarding Advisers, with at least one in each country. The role of these advisers is to provide staff with training and advice on all matters connected with safeguarding families, children and vulnerable and protected adults.

Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team consists of the RSPB Safeguarding Group and the Safeguarding Advisers. Their contact details can be found on the Intranet under Safeguarding.

Overall responsibility for Safeguarding within the RSPB rests with the People Director who is the RSPB's Designated Safeguarding Officer supported by the Safeguarding Team.

The policy also covers:

- The clear definition of the scope of safeguarding the purpose of the policy
- The RSPB approach to safeguarding
- What the different safeguarding roles are responsible for
- An identification of different potential types of abuse
- A guide to identifying signs of harm and abuse
- The process for reporting abuse and incidents
- Dealing with the media
- Safe recruitment and running of events
- An identification of safe place considerations / requirements / procedures for different vulnerable groups of people and different situations, including social media and digital communication
- Safeguarding contacts

RSPB is also committed to ensuring that the partners it works with also have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place. To this end a policy on safeguarding was developed for GRC *(see Doc J)* in Mar 2019. An updated version of this has been developed by RSPB and is currently awaiting approval.

Additionally, GRC has a Code of Conduct in its staff handbook, covering safeguarding as well as other conduct, that all joining staff are expected to review.

In order to strengthen the safeguarding element a senior RSPB HR Officer spent 2 weeks in Mar 2020 at GRC offices in Kenema to support the updating of the safeguarding policy and to provide training on safeguarding to the Senior Management Team *(see Doc L)*. The GRC Staff Handbook is currently being updated to reflect this input.

There have been no safeguarding issues related to the project in the course of Year 1.

15. Project Expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020)

Project spend (indicative) since last annual report	2019/20 Grant (£)	2019/20 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)			0%	n/a
Consultancy costs			0%	n/a
Overhead Costs			0%	n/a
Travel and subsistence			0%	n/a
Operating Costs			0%	n/a
Capital items (see below)			0%	n/a
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)			0%	n/a
Others (see below)			0%	n/a
TOTAL				

Table completed on basis of change request submitted in December 2019. All financial figures are currently being compiled as part of the final 19/20 financial report due, for which an extension until the end of June has been requested. We anticipate a small underspend, but will confirm actual figures once all paperwork has been reviewed and compiled.

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year 2019-2020

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2019 - March 2020	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact: **70,000ha of Upper-Guinea rainforest and food-security of 22,000 people are secured by REDD+ payments which incentivize protection of High Conservation Value Community-Forest (HCV-CF) through tailored agricultural support which transforms yields.**		This project will have a direct impact through establishing HCV-CFs covering 1500 ha (25% of the project community forest area) and through improving food security for an estimated 1045 people in the project area. The project will also have an indirect impact through piloting an approach that improves understanding of the link between community forest conservation and food security which is proposed to be rolled out across the rest of the forest edge communities around GRNP. In Year 1 the key contributions in terms of a positive impact on biodiversity were in: • Generating greater clarification of forest cover and deforestation rates in the area through land use mapping • Improving knowledge of species occurrence within community forests (ongoing in Year 2) and to clarify where to effectively locate HCV-CFs • Demonstrating, through biodiversity surveys and mapping undertaken, that this is a heavily forested area supporting a range of GTs and that achieving Conservation Agreements will be important for conservation in the region	

		• Training community champions in ecology / conservation (ongoing in Year 2) In Year 1 the key contributions in terms of a positive impact in the conditions of human communities associated with biodiversity were in: • Improving knowledge of food security and dietary diversification in the project area to allow for effective improvement in these areas through the baseline survey and its analysis • Training provided to farmers around improved farming techniques • Establishing savings and loans schemes across the 14 communities to improve access to finance Measurement of quantifiable impact in both these areas will only be understood later in the project	
Outcome: **Communities in Malema Chiefdom demonstrate food security can be improved sufficiently to allow them to protect High Conservation Value Community Forest and commitment made to roll-out demonstration across Malema chiefdom.**	0.1 By EOP deforestation rates fall to zero in 1,000-1,500ha of HCV community forest (ca.25% of target leakage belt area) and remains below 2.5% (REDD+ threshold) in the rest. 0.2 By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1,045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are engaged in forest-protection activities compared to a baseline of <10% (to be confirmed by baseline (Year1) Household survey). 0.3 By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are food secure (have a HFIAS score of	0.1: Baseline survey undertaken to identify community forest coverage and potential HCV-CF areas identified 0.2-0.5: Baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity carried out in target (project) communities and control communities Baseline survey analysed and new baseline data identified 0.6: Activities to progress indicator will occur in Year 3	0.1 Ground truthing of community forest areas will be completed Specific HCV-CF sites will be mapped and agreed 0.2 – 0.5: Qualitative, gender-specific surveys will be carried out across target households, by the Project Social Scientist to examine: • key drivers of food insecurity • effective food security interventions • barriers for participation in forest protection activities

	<11.) compared to the 2017 baseline of 4%.		• perceptions and understanding of forest protection concepts.
	0.4 By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1,045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) have increased the diversity of their diet (Diet diversity HH (Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) is 3.3 by EOP.		Surveys will assess participation in project activities, and their effectiveness for improving food security and diet diversity.
	0.5 By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are aware of the 'forest protection for increased food security' concept and wish to continue forest protection through the REDD+ project compared to a baseline of <5% (to be confirmed by a baseline (Yr1) Household survey).		Results will be used to identify ways that project activities can be improved. 0.6: Activities to progress indicator will occur in Year 3
	0.6 By EOP GRC directors (including the Paramount Chief representative) hold a Darwin project review meeting at which they agree to a) roll out the 'forest-protection for increased food security' concept across the remaining 19 villages in Malema chiefdom. b) pilot the concept across 3 other chiefdoms.		
Output 1: Areas of community forest of High Conservation Value (HCV-CF) in target area are identified and current rate of loss quantified and future deforestation risk modelled. . (HCV-CF provides vital habitat for globally threatened forest species outside the protected area and potentially connective habitat between protected areas in Sierra Leone and neighbouring Liberia.	1.1. Target area (4,000-6,000 ha of CF in the leakage belt) mapped. Environmental variables such as patch size, proximity to protected forest and presence of globally threatened species (GTS) from existing species records used to 'short-list' potential HCV-CF sites by end Q1 Y1. 1.2 Deforestation rates in potential HCV-CF and in control area assessed and future deforestation risk modelled by end Q2 Y1. 1.3 Surveys of forest birds and GTS of mammals (in particular chimpanzee, pygmy hippo, elephant) and habitat surveys in potential HCV-CF sites		*Two measurable indicators have been fully delivered in Year 1* 1.1 Existing records of GTS in the project area were mapped, a new map of community forest using remotely sensed data was produced for the project area, habitat data collected to allow future groundtruthing and a short-list of potential HCV-CF sites identified on the basis of these data 1.2 Deforestation rates in project area and control communities outside project area were assessed *Two measurable indicators are behind schedule due to an initial delay in getting equipment to the field and then the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak delivery impacting travel and will need to be completed in Year 2 against revised deadlines* 1.3 Camera trap fieldwork, bird point counts, opportunistic surveys and habitat data collection partially completed with restrictions on entry to sites due to COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, retrieval of the most recent data was delayed due to RSPB international staff repatriation (see

	conducted to identify final set of at least 10 HCV-CFs accounting for at least 25% of leakage belt forest linked to the 14 target communities. Completed by end of Y1. (NB we already know how much community forest exists from a previous Darwin project). 1.4 Local communities' knowledge of globally threatened species in target area captured and participatory mapping of globally threatened species/community conflict 'hotspots' completed by end Y1. 1.5 Camera trapping study of probable activity hotspots, (identified during activities 1.3/1.4), along the Malema/Liberian Gola Rainforest border undertaken to establish pygmy hippo areas of activity and potential elephant and chimpanzee migration routes by end of Y2.	Section 3.1 and Annex 5). Clarification: The measurable indicator being used is the number of field plots to be established during the project for camera trapping, bird point count and habitat data collection. 1.4 Data on location of GTS collected from community members by GRC Research Technicians during biodiversity surveys. This work will continue when COVID-19 restrictions allow. The Project Social Scientist will also develop methods to better elicit data from communities during the course of the project (see Section 3.1) *One measurable indicator is not due to be delivered until Year 2 but delivery against the measurable indicator on time is at risk and will be dependent on the impact of the COVID-19 on operations in the field.* 1.5 Camera trapping study of probable activity hotspots along the Malema/Liberian Gola Rainforest border has been postponed due to the unavailability of data from activities 1.3 and 1.4 (see Section 3.1)
Activity 1.1 Use existing species records and landcover data to map and assess target area (4,000-6,000 ha) to identify potential HCV-CF sites used by globally threatened species	Records of GTS across target area from 2008-1019 collated and mapped New map of community forest produced for project area Potential HCV-CF's identified for further HCV mammal and bird surveys (based on land-use map)	Activity complete – no further work in next period (note that habitat data will continue to be collected to enable groundtruthing and improvements of maps)
Activity 1.2 Use remote sensing data (gathered under activity 1.7) to assesses deforestation rates in potential HCV-CF sites in target area	Deforestation rates in project area and control communities outside project area assessed	Activity complete – no further work in next period
Activity 1.3 Conduct surveys of forest birds and of GTS mammals and forest indicator species in target area (in particular chimpanzee, pygmy hippo, elephant) and habitat surveys. This will allow us to quantify which sites support most GTS and model species-habitat relationships to help guide prioritisation of HCV-CF. Results presented in a species report.	Design of spatially intensive camera trap survey protocol Selection of sampling points across 14 target communities Surveys of potential HCV-CF sites inc:	Complete surveys of potential HCV-CF sites inc: - Deploy remaining camera traps (40) - Recover camera trap images (43)

	• Deployment of camera traps (48) • Recovery of camera trap images (43) • Processing of camera trap images (14) • Undertaking bird point counts (48) • Collating habitat data at survey sites • Undertaking opportunistic primate surveys (6)	• Process camera trap images (74) • Undertake bird point counts (40) • Collect habitat data at remaining survey sites • Undertake opportunistic primate surveys Quantify potential HCV-CF sites in terms of identifying which sites support most GTS Model species-habitat relationships to guide prioritisation of HCV-CF
Activity 1.4 Capture local communities' knowledge of globally threatened species in target area and engage them in participatory mapping of globally threatened species/community conflict 'hotspots'	Capture of local community knowledge of GTS (across 8 communities)	Capture local community knowledge of GTS (across at remaining 6 communities during opportunistic surveys) Design participatory mapping exercise to capture further community knowledge of GTS / community hotspots with help of social scientist Engage communities in participatory mapping exercise and feed information into identification of HCV-CF sites
Activity 1.5 Undertake a camera trapping study of key biodiversity hotspots along the Malema/Liberian border to establish pygmy hippo areas of activity and potential elephant and chimpanzee migration routes and presents results in a migration report. This will allow us to identify sites that are vital for connectivity and assess the extent to which individuals move across the border.	No work undertaken in Year 1	Undertake camera trapping study of key biodiversity hotspots Identify areas of pygmy hippo activity Identify potential elephant and chimpanzee migration routes Write migration report Identify sites vital for connectivity Assess extent of cross-border migration
Activity 1.6 Use joint species distribution modelling to combine biodiversity and habitat data, deforestation risk data and data on HCV-CF patch size and connectivity on HCV-CF patch size and connectivity generated in output 1 to	No work undertaken in Year 1	Undertake modelling

identify and map potential HCV-CF areas in project target area and their priority for conservation and those to be targeted by the project in the trial (output 3)			Identify and map potential HCV-CF areas Identify priority of conservation for potential HCV-CF Agree areas to be targeted in the project
Activity 1.7 Assess deforestation rates in HCV-CF targeted by the project 5 years pre-project (baseline)/at EOP in project/matched control areas in a Before-After-Control-Intervention design		Assessment of deforestation rates (5 years pre project)	No work in next period
Output 2: Malema communities are aware of the importance of maintaining forest and biodiversity for the REDD+ project and take an active role in their conservation and monitoring as a tool for long-term sustainability.	2.1 Local communities' knowledge of the importance of maintaining HCV-CF to REDD+ project is assessed between control and intervention villages in year 3. 2.2 Two Education roadshows/ 5 radio broadcasts held annually in target area. 2.3 Two Champions for globally-threatened species (Pygmy Hippo, Forest Elephant or Western Chimpanzee depending on species present) trained per village by end Y1 and leading community surveys for species signs including mid-term and EOP surveys by end Y2. 2.4 HCV-CF patrols led by HCV-forest champions (1 per village) are established to identify any deforestation in HCV-CF areas. Forest patrol efficacy tested against satellite-detected deforestation and GRNP spot-checks at end of Y2 and EOP.	*One measurable indicator has not been fully met in Year 1 but is expected to be in Years 2 and 3:* 2.2: Sensitisation meetings were held in Q4 (Jan-Mar 2020), and 2 radio programmes were broadcast during the same period. *Two measurable indicators are behind schedule due to their dependence on delayed activities under Output 1 and the need for additional activity going forward in order to secure the output:* 2.3: Two champions in 6 communities (Dukor, Makpoima, Seyama, Peyama, Levuma and Congo) received training in GTS Conservation and Ecology. One champion in 2 communities (Yollo and Vaama) due the small number of people living there received training in GTS Conservation and Ecology. Similar training will occur in the remaining 6 communities in year 2 in line with the setting of camera traps by the GRC Research team and further training will be needed to enable champions to conduct surveys 2.4: Patrolling has not yet started and will be scheduled once all training is provided *One measurable indicator is not due for delivery until Year 3 and delivery is not currently at risk:* 2.1 Local communities' knowledge of the importance of maintaining HCV-CF is due to occur in Year 3	
Activity 2.1 Run 2 education road shows and 5 radio broadcasts' in project area annually.		Sensitisation meetings were held in Q4 (Jan-Mar 2020) Two radio shows were broadcast in Feb and Mar	Two education roadshows and five radio broadcasts will be undertaken but it is possible that the roadshows will be delayed until the second half of Year 2 as they may not be able to take place whilst there are restrictions from the coronavirus outbreak

			Whereas the work in this area in the first year were more focused on general community awareness of the programme there will be more focus in Year 2 to support specific activities as these occur
Activity 2.2 Train 2 Champions for globally-threatened species in each village and support them to lead community surveys for species/species signs including mid-term and EOP surveys		Two champions per community have received initial training in 6 communities One champion per community has received initial training in 2 communities	Provide training on GTS ecology and conservation will be extended to the remaining 6 communities in Year 2 Provide training on deforestation across all 14 communities Provide training on surveying / patrolling and capturing / reporting of information across all 14 communities
Activity 2.3 Support HCV champions to establish and run HCV-CF patrols to identify any deforestation in HCV-CF areas.		No work undertaken in Year 1	Identify required frequency of patrols and additional surveys Identify operational procedures around patrolling (including communication and analysis of information) Provide focused support on first patrols to ensure effective start Provide ongoing support to patrols
Activity 2.4 RSPB Forest cover analyst tests forest patrol efficacy against satellite-detected deforestation and GRNP spot-checks at end of Y2 and EOP.		Not applicable for Year 1	GRC Research team will collect results of community forest patrols and provide them to the Forest Cover Analyst Forest Cover Analyst will assess results against satellite-detected deforestation and spot-checks.
Activity 2.5 Perform EOP assessment in control/intervention villages to assess project impact on local communities' knowledge of the importance of maintaining HCV-CF to the REDD+ project.		Not applicable for Year 1	Not applicable for Year 2
Output 3: Communities in target area develop village community land use and agricultural training plans to regulate natural resource use in HCV-CF areas whilst increasing yields in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent	3.1 General Agreements to develop provisional Village Land use plans made by with the 14 villages in the target area by end Q2 Year 1 using Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).	*One measurable indicator was delivered as planned in Year 1 but we believe that we have to undertake further work to secure the output in Year 2* 3.1: Verbal consent for the project and land use planning was secured but follow up work needed to formalise these agreement and to identify how they will be integrated into REDD+ agreements	

encroachment on community forests.	3.2 Community boundaries and land use zones (including potential HCV-CF areas) mapped for the 14 communities via participatory rural appraisal and GPS data collections by end Q2 Y1. 3.3 14 Village specific agricultural targets (e.g. yield increases, improvements to processing) set by farmers through focus groups by end of Q2 Y1. 3.4 14 Village specific land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs to be protected and farms to be intensified) completed through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process by end Y1. 3.5 14 Village level agricultural training plans developed through a participatory, inclusive process by end Y1.	*One measurable indicator is behind schedule because of the delays in activities under Outputs 2 and cancellation of work due to the COVID-19 outbreak* 3.2: Ground truthing of community boundaries was undertaken during the year both during the visit of the RSPB Senior Conservation Scientist at the start of the project and ongoing data being collected by the GRC Research team in the field. However delays in completing camera trapping and because the trip of the RSPB Forest Cover Analyst has been delayed from COVID-19 *Delivery for three measurable indicators were unable to start because of the delayed recruitment of the Project Social Scientist and inability to deploy due to COVID-19 (and in the case of measurable indicator 3.4 additionally from delays in the identification of land use zones)* 3.3 / 3.5: The development of specific agricultural targets and training plans was unable to take place because of the dependency on the analysis of the baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity which only happened in Feb 2020 following the start of the Project Social Scientist 3.4: The development of village specific land use plans did not take place because of the desire to include the Project Social Scientist who only started in Feb 2020 and the need to identify land use zones which has not yet occurred	
Activity 3.1 Use Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) to develop General Agreements in the 14 villages in the target area to develop provisional Village Land Use Plans		Consultation meetings held at start of project at District, Chiefdom and Section / Village level Verbal agreement secured at all levels for project delivery including development of land use plans Follow up awareness activities undertaken	Formalise agreements to develop land use plans
Activity 3.2 Map community boundaries and land use zones using PRA and GRP in 14 villages		Activity not undertaken in Year 1	Ground truth community boundaries in all 14 communities Align approach to landscape landuse planning work Map land use zones in all 14 communities
Activity 3.3 Facilitate focus groups in each village to set specific agricultural targets.		Activity not undertaken in Year 1	Plan intervention to ensure participatory, inclusive process Facilitate focus groups in 14 communities and incorporate

		information from baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity
		Finalise and agree agricultural targets for 14 communities
Activity 3.4 Facilitate development of village land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs to be protected/farms to be intensified) through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process	Activity not undertaken in Year 1	Align approach to landscape landuse planning work
		Plan intervention to ensure participatory, gender sensitive process
		Facilitate development of 14 land-use plans through participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process
		Finalise and agree land use plans
Activity 3.5 Facilitate development of village level agricultural training plans through a participatory, inclusive process.	Activity not undertaken in Year 1	Plan intervention to ensure participatory, inclusive process
		Facilitate process to develop of 14 village level agricultural training plans
		Finalise and agree training plans
Activity 3.6 Use qualitative social science techniques to understand factors that constrain participation in project focusing on non participants in target group.	Not applicable for Year 1	Hold focus group discussions to ascertain general themes surrounding barriers to participation.
		Conduct semi-structured interviews with non-participants (using purposive sampling)
		Explore barriers and motivations for participation for men and women, across different socio-economic and demographic groups.
Activity 3.7 Carry out baseline/end of project sample household surveys on food insecurity/dietary diversity (using the Food Insecurity Access Scale and Household Diet Diversity Score). Baseline data will be gathered by Andreas Kontoleon and GRC Research technicians as part of scheduled REDD+ monitoring and analysed by the social scientist in Yr1 Q4. EOP surveys will be led by the RSPB Social scientist with guidance from Andreas.	Baseline survey on food security and dietary diversity carried out	Carry out social science research to build on understanding of baseline survey and the design of an appropriate EOP survey instrument
	Survey analysed and new baseline indicators established	
	Baseline information collected on non-timber forest product use, awareness of forest protection concepts and forest protection activities	

| Output 4: Target communities trial implementation of land use and agricultural training plans which regulate natural resource use in HCV-community forest whilst increasing crop production/diversification in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on HCV-community forest. | 4.1. 14 community demonstration/on-farm research plots established and inputs provided through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) by end Yr1.

4.2. Farmers from 182 target households (50% men, 50% women) trained in improved agricultural production/marketing techniques, and skills through (gender sensitive Farmer Field School training), and have put into practice at least two of these techniques on their own farms by end Yr2.

4.3 At least one new or diversified forest-based livelihood being implemented in each target village by end Yr2.

4.4 A savings and loan scheme running in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women, with at least two women in leadership roles by end Yr1. (Baseline: no schemes currently exist)

4.5. Small-scale improvements to access trails for each of 14 villages completed through 'food for work' schemes (by end Yr1) allowing the number of HHs selling goods in local markets to increase by 20% on baseline on baseline household by EOP.

4.6 75% of target villages have met their specific agricultural targets on agricultural land adjacent to protected HCV-CF by EOP | *One measurable indicator was delivered as planned in Year 1 but we believe that we have to undertake further work to secure the output in Year 2*

4.4: A savings and loan scheme was established in all 14 project communities in Year 1, but more work will be carried out to identify is there is additional demand for further schemes in Year 2

One measurable indicator is on target to be delivered according to plan

4.2 108 farmers were trained in improved agricultural production / marketing techniques with 42% ofthese being women in 2019 and 50% in 2020. Further activity will be undertaken in Year 2 aligned to the results from the food security and dietary diversity survey

Two measurable indicators are behind schedule because of delays in activities under Output 3

4.1 / 4.3: No community demonstration/ on-farm research plots were established, nor any new or diversified livelihoods implemented due to dependence on input from work on food security and dietary diversity

One measurable indicator although not yet behind schedule is at risk due to delays in Output 3

4.6: Although this is EOP target delays in the development of agricultural targets and plans due to delaying this activity to get input from work on food security and dietary dependency mean that there is a reduced amount of time to ensure that 75% of target villages have met their specific agricultural targets

One measurable indicator has not been completed but there is a discrepancy between the indicators and the plan that was not identified

4.5: No small-scale improvement to access trails have been made in Year 1 as identified in the indicator. However this activity is planned as an ongoing activity starting in Year 1 but ending in Year 3 | |
| Activity 4.1 Establish 14 community demonstration/on-farm research plots (1 per village) and provide inputs (e.g. quality seeds for target value chains through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) | Activity not undertaken in Year 1 | Identify relevant demonstration / on-farm research plots based on analysis from the food security and dietary diversity survey |

		Establish community demonstration / on-farm research plots in at least 7 of the 14 communities
		Provide required inputs (e.g.) seeds as required
Activity 4.2 Train farmers from target households (50% men, 50% women) in improved agricultural production/marketing techniques and skills	Training of 108 farmers (54 women:54 men) female on 5 areas ofagricultural production / marketing techniques and skills for cocoa	Train farmers in new production / marketing techniques and new crops (with input from analysis of food security and dietary diversity study and outputs from ensuing focus groups)
		Undertake activities and engagement to drive training that is 50% female including gender awareness training
		Support farmers to implement techniques on own farms
Activity 4.3 Train farmers in new forest-based livelihoods and supports implementation (at least one in each target village)	Activity not started Year 1	Identify appropriate forest-based livelihood interventions for each of the 14 communities
		Train farmers in each of the 14 communities on the relevant forest-based livelihood
		Provide implementation support to the 14 communities (dependent on chosen forest-based livelihood this activity may need to continue in Year 3)
Activity 4.4 Establish a savings-loan scheme in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women and more than 2 women in leadership roles.	Village & Savings Loan Associations (VSLA) established in all 14 project communities	Supply training and kit to identified 2nd VSLA groups
	Training on VSLA management given in all 14 project communities	
	Materials to support establishment of VSLAs distributed in all 14 project communities	
	Training on small business establishment given in all 14 communities	

Activity 4.5 Establish 'food for work' schemes in each village.	Food for work schemes to rehabilitate land for cocoa production undertaken resulting in payments to 268 beneficiaries	Identify priorities for food for work schemes in Year 2 Support selected farmers based on agreements made after targets have been agreed
Activity 4.6 Run 'food for work' schemes that improve access trails allowing local goods to reach markets	Activity not undertaken in Year 1	Identify required access trail improvements Prepare agreement and workplan including budget Undertake work on access roads Track numbers of households selling goods in local markets
Output 5: 14 Target communities have committed to protect HCV-CF in return for tailored agricultural training/ equipment to increase yields sustainably provided by the GRC REDD+ project through Conservation Agreements (revised MOUs) which will be embedded, post-project, in Sierra Leone's Community Forest Laws.	5.1 Community bylaws protecting HCV-CF agreed by 14 villages by end Y2. 5.2 In each village a HCV-CF Committee with representation from all forest user groups elected to support bylaws, protection of HCV-CF and Conservation Agreement. 5.3 Five-year Conservation Agreements between the 14 target communities and GRC signed by end Y3. In these, GRC will commit to deliver agricultural support tailored specifically to community's needs, as well as support for community protection of HCV-CF through the REDD+ project, in return for communities protecting i.e. ensuring zero deforestation in HCV-CF. 5.4 Communities engaged in developing Community Forest process as it develops, for example , forming and registering Community Forest Associations (by EOP), with a view to developing Community Forest Management Plans (with project HCV-	*One measurable indicator due to start in Year 1 has not yet started and is likely to be delayed slightly* 5.2: Work to establish HCV-CF committees in the 14 project communities which was due to have started in the second half of Year 1 has not yet started. Delays in achieving Output 1 has impacted the start of work on this indicator as setting up committees too far ahead of identification of the specific areas would be counter-productive. It is expected that this activity can happen in line with the development of by-laws (Indicator 5.1) and be completed in Year 2 *Four measurable indicators were not due to start in Year 1 and are still expected to be achieved within the agreed timeline* 5.1: It is still expected that work to achieve this element of the output can still be undertaken in Year 2 as long as there are no significant delays from the COVID-19 outbreak 5.3 / 5.4 Work on the development of 5-year conservation plans and community engagement in developing Community Forest processes is due to start in Year 2 and run to the end of the project. If a request for an extension due to the COVID-19 outbreak is granted we expect to achieve this element of the output 5.4 The paper to be developed for submission to the FDA is due to be delivered before the end of the project and we expect to achieve this, as it will be written at some point during the last year of the project to enable enough work to have been completed on the ground.

	CF sites included as 'zero deforestation zones) post-project. 5.5 A paper submitted to the FDA which shares lessons learned from this project to inform Community Forestry Policy across Sierra Leone.		
Activity 5.1 Support village communities to develop bylaws to protect HCV-CF		Not applicable for Year 1	Provide initial training on gender inclusive planning and governance Develop draft bylaws Review draft bylaws with key representatives from communities Finalise and agree bylaws Hold awareness sessions on bylaws with local leaders
Activity 5.2 Support village communities to establish a HCV-CF committee with representation from all forest user groups.		Concept of HCV-CF discussed at consultative meetings in Nov 2019	Define and draft a gender inclusive governance committee structure Develop draft operations manual for committees Review structure and operations manual with key representatives from communities and incorporate suggestions Support selection process and establishment of committees across 14 communities Identify and provide further training
Activity 5.3 Facilitate development and agreement of 5 year conservation agreements between the 14 target communities and GRC		Not applicable for Year 1	Review current Memorandums of Understanding with key representatives from communities to understand strengths and weaknesses Identify areas for improvement and scope of conservation agreements Draft template for new 5 year conservation agreements
Activity 5.4 Facilitate communities' engagement in the Community Forest process		Not applicable for Year 1	Potentially engage consultant to provide initial training on gender/human

			rights awareness, planning and visioning through a methodology that can engage non literate community members to enable inclusiveness. Identify specific focus areas for support Hold regular workshops on different focal areas to support community engagement in the planning and establishment of community forests
Activity 5.5 Write and disseminate paper to the FDA and other relevant audiences.		Not applicable for Year 1	Not applicable for Year 2
Output 6: The GRC (proponent of the Gola REDD+ project) reviews/refines their model for providing livelihood support to communities in the REDD+ leakage belt to deliver greater impact for biodiversity and livelihoods.	6.1 Community representatives (including paramount chiefs) from all 6 neighbouring chiefdoms visit Darwin project villages by end Q1 Yr. 3. 6.2 By EOP GRC directors (including the Paramount Chief representative) hold a Darwin project review meeting	Not applicable for Year 1	
Activity 6.1 Facilitate visits by representatives from all 6 neighbouring chiefdoms to Darwin project villages.		Not applicable for Year 1	Activity being postponed to Year 3
Activity 6.2 GRC organises and hold a Darwin project review meeting to review/refine their model for providing livelihood support to communities in the REDD+ leakage belt.		Not applicable for Year 1	Not applicable for Year 2
Output 7: Project partners increase their capacity to implement the Gola programme.	7.1 By end Y2Q2 CSSL Community Development Co-ordinator is co-ordinating community development work in project area with support of GRC staff and other CSSL staff are contributing to the Gola work programme in Malema. 7.2 By EOP CSSL Community Development Co-ordinator, in partnership with GRC staff, has developed a post project plan for community development work for the Malema chiefdom and other CSSL project staff involved in the project have	*One measurable indicator is on track* 7.5 The Project social Scientist has delivered two presentations this year on techniques that will be used in this project and is due to deliver two more next year with a greater focus on work conducted under the project *One measurable indicator is subject to revision with the change request being submitted in line with this report but will is on track if the change request is granted* 7.1 It was not possible to recruit anyone with the capability to undertake the role of Community development Co-ordinator and instead a facilitator was hired by CSSL to work with GRC and co-ordinate CSSL input into the project, achieving a higher level of integration that will continue in Year 2	

	Gola project activities built into their annual workplans. 7.3 By end Y2Q2 project GRC is submitting financial reports to RSPB using Darwin templates. 7.4 By EOP GRC is submitting financial reports directly to donors and having them approved. 7.5 By end Yr 2 social scientist has given at least 2 and by EOP 4 presentations to project/RSPB staff/wider conservation community (e.g. Cambridge Conservation Initiative, on measurement of social impact of conservation projects/value of social science in conservation projects. 7.6 By EOP at least 2 members of staff from each of GRC and CSSL are able to use some social science techniques (e.g. Food security/Diet diversity surveys) to monitor social impact of conservation projects.	*One measurable indicator is not due for delivery until Year 2 and delivery is not currently at risk* 7.3 It s expected that GRC will be submitting financial reports to RSPB using Darwin templates by the end of the second quarter of Year 2 *Three measurable indicators are not due for delivery until the end of the project and delivery is not currently at risk:* 7.2 It is expected that by the end of the project a post project plan will have been jointly developed by GRC and CSSL for community development n the Malema chiefdom and that Gola activities will be incorporated into CSSL annual workplans 7.4 It is expected that by the end of the project GRC will be submitting financial reports directly to donors and having them approved 7.6 It is expected that 4 members of GRC / CSSL staff will be able to use social science techniques in the filed to monitor social impact of conservation projects. This will begin once the Project Social Scientist is deployed in the field
Activity 7.1: CSSL in partnership with GRC staff develop a post project plan for community development in Malema chiefdom	Not applicable for Year 1	Not applicable for Year 2
Activity 7.2: CSSL in partnership with GRC staff build Gola project activities into their annual workplans.	Not applicable for Year 1	Not applicable for Year 2
Activity 7.3: RSPB finance staff continue to build GRC staff capacity in financial reporting	Top level identification of GRC finance issues and capability undertaken GRC financial calendar drafted to improve timeliness of reporting	Complete Finance capability review Complete and agree GRC financial calendar Review and redesign key GRC financial processes (budgeting, forecasting, financial reporting, management reporting) Appoint TA to implement new financial system

		Start installation of new finance system (activity likely to cut across Year 2 and Year 3)
		Identify specific finance training requirements and undertake training in at least one area with RSPB financial staff
Activity 7.4: Presentations on the importance of measuring social impact of conservation projects/ value of social science to conservation projects made to project/RSPB/CCI staff.	Presentation given at the RSPB annual science meeting (Nov 2019) Presentation given at the Zoological Society of London (Mar 2020)	Give presentation at GRC by the on social science techniques Give presentation at RSPB Annual Science Meeting or at the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (Year 2 or 3 to be determined)
Activity 7.5: GRC/CSSL staff trained in the use of social science techniques	Not applicable for Year 1	Conduct generic training on social science techniques, facilitation and community outreach for GRC and CSSL Conduct one-to-one training for GRC and CSSL staff during the design of qualitative surveys Mentor GRC and CSSL staff to carry out surveys in communities Identify any additional key areas of training required (e.g. data management and analysis skills) and conduct workshops for appropriate GRC and CSSL staff

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

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: 70,000ha of Upper-Guinea rainforest and food-security of 22,000 people are secured by REDD+ payments which incentivize protection of High Conservation Value Community-Forest (HCV-CF) through tailored agricultural support which transforms yields.			
Outcome: Communities in Malema Chiefdom demonstrate food security can be improved sufficiently to allow them to protect High Conservation Value Community Forest and commitment made to roll-out demonstration across Malema chiefdom	0.1 By EOP deforestation rates fall to zero in 1,000-1,500ha of HCV community forest (ca.25% of target leakage belt area) and remains below 2.5% (REDD+ threshold) in the rest. 0.2 By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1,045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are engaged in forest-protection activities compared to a baseline of <10% (to be confirmed by baseline (Year1) Household survey). 0.3 By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are food secure (have a HFIAS score of <11.) compared to the 2017 baseline of 4%. 0.4 By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1,045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) have increased the diversity of their diet (Diet diversity HH (Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) is 3.3 by EOP. 0.5 By EOP 70% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% Female, 50% male) are aware of the 'forest protection for increased food security' concept and wish to continue forest protection through the REDD+ project compared to a baseline of <5% (to be	0.1/0.2 BACI (beforeafter- Control intervention) comparison of CF deforestation rates, comparing annual rates at beginning/end of project in intervention and control areas using freely available Landsat and Global Forest Watch data groundtruthed with field surveys 0.3/0.4. Baseline and EOP sample household surveys of food security and diet diversity (using the Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) and Household Diet Diversity Score (HDDS). 0.5 Report from end of project survey to assess project impact on local communities' knowledge of the importance of maintaining HCV-CF to the REDD+ project.	Malema communities willing to engage in this project. *We think this will hold true because we have worked in the area for the past 5 years and target communities are now requesting more tailored livelihood support from the REDD+ project.* Agricultural yields can be increased enough to enable communities to protect 25% of their forest. *We think this will hold true because our work so far with communities suggests that yields are so low that they can be transformed with sustainable methods.* Exchange rates do not devalue the grant/cofunding available such that the project cannot meet its objectives. *We think this will hold true because the general pattern (2015-2018) is that the value of the Leone in respect to GBP has fallen. This means an underspend is more likely but we have costed our budget conservatively.* No external influences on deforestation – e.g. immigration, external development pressures. *We think this will hold true because the forest across the Liberian border is*

	confirmed by a baseline (Yr1) Household survey). 0.6 By EOP GRC directors (including the Paramount Chief representative) hold a Darwin project review meeting at which they agree to a) roll out the 'forest-protection for increased food security' concept across the remaining 19 villages in Malema chiefdom. b) pilot the concept across 3 other chiefdoms.	0.6 Copies of minutes from GRC meetings, copy of MOU.	*comparatively sparsely populated. In addition, the governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia recently signed a MoU to mark their intention to collaborate to patrol transboundary forest.* GRC and Malema communities willing to revise MoUs. *We think this will hold true because the current programme of agricultural support ends in 2021 (Y2) This provides a natural point at which GRC and communities will evaluate and revise the MoUs.*
Output 1: Areas of community forest of High Conservation Value (HCV-CF) in target area are identified and current rate of loss quantified and future deforestation risk modelled. . (HCV-CF provides vital habitat for globally threatened forest species outside the protected area and potentially connective habitat between protected areas in Sierra Leone and neighbouring Liberia.	1.1. Target area (4,000-6,000 ha of CF in the leakage belt) mapped. Environmental variables such as patch size, proximity to protected forest and presence of globally threatened species (GTS) from existing species records used to 'short-list' potential HCV-CF sites by end Q1 Y1. 1.2 Deforestation rates in potential HCV-CF and in control area assessed and future deforestation risk modelled by end Q2 Y1. 1.3 Surveys of forest birds and GTS of mammals (in particular chimpanzee, pygmy hippo, elephant) and habitat surveys in potential HCV-CF sites conducted to identify final set of at least 10 HCV-CFs accounting for at least 25% of leakage belt forest linked to the 14 target communities. Completed by end of Y1 (NB we already know how much community forest exists from a previous Darwin project). 1.4 Local communities' knowledge of globally threatened species in target area captured and participatory mapping of globally threatened species/community conflict 'hotspots' completed by end Y1.	1.1 Report showing location of and presence/absence of GTS across target area to identify potential HCV-CF sites. 1.2 Report of baseline deforestation survey of potential HCV-CFs derived from remotely sensed data 1.3/1.4 Survey reports	Survey methods/equipment are appropriate to terrain. We have already trialled survey techniques and equipment in as part of REDD+ monitoring and under Darwin Initiative project 20-022 (e.g. chimpanzee nest counts, camera trapping, pygmy hippo surveys, bird point counts)

	1.5 Camera trapping study of probable activity hotspots, (identified during activities 1.3/1.4), along the Malema/Liberian Gola Rainforest border undertaken to establish pygmy hippo areas of activity and potential elephant and chimpanzee migration routes by end of Y2.	1.5 Report and maps showing HCV-CF areas in project target areas and their priority for conservation and those to be targeted by the project in the trial (output 3).	
Output 2: Malema communities are aware of the importance of maintaining forest and biodiversity for the REDD+ project and take an active role in their conservation and monitoring as a tool for long-term sustainability.	2.1 Local communities' knowledge of the importance of maintaining HCV-CF to REDD+ project is assessed between control and intervention villages in year 3. 2.2 Two Education roadshows/ 5 radio broadcasts held annually in target area. 2.3 Two Champions for globally-threatened species (Pygmy Hippo, Forest Elephant or Western Chimpanzee depending on species present) trained per village by end Y1 and leading community surveys for species signs including mid-term and EOP surveys by end Y2. 2.4 HCV-CF patrols led by HCV-forest champions (1 per village) are established to identify any deforestation in HCV-CF areas. Forest patrol efficacy tested against satellite-detected deforestation and GRNP spot-checks at end of Y2 and EOP.	2.1 Copy of assessment report. 2.2 Copies of progress reports/photos. 2.3. Copies of Community survey reports 2.4 Copies of Community forest patrol efficiency reports	Community members willing in engage in awareness raising and conservation/monitoring activities. We think this will hold true because We have trailed the Champion approach successfully in other chiefdoms and community surveyors will be paid a stipend (for 3-4 days per month. Stipends form part of the conservation agreement. We recognise that improving knowledge is only one tool that can change behaviour. None the less, it is it essential for the long-term sustainability of the REDD+ project that communities continue to link REDD+ agricultural support with forest and biodiversity conservation.
Output 3: Communities in target area develop village community land use and agricultural training plans to regulate natural resource use in HCV-CF areas whilst increasing yields in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on community forests.	3.1 General Agreements to develop provisional Village Land use plans made by with the 14 villages in the target area by end Q2 Year 1 using Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). 3.2 Community boundaries and land use zones (including potential HCV-CF areas) mapped for the 14 communities via	3.1 Copies of agreements for each target community 3.2 Copies of draft maps.	Inputs provided by project e.g. rice mills can be replaced with no further donor funding We think this will hold true because we will have supported communities to establish Village Loan Scheme Associations – we will provide equipment to the Associations who will lend out equipment in return for a small share of the processed harvest, which will

	participatory rural appraisal and GPS data collections by end Q2 Y1.		be sold to fund repair/replacements of equipment.
			Training can be maintained i.e. passed on to other farmers in community The Farmer Field School model and particularly the role of master farmers promotes this approach.
	3.3 14 Village specific Agricultural targets (e.g. yield increases, improvements to processing) set by farmers through focus groups by end of Q2 Y1.	3.3 Copies of targets	
	3.4 14 Village specific Land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs to be protected and farms to be intensified) completed through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process by end Y1.	3.4 Copies of land use plans	
	3.5 14 Village level Agricultural training plans developed through a participatory, inclusive process by end Y1.	3.5 Copies of agricultural training plans	
Output 4: Target communities trial implementation of land use and agricultural training plans which regulate natural resource use in HCV-community forest whilst increasing crop production/diversification in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on HCV-community forest.	4.1. 14 community demonstration/on-farm research plots established and inputs provided through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) by end Yr1.	4.1-4.3, 4.5-4.6 Farmer Field School reports.	Security does not deteriorate significantly and the rural population maintains access to land. We think this will hold true because the political situation is stable.
	4.2. Farmers from 182 target households (50% men, 50% women) trained in improved agricultural production/marketing techniques, and skills through (gender sensitive Farmer Field School training), and have put into practice at least two of these techniques on their own farms by end Yr2.	4.2 and 4.3 Baseline and EOP sample household surveys.	
	4.3 At least one new or diversified forest-based livelihood being implemented in each target village by end Yr2.		
	4.4 A savings and loan scheme running in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women, with at least two women in leadership roles by end Yr1. (Baseline: no schemes currently exist)	4.4 Village Savings and Loan scheme reports	

	4.5. Small-scale improvements to access trails for each of 14 villages completed through 'food for work' schemes (by end Yr1) allowing the number of HHs selling goods in local markets to increase by 20% on baseline household by EOP. 4.6 75% of target villages have met their specific Agricultural targets on agricultural land adjacent to protected HCV-CF by EOP		
Output 5: 14 Target communities have committed to protect HCV-CF in return for tailored agricultural training/ equipment to increase yields sustainably provided by the GRC REDD+ project through Conservation Agreements (revised MOUs) which will be embedded, post-project, in Sierra Leone's Community Forest Laws.	5.1 Community bylaws protecting HCV-CF agreed by 14 villages by end Y2. 5.2 In each village a HCV-CF Committee with representation from all forest user groups elected to support bylaws, protection of HCV-CF and Conservation Agreement. 5.3 Five-year Conservation Agreements between the 14 target communities and GRC signed by end Y3. In these, GRC will commit to deliver agricultural support tailored specifically to community's needs, as well as support for community protection of HCV-CF through the REDD+ project, in return for communities protecting i.e. ensuring zero deforestation in HCV-CF. 5.4 Communities engaged in developing Community Forest process as it develops, for example, forming and registering Community Forest Associations (by EOP), with a view to developing Community Forest Management Plans (with project HCV-CF sites included as 'zero deforestation zones) post-project.	5.1 Copies of by-laws for each target community. 5.2 TOR and minutes of forest management committee meetings. 5.3 Copies of documents relating to target communities' engagement in the developing Community Forest Process, e.g. CFA registration documents, CF Management plans. 5.4. Copies of Conservation Agreements for each target community. 5.5 Copy of paper and dissemination report	Communities respect by-laws. We think this will hold true because we will have made communities aware of the importance of HCV-CF to the REDD+ project and they are already supportive of the REDD+ project. Communities are willing to and have the opportunity to engage in the Community Forestry process as it develops in Sierra Leone. We think this will hold true because RSPB and the Society for Nature Conservation in Liberia have been working (with EU funding) to support Liberian communities to engage in the new Liberian Community Forest Management process. We have found communities are keen to engage in the CF process as it protects their traditional rights over their land. In addition, we are already working with one community in Sierra Leone to develop a pilot community forest management plan funded by the USAID funded WABiCC) programme (2017-2020). Lessons from this work will guide the Darwin project.

	5.5 A paper submitted to the FDA which shares lessons learned from this project to inform Community Forestry Policy across Sierra Leone.		
Output 6: The GRC (proponent of the Gola REDD+ project) reviews/refines their model for providing livelihood support to communities in the REDD+ leakage belt to deliver greater impact for biodiversity and livelihoods.	6.1 Community representatives (including paramount chiefs) from all 6 neighbouring chiefdoms visit Darwin project villages by end Q1 Yr. 3. 6.2 By EOP GRC directors (including the Paramount Chief representative) hold a Darwin project review meeting	6.1 Reports of interviews with chiefs post-project 6.2 Minutes of GRC meeting	Weather conditions allow visits between chiefdoms. We will arrange for visits to take place in the dry season before the end of project
Output 7: Project partners increase their capacity to implement the Gola programme.	7.1 By end Y2Q2 CSSL Community Development Co-ordinator is co-ordinating community development work in project area with support of GRC staff and other CSSL staff are contributing to the Gola work programme in Malema. 7.2 By EOP CSSL Community Development Co-ordinator, in partnership with GRC staff, has developed a post project plan for community development work for the Malema chiefdom and other CSSL project staff involved in the project have Gola project activities built into their annual workplans. 7.3 By end Y2Q2 project GRC is submitting financial reports to RSPB using Darwin templates. 7.4 By EOP GRC is submitting financial reports directly to donors and having them approved. 7.5 By end Yr 2 social scientist has given at least 2 and by EOP 4 presentations to project/RSPB staff/wider conservation community (e.g. Cambridge Conservation	7.1 Copy of CSSL staff midterm report on engagement with the Gola programme 7.2 Copies of CSSL Malema community development plan and CSSL staff annual workplans. 7.3 Copies of GRC financial reports 7.4 Copies of reports/ donor approvals. 7.5 Copies of presentations.	None identified

| | Initiative, on measurement of social impact of conservation projects/value of social science in conservation projects.

7.6 By EOP at least 2 members of staff from each of GRC and CSSL are able to use some social science techniques (e.g. Food security/Diet diversity surveys) to monitor social impact of conservation projects. | 7.6 Copies of data collected by GRC/CSSL staff | |

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)

Output 1: Areas of community forest of High Conservation Value (HCV-CF) in target area are identified and current rate of loss quantified

1.1 Use existing species records and landcover data to map and assess target area (4,000-6,000 ha) to identify potential HCV-CF sites used by globally-threatened species and present results in a baseline report of potential HCV-CF sites.

1.2 Use remote sensing data (gathered under activity 1.7) to assesses deforestation rates in potential HCV-CF sites and present results in a deforestation survey report.

1.3 Conduct surveys of forest birds and GTS of mammals and forest indicator species in target area (in particular chimpanzee, pygmy hippo, elephant) and habitat surveys. This will allow us to quantify which sites support most GTS and model species-habitat relationships to help guide prioritisation of HCV-CF. Results presented in a species report.

1.4 Capture local communities' knowledge of globally threatened species in target area and participatory mapping of globally threatened species/community conflict 'hotspots'

1.5 Undertake a camera trapping study of key biodiversity hotspots along the Malema/Liberian border to establish pygmy hippo areas of activity and potential elephant and chimpanzee migration routes and presents results in a migration report. This will allow us to identify sites that are vital for connectivity and assess the extent to which individuals move across the border.

1.6 Use joint species distribution modelling to combine biodiversity and habitat data, deforestation risk data and data on HCV-CF patch size and connectivity generated in output 1 to identify and map potential HCV-CF areas in project target area and their priority for conservation and those to be targeted by the project in the trial (output 3) This will be further refined with additional data from 1.5 when it becomes available.

1.7 Assess deforestation rates in HCV-CF targeted by the project 5 years pre-project (baseline)/at EOP in project/matched control areas in a Before-After-Control-Intervention design

Output 2: Malema communities have increased awareness of the importance of maintaining forest and biodiversity for the REDD+ project and take an active role in their conservation and monitoring as a tool for long-term sustainability.

2.1 Run 2 education road shows and 5 radio broadcasts' in project area annually

2.2 Train 2 Champions for globally-threatened species (Pygmy Hippo, Forest Elephant or Western Chimpanzee depending on species present) in each village and supports them to lead community surveys for species for species signs including mid-term and EOP surveys

2.3 Support HCV champions to establish and run HCV-CF patrols to identify any deforestation in HCV-CF areas.

2.4 RSPB Forest cover analyst tests forest patrol efficacy against satellite-detected deforestation and GRNP spot-checks at end of Y2 and EOP

2.5 Carry out an EOP assessment in control/intervention villages to assess project impact on local communities' knowledge of the importance of maintaining HCV-CF to the REDD+ project.

Output 3: Communities in target area develop village community land use and agricultural training plans to regulate natural resource use in HCV-CF areas whilst increasing yields in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on community forests.

3.1 Use FPIC to develop General Agreements in the 14 villages in the target area to develop provisional Village Land Use Plans.

3.2 Map community boundaries and land use zones using PRA and GRP in 14 villages

3.3 Facilitate focus groups in each village to set specific agricultural targets.

3.4 Facilitate development of village specific land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs to be protected and farms to be intensified) through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process

3.5 Facilitate development of Village level Agricultural training plans through a participatory, inclusive process

3.6 Use qualitative social science techniques to understand factors that constrain participation in project focusing on non participants in target group.

3.7 Carry out baseline/end of project sample household surveys on food insecurity/dietary diversity (using the Food Insecurity Access Scale and Household Diet Diversity Score). Baseline data will be gathered by Andreas Kontoleon and GRC Research technicians as part of scheduled REDD+ monitoring and analysed by the social scientist in Yr1 Q4. EOP surveys will be led by the RSPB Social scientist with guidance from Andreas.

Output 4: Target communities trial implementation of land use and agricultural training plans which regulate natural resource use in HCV-community forest whilst increasing crop production/diversification in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on HCV-community forest.

4.1 Establish community demonstration/on-farm research plots (1 per village) and inputs (e.g. quality seeds for target value chains Rice, cassava groundnuts, vegetables and cocoa) provided through Farmer Field Schools (FFS)

4.2 Train farmers from target households (50% men, 50% women) in improved agricultural production/marketing techniques and skills through (gender sensitive FFS training), and support them to put at least two of these techniques on their own farms.

4.3 Train farmers in new forest-based livelihoods and supports implementation (at least one in each target village)

4.4 Establish a savings and loan scheme in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women, with at least two women in leadership roles

4.5 Establish 'food for work' schemes in each village. Food for work schemes are an established way of facilitating completion of tasks that benefit the whole community.

4.6 Run Food for work schemes that improve access trails allowing local goods to reach markets

Output 5: 14 Target communities have committed to protect HCV-CF in return for tailored agricultural training/ equipment to increase yields sustainably provided by the GRC REDD+ project through Conservation Agreements (revised MOUs) which will be embedded, post-project, in Sierra Leone's Community Forest Laws.

5.1 Support village communities to develop bylaws to protect HCV-CF

5.2 Support village communities to establish a HCV-CF committee with representation from all forest user groups.

5.3 Facilitate development and agreement of 5 year conservation agreements between the 14 target communities and GRC

5.4 Facilitate communities engagement in the Community Forest process, for example, forming and registering community forest associations with a view to developing Forest Management plans (with project HCV-CF sites included as 'zero-deforestation zones') post project.

5.5 Write and disseminate paper to the FDA and other relevant audiences.

Output 6: GRC (proponent of the Gola REDD+ project) reviews/refines their model for providing livelihood support to communities in the REDD+ leakage belt to deliver greater impact for biodiversity and livelihoods.

6.1 Facilitate visits by representatives from all 6 neighbouring chiefdoms to Darwin project villages.

6.2 GRC organises and hold a Darwin project review meeting reviews/refines their model for providing livelihood support to communities in the REDD+ leakage belt to deliver greater impact for biodiversity and livelihoods.

Output 7: Project partners increase their capacity to implement the Gola programme.

7.1 CSSL in partnership with GRC staff develop a post project plan for community development in Malema chiefdom

7.2 CSSL in partnership with GRC staff build Gola project activitites into their annual workplans.

7.3 RSPB finance staff continue to build GRC staff capacity in financial reporting

7.4 Presentations on the importance of measuring social impact of conservation projects/ value of social science to conservation projects made to project/RSPB/CCI staff.

7.5 GRC/CSSL staff trained in the use of social science techniques

Annex 3: Standard Measures

Table 1   Project Standard Output Measures

Code No.	Description	Gender of people (if relevant)	Nationality of people (if relevant)	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
6A	Number of people to receive other forms of education/training			167			167	300 *(see Annex 5)*
9	Number of species/habitat management plans (or action plans) to be produced for Governments, public authorities, or other implementing agencies in the host country			0			0	tbc (this will depend on the number of HCV-CFs established and whether conservation agreements will be made with all project communities
14B	Number of conferences/seminars/ workshops **attended** at which findings from Darwin project work will be presented/ disseminated.			0			0	2
20	Estimated value (£'s) of physical assets to be handed over to host country(ies) motorbike and a 4x4 vehicle, camera traps, a PA system and computing equipment			42,428			42,428	42,428
22	Number of permanent field plots and sites to be established during the project and continued after Darwin funding has ceased			12			12	22 (based on 25% of the 88 field sites community forests being in HCV areas)
23	Value of resources raised from other sources (i.e., in addition to Darwin funding) for project work			£35,182			£35,182	£105,546

Table 2   Publications

No publications or material has been produced over the last year that can be publicly accessed,

Annex 4 – Material supporting Outputs 1 and 2

Output 1.1 - Methods for land classification

The land cover classification was generated by training a random forest algorithm to predict land cover classes in Google Earth Engine. The manual classification was developed as set of points using a mixture of high resolution imagery (Google Earth accessed September 30th 2019), for visually discernible land cover classes, and ground surveys for cocoa carried out during Darwin project 20-022. Samples were produced in 9 clusters distributed across the seven chiefdoms surrounding Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP), where part of each chiefdom falls within the 4km REDD leakage belt around GRNP. Within each cluster, points were produced with reference to a mixture of the true colour imagery, the Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) digital terrain model, and the global forest change map (Hansen, 2013). Points encoded bare ground (n = 190), early regrowth (n = 238), late regrowth (n = 228), farm-bush (n = 202), swamp (n = 102), and oil palm (n = 200). A further set of points were produced for the forested domain hand-picked from within GRNP (n = 233) and for open water, where visible (n = 86). The cocoa survey consisted of a set of 104 polygons covering 333 ha, mainly surrounding Gola Central. These were converted to a set of points by systematically sampling from all intersections between the polygons and a 100 m x 100 m grid (n = 328). The slightly increased replication was used in order to adequately model the diversity of conditions in which cocoa occurs.

An image collection was compiled and values were extracted for each of the manually classified points before running the random forest algorithm. The image collection consisted of (1) Sentinel 1 synthetic aperture radar VV backscatter intensity averaged for the ascending phase during three periods March-April, May-June and June-August during 2019, (2) the spectral and thermal bands from a cloud-free Sentinel 2 image covering the study site (23rd February 2019) and (3) the SRTM elevation and slope values. The points were then split into a training dataset (60%; n = 1085) used only for model development, and a testing dataset (40%; n = 722) used only for validation. The random forest model (50 trees) was then produced for the training data and used to predict the class of the held-out testing data, for which classification accuracy was derived using a confusion matrix produced by the CARET package (6.0-85) in R (version 3.6.2). Subsequently the land cover classes were mapped across the study site by predicting the entire image collection. Habitat was recorded at a number of points defined as community forest in the project area in order to partially groundtruth the data. Areas recorded as community forest appear in Figure 1.
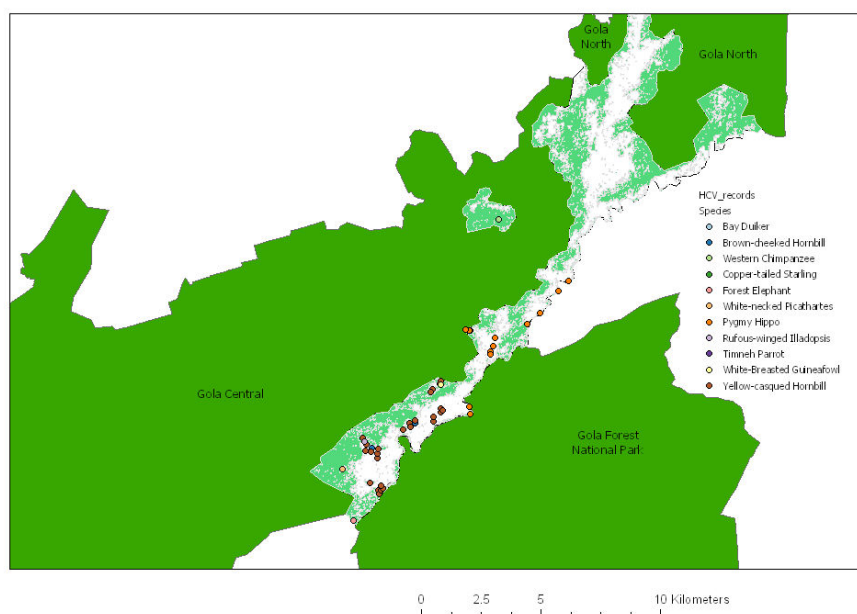
Figure 1. Records of globally threatened or near-threatened species in the project area (also referred to as High Conservation Value species in the text), derived from previous surveys and opportunistic observations from 2008-2019. Existing community forests, identified using the land classification described above, are shown in pale green. Gola Central and Gola North are part of Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leone; Gola Forest National Park is in Liberia. Although HCV species evidently occur in parts of the project area that are not community forest, we focussed surveys on forest only, as other parts of the project area are largely farmed and therefore could not be protected using the explicit mechanism linking forest protection to increased food security within this project.
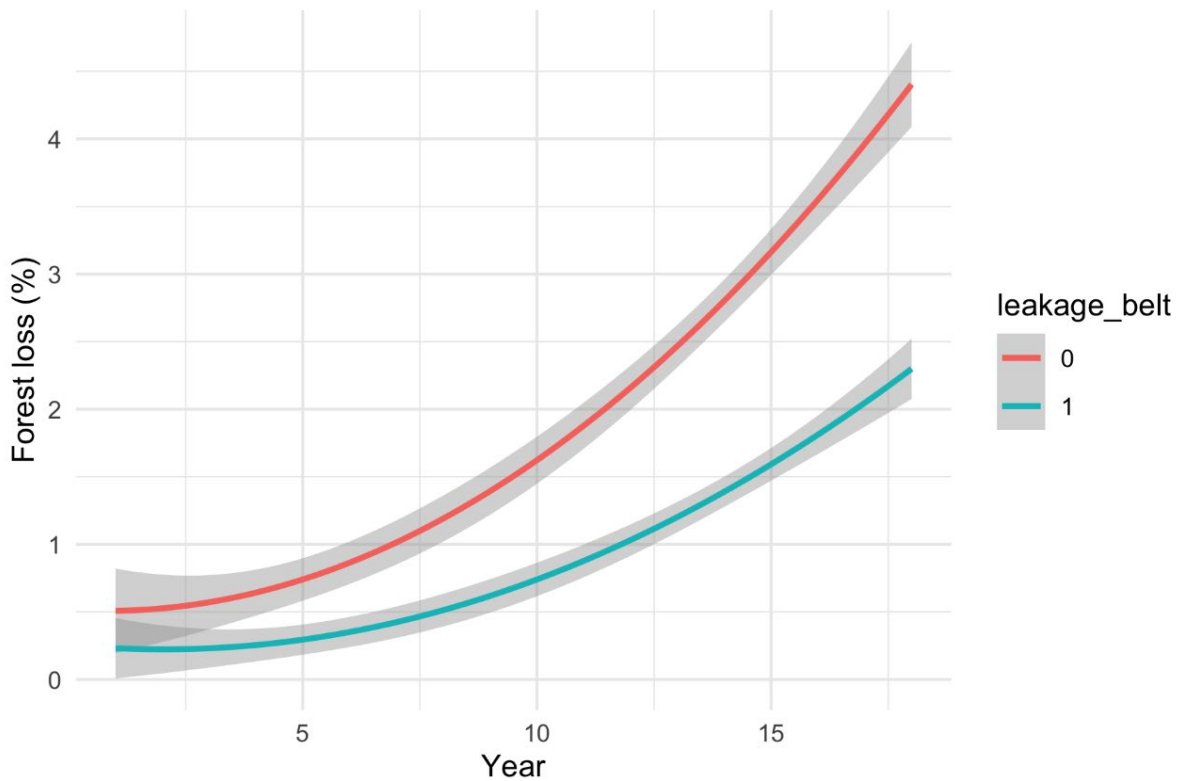
Output 1.2

Figure 2. Mean annual forest loss from villages in Malema chiefdom from 2000-2018, with 95% confidence intervals. The blue line denotes villages within the REDD leakage belt, where annual deforestation should remain below 2.5% for continued REDD accreditation; the red line denotes villages outside the leakage belt.
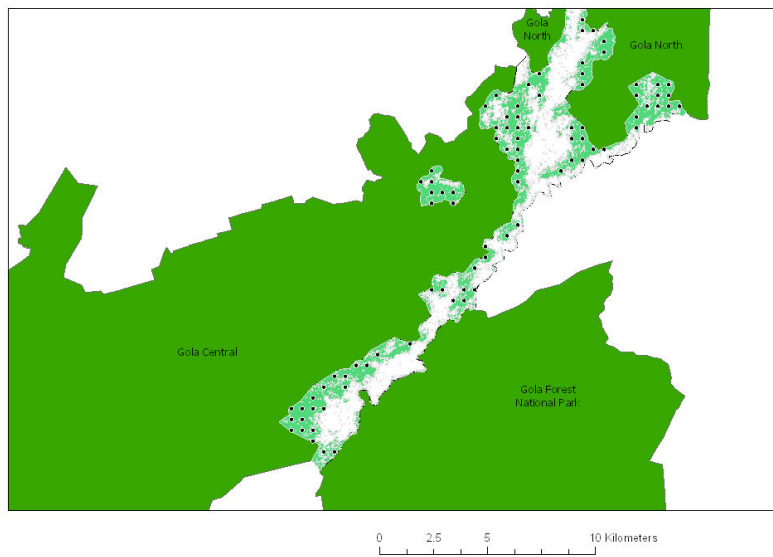
Figure 3. Location of sampling points (black filled circles) for camera trap surveys for large mammals and bird point counts.
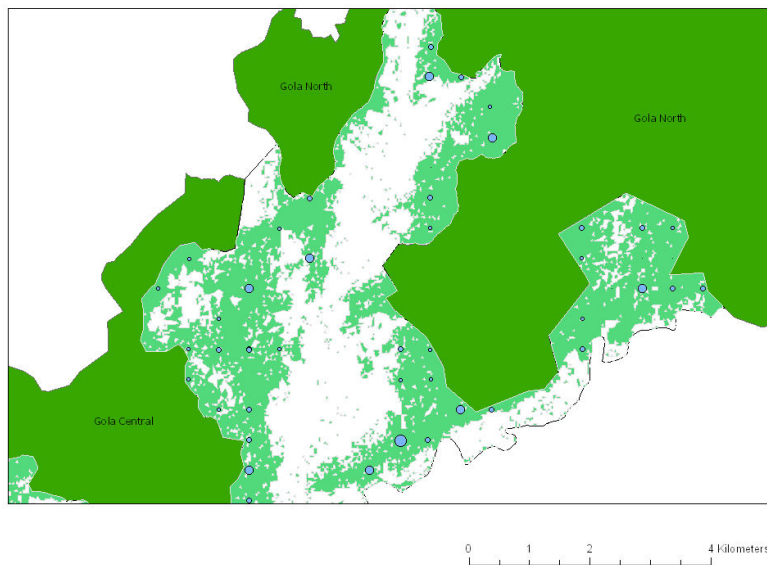

Figure 4. Bird point counts covered, with number of globally threatened species at each point (ranging from 0-4) proportional to size of blue circle

Table 1. Globally threatened and near threatened bird species and highly forest dependent species (according to BirdLife International) recorded at the 48 point counts carried out so far. Number of points indicates the number of points that the species was recorded at. EN = endangered; LC = least concern; NT = near threatened; VU = vulnerable.

Common species name	Scientific name	Number of points	Number of individuals	Red List status	Level of forest dependence
Ansorge's Greenbul	*Eurillas ansorgei*	18	20	LC	High
Black-casqued Hornbill	*Ceratogymna atrata*	3	5	LC	High
Blue-breasted Kingfisher	*Halcyon malimbica*	5	5	LC	High
Brown-cheeked Hornbill	*Bycanistes cylindricus*	14	19	VU	High
Chocolate-backed Kingfisher	*Halcyon badia*	10	10	LC	High
Copper-tailed Starling	*Hylopsar cupreocauda*	2	3	NT	Medium
Crowned Eagle	*Stephanoaetus coronatus*	2	2	NT	High
Dwarf Hornbill	*Lophoceros camurus*	10	14	LC	High
Fire-bellied Woodpecker	*Dendropicos pyrrhogaster*	14	17	LC	High
Forest Francolin	*Peliperdix lathami*	2	2	LC	High
Green-tailed Bristlebill	*Bleda eximius*	15	18	NT	High
Grey Ground-thrush	*Geokichla princei*	1	1	LC	High
Hairy-breasted Barbet	*Tricholaema hirsuta*	4	8	LC	High
Little Hornbill	*Horizocerus hartlaubi*	1	2	LC	High
Lyre-tailed Honeyguide	*Melichneutes robustus*	2	2	LC	High
Narina Trogon	*Apaloderma narina*	2	6	LC	High
Rufous-winged Illadopsis	*Illadopsis rufescens*	2	2	NT	High
Sharpe's Apalis	*Apalis sharpii*	18	18	LC	High
Shining Drongo	*Dicrurus atripennis*	13	16	LC	High
Speckled Tinkerbird	*Pogoniulus scolopaceus*	10	10	LC	High
Timneh Parrot	*Psittacus timneh*	11	64	EN	Medium
West African Pied Hornbill	*Lophoceros semifasciatus*	5	5	LC	High
Western Long-tailed Hornbill	*Horizocerus albocristatus*	6	14	LC	High
White-spotted Flufftail	*Sarothrura pulchra*	4	5	LC	High
White-Throated Greenbul	*Phyllastrephus albigularis*	1	1	LC	High
Yellow-bearded Greenbul	*Criniger olivaceus*	1	1	VU	Medium
Yellow-billed Turaco	*Tauraco macrorhynchus*	14	17	LC	High
Yellow-casqued Hornbill	*Ceratogymna elata*	33	65	VU	High
Yellow-Footed Honeyguide	*Melignomon eisentrauti*	3	3	NT	High
Yellow-spotted Barbet	*Buccanodon duchaillui*	24	24	LC	High

Table 2. Globally threatened and near threatened bird and mammal species recorded on camera traps where data has been processed (14 locations)

Common name	Scientific name	Red list status	Declining?	Number of locations
Sooty mangabey	*Cercocebus atys*	NT	decreasing	3
White-breasted guineafowl	*Agelastes meleagrides*	VU	decreasing	1
White-bellied pangolin	*Phataginus tricuspis*	EN	decreasing	1
Timneh parrot	*Psittacus timneh*	EN	decreasing	1
Bay duiker	*Cephalophus dorsalis*	NT	decreasing	2

Figure 4 (below). A few examples of Camera trap images of HCV species

Western Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) - Critically Endangered

Jentink's Duiker (*Cephalophus jentinki*) - Endangered

White-breasted Guineafowl (*Agelastes meleagrides*) - Vulnerable

Bongo (*Tragelaphus eurycerus*) - Near Threatened

Output 2.2

Banner created for the community sensitisation meetings in Feb 2020

A cross section of community stakeholders & members during the road show at the Congo Community Barray

Mariama Kargbo, the CSSL EE Officer engaging with community members in Madina

Annex 5 – List of all Attached Documents

Other documents included separately with the report

Ref	Report Section	Title
A	1. Project Rationale	Map of Project Area in Country
B		Map of Project Communities
C	2. Project Partnership	Partner Collaborative Work on Gola Strategy (Feb 2019)
D		Greater Gola Landscape Signed MoU (Feb 2020)
E	8.Monitoring & Evaluation	Change Request (Dec 2019)
F	8. Monitoring & Evaluation	26-004 Darwin Half Year Report (Oct 2019)
G	13. Darwin Identity	CSSL Newsletter (Sep 19-Feb 20)
H		RSPB Blog (Nov 19)
J	14. Safeguarding	Minimum Safeguarding Requirements for GRC (Mar 2019)
K		RSPB Safeguarding Policy (Dec 2019)
L		International Safeguarding Presentation
1.1	Output 1	Land Use Map
1.2		Mean Annual Forest Loss with Individual Communities Shown
1.3		Darwin Field Protocol
2.1	Output 2	Awareness Raising Meeting at Madina – Report (Feb 2020)
3.1	Output 3	Food Security & Dietary Diversity Survey Report
3.2		Example Letters of Invitation to Consultative Meetings
3.3		Darwin Chiefdom Level Consultative Meeting – Concept Note (Nov 2019)
3.4		Darwin Chiefdom Level Consultative Meeting – Report (Nov 2019)
3.5		Darwin Meeting with DFO and Kailahun Council (Jan 2020)
3.6		Darwin Meeting pre Camera Trapping with Northern Project Communities – Report (Jan 2020)
3.7		Darwin Chiefdom Level Consultative Meeting – Attendance Sheet (Nov 2019)
3.8		Darwin Section Level Consultative Meeting – Attendance Sheet (Nov 2019)
3.9		Darwin Sensitisation Meeting to Introduce Project Team – Attendance (Nov 2019)
4.1	Output 4	Photos from Launch of VSLA in Malema including Hand Over of Kits (May 2019)
4.2		Cocoa Training & Rehabilitation Support (2019-20)
4.3		Best Master Farmer Rehabilitation Monitoring Tool
7.1	Output 7	Summary Report from Kick Off Meetings with Senior GRC Staff (Feb 2020)

Annex 6 – List of Abbreviations

List of abbreviations used in the document

Acronym	Title
BHC	British High Commission
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CSSL	Conservation Society of Sierra Leone
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DFID	Department for International Development
DFO	District Forestry Officer
EOP	End of Project
EU	European Union
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
GFNP	Gola Forest National Park (Liberia)
GRC	Gola Rainforest Conservation – Limited by Guarantee
GRNP	Gola Rainforest National Park (Sierra Leone)
GTS	Globally Threatened Species
HCV	High Conservation Value
HCV-CF	High Conservation Value – Community Forest
HDDS	Household Diet Diversity Score
HFIAS	Household Food Insecurity Access Scale
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPAA	National Protected Area Authority
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
PC	Paramount Chief
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (plus the sustainable management of forests, and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks)
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SLL	Sierra Leone Leone (currency)
TA	Technical Advisor
UNFCC	United Nations Convention on Climate Change
VSLA	Village Savings & Loan Association
WABiCC	West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (project)

Annex 6 – Training

Table 6.1 – Anticipated Training Figures

Trainees	Training Focus	Year	Actual Numbers Trained in Year 1	Expected by End of Project
Enumerators	Training for undertaking food security and dietary diversity survey	Years 1 and 3	11	11
GRC / CSSL Research Technicians	Training on project survey techniques and setting of camera traps	Year 1	6	6
Community Champions	Training on generic ecology and conservation as well as GTS survey techniques	Years 1 and 2	14	24
Community Champions	Training on measurement of deforestation and patrolling	Year 2	0	14
GRC Community Development and Cocoa Staff / CSSL Staff	Training in facilitation, community outreach and for a core (4) in Social Science Techniques	Year 2 and 3	0	30
Community Members	Training on farming methods by the Cocoa team and agricultural extension officers in the Community Development team in GRC	Year 1-3	108	182
Community Members	Training on savings and loans schemes by VSLA Officers in GRC	Year 1	28	28
GRC Finance Staff	Training on improved reporting and finance systems	Year 2 and 3	0	5