

Darwin Initiative Main Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the “Writing a Darwin/IWT Report” Information Note:
(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/reporting-forms-change-request-forms-and-terms-and-conditions/>).

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

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2021

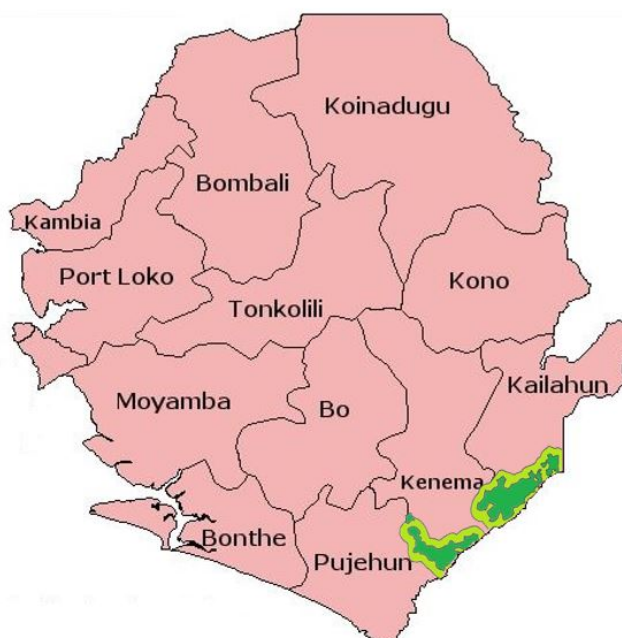
Darwin Project Information

Project reference	26-004
Project title	Linking food security and forest conservation under REDD+
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 2020 – Mar 2021) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	Annual Report 2 (April 2020 – Mar 2021)
Project Leader name	Richard Dixon
Project website/blog/social media	https://golarainforest.org/new-page https://golarainforest.org/partners-support @RSPBScience Twitter
Report author(s) and date	Richard Dixon / Andy Brock-Doyle – 31 st 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 summary

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

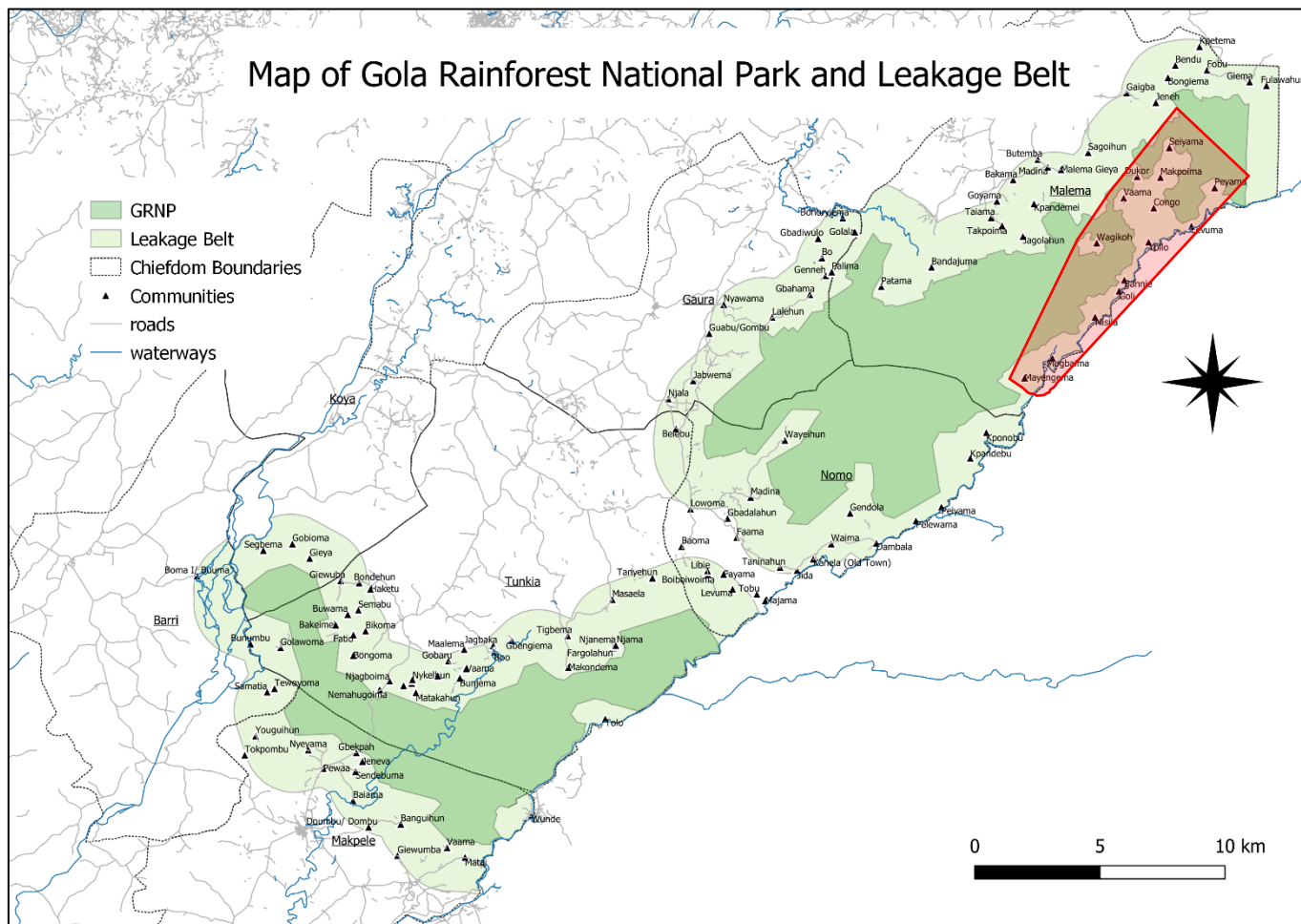


The first REDD+ project in West Africa protects GRNP and surrounds by working with forest communities. A 4km leakage-belt encompasses 122 settlements and inhabitants are amongst the poorest in Sierra Leone. At the time the proposal was written the latest available data identified that the average annual 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 and on the Darwin project with an RSPB Project Social Scientist. 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 been constrained in its evolution because of the coronavirus pandemic which resulted in all RSPB staff being repatriated and therefore having to work from a distance. In addition, restrictions from the corona virus pandemic in-country made it more difficult for travel and co-operation opportunities. However, despite this some significant achievements were made this year in the development of the partnership, including:

- The development of a new 5-year strategic plan by CSSL. This was done using an external strategic planning expert and had input not only from across CSSL but also from external advisors including both RSPB and BirdLife International.
- 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 not only the first year of implementation initiation of a new cross-border project funded by the EU (started in Jan 2020) but also a cross-border project that has gained initial approval from the IUCN Rapid Action Grant both of which complement the work being undertaken through the Darwin project.
- A joined-up response to the coronavirus pandemic that saw emergency food security relief from GRC and CSSL between Apr – Sep 2020 being co-ordinated across the 7 Gola Chiefdoms using both agreed donor funds as well as core funds from GRC operations. This joined up response was supported in the planning phase by RSPB Sierra Leone personnel and was significant in reinforcing trust between the partners and local communities in the Gola area.
- Improving partnership co-ordination through holding quarterly GRC Director's meetings to discuss strategic direction and address escalated operational issues. A number of key issues were addressed this year at Board level including improving annual budgeting at GRC, increasing capability through a strategic reorganisation, and looking at strategic changes to ways in which carbon credits are sold to maximise value going forward.
- Greater agility between GRC and CSSL in the movement of resources which saw several GRC staff move across to CSSL to implement the new EU funded trans-boundary Protected Area management support project. It is expected that this will give opportunities to staff to be able to develop their capabilities and is an important component in CSSL and GRC partnership working relationship.
- Continued implementation of the REDD programme with a focus on forest friendly livelihood support.
- Continued implementation in partnership with local communities of a number of projects focused on improving community capability around conservation of natural resources, both within the Gola Rainforest National Park but especially in community managed forest areas. This includes a new IWT project that started in October 2020.
- The deployment of the Darwin Project Social Scientist from RSPB to Sierra Leone in October 2020, who within this role has been increasing capability across both CSSL and GRC through training of staff on the ground and this has resulted in the agreement to develop a new social science position in GRC. Perhaps more importantly it has also already started to have an impact in terms of understanding of the impact of work being carried out with local communities through GRC.
- The deployment of a new RSPB Finance Technical Advisor in March 2021 which will see a new accounting system installed within 6 months and the development of a new accounting

structure and a thorough review of finance policies, processes and controls to ensure improved access to information and the ability to report on a more timely basis.

- Supporting development in other areas that has seen key governance improvement in policy areas such as DSA and travel allowances and in field operations. This is key in terms of building trust and co-operation with local communities as it drives improved standardisation of the way that different teams work with communities and reduces potential issues around equity in the way that communities are working with GRC.

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:
 - 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. Whilst this is the same as for last year, this working model was put under significant stress this year through the RSPB Research TA having to spend 6 months of the year back in Italy. However, the ability for the team to work virtually, although it had its challenges (see “Challenges and Lessons Learned” section below) underscored the robustness of the working partnership between RSPB, CSSL and GRC.
 - Although the GRC-LG Research team has many years of experience in collecting a wide range of biodiversity variables, the protocol developed by the RSPB Conservation Science team for activity 1.5 (i.e., camera trapping study of key biodiversity hotspots along the Malema / Liberian border) contained some new elements for the selection of camera trap locations. For this reason, the GRC-LG Research team was trained on this new protocol, including setting of camera traps, by the Research Technical Advisor before and during the implementation of the activity. The Research & Monitoring Superintendent has also been working in close collaboration with the RSPB Conservation Scientist and the Research Technical Advisor to help refine the protocol for activity 1.4 (i.e., participatory mapping of Globally Threatened Species) and 2.2 (i.e., Community patrols), increasing his experience in designing and planning fieldwork.
 - The funding of the Project Social Scientist role which is not only enabling increasing capability with CSSL and GRC but has had a clear impact already in terms of improved outcomes-based understanding of the impact of work being carried out. A key example of this has been around work with communities on how the impact of messaging from roadshows and radio programmes is cascaded down through communities. As a result of this the Project Social Scientist has been able to work with the CSSL implementation team about improving the way in which engagement with communities is carried out and support the development of different approaches to engagement (such as the greater use of acted out scenarios around community forestry) that will be brought into effect next year on Darwin.
 - The social science fieldwork revealed key issues and opportunities for more effectively engaging communities in forest protection and delivering livelihood support. These include: 1) documentation of an emerging threat from pit-sawing operations, and the identification of the opportunity to engage influential community members alongside traditional authorities to address this effectively. 2) identification of illiteracy as a barrier for some communities to participate in village savings and loans schemes. 3) identification of community perceptions surrounding the community development fund

distribution as a key determinant of participation. Steps to address this have been identified through staff consultations and are to be enacted in the coming months (e.g. revision of existing procedures, improvement of community engagement approaches and development of effective communication methods). 4) identification of the wider context of food insecurity and opportunities to tailor livelihood interventions to meet needs of communities. Important factors for designing livelihood interventions include availability of labour, existing agricultural and land-use practises, existing income generating activities, size of community, social dynamics and distance to markets. For instance, swamp development is poorly suited in communities lacking sufficient labour- and time resources. The work highlighted a need to build capacity that allows GRC staff to effectively co-develop livelihood interventions with communities to promote community ownership. This has been acted on through the development of a restructuring plan, which will mean field staff are assigned to all chiefdoms to allow long-term community relations to be developed. The plan will be implemented over the course of next year.

- Increased understanding of how to operationalise community forestry work with communities. Following on from a previous USAID funded project Darwin is providing significant information to the partners on the way to: effectively implement community forestry initiatives on the ground especially in terms of the ways in which communities are engaged; the understanding of key areas that need to be addressed before community forestry work can be effective; and, the way to support communities establish structures to drive community forestry as well as key approvals to make community forestry changes sustainable in the Gola context. In addition to this the GRC Community Forestry Officer (who is leading the work in Darwin) is also engaged on an EU funded project which is looking at Community Forestry at a landscape level and which is being led by CSSL. Through input into co-ordination meetings experience from the Darwin project is being fed into broader landscape level approaches.
- Strengthening partner co-operation in project planning and project monitoring through the implementation of good practice that is increasing capability and will have a knock-on effect on other projects, through:
 - Delegation of project responsibilities through the establishment of workstream leads in GRC and CSSL to instil greater ownership and leadership of the work being undertaken
 - Monthly management meetings involving Darwin workstream leads from GRC, CSSL and RSPB that is helping to improve co-ordination across different work areas and improve general project management protocols
 - Alignment and agreement of annual plans and budget approval processes for activities taking place on the ground with greater emphasis on value for money

In all of these areas Darwin is being used as an exemplar with the effect of exposure to improved project management fully expected to have knock on impacts on the way that other work is approached and managed

- Improved partnership understanding of what a successful approach to Community Forestry looks like in the Gola context. Such as through the lessons learned review meeting of what has been a challenge / worked well in the first two years of Darwin implementation, which will not only allow tactical improvements in implementation on Darwin itself, but is being used to inform the identification of follow on work and the way that this is being structured
- Working together with communities in establishing community forestry elements of the project that through a clear participatory bottom up approach is strengthening the way in which GRC and communities work together and through which it is hoped that improved outcomes will be achieved.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges and lessons during Year 2 of the project in terms of partnership working and development have included:

- Challenges faced by the coronavirus pandemic were central to Darwin work during the course of this year. Within Sierra Leone for the first six months of the year and periodically thereafter there were restrictions put in place in terms of travel. With GRC based in a different district from where the Darwin project is being implemented the project was impacted by the fact that permission had to be granted to travel across districts and this was limited to 4 travel passes. Given that GRC also had fundamental operational priorities in terms of protecting the National Park this meant that it was not possible for a lot of activities, such as community forestry to really kick off until September and meant slowing down the deployment and retrieval of camera traps, with limited options around mitigation. As such the project had to put in for a no cost extension to the project for 6 months, which was granted as part of a change request submitted in December 2020.
- Another challenge from coronavirus impacting the project has been restrictions that were put in place in terms of the number of people who were allowed to gather in one place. This had a particular impact on the community forestry work, as the standard way of operation around this was to kick off with community meetings that in some villages were not possible and again meant that there were further delays in starting this work.
- A further challenge of the coronavirus pandemic was the challenges of working as a virtual team with RSPB resources being repatriated (RSPB Country Manager and Research and Community development TAs) or being unable to deploy (Project Social Scientist). Whilst this has at times been difficult especially with poor internet connection / electricity interruptions in Kenema, there has been a significant increase in capability and the use of new communication channels (e.g. teams and WhatsApp) in getting work done and is, for example, leading to the establishment of a conference room in GRC to enable improved project conferencing not just locally but with national and international partners.
- Delayed deployment of the Finance TA. Due to coronavirus RSPB took a decision not to recruit any new staff for a period of 6 months. This effectively delayed the deployment of a Finance TA to support GRC in inputting a new system and addressing capability around budgeting and reporting and has meant that this programme (see Outcome 7) has effectively been delayed for 6 months. However, the Finance TA is now in place along with a new budget that will allow this work to be undertaken over the next 6-12 months and still allow the project to input
- Community Forestry capacity in GRC. A key lesson learned on the project this year was the need to increase limited Community Forestry capacity within GRC. This has been a challenge in two ways.
 - Firstly, in clearly establishing and implementing to a plan with limited resources (especially given the fact that the work was behind schedule – see above). This has resulted in having to replan community forestry work a number of times throughout the year to reflect the need to change our approach, based on a need to accelerate activity and from learning lessons from deployment on the ground. As such in addition to monthly management meetings at which workstreams report progress, risks and issues additional measures will need to be put in specifically to support community forestry work. Two key areas that the project is having to consider in this are:
 - the tension between moving at the pace that a community is ready to move (i.e. proper engagement and ownership) and the artificial deadlines imposed in terms of projects
 - the ability to flexibly deploy resource so that when planned work cannot proceed there is an alternative way in which resources can be deployed to drive progress in other areas
 - Secondly overall capacity for Community Forestry in GRC has been stretched this year and there is a need to increase this. As such in the strategic reorganisation agreed by the Directors it was decided to recruit a new Community Forestry resource position and to increase the seniority of the current position.

- Lack of capability around project management within GRC. The Darwin Project has very limited project management capacity embedded into it. During Year 2 this gap which was identified in Year 1 was to be filled by the RSPB Country Manager in effect stepping in and running the project on the ground. However, the Country Manager was repatriated in March 2020 and the position has not yet redeployed. Therefore, as part of the strategic reorganisation that was agreed by the Directors there was a decision to increase local capacity in GRC for both Project Management and Project Financial Management.
- The impact of other work / issues on Darwin implementation. Over the course of the year there have been a number of times where work in other areas has had an impact on Darwin. These include:
 - The impact of another project establishing a limited number of demonstration plots across the whole of Gola was not expecting local farmers to provide their own cocoa seeds, whereas the Darwin project (with a philosophy of encouraging greater ownership from local communities) was expecting farmers to provide their own. As a result, there is a greater focus on ensuring similarity of approach in implementation of different projects.
 - A tightening up of the policy around transport allowances led to issues with implementation in both Research and Monitoring and Community Forestry, as local expectations about the way communities are being compensated for working with the project ran up against a standardisation of the policy. This resulted in one community in particular stopping work with GRC, which impacted neighbouring communities. The issue was resolved after a few weeks and an updated Field Operations policy has been put in place to ensure that there was a transparent and even playing field across all work being carried out by GRC in Gola.
 - In September 2020 the government brought in legislation that significantly increased the cost of employment for staff in Sierra Leone. This included a 30% increase in basic salary levels, new travel and rent allowances of 25% and 30% of basic salary and increased medical allowances. This has not only put considerable strain on core funding but from a point of view of Darwin has meant that along with dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, the strategic reorganisation of GRC, addressing challenging issues with the cocoa component, this has been another area that has stretched the focus of the senior management team and RSPB advisors.

The challenge for the Darwin project in a number of these activities is that transformation work at the organisation level, in terms of its structure and organisation design, policies and addressing generic issues around expectations with communities take time to resolve.

- 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.

3. Project progress

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 focused area in which to undertake on the ground surveys to identify potential HCV-CF sites used by globally-threatened species and present results in a baseline report

No activity scheduled for Year 2 – Work completed in Year 1

1.2 Use remote sensing data to assess deforestation rates in potential areas for HCV-CF sites and present results in a deforestation survey report

No activity scheduled for Year 2 – Work completed in Year 1

1.3 Conduct surveys of forest birds and GTS mammals and forest species in the target area (in particular chimpanzee, pygmy hippo and elephant) and habitat surveys to quantify sites that support GTS and model species-habitat relationships to help guide identification and prioritisation of potential HCV-CF sites.

This activity was completed during the course of the year with the remaining 32 camera traps deployed in the field and 37 sets of camera trap images recovered (this included 5 sets of camera trap images that were deployed in Year 1 but had still to be collected at the end of the year). Due to its unique location within the national park, the Wagikoh Community did not appear to be very well informed in terms of species occurrence, so we decided to exclude from the analysis the 8 camera traps we had initially planned to deploy in that area. Hence, to date, we have set a total of 80 camera traps in the remaining 13 communities, but due to technical issues, images have been recovered from 77 of them, all of them having been processed, labelled, and species identified. A total of 34 large mammal and bird species have been recorded, including 11 globally threatened or near threatened species (see Table 1, Annex 4).

As per Year 1, when travelling to and from camera trap locations within the Community Forest, GRC-LG Research Technicians recorded their routes and any records (sight or sound) of primates, since many of the target primates are rarely captured on camera traps due to their low density. To date, 17 opportunistic transects have been completed (this includes the 6 transects completed in Year 1), that allowed us to record the presence of the following species: 4 records of Diana monkey (*Cercopithecus diana*), 4 records of Western red colobus (*Piliocolobus badius*), 2 records of Black and white (western pied) colobus (*Colobus polykomos*), 3 records of Sooty mangabey (*Cercocebus atys*) and 4 records of Western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*). During camera trap collection, relevant habitat data have been collected at the 80 camera trap locations, and will be used as covariates in the joint species distribution modelling to better understand the drivers of GTS distribution.

In addition to camera trapping, the outstanding 32 bird point counts were undertaken, and the data collected. A total of 124 species have been recorded, of which 10 are Globally Threatened or Near Threatened and 30 are highly dependent on forest habitat (see Table 2, Annex 4). Due to the resignation of the only independent ornithological surveyor in GRC-LG, we had to hire a local research consultant to complete the survey.

We disseminated the results of the camera trap and bird point count surveys across all 14 Forest Edge Communities, to help the Natural Resource Management committees to identify potential HCV areas in their Community Forest as those areas that support the greatest diversity and abundance of globally threatened and forest-dependent species. We received a positive response from the members of the committees, firstly because they were able to better understand the rationale behind the research we had carried out, and secondly because they were able to realise the extraordinary richness of some portions of their forest. Two maps showing the frequency of globally threatened species and forest-dependent species are reported in Annex 4 (Fig. 1 and 2, respectively).

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 continued to collect community information through Species Champions as they undertook camera trap deployment and associated opportunistic surveys, but very limited information has been provided so far, mainly associated to the presence and extension of brushed farms and cocoa plantations. We identified several reasons for this limited result (e.g., we could only count on data collected from two members per community, the Species Champions were not comfortable in revealing encounters with protected species, the Research team was not sufficiently trained in collecting this kind of information), and we decided not to complete the information being collated in this fashion in favour of the approach below.

Given that this activity was able to produce only limited information it was decided to address this by undertaking a participatory mapping exercise, conducted by the Species Champions in each community to gather further information from a wider section of the village population. The exercise consisted of interviewing focus groups of community members (e.g., old persons, ex-hunters or other forest users) to capture local communities' knowledge of Globally Threatened Species and community conflict 'hotspots', by using semi-structured interview models and participatory maps. As well as producing more information, the purpose in doing this was to increase community participation in this exercise and therefore to build ownership within communities of the areas of community forestry to be protected and to highlight the role that the Species Champions are playing. This activity started in February/March 2021, and the information will be collected after three months, between May and June 2021 (see Annex 5.1 "Field protocol for Activity 1.4"). The Town chief in Makpoima denied his consent to the implementation of activity 1.4 after the training was completed, and this caused a delay of several months, as at the end of Year 2 the participatory mapping exercise in Makpoima had not yet started.

1.5 Undertake camera trapping study of key biodiversity hotspots along the Malema / Liberian border to establish pygmy hippo areas of activity and elephant and chimpanzee migration routes to identify sites vital to connectivity

Field protocol for this activity has been agreed at the beginning of Year 2 and consisted of deploying 37 camera traps among the Malema / Liberian border by selecting the deployment sites based on the detection of animal signs (see Annex 5.2 "Field protocol for Activity 1.5"). The work was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic and the need to complete camera trapping under Activity 1.3 to identify potential HCV-CF sites, however by the end of Year 2 all the 37 camera traps had been deployed. The first sets of images will be retrieved between May and June 2021, and from then on new data will be retrieved every 3 months (with batteries and SD cards replaced accordingly). The new information retrieved on possible migratory routes of Globally Threatened Species will be disseminated across the 8 southern communities (i.e., Mayengema, Mogbaima, Misila, Goli, Bannie, Yollo, Levuma, Peyama) and will allow their Natural Resource Management committees to identify further areas of interest.

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 and map potential HCV-CF areas and their priority for conservation, refining modelling and maps if required when data from Activity 1.5 becomes available

Based on the species information collected through the camera trapping exercise it was possible to not only identify species occurrence (see Activity 1.3) but also to identify where within the community forests the most important areas were in terms of locating HCV-CFs, based on species diversity and also on geographical importance (e.g. corridors) to maximise impact in terms of species conservation.

However in a significant change in approach, brought about both by constraints within RSPB due to the departure and furloughing of staff and from an internal project review that that it would be important to ensure that the identification of specific HCV-CF sites on the ground needed to have a more bottom up approach if it was to be truly sustainable and owned by communities. This was identified in the change request submitted during Year 2.

Therefore working together, the Community Forestry Officer and the Research Team presented the high level species data collated by the Research Team to communities during the training for Natural Resource Management committees in February 2021 (see Activity 5.1) and this is now being followed up with work on the ground to map community and HCV-CF sites through the Community Forestry process.

It is still planned to undertake more comprehensive joint species modelling to make sure that this is aligned with the Natural Resource Management committees work of identifying the specific HCV-CF areas on the ground. Therefore, throughout Year 3 when these areas are identified there will be an important piece of work to align the selected areas to more detailed

modelling and identify whether there is clear synergy between the top-down scientific approach and the bottom up community lead approach.

(As identified in the challenges and lessons learned this is one of the areas where any future project work with other Forest Edge Communities will look to reduce the focus on scientific identification and increase the focus on the Community Forestry part of the work at the start of any project. Note this is not to say that the scientific identification of HCV-CFs is not important – it just represents the reality that for this work to be sustainable then it needs to be driven by community ownership of the areas that they are willing to set aside for conservation).

1.7 Assess deforestation rates in HCV-CF sites, other protected community forest areas and the control area through a before and after control intervention comparison, supported by GRC ground truthing, and present results in a report

No activity scheduled for Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

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 a total of 6 education roadshows and 10 radio broadcasts in the project area during the course of the project

Roadshows were carried out in Dec 2020 and Feb 2021 at four points within the Darwin area with villages being invited to participate at the point they were closest to. These points were Mogboima, Makpoima, Congo and Gollie respectively in the first roadshow and then Makpoima and Takpoima in the second roadshow.

During the roadshows a number of key thematic topics were discussed including:

- the importance of forest in terms of biodiversity
- ownership of the community forests
- livelihood activities and the negative impacts of illegal activity
- best practice for the harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP)
- the involvement of women in resource management
- importance of community by-laws

School nature clubs were used to help deliver messages around conservation through drama and key areas of concern were raised and discussed (see Roadshow reports 1 and 2).

Key improvements in this activity this year were the ability to tie this work in more closely with the work of other workstreams on the project with both the Co-Management and Land Use Planning Manager and Project Social Scientist attending which allowed more focus on these two areas than had been the case in Year 1, where more generic sensitisation was undertaken. For example, the Co-Management and Land Use Planning Officer was able to explain the Community Forestry process and also the purpose of establishing Natural Resource Committees in each community at a time when these were being established.

Alongside the 2 roadshows 4 radio broadcasts were aired (one broadcast at the start and end of each roadshow) on Eastern Community Radio in Kenema taking the form of panel based discussions covering topics including the importance of conserving community forest, land use planning and community forest management. The radio shows also answered questions sent in by communities. Again, a key improvement on last year was the ability of the Project Social Scientist to identify the degree to which the roadshows and radio broadcasts cascaded down to people from the Darwin communities who were not there or listening first hand. The Project Social Scientist was therefore able to play this back and work with the workstream lead on improving engagement further in Year 3.

2.2 Train 1 or 2 (depending on village size) Species Champions for globally-threatened species (Pygmy Hippo, Forest Elephant or Western Chimpanzee depending on species present) in each village to undertake surveys & patrols to identify species signs in community forests and deforestation in HCV-CF sites

The GRC Research team completed the training of Species Champions on generic ecology and conservation in line with the setting and collecting of camera traps (see Activity 1.3) prior to the end of Year 1. Following this, in February/March 2021 the GRC Research team conducted further training sessions with all 28 Species Champions (two per community) on detection and identification of Globally Threatened species signs and signs of deforestation in community forests (see Annex 5.3 “Field protocol for activity 2.2”).

2.3 Support Species champions to undertake monthly surveys & patrols to identify species signs in community forests and deforestation in HCV-CF areas

Contracts were signed with Species Champions between late February and early March 2021 following initial training and at the same time that Natural Resource Committees were established. Contracts identified the work that needed to be done on a monthly basis (Champions are contracted for 4 days a month) and the level of remunerations that they would receive (see Annex 5.4 “MOU for Darwin activity 2.3”). Following this and the training received under Activity 2.2, Species Champions started patrolling and collecting data from February/March 2021, with the first data due to be collected and collated by the GRC Research team in May/June 2021 and from then on, every 3 months. The Town chief in Makpoima denied his consent to the implementation of activity 2.3 after the training was completed, and this caused a delay of several months, as at the end of Year 2 the community patrols in Makpoima had not yet started.

2.4 Carry out baseline / EOP sample household surveys to assess project impact on local communities’ knowledge of the importance to the REDD+ project of maintaining HCV-CF sites / other areas of community in control and intervention villages.

No activity scheduled for Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

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

3.1 Hold consultative meetings with villages at the beginning of the project to agree to the undertaking of project activities

No activity scheduled for Year 2 - Work completed in Year 1.

A plan to revisit the agreements, as identified in the Year 1 report, to get written consent in line with the purpose of this activity was abandoned because of coronavirus preventing large meetings in the first half of the year and the inevitable further delay that this would have brought to the project (see Year 2 Change Request). Instead work will focus on ensuring that there is effective sign off of the outcomes of the project and in particular the identification and management of HCV-CF areas.

3.2 Map land use zones using satellite imagery as well as community boundaries and HCV-CF area / other community forest areas being protection using GPS and PRA techniques in 14 villages

Overall high-level land use zones were mapped in Year 1. It was planned that the mapping of community boundaries and HCV-CF areas would take place in Q4 in Year 2 and in Q1 in Year 3 as it is work that is difficult to undertake in the wet season because of accessibility issues.

However, following interaction with communities during the roadshow in December 2020 and February 2021 it became clear that a change in approach was required because of sensitivity related to boundary marking in the Gola region. This sensitivity stems from a perception that land is being mapped to take it from the community and to include it within the Gola Rainforest National Park. In addition to this there is sometimes contention in terms of location of boundaries between communities due to the significant movement of people away from their communities during the civil war.

As such it was identified that the best way to ensure that the work under this activity was sustainable and owned by the communities was to first establish Natural Resource Management Committees in each community (established in Q4) before mapping so that they could support this work in the communities and where disputes arose could address these in their new roles.

In addition to this it was identified that this activity would need to be more focused than currently identified in the plan with a focus on mapping important boundaries rather than all boundaries and then focusing on mapping the HCV-CF areas and overlaying this on the land use zones maps. Although this activity did not start in Year 2 Q4 as planned it has now commenced at the beginning of Year 3 Q1.

A key component of this work going forward will be to understand that not all communities will be able to move forward at the same time as issues will arise. As such an agile approach is needed to this work, with a focus on those areas that are deemed most important first (see Activity 1.6) and ensuring that where this work can progress it is progressed. This might for example mean that where issues are encountered either in the identification of boundaries or through other work with GRC that impacts the willingness of communities to own and support this work, there is a change in focus to other communities where work can be progressed whilst any issues are addressed and resolved.

In addition to this (as identified under Activity 3.1) a key element of the sustainability of this work is to ensure that it is signed off at village chief, section chief and Paramount Chief level as well as with relevant government authorities to ensure that this work is sustainable. This is work that should be able to be carried out in the rainy season (Q2 and Q3 in Year 3).

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

Once coronavirus restrictions were lifted 4 teams from GRC Conservation Enterprises (cocoa) and Community Development Department (other agricultural extension) held consultative focus group sessions in September 2020 with farmers in each of the Darwin villages. In these meetings they outlined the activities under Outputs 3 and 4, linking this message to the overall programme and agreed with the communities what targeted support they would receive from the project in this area.

Over the next couple of months, which included the need to re-engage with some of the communities, a plan was developed in terms of the area of support and expected yields from this support were identified.

The focus that the 14 communities agreed in terms of improving agricultural yields were:

- 8 communities that were already focused on cocoa production will develop this further through the introduction of new seed varieties and focusing on cocoa plantation and inter-cropping with multipurpose trees, perennial and seasonal agricultural crops
- 2 communities where cocoa production had not been effectively established will concentrate on cocoa plantation intercropped with perennial agricultural crops.
- 4 communities with the establishment of IVS rice production
- 1 community with the planting and production of ginger

Following the identification of these focus areas with the different communities' work has been undertaken (see Activity 3.5 and 4.1) in establishing demonstration plots and providing required training.

As identified in the Year 2 Change Request this activity was replanned from being a single touch activity to the project looking to revisit these targets in Year 3 and in Year 4 based on how effective the previous season has been. This is particularly important for those crops such as cocoa where targets will only start to be realised from the 4th year.

Yields, on planted agricultural material 2021, are expected this year from rice, *Cajanus cajan* (pigeon peas), cow peas, cocoa yam and chili pepper. While banana, plantain and ginger will yield in 2022. Cocoa that will be established 2021 is expected to bear fruit from 2025 onwards. While older Cocoa plantations, that have been rehabilitated through better management have been harvested during the 2020-2021 season.

Expected and annual yields per acre 2021-2022

- Inland valley swamp rice ≈ 25 bushels per acre (700 kgs.) (2021)
- Ginger ≈ 27 rice bags (62 litre) (2022)
- Bananas/Plantain ≈ 2000 kg, Intercropped (2022)
- *Cajanus cajan* (Pigeon peas) ≈ 25 kg Intercropped (2021)
- Cow peas ≈ Intercropped (50 kg) Intercropped (2021)
- Cocoa yam ≈ 3 rice bags Intercropped (62 litre)
- Chilli pepper ≈ 1 rice bag Intercropped (62 litre)

3.4 Facilitate development of village specific land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs / other community forest to be protected) through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 3

However, as there is other work that is taking place in the Gola landscape around Community Forestry, the Co-Management and Land Use Planning Officer has been undertaking a series of alignment meetings with other stakeholders, especially with CSSL colleagues on the landscape level project that is currently being funded through the EU. The purpose of this is to ensure that there is proper alignment going forward in the way in which land use planning is carried out, alignment in institutional capacity building and standardization of information. This will need to be continued and broadened to ensure that all relevant government stakeholders are aligned over the course of the next year. It should be noted that as a result of the establishment and training of natural resource management committees, at least 2 communities have initiated development of land-use management plans, by zoning their land into 3 areas: reserve, agriculture use, and conservation.

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

On the back of the development of the agricultural targets training has been given in line with the specific interventions in setting up nurseries and demonstration plots and in clearing land for IVS (see Activity 4.1). This training plan will be revisited along with the identification of agricultural targets in both Year 3 and Year 4

For the Cocoa component training has taken place in Nursery establishment, site selection and governance of demonstration plots. Cocoa Master farmers and youth were given additional training on site selection, land preparation, out planting of cocoa seedlings, and rehabilitation & management of already established cocoa farms. Three local cocoa buying officers (members of Malema Cocoa Farmers Association) participated in a 3-day training and season review meeting in June 2020. The meeting included: a refresher training on quality and cocoa buying procedures; an overview of the past cocoa season; and development of a plan for the

upcoming cocoa season. The Agroforestry plan for year 3 includes demonstration plot preparation, out planting of trees and crops, weeding and management, the harvesting and post harvesting processing of mature crops, storing and marketing.

For Inland valley swamp rice (IVS) training took place in site selection, land clearing, demarcation, and water channel construction. Upcoming in year 3 will be finalizing construction of channels, bed preparation to establish rice nurseries, planting rice, weeding, pest management, harvesting and post-harvest management and enterprise development.

Ginger production will start at the onset of the rains, with training on final site selection, land preparation, planting, and crop and pest management.

3.6 Use qualitative social science techniques to understand key social science issues including factors that constrain participation in project

Due to coronavirus there was a further delay in being able to deploy the project Social Scientist into the field. This was an area that was identified in the previous report and we were asked to consider alternative ways of covering this work. However there is a scarcity of social science capability in Sierra Leone and as the Project social Scientist had already been contracted specifically to cover this role it was felt that the best alternative was to ensure their deployment as soon as possible, which happened in October 2020.

Prior to this the Project Social Scientist played a key role in reviewing and understanding the baseline data and feeding into the redevelopment of the project outputs and outcomes to make them more robust.

Since arriving in Sierra Leone the Project Social Scientist has been able to work with the communities and undertake research into factors relating to participating and non-participation in livelihood interventions as well as wider food security and livelihood issues to help develop a good understanding of impacts by the end of the project.

This has included holding semi-structured interviews with GRC field staff, 5 trips to communities to observe implementation and community-GRC relations as well as collecting qualitative data around participation and non-participation

- Trip 1 (November): observed Natural Resource Management Committee (NRMC) establishment meetings (9 communities) and attended roadshows.
- Trip 2 (January): in depth interviews with key informants (3 communities), exploring perceptions of interventions, traditional land management systems, livelihood issues and barriers to participation (including emerging pit-sawing operations). Observed cocoa nursery establishment training activity.
- Trip 3: (Feb) observed NRMC training activity and attended roadshows.
- Trip 4 (March): observed research team training of volunteers; conducted questionnaire-based survey to evaluate successful information flow from training and roadshows and assessed baseline knowledge of forest conservation concepts.
- Trip 5 (March): observed CF-HCV establishment meetings in two communities (Peyama, Levuma); observed local dispute settlement meeting related to pit sawing operations; conducted a detailed assessment of past livelihood interventions in one community (Congo); observed decision-making about non-participation in one community (Makpoima).

3.7 Carry out baseline / EOP sample household surveys on food insecurity/dietary diversity (using the Food Insecurity Access Scale and Household Diet Diversity Score) in control and intervention villages

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

Output 4: Target communities trial implementation of land use and agricultural training plans which regulate natural resource use in HCV-CFs sites / other community forests being protected whilst increasing crop production / diversification in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on HCV0CF sites / other community forests being protected

4.1 Establish managed nurseries (where required and community demonstration plots (1 per village) and supply essential inputs (e.g. seeds for target value chain crops like rice, cassava, groundnuts, vegetables and cocoa) through Farmer Field Schools (FFS)

Nurseries were established in 8 out of the 10 communities that identified that they wanted to improve cocoa production in Year 2 Q4. In order to facilitate this the project supplied 9 communities with established cocoa crops, who wanted to improve their cocoa production with improved cocoa seeds from the Sierra Leone Agriculture Research Institute (SLARI), as well as seeds for shade trees to allow for greater intercropping. These shade trees serve a dual purpose of both shading the cocoa plants but are also varieties that can be sustainably cut down and used for building materials in the future, therefore further reducing the need to fell areas of community forest.

These 8 communities and an additional 2 communities who are in the process of establishing cocoa production were trained and supported in setting up nurseries through the provision of tools, building materials and polybags in which to grow cocoa seedlings. Farmers were encouraged to donate some of their own Cocoa seeds in order to generate greater ownership. There was a varied response to this requirement as seeds were provided for free by another project implemented in one community in the area and is something the project will need to look at going forward.

For the Cocoa Agroforestry activity, a total of 114 community members participated in nursery establishment for cocoa and *Gliricidia sepium* (a nitrogen fixing soil improver).

Farmers where asked which indigenous trees they would prefer to establish in the demo plots, the following species where selected grouped according to gender interest, 6 species were identified, and every nursery agreed to raise 3 seedlings of each specie making it a total 136 seedlings of which 10 were to be planted in each Agroforestry Demo-plot and the remaining to be shared among the members.

- Females: *Beilschmiedia mannii* and *Irvingia gabonensis* (food sources)
- Male: *Garcinia Kola* (medicinal); *Terminalia ivorensis* and *Terminalia superba* (timber)
- Male, Female and Children: *Bussea occidentalia* (food, medicine and timber)

Some of the selected species have not been planted in the nurseries yet, as the seed will only be available later in the season.

Table 1. Communities establishing nurseries for Cocoa Agroforestry Demonstration plots

COMMUNITY	MALE	FEMALE	LOCAL VARIETIES COCOA SEEDS	IMPROVED COCOA SEEDS	GLIRICIDIA SEPIUM	MULTIPURPOSE TREES
PEYAMA	7	3	1950	50	0	10
CONGO	18	5	3900	100	100	10
WANGIKOR	4	1	450	50	0	10
BANI	4	2	450	50	0	10
GOLI	6	4	450	50	0	10
MISSILA	10	5	425	75	100	10
MAYENGEMA	13	7	425	75	100	10
DUKOR	19	6	450	0	0	10
TOTAL	81	33	8500	450	300	80

The Agroforestry Demonstration Plots establishment will start with land preparation in May-June and the planting at beginning of July.

A total of 8 Communities decided to establish an Agroforestry demonstration plot, however, the cocoa farmers in the 2 communities who decided not to establish a demo plot were supplied with polybags and tools for nurseries. In total 39,700 polybags for nursing seedlings were distributed to the communities for farmers to raise new cocoa/tree plants for their own plantations, including the ones raised for demonstration plots.

Table 2. Material/tools distributed to cocoa farmers in 9 communities. * Dukor village received tools year 1 (through Darwin co-funding).

COMMUNITY	POLYBAGS	WATERING CANS	HEADPANS	NAIL PACKET
LEVUMA	4000	2	4	2
YORLLO	4000	2	4	2
CONGO	4000	2	4	2
MAYENGEMA	4000	2	4	2
MISSILA	4000	2	4	2
PEYEMA	2000	2	2	1
DUKOR	11700	0*	0*	0*
GOLI	2000	2	2	1
BANI	2000	2	2	1
WANGIKOR	2000	2	2	1
TOTAL	39700	18	28	14

Inland Valley Swamp rice (IVS): Presently, no nurseries have been established for the 4 communities interested in IVS rice (Table 3), as rice seeds only require planting in a nursery for a couple of weeks before transplanting into the field. This will take place in June and then transplanting out to the plots at the beginning of July.

In total 66 community members participated in the training for IVS demonstration plot establishment. Project support was given in the form of tools (Table 4) and payment of local youths to clear an area for the rice to be grown, this included digging irrigation channels.

Table 3. Male and Female participation in the establishment of IVS plots

COMMUNITY	MALE	FEMALE
DUKOR	9	7
MAKPOIMA	10	10
SEYAMA	6	4
MOGBEIMA	10	10
TOTAL	35	31

Table 4. Tools distributed to the 4 communities implanting IVS

ASSORTED TOOLS	PER COMMUNITY	TOTAL
Hand Travel	4	16
Spade	1	4
Shovel	4	16
Rake	2	8
Mattok	5	20
Slasher	6	24
Filling Axe	3	12
Garden line	1	4
Cutlasse	10	40
Head Pans	4	16

Establishment of a Ginger Demonstration plot: In Vama community, 16 Community members were trained (7 Male 9 Female) on site selection and land preparation. It was not necessary to establish a ginger nursery, as this crop is planted out directly. Ginger will be bought and planted at the onset of the rainy season in June. A total of 3 bags 64 litres will be planted.

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 into practice on their own farms.

Farmers from 10 communities have been trained as nurseries have been established in the communities that are looking to undertake cocoa production. This has taken the form of training farmers in the establishment of the nurseries, establishing seedlings and caring for them in the nurseries. Further training will be given in Year 3 Q1 as seed are relocated into demonstration plots and back to farmer's own farms.

Please see activity 3.5 for a list of training events.

3 Male local cocoa buying officers participated in a 3-day training and season review meeting in June 2020 that included refresher trainings on quality and cocoa buying procedures, overview of the past cocoa season and planning for coming cocoa season.

Communities interested in producing IVS rice and ginger do not need to establish nurseries in the same way as cocoa, therefore no training has been carried out in these communities for nursery establishment.

Training in rice bed preparation and rice production techniques is planned for June. Training for rice transplanting is planned at the beginning of July.

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

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

The focus this year has been on establishing agricultural crops where the focus next year will switch to supporting implementation of forest-based livelihoods. This has been done both from a capacity point of view but also to ensure that the support in this area is spread across the project, which will reinforce the link between conservation and food security

4.4 Establish a savings and loan scheme in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women, with women in leadership roles in the majority of groups

The main element of this activity was undertaken in Year 1 of the project with Village Savings and Loans Associations being established in all 14 Darwin communities. Work in Year 2 has focused on two areas: (i) understanding where these Associations may not have effectively taken off and to assess if further intervention could increase the effectiveness of this, and (ii) to also establish second groups in communities where there was demanded to do this.

There are 14 established VSLA groups in the second cycle, with a total of 360 members, 196 Females and 164 Males. Please see Annex 5.5 "VSLA Groups Malema" for a review of the VSLA Groups in the 14 Communities, including the amount that had been invested and loaned in Year 1 and Year 2.

See below for a summary of the issues we encountered in establishing the VSLA (e.g., in one there was an issue with literacy) and what has been done to mitigate them.

- Dukor, Makpoima, Mogbaima, Congo, Levuma, Wangikor - all have a functioning group, however, there's a temporary issue linked to the Congo chairperson
- Seyama – the issue is that the group is administered from outside the village itself.
- Peyama – uncertain status.
- Banni – this village is really too small to have a group.
- Yorllo – there internal disputes which are hindering its implementation (including disputed chieftaincy)
- Goli, Misila, Mayengema – these groups are not functioning well due to the lack of a person who is literate to act as secretary.
- Vaama – functioning

4.5 Undertake crop production / diversification 'food / cash for work' schemes in villages

Food / cash for work schemes were implemented in the 4 villages that chose to undertake production of IVS rice. Youths from these villages helped to clear the land for the demonstration plots, one acre per village, this included clearing the ground of stones and tree stumps as well as constructing the head bunds and digging the channels for irrigation. A total of 66 youths across the 4 villages were used in this activity 31 females and 35 males.

Dukor community has completed the work and the next step will be to prepare the plots, centre buds and establish the rice nurseries in June and out planting beginning of July. The remaining 3 demonstration plots might not be fully completed this season but will be planted with Inland Valley rice as far as they can and completed next year. Makpoima village only completed land clearing at the end of March.

Food / Cash for work schemes were undertaken in 7 villages that established Cocoa and tree Nurseries, which will be used for the demonstration plots and for participating members own farms. A total of 89 villagers participated in the work, 62 males and 27 females. The plan was initially to involve 9 Villages in this activity but due to disagreements between community members in Levuma and Yorllo only 7 implemented the activity.

Youths will be encouraged to participate in a cash for work scheme for the out-planting exercise in the 7 Agroforestry Demonstration plots.

4.6 Undertake access trail 'food/cash for work' schemes that improve access to local markets

Work was undertaken to improve the main access road to the north Darwin communities. This is a section of road between the main access junction Saigohun and the town of Jojoma. This 10km stretch of road is often impassable during the rainy season and improving the access along this route will allow motorbike access all year round. As the main access route into the north Darwin communities, it will mean that access to markets are improved for 8 of the 14 communities.

Work started on improving this route in Q1 of Year 2 but was not completed before the rainy season began and therefore had to be completed in Q3/Q4.

Further work is planned to be undertaken on other access routes in Year 3 and a short list of priority options has been drawn up.

Output 5: 14 Target communities have committed to protect HCV-CF sites / protect other areas of community forests in return for tailored agricultural training and equipment to increase yields sustainably through the GRC REDD+ programme and this will be embedded in Conservation Agreements.

Activity 5.1: Support communities establish Natural Resource Management committees that represent the breadth of forest users within each village to manage HCV-CF sites / other community forest areas being protected

Natural Resource Management committees have been established in all 14 Darwin communities in Year 2 Q4 and a joint training session was held with most committee members around the role and responsibility of the committees in February (at the time 2 villages had not selected their committees).

The Natural Resource Management committees will be integral to the establishment of effective community forestry in the area and it was decided not to have the Species Champions as part of the committees but to work alongside them in order to maximise the number of people involved.

One Species Champion per community was invited to join the Natural Resource Management committees in February 2021. Although not an integral part of the committees, the Species Champions have the key role of advising committee members, as they have experience with monitoring activities completed in Year 1 and 2 (camera trapping, bird point counts, opportunistic surveys) and oversee the creation of the community participatory mapping of globally threatened species and potential conflict 'hotspots' (see Activity 1.4).

Activity 5.2: Support village communities develop bylaws to protect HCV-CF and other community forest areas being protected within each village

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

Activity 5.3: Facilitate the development and agreement of forest management plans within each village

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

Activity 5.4: Sign off bylaws, land use plans and management plans including HCF-CV areas and other protected community forest areas at village, section, chieftdom, and District level

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 3

Activity 5.5: Facilitate development and agreement of Conservation Agreements between the 14 target communities and GRC

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 3

Activity 5.6: Write and disseminate paper to the Forestry Department and other relevant audiences.

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

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

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

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 3

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

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

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

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

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

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

No activity scheduled in Year 2 – Work due to be undertaken in Year 4

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

No activity was specifically scheduled to take place in Year 2 in the revised plan that was submitted as part of the Year 2 Change Request. The rationale for this is that with the coronavirus pandemic there was a freeze on new recruitment in RSPB, and therefore it was not possible (as well as not being feasible given travel bans) to send out a new RSPB Finance TA, who will be spearheading the work in this area.

However as soon as the recruitment freeze ended in December 2020 the process to hire a new Finance TA was undertaken and this person deployed to GRC in March 2021, in time for the new financial year. This will allow for the input of a finance system in GRC by October 2021 (current planned go live date) and support the improvement of financial reporting. This will happen alongside other key transformational actions in the course of Year 3 of the Darwin project

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

Because of the coronavirus pandemic the ability to carry out more work under this activity was low and therefore it was decided to focus on progressing Social Science work on the ground as a priority. Further presentations, in addition to the two that were given in Year 1 are scheduled to occur in Year 3, after more data have been collected and analysed.

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

With the deployment of the Project Social Scientist to Sierra Leone in October 2020 there has been a considerable amount of work started under this activity.

This has included hands on training in social science fieldwork methods with three GRC staff members from the Community development and Research and Monitoring Team as well as the holding of a training lecture about the use of behaviour science in conservation practice for a wider GRC staff audience. A similar training will be held in Year 3 for CSSL staff.

In addition to these, two workshops were held with both GRC and CSSL staff to address tailoring of conservation messages, in line with the holding of roadshows to support the development of improved outcomes from this area of engagement.

3.1 Progress towards project Outputs

Report on how overall progress has been made towards the project Outputs and how likely the project is to achieve them by its close. Address each Output in turn, identifying the baseline condition, change recorded to date, and the source of evidence for this change. Please comment on how you are measuring the Output indicators. Please support comments with evidence and use indicators to support progress towards Outputs.

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

3.2 Progress towards the project Outcome

Please report on progress made towards the project Outcome. Please make specific reference to the Outcome indicators including baseline condition and progress to date and provide evidence against them. Consider the following:

- Are the indicators adequate for measuring the intended Outcome?
- Is the project likely to achieve the Outcome by end of funding? If not, what action will you take to ensure the situation can be improved?

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

3.3 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 there was a clear willingness to engage in this project.

During the course of Year 2 we have had continued issues with one of the communities Makpoima who again objected to the project operating in their community. These objections do not seem to be related to the Darwin project itself but more generically to engagement with GRC across a range of activities and compensation for these activities. The location of Makpoima at the centre of the northern cluster of Darwin villages has meant that this has impacted work not only with the community but also in accessing neighbouring communities and has delayed in particular community forestry work. Each time that this happens significant delays are occurred whilst issues are sorted out. Going forward the project and GRC in general will need a more strategic approach to addressing this issue in particular. Overall though this assumption holds true for other communities.

A related issue has been the emergence of pit sawing operations across several of the Darwin villages, which communities may perceive to be in conflict with the establishment of HCV-CF. However, this is being addressed through active engagement of stakeholders at various levels alongside ongoing outreach and sensitisation about what forest protection

and management entails. Therefore, it is expected the assumption of community engagement will hold true for those affected communities.

Overall, observations by the project social scientist show that, while some community members have expressed disillusionment due to initially high expectations, there is considerable interest and commitment to remaining involved with livelihood support projects.

- b) *Agricultural yields can be increased enough, along with other support and messaging through the Darwin project and REDD+ programme, to enable communities to protect 25% of their forest.*

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-year period. We believe that significant increases in yields 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. However, during Year 3 of the project this will be a key area to address because:

- 1) The HCV-CF areas will be demarcated and there will be the first clear evidence on the ground as to whether around 25% of the community forest will be protected by the communities (in terms of agreements)
- 2) There needs to be more focused effort to reinforce the link between agricultural yields, food security and conservation. It is clear that at the moment whilst communities may be willing to protect community forests this may be through more general understanding of benefits that they get from working with GRC rather than a real belief or understanding in the link between protecting ecosystem services and the impact on their livelihoods. This is one reason why we are looking to change the activity under Output 6 so that communities will be able to visit the areas where forest resources have not been protected and see the impact of these rather than focusing on other Chiefdoms coming to see ongoing work in the Darwin villages
- 3) Additional pressure on community from pit sawing operations will demand additional and focussed messaging, but also opens opportunities to illustrate benefits to communities from forest management.

However, with the assumption broadened in the Year 2 Change Request we expect this assumption to hold true.

- c) *Exchange rates do not devalue the grant/co-funding available such that the project cannot meet its objectives.*

The SLL has devalued against the British Pound (GBP) through the course of the project and there is no expectation that this will change, and if it does it would have to increase in value by around 20% to reach the same levels as at the beginning of the project. As such we expect this assumption to hold true.

- d) *No external influences on deforestation – e.g. immigration, external development pressures.*

There continue to be some pressures on GRNP over the course of the year including around Gola North and Gola Central where the Malema Chiefdom is located and there have been additional pressures in terms of addressing these during the year because of travel restrictions associated with the coronavirus pandemic.

However, during the course of the year there have been no reported incidents of illegal poaching or increased pressure from artisanal mining in the Darwin area.

The assumptions of deforestation around the Darwin project area is becoming alarming and a threat to the National Park, as serious logging is going on at Wakigor, Vaama and Manyengema in the Malema Chiefdom which has become a concern. Due to the incentive received from the logging the Vaama community is planning to extent their logging activities toward Dukor and Congo axis since they share boundaries.

Another key pressure on the Darwin community is the construction of a road in the neighbouring Nomo Chiefdom to allow better access for logging in community lands and there is a risk that this will impact the ability of the project to reach agreements with the 2 southernmost villages who may look to benefit from an extension of this road. Over the course of Year 3 this will be an area that GRC will need to address strategically to ensure that this remains a risk that can be successfully mitigated. Overall, despite localised incidents and pressures 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 stepped 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 to engage in awareness raising and conservation/monitoring activities.*

Species Champions have been successfully trained and Natural Resource Management committees have been established across all the communities. As such a significant step has been achieved in relation to this risk. However, Year 3 will be a key year in terms of this risk to see how the community champions engage and how the Natural Resource Management committees grow and evolve. Based on the ability to establish the champions approach and set up the Natural Resource Management Committees we expect this assumption to hold true.

- h) *Inputs provided by project e.g. rice mills can be replaced with no further donor funding*

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 communities 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 especially as the project is not supplying any significant capital items to communities.

- i) *Training can be maintained i.e. passed on to other farmers in the community Farmer Field School model and particularly the role of master farmers promotes this approach.*

The Farmer Field School model and particularly the role of master farmers does promote 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.*

The political situation continues to be stable and has remained stable during the coronavirus pandemic, during which time GRC and CSSL undertook significant levels of

engagement with communities and supported them through the distribution of covid messaging as well as covid and food security supplies.

k) *Communities respect by-laws.*

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 create 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, to the extent that this is needed.*

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.

3.4 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 areas, 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 the mapping of the forest extent (see Activity 1.2) and biodiversity surveys (see Activity 1.3) demonstrate that this is a heavily forested area that supports a range of Globally Threatened and Forest dependent species, 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. An additional 126 economic trees are being raised and will be planted in the rainy season Year 2.

Poverty Alleviation

The Year 2 Change Request changed the original project assumptions in this area to identify more robust measurable indicators that had less focus on increasing the diet diversity and food security of whole communities but were more focused on the most vulnerable.

Two of the measurable indicators were therefore changed to:

- By EOP 70% of target households in the highest quartile (i.e. the 25% with the highest food insecurity) have improved their HFIAS score by 3 points or more and the overall level of improvement is higher in target villages than in control villages
- By EOP 70% of target households in the lowest quartile (i.e. the 25% of households with the lowest dietary diversity) have improved their Household Dietary Diversity Score by 1 point or more and the overall level of improvement is higher in target villages than in control villages

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.

Because of coronavirus it has not been possible to verify the impact of the project on food security and diet diversity in Year 2 and this will therefore be a key aspect of social science work in Year 3 and at the end of project survey in Year 4. With a caveat that in year 3 the evaluation will largely be qualitative and based on simply measuring the agricultural yields (which are indicators).

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 2 the project has contributed to these targets through:

- The establishment of a further 9 VSLA schemes in the project communities in addition to the 14 that were established in Year 1 of the project ([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.
- Support to Cocoa 350 farmers in 14 Darwin communities through:
 - The provision of improved varieties of cocoa seeds for 8 communities to improve yields, as well as the provision of shade trees that will provide sustainable building materials in future years
 - Cocoa Master farmers and youth with participants from all 14 communities have been trained on cocoa nursery establishment, cocoa farm rehabilitation through the Darwin project and co funding
 - The establishment of nurseries across 8 communities and the provision of tools, polybags and training on how to take care of and grow cocoa seeds in a nursery before they are planted to increase the number of seeds that are successfully planted.
 - 8 Nurseries were established involving a total of 114 community members. 19 750 local variety cocoa seedlings and 450 improved variety cocoa seedlings were bought from Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI). In total 39,700 polybags were distributed to 9 communities to be used for nursing plants; this includes the seedlings produced by the Farmer Field Schools. Farmers will be encouraged to use the remaining polybags next season year 3
 - The clearance of demonstration plots in 4 communities to allow for the growing of IVS rice which will be planted at the beginning of Year 3 along with training in agricultural techniques.
 - Cocoa Master farmers and youths have participated in trainings on site selection, land preparation and transplanting of cocoa seedlings, further on rehabilitation and management of already established cocoa farms. At the beginning of the harvesting season in August-October they received a refresher training on harvesting, fermentation, drying, storing and quality control.
 - 3 Male local cocoa buying officers participated in a 3-day training and season review meeting in June 2020 that included refresher training on quality and cocoa buying procedures, overview of the past cocoa season and planning for the coming cocoa season.
 - 105 Farmers 44 % Female, from 11 communities have sold 12,762 Kg's of quality cocoa to their Farmer Association earning an income of SLL in total, in average per farmer leones, approximately USD per farmer.

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 2 the project has contributed to this target through:

- Gathering and analysing 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](#)).
- By training Species Champions to undertake patrolling and survey work 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*).
- Establishing Natural Resource Committees in all 14 Gola communities that are being supported through the Darwin project (*see Activity 5.1*)

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 2 to the following areas of the NBSAP:

- The objective of adopting alternative measures that have the lowest ecological footprint [Strategic Objective B1 (ii)] through
 - supporting the development of cocoa nurseries in 8 communities, through increasing yields (to be confirmed) through the provision of improved cocoa seeds to 8 communities and by undertaking training in nursery management in 10 communities (*see Activity 4.1*).
 - Supporting the development of demonstration plots for the planting of Inland Valley Swamp rice in 4 communities (*see Activity 4.1*).
- 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 (UNFCCC) / 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 2 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:
 - 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*).
 - 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 2 of the project the major achievement in poverty alleviation has been through

- The establishment of a further VSLA groups in 9 of the 14 communities where there was additional demand (*see Activity 4.4*).
- The establishment of nurseries in 9 communities to grow cocoa and other seedlings in a way that will ensure improved production as well as the provision of tools and polybags to enable this and training given on nursery management
- The training of 350 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*).
- The provision of work opportunities for 66 youths in 4 villages through the running of food / cash for work schemes in the clearing of land to establish IVS rice demonstration plots, 49 beneficiaries benefited from this activity.

7. Consideration of gender equality issues

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 2 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 a further 9 savings and loans schemes in project communities which will further enable women access to finance and with women accounting for 25% of leadership roles in these new groups ([see Activity 4.4](#))

Training of farmers in Year 2 ([see Activity 4.2](#)), which includes 164 women.

There is already a gender officer 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 has increased from 37% to 44%.

A total of 105 farmers from 11 out of the 14 Darwin villages sold Cocoa to the 3 local cocoa buying officers working for Malema Cocoa Farmers Association (MACFA). Out of these, 46 were female (44%). Due to Covid 19 no specific gender training took place. Besides a radio programme addressing gender issues that was produced at beginning of the year. The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) training was postponed as there was no funds assigned for a consultant. We are 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. This activity was delayed partly due to the covid, we would like to implement this starting in Makpoima.

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 and this annual report have been submitted. A separate detailed financial report is also being submitted for Year 2. 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. The Change Request for Year 2 was significant in that it not only was responding to delays from coronavirus and requesting a change request but

identified key changes to the log frame and that were made to make the project more robust and in response to lessons that have been learned in Years 1 and 2 in implementing the project

One of the key learnings from the project in Year 1 was 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.

At the start of Year 2 a new project management framework was put in place with the identification of workstream leads in GRC and CSSL to own distinct workstreams along with the development and agreement of a project plan. The project plan was iterated a number of times during the course of the year; however, the tracking of this plan needs to have more focused effort to ensure that timelines are not allowed to slip.

Workstream leads and the Project Manager met on a monthly basis to understand work that had been carried out, next steps and any risks and issues that the workstream was facing. This allowed for closer and more effective project monitoring, although work remains to improve the quality of input and discussion in these meetings.

At the end of the year review sessions were held which included field-based staff not normally in the management meetings. This has produced some good feedback which will be integrated into Year 3 and into the development of new projects. For instance, staff identified the need to place more attention on cross-departmental information sharing so that field staff have a more in-depth knowledge about the project activities and scope across different workstreams. This was seen as a valuable way to ensure extension staff can provide accurate and timely information to communities during their visits, and can bring back relevant updates to their colleagues if they become aware of issues that are unrelated to their specific work area. This is to be achieved through processes such as a regular cross-department meeting with field staff and leveraging the potential of a WhatsApp group for timely updates. In planning new projects, staff identified that management of communities' expectations could be improved by a more thorough engagement with field staff about what exactly might be delivered on-the-ground within an available budget.

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 REDD report was also produced during the course of the year in July 2020 which covered the whole of the REDD+ programme including the Darwin activities. Evidence for this report 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, 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. This tool has been developed incorporating pictures so that it can be used where people cannot read or write. The implementation of this tool was interrupted by the Covid 19 outbreak.

9. Lessons learnt

The project has addressed this in three ways during the course of Year 2.

Firstly, risk and issues are addressed at monthly management meetings allowing lessons to be learned in an agile manner that allows relatively quick adjustments. A key example of this was in addressing the issue that arose with Makpoima and also improvement made to the Community Forestry process that saw the Research team and Community development and Cocoa teams working more closely together to support the training of Natural resource Management committees. It was also through Darwin that the need to address increased standardisation in the operational field policy was identified and addressed. It was also through this that the issue of ensuring that radio broadcasts and roadshows not cascading to all members of communities was raised and addressed.

Secondly CSSL as one of its deliverables this year developed a report on integration

Thirdly a series of lessons learned sessions were held with staff members to identify what worked well and what did not. The purpose of this was twofold:

- To improve planning and make adjustments for year 3 (such as ensuring that there is an activity to take Natural resource Management committee members on an exchange visit to show where ecosystem resources have not been well managed)
- To feed into the development of any new funding proposals to ensure that the lessons from the Darwin project can lead to improvements in the way that follow on projects (which is a key deliverable of the Darwin project) are addressed.

What worked well

- The finalisation of the camera-trap deployment was efficiently executed, and the activity was well received by communities. Key enabling factors were the experience of the research and monitoring team, the development of monthly work-planning systems, the investment of the project into community engagement such as the training of natural resource management committees.
- The supply of seeds and equipment for the establishment of cocoa nurseries was very well received by communities. A potential issue, that inputs differed from those other cocoa demonstration sites in the area, was managed through regular engagement with communities by field staff. The previous cocoa work undertaken under the REDD programme likely facilitated the success of this activity by providing a solid groundwork. This meant that farmers in communities had prior experience of cocoa-related support interventions.
- The clearing of land for IVS rice demonstration plots was carried out well. The inputs of cash for work were instrumental to achieving this, and the activity was planned in good time because the budget approval process had begun several months in advance.
- The training of Species Champions and preparation for undertaking patrolling and surveying work was a successful way to involve community members in the project's species conservation elements and raise understanding of the concept of high conservation value species. The financial support for champions is seen to have value as a token that demonstrates commitment to the project-community partnership.
- Establishing NRM committees and training for NRM members represented a significant first step leading towards the development of community-based resource management as a conservation tool both for Gola and for Sierra Leone. The concepts were well-received by participants and appear to align well with existing values and natural resource governance systems. The training was held in communities, by a staff member from the chiefdom, which promoted the sense that the process was intended to support communities in a participatory way. Bringing the committee members from different communities together was important to establish a sense of shared purpose across the villages and resulted in engaged discussions around resource-use decision-making. The involvement of a research technician was also highly positive as it helped establish the link between species monitoring work and the activities of the community development department.
- The social science work has started to identify participation and non-participation factors. The timing has allowed the social scientist to observe implementation of a range

of activities, providing insights across the different types of intervention. In addition, the emergence of pit sawing activities has coincided with the social science fieldwork, allowing direct observations of how natural resource management decisions are made and how conflicts are addressed.

- Social science training has been very well received by staff, and the mix of hands-on training and participatory workshops has allowed staff to develop knowledge and skills from different sub-disciplines of the field.
- The development of a project structure with workstream leads owning work has been highly effective. This structure has given staff a clear sense of direction when planning and reporting the work, which has been beneficial for the delivery of all areas of the project.
- The running of monthly management meetings has allowed greater team co-operation and cohesion. This has enabled regular check-ins and alignment on project aims and progress as well as facilitating the valuable exchange of insights and ideas. The discussions sparked during the meetings have allowed the expertise and experience from different staff to be incorporated into project planning and implementation.
- The lessons learned consultations that incorporated field staff as well as management teams, generated useful insights from a range of perspectives. Importantly, the closeness that field staff have to communities meant that the evaluation incorporated many lessons related to communities' perceptions that might otherwise have been missed. This activity was also valuable as a platform for staff members to voice concerns or opinions and to play a more active role in the project as a whole.
- Engagement with traditional authorities during activities to introduce the project was identified as a key activity to ensure appropriate buy-in and engagement in the project at this key level of decision-making.
- Inclusion of women in the cocoa business and the general increase in sells to farmers association.

What did not work well

- Analysis of information from the camera trapping exercise to clearly identify HCV-CF sites in the communities. This approach demanded a lot of time, and communities did not understand its purpose since much of the camera trapping activity preceded the work to engage communities about forest management and land-use planning. The level of spatial detail this approach can provide, and the need for land-use decisions to come from communities, means the results are a relatively small contribution to the decisions of where community forest conservation zones might be placed. In future, the process to identify community forest zones should be initiated from the community level, using techniques such as participatory mapping exercises. More formal methods such as camera traps should be implemented after substantial community outreach to ensure the results are meaningful from the point of view of communities' decision-making.
- The exercise to identify agricultural targets did not result in clear identification of workable targets and staff had to revisit communities. There was some lack of clarity in the objectives of the activity and consequently the roles and responsibilities of the project and farmer groups were not clearly identified. Staff experience and capacity to deliver participatory community engagement needs to be improved, and communication with community members (from leadership to farmers) is a key area that demands further attention. GRC is presently reviewing their community engagement strategy, to improve staff engagement capacity and bring in a more standardised approach across all of the chiefdoms. The aim is to establish sub offices in the chiefdoms and have a resource centre to act as an information hub, which community members can get to know and visit. GRC is also reviewing its grievance process and plans to build community awareness of the standards expected of staff, especially around safeguarding issues, staff capacity will be improved through a training programme.

- Future projects should be designed with a larger time and resource budget allocated to any participatory components, since these may often require several meetings, over an extended period of time, to establish the necessary identification and understanding of each party's motives, roles and responsibilities. There was also a conceptual lack of clarity in the purpose of agricultural interventions and targets, with inconsistent perceptions among staff and community members about whether the agricultural training was intended as a tool to incentivise forest protection, to promote a change in farming techniques in order to reduce deforestation, to generate food and income for farmers. A clearer conceptual pathway (e.g. theory of change) should be developed to guide future projects, ideally with the involvement of communities themselves.
- The efficiency of livelihood support work could be improved by better follow-up and monitoring of previous activities. This was evidenced in the establishment of new VSLA where there were additional groups set up before the first groups were operating effectively.
- The quality of workstream reports was generally low and more work is needed to build capacity of staff in reporting. The low quality was due partly to the fact that the monthly reporting system was new and unfamiliar, and partly because workloads of staff were high, so little time could be spent improving reporting.
- Processes to give clear budgetary oversight to the project manager of specific activities created delays in the implementation of activities. While this was necessary to ensure appropriate spending, the procedure was unfamiliar to staff and there were substantial delays due to the need to re-write budgets for approval. More attention to project management capacity needs to be given in the design of future projects.
- Planning and tracking project implementation was not as effective as it needed to be. The process worked well in that plans were drawn up but without enough project management it proved impossible to update these as required and track project progress. Developing these crucial aspects of planning and reporting will be a key focus for the next year of the project and is facilitated by the workstream structure and monthly reporting system now in place.
- Ability to address risks and issues quickly was low. Future work to improve organisational capacity needs to address this. A restructuring plan is now in place and will be implemented in the coming year. The focus of this plan is to increase management capacity throughout the organisation. To decentralise the decision-making process to avoid the bottle neck of decisions being pushed up to the Head of Gola (HOG). There will be a Head of operations and a Head of Administration and Finance, giving the Head of Gola more time to improve community engagement relationships with chiefdom leaders and key stakeholders. To improve the information flow back to the organisation so that GRC is more in tune with the issues being raised by communities and can mitigate them more efficiently.
- 2 communities could not agree on how to work as a group on the Agroforestry Demo plot

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

The review of the Year 1 report identified that there were significant delays to the work needing to be undertaken because of delays in recruiting the Project Social Scientist and suggested that an alternative local way of working was identified. The project carefully considered this but concluded that this was not feasible because financially it would not have been viable as the person had already been recruited specifically for this role and because there is very limited social science capability in Sierra Leone. Instead effort was put to ensuring that the Project Social Scientist was able to deploy to the field as soon as possible and in time for the end of the rainy season.

The review also recommended that there would be a need to pursue greater community engagement and maintain trust with the communities and identified a concern that as a group

of organisations focused on species protection whether they would be able to do so. It is important to note that the concern raised by the reviewer was deemed to be misplaced and demonstrated a lack of understanding of the role of GRC which has been working with the communities around Gola for over a decade and has significant capability around community outreach and engagement. However, the underlying issue of the need for continued community engagement as raised by the project in the Year 1 annual report is a valid one. To this end in Year 2 there has been a focus on understanding the relationship between GRC and the communities in more detail, including but not limited to how messaging is perceived. Issues to do with community engagement are key risk areas that are also addressed at project management meetings and in Year 2 there was a greater level of engagement through undertaking more liaison around agriculture outreach work and also through the Community Forestry process all of which means that there is significantly more engagement than there was in Year 1 when the key activity was around biodiversity monitoring. The lessons learned consultations resulted in the identification of mechanisms to address communities' high expectations or misperceptions of the project, including mechanisms to ensure field staff from different departments are fully aware of each other's workplans. However this remains a key risk area because of the heightened expectations of the communities in the area in working with GRC and will need to be closely monitored again through project management and more agile ways to address issues (which will inevitably occur) need to be put in place.

A third area raised by the Year 1 review was around the assumption that increasing awareness will change behaviour and that improving food security will reduce disturbance of HCV-CFs. This remains a key risk area, not in terms of the achievement of the outcomes (i.e. protection of HCV-CFs) but in terms of the fact that there might not be a strong causal link with food security. As such this is a key area that the Project Social Scientist is looking at to determine the degree to which this link is the motivation for protecting Community forests and we expect the outcomes of this through the mid-project survey to be instrumental in determining whether the emphasis on this causal link is the correct way to go forward, or how it can be improved. In essence this is a core outcome of the project and we have put in place the capability to effectively look into this in Year 2, but findings will not be available until Year 3 and 4 of the project. However, the importance of having a Project Social Scientist is the fact that this link can be studied, and changes can be made in real time on the project to address some of the findings

The Year 1 reviewer also suggested that the Malema communities are not partners in the project and based this on a single experience during camera trapping exercises in the first year. Again, the project believes that the premises for making this assertion are flawed. GRC have been working in the Gola landscape for a long time and have partnership agreements in place and the work that they do is based on a strong partnership model. Unfortunately, in Year 1 the majority of work on the Darwin project was focused on scientific camera trapping, an activity in which the partnership model is less valid than in other areas. The fact that there were a few issues (mainly with one community) in Year 1 and Year 2 is not an unexpected occurrence when you are dealing with 122 different communities who have high expectations and sometimes unrealistic expectation about project work. The work by the project social scientist has revealed the complex factors that contribute to non-participation (such as the refusal to allow the team to set camera traps). Key among these is the personal perspectives of powerful decision-makers (in this case a town chief) over whether the project is satisfying their interests and expectations. Secondly, the relationship between the organisation and communities is strongly mediated by the sharing of development funds at the chiefdom level through the REDD programme, and the degree to which each community perceives the process as fair and appropriate. A revision of the process is currently underway, including elections for community development representatives, which are expected to help address this underlying issue.

However, the point that the reviewer made was valid in the sense that there is a need for more ownership by communities. In Year 2 there has been a focus on ensuring this in a number of ways including:

- Ensuring that communities were engaged in terms of agricultural targets, training and support in a way that used PRA techniques and in which they decided what crop production that they wanted to focus on rather than this being imposed on them. Having

field staff regularly visiting the same communities helps promote inter-personal relationships that enable a two-way dialogue and better sense of ownership by farmers.

- The research work that the Project social Scientist has been undertaking has shown that engagement with the community leaders does not necessarily result in engagement with all community members and therefore we are refining our approach to engagement on the back of this insight. Communication and information-sharing will be a focus of Year 3 work across workstreams, and there are plans in place to develop new ways of engaging communities through drama groups, field staff trainings and technology tools such as filming of meetings or workshops with mobile phones. The social science work in year 3 will further investigate how information is received by communities so that engagement strategies can be further developed and refined.
- The Community Forestry process is a fully participative process in which each of the communities are selecting their own representatives for the Natural resources Committee and having this established first will enable community input into decision making on what will be conserved and how. There has been an emphasis on ensuring the decisions are made at the pace dictated by communities, and the co-management officer has spent as much time in the communities as the work schedule allows to enable this new concept is communicated well, such that communities decisions are informed by a deep understanding of the motives and concepts underpinning the process.
- In addition to this the Community Forestry process has been changed, and the measurable indicators alongside this, to not only focus on complete HCV-CF areas but to also ensure that other archetypes of forest protection are also valid and should be included if they have a conservation benefit such as through mixed sustainable use.

11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

The log frame of the project was significantly changed in the Change Request put forward and accepted in Year 2. The rationale for this was threefold. In some respects, this was due to the delays that had occurred in the main because of the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on project progress.

However, there were also three other key issues that needed to be addressed.

The first of these was how to ensure that the measurable indicators were more robust, especially given that the results of the baseline survey showed that at least one of them had already been reached. As a result of this a more robust set of measurable indicators were put forward that for example focused on improvements to the lowest quartile in terms of food security and diet diversity rather than looking at the impact across all levels within a community. In terms of conservation there was a focus on ensuring that the measurable indicators reflected the fact that there were alternative forms of community forest protection and not just complete conservation of areas as HCV-CF areas and that if this was appropriate then this should also be considered.

It was agreed that whilst there was a desire to ensure that the most important areas of community forests were protected from a conservation point of view ultimately it is the communities who will decide where community forest sites are to be located. Whilst the identification of the conservation hot spots provides useful information it cannot in itself identify where communities will decide where to protect its forest. As such the approach has been turned on its head in that the identification of community forests will be decided with the communities with only the highest level identification of species concentration and that once this is done it will be possible to compare against the scientific data collected to clearly identify if the areas chosen are the ones where there is most species diversity.

A lot of time and consideration also went into looking at the Community Forest process. This is a relatively new process for Sierra Leone and was an area that was identified in the proposal, but which left the details of how this was going to be done unidentified. As a result there were a number of planning sessions that were held to assess the way in which it would be feasible to carry out this work going at the pace that the communities need to go in order to own the

process whilst being conscious of project timeframes. This is still an evolving process as each step of the Community Forest process is reached and a need for agility has been retained.

It is clear from Year 1 experiences that the focus on biodiversity identification was not as effective as it could have been and led to a reduced timeframe in which to undertake Community Forestry work, which is subject to a less controllable timeline. As such at the end of Year 2 a series of lessons learned, from the project to date, was compiled and the outputs used to feed into future proposals to expand the work being carried out on the Darwin project (the broadening of this approach to other chiefdoms is a key outcome of the project)

The single biggest issue that the project faced in Year 2 was the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. This resulted in the repatriation of RSPB staff and significant impacts, especially in the first half of the year, of work that could be carried out. In addition to this the project work was properly deprioritised for a number of months as focus went to ensuring safe operations and support for the Gola communities. This has led to significant delays and the request for a 6-month project extension which was granted.

The biggest ongoing risk to the project lies in the Community Forestry work and specifically in two related areas.

The first is that there is a clear tension between the timelines of the project and the ability to move things forward at pace, which would be counterproductive as the communities would not effectively own the process as they need to in order to be sustainable. As such there is a real chance that although significant progress will have been made towards the identification and establishment of HCV-CF area and the establishment and effective operation of institutional mechanisms such as the Natural resource Management committees it is likely that by the end of the project the 14 communities will all be at different stages along this process or will have got to a stage where the mechanisms have been established, but where it is too early to see if the outcomes have been achieved.

Linked to this is the level of resource on the project both in terms of project management and in terms of community forestry work given the intensive nature of this work with communities - both areas that will need to be considered going forward.

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
<p>Probable High Level of Recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Probable Medium Level of Recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Probable Lower Level of Recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 2:

- 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 continues to be acknowledged at all community meetings, including in radio broadcasts and on roadshows.

- Ongoing discussion between the project, RSPB and the British High Commission around how Gola Rainforest can be used as a visible example of co-operation between the UK and Sierra Leone in the run up to COP 25 in Glasgow
- A visit was organised for personnel from the BHC, including the Deputy High Commissioner to visit the Gola area and to coincide this with a visit by the Minister of Tourism so that connections could be further strengthened in light of the work being carried out by GRC. The Minister of Environment was also due to attend but because of Presidential requirements was at short notice not able to do so.

Unfortunately, a number of other areas where Darwin identity would have been highlighted even more were put on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic. These included events like seminars (due to limitations on travel), publication of articles (due to limited progress in the first half of the year) and the development of a Darwin project page (as limited resources were focused elsewhere).

It is expected that these actions will be undertaken in Year 3. Additionally, with the hosting of COP 25 in Glasgow the role that the UK plays in Gola will be publicised (along with the Darwin component of this work). There is also a trip planned by a number of Social Science experts from RSPB and in the same way as with the trip from the Conservation Scientists in Year 1 we will look to use social media as a way of recording the trip and raising specific issues. Darwin will be explicitly referred to within these communications.

14. Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery

- **To what extent has COVID-19 impacted your project?**
 - Repatriation of RSPB personnel
 - Inability to deploy Project Social Scientist
 - Restrictions in gathering and impact on community forestry
 - Restrictions in travel across district boundaries and prioritisation of other areas by GRC
- **How have you responded? For example, by adjusting your workplan or approach to help maintain delivery.**
 - Replanning of the project throughout Year 2
 - Approach that sees identification of the HCV-CF areas not dependent on delayed conservation science work (note this is also a philosophical change of approach)
 - Not looking to do midterm reviews of forest cover etc as would be meaningless as levers for protection only just being put in place
 - Replanning of the community forestry work (although a lot of this was about making the approach more robust rather than due to delays)
 - In agricultural extension space rather than doing everything in one big bang looking at revisiting each year
 - Adjustment on non-essential items backward into Year 4
- **Are longer-term delays expected?**
 - Yes , that is why a 6-month extension was requested and granted
- **How are you assuring the health and safety of project staff and beneficiaries?**
 - A COVID response was initiated which input specific operational norms for office working above that required by the government such as staying at home unless

- there was specific work needed to be carried out – grater levels of cleaning and sanitiser, changes to working practices such as buying small bags of water etc
 - Work done by GRC and CSSL in the communities – provisi0on of health and safety items, training on health and safety – posters on washing hands etc
- Could any of your project outcomes or impacts assist with the response to COVID-19 or reduce the risk of future pandemics?
 - No
- Do you expect or hope to continue with any of the new ways of working adopted over the past year, once the pandemic passes? For example, greater use of virtual meetings to reduce the need to travel?
 - Yes, there is improved reliance on virtual meetings to the extent that inputting a conference room in GRC to enable this
 - Improved understanding of how to conduct virtual meetings

15. Safeguarding

Please tick this box if any safeguarding or human rights violations have occurred during this financial year.

If you have ticked the box, please ensure these are reported to ODA.safeguarding@defra.gov.uk as indicated in the T&Cs.

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. It is expected that over the course of Year 3 that a stand-alone safeguarding policy and a stand-alone gender policy (drafted) will be adopted by GRC

16. Project expenditure

The response from LTSI said that we could submit this section later in the year, so this has not been addressed here.

Please expand and complete Table 1. If all receipts have not yet been received, please provide indicative figures and clearly mark them as Draft. The Actual claim form will be taken as the final accounting for funds.

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021)

Project spend (indicative) since last annual report	2020/21 Grant (£)	2020/21 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL				

Highlight any agreed changes to the budget and **fully** explain any variation in expenditure where this is +/- 10% of the budget. Have these changes been discussed with and approved by Darwin?

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

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2020 - March 2021	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Impact:</p> <p>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.</p>		<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In Year 1 the key contributions in terms of a positive impact on biodiversity were in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training community champions in ecology / conservation (ongoing in Year 2) <p>In Year 1 the key contributions in terms of a positive impact in the conditions of human communities associated with biodiversity were in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Measurement of quantifiable impact in both these areas will only be understood later in the project</p>	
<p>Outcome:</p> <p>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 approach across Malema Chiefdom and pilot approach in another 3 Chiefdoms</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>0.2 By EOP 50% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% female, 50% male) are able to demonstrate they are more involved in forest protection activities than at the start of the project, and that the level of involvement has increased more in target villages than in control villages</p> <p>0.3 By EOP 70% of target households in the highest quartile (i.e. the 25% of</p>	<p>0.1-0.2: Natural Resource Management committees established in all 14 Darwin Communities and trained in roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Species champions identified and trained in all 14 Darwin villages</p> <p>Engagement begun with communities around protecting HCV-CF and other community forest areas with demarcation of all areas due in Year 3</p> <p>0.3-0.4: 9 new nurseries established to improve cocoa production across the 14 Darwin communities</p> <p>4 demonstration plot areas cleared for the planting of IVS rice</p>	<p>0-1-0.2: Specific HCV-CF sites and other protected community forest sites mapped and agreed with communities and signed off by community and Chiefdom leaders</p> <p>Natural Resource Management communities fully operational with by-laws in place and clear operational practices being undertaken</p> <p>Species champions patrolling and surveying community forest for 4 days per month, with information collated on a quarterly basis</p> <p>0.3-0.5: Qualitative, gender-specific surveys will be carried out across target</p>

	<p>households with the highest food insecurity) have improved their HFIAS score by 3 points or more and that the overall level of improvement is higher in target villages than in control villages.</p> <p>0.4 By EOP 70% of target households in the lowest quartile (i.e. the 25% of households with the lowest dietary diversity) have improved their Household Dietary Diversity Score by 1 point or more and that the overall level of improvement is higher in target villages than in control villages.</p> <p>0.5 By EOP 50% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% female, 50% male) are able to demonstrate an improved understanding of the concept that forest protection increases food security and are stronger advocates for the continuation of forest protection through the REDD+ project, and that the overall level of improvement is higher in target villages than in control villages.</p> <p>0.6 By EOP GRC Directors 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 20 villages in Malema chiefdom, b) pilot the concept across 3 other chiefdoms.</p>	<p>Food for work schemes run on improving access routes and on clearing fields for the planting of IVS rice</p> <p>0.5-0.6 Social science work carried out to identify the underlying understanding in communities between the community's participation in protecting their forest resource and food security</p> <p>Additional 9 VSLA groups established / additional 9 nurseries established with messaging linking ecosystem conservation and increased food security</p> <p>Natural Resource Management committees set up and members trained / Species champions trained</p>	<p>households, by the Project Social Scientist to examine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key drivers of food insecurity • effectiveness of food security interventions • barriers for participation in forest protection activities • perceptions and understanding of forest protection concepts. <p>Surveys will assess participation in project activities, and their effectiveness for improving food security and diet diversity.</p> <p>Results will be used to identify ways that project activities can be improved.</p> <p>0.6: Activities to progress indicator will occur in Year 4 following agreement of 6-month extension to the project</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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 identify focused area in which to undertake on the ground</p>	<p>1.1 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN YEAR 1</p> <p>1.2 ON TRACK – Measurement was taken in Year 1 and will be taken again at the end of the project in Year 4 including an identification of the change in deforestation before the end of Year 2 and the start of Year 3 when a number of the levers expected to impact deforestation rates started to come into effect (establishment of Natural Resource Management committees, start of patrolling and surveying by Species Champions, start of the identification of HCF-CV areas on the ground)</p>	

	<p>surveys to identify potential HCV-CF sites by end Y1 Q3.</p> <p>1.2 Deforestation rates in potential area in which HCV-CF sites could be located and in control area assessed by end of Y1 Q3 and future deforestation risk is modelled by EOP</p> <p>1.3 Surveys of forest birds and GTS of mammals (in particular chimpanzee, pygmy hippo, elephant) and habitat surveys in the area where potential HCV-CF sites may be located conducted to clarify species occurrence by end of Y2 Q3</p> <p>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 of Y2.</p> <p>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 Y3.</p>	<p>1.3 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN YEAR 2 - All remaining camera traps were recovered and the data successfully extracted for analysis and all remaining bird point counts were undertaken from which a map of species occurrence was identified.</p> <p>1.4 SLIGHTLY BEHIND SCHEDULE – Whilst the initial exercise was completed in Year 2 with the gathering of data as part of the camera trapping exercise it was identified that this needed to be broadened out so that there was an opportunity to both gather more data and to use the exercise to generate greater interest and ownership from community members. As such an additional exercise was started in Q4 of Year 2 through the Species Champions to gather information across their communities. This process is in place with data due to be collected and collated in Q1 of Year 3</p> <p>1.5 ON TRACK – Camera traps were successfully set along the border before the end of Year 2 and will be in the field for a year to capture migration in all seasons with data being collected on a quarterly basis</p>	
<p>Activity 1.1 Use existing species records and landcover data to map and assess target area (4,000-6,000 ha) to identify focused area in which to undertake on the ground surveys to identify potential HCV-CF sites used by globally-threatened species and present results in a baseline report</p>	<p>Work completed in Year 1</p>	<p>Work completed in Year 1</p>	
<p>Activity 1.2 Use remote sensing data (gathered under activity 1.7) to assesses deforestation rates in potential HCV-CF sites in target area</p>	<p>Work completed in Year 1</p>	<p>Work completed in Year 1</p>	
<p>Activity 1.3 Conduct surveys of forest birds and GTS mammals and forest species in target area (in particular chimpanzee, pygmy hippo and elephant) and habitat surveys to quantify sites that support GTS and model species-habitat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of camera trapping as well as opportunistic primate and habitat surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling of species-habitat relationships to guide prioritisation of HCV-CF 	

<p>relationships to help guide identification and prioritisation of potential HCV-CF sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of bird point counts • Processing of camera trapping images • Quantification of potential HCV-CF sites to identify sites that support most GTS • Modelling of species-habitat relationships to guide prioritisation of HCV-CF 	
<p>Activity 1.4 Capture local communities' knowledge of globally threatened species in target area and participatory mapping of globally threatened species / community conflict 'hotspots'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Captured local community knowledge of GTS (across at remaining 6 communities during opportunistic surveys) ▪ Designed participatory exercise to capture further community knowledge of GTS / community hotspots run by Species Champions ▪ Communities engaged in participatory exercise by Species Champions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete participatory exercise ▪ Feed information into rationalisation of HCV-CF sites (if required)
<p>Activity 1.5 Undertake camera trapping study of key biodiversity hotspots along the Malema / Liberian border to establish pygmy hippo areas of activity and elephant and chimpanzee migration routes to identify sites vital to connectivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Camera trap study of key biodiversity hotspots commenced (37 cameras deployed out of 37) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete camera trap study ▪ Identify areas of pygmy hippo activity and potential elephant and chimpanzee migration routes ▪ Write migration report and assess extent of cross-border migration ▪ Identify sites vital for connectivity ▪ Feed information into rationalisation of HCV-CF sites (if required)
<p>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 generated in Output 1 and map potential HCV-CF areas and their priority for conservation, refining modelling and maps if required when data from Activity 1.5 becomes available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High level map produced of key sites to place HCV-CF areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake joint species modelling and produce report ▪ Establish overall alignment of areas to the bottom up identification of HCV-CF sites on

		the ground and identify significant variance
Activity 1.7 Assess deforestation rates in HCV-CF sites, other protected community forest areas and the control area through a before and after control intervention comparison, supported by GRC ground truthing, and present results in a report	No work in Year 2	No work in Year 3
<p>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.</p> <p>2.1 Six education roadshows and ten radio broadcasts are held over the course of the project in the target area.</p> <p>2.2 1-2 Species Champions for globally threatened species (Pygmy Hippo, Forest Elephant or Western Chimpanzee depending on species present) trained per village by end of Y2</p> <p>2.3 Species Champions undertake community forest surveys and patrols on a regular basis to identify species signs and deforestation particularly in HCV-CF sites from start of Y3 and take part in EOP survey in Y4.</p> <p>2.4 Local communities' knowledge of the importance of maintaining HCV-CF / other areas of protected community forest to the REDD+ project is assessed between control and intervention villages in Y4.</p>	<p>2.1 ON TRACK – A total of 2 roadshows and 4 radio programmes were held during the course of the year, bringing the total undertaken on the project so far to 4 roadshows and 6 radio programmes. Another 2 roadshows and 4 radio programmes are planned for Year 3</p> <p>2.2 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN YEAR 2 – Species Champions have been trained in both general ecology and conservation as well as in surveying and data collection. This included 2 Species Champions in all communities</p> <p>2.3 ON TRACK – With the completion of the training of Species Champions in Q4 of Year 2 the Species Champions will begin their patrolling and surveying work at the start of Y3 (at the time of writing this was already underway in 13 of the 14 communities with the dispute with Makpoima delaying this work in the last community)</p> <p>2.4 NOT YET ADDRESSED – This will be addressed in Year 4</p>	
Activity 2.1 Run a total of 6 education roadshows and 10 radio broadcasts in the project area during the course of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two education roadshows (one at 4 cluster points and one at 2 cluster points) undertaken ▪ 4 radio programmes aired in the project area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two education roadshows to be undertaken ▪ Four radio programmes to be aired in the project area
Activity 2.2 Train 1 or 2 (depending on village size) Species Champions for globally-threatened species (Pygmy Hippo, Forest Elephant or Western Chimpanzee depending on species present) in each village to undertake surveys & patrols to identify species signs in community forests and deforestation in HCV-CF sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Species champions in all 14 villages trained in general ecology ▪ Species champions in all 14 villages trained in patrolling and survey methods and collection of data 	Work completed in Year 2

<p>Activity 2.3 Support Species Champions to undertake monthly surveys & patrols to identify species signs in community forests and deforestation in HCV-CF areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contracts established with all Species Champions ▪ Operational procedures around frequency of patrols and collection of data for analysis agreed (quarterly) 	<p>Provide focused support on first patrols to ensure effective start</p> <p>Provide ongoing support to patrols as required to improve capability</p> <p>Collate and analyse data in Months 3, 6, 9 and 12</p>
<p>Activity 2.4 Carry out baseline / EOP sample household surveys to assess project impact on local communities' knowledge of the importance to the REDD+ project of maintaining HCV-CF sites / other areas of community in control and intervention villages.</p>	<p>No work in Year 2</p>	<p>No work in Year 3</p>
<p>Output 3: Communities in target area develop village land use and agricultural training plans to regulate natural resource use in HCV-CF sites / other community forest areas being protected whilst increasing yields in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on community forests.</p>	<p>3.1 Consultation meetings held with all 14 villages with agreement to implement the Darwin project, including the development of land use plans.</p> <p>3.2 Community boundaries and land use zones (including potential HCV-CF sites / other community forest areas being protected) mapped for the 14 communities via participatory rural appraisal and GPS data collection by end Y3 Q1.</p> <p>3.3 14 Village specific agricultural targets (e.g. yield increases, improvements to processing) set by farmers through focus groups using a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process by end of Y2 Q2 and reviewed in Y3 and Y4 with 75% of villages having met (or on course to having met) their specific targets by EOP.</p> <p>3.4 14 Village specific land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs and other community forest areas being protected) completed through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process by end Y3 Q2.</p> <p>3.5 14 Village level agricultural training plans developed through a participatory, inclusive process by end Y1.</p>	<p>3.1 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN YEAR 1</p> <p>3.2 BEHIND SCHEDULE – this is a critical activity in the community forestry process and is taking substantially longer than anticipated. This is in part due to a later start than anticipated due to establishing the right process and delays in being able to put a boundary marking team in the field as the capacity for this was taken out of GRC last year to reduce cost. As such a new team has had to be hired. Also this activity has been delayed because of issues with one of the communities and limited capacity within GRC (the organisation design changes approved by the GRC Directors in April included a proposal to recruit an additional person to work on Community Forestry to support a speeding up of the process by allowing support across multiple communities at the same time).</p> <p>Delays in this area are likely to lead to knock on delays in other indicators where work has not yet started</p> <p>3.3 ON TRACK – Focus groups were established and using a participatory and gender sensitive process an exercise was held in Year 2 to identify the agricultural targets. There were a number of lessons learned through this process that will be implemented in the review of whether targets have been met and the revision of those targets in Year 3</p> <p>3.4 BEHIND SCHEDULE – Because of the way that the communities operate it is difficult to undertake multiple elements of the project at any one time. As such there is a focus at the moment on getting the mapping of community boundaries and HCF-CVs undertaken to ensure that this key element on which a lot of the rest of the Community Forestry process is based is effectively completed. As such there is a high risk that land use plans will not be completed by the deadline identified.</p> <p>3.5 ON TRACK – Village level agricultural training plans were developed off the back of the identification of agricultural targets. These plans follow the agricultural cycle of the selected crops that the communities identified that they wanted to focus on and include establishment of nurseries, out planting of crops, harvesting</p>

	<p>3.5 14 Village level agricultural training plans developed through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process by end of Y2 Q3 and reviewed in Y3 and Y4.</p> <p>3.6 Key social factors impacting the project including constraints on participation are understood by end of Y4 Q1</p>	<p>and marketing (there is a plan to do this training, this plan will be reviewed along with agricultural targets during Year 3)</p> <p>3.6 ON TRACK – The deployment of the Project Social Scientist has means that we are on track to have a good understanding of key social factors impacting the project including constraints on participation. Initial survey work was carried out in Year 2 and the findings are being integrated into the project to support its impact (e.g. the understanding of the way that engagement activities through roadshows and radio programmes are limited in the way that they cascade to all members of communities. Further work will be carried out in Year 3 on this area</p>	
<p>Activity 3.1 Hold consultative meetings with villages at the beginning of the project to agree to the undertaking of project activities</p>	<p>Work completed in Year 1</p>		<p>Work completed in Year 1</p>
<p>Activity 3.2 Map community boundaries and land use zones using PRA and GRP in 14 villages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation on mapping held as part of roadshows ▪ New approach developed focused on establishing Natural Resource Management committees to support this work ▪ Boundary marking team contracted and workplan agreed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Map key boundaries in the 14 communities ▪ Hold consultation meetings to agree HCV-CF areas in the 14 communities ▪ Map HCV-CF areas in the 14 communities ▪ Overlay the HCV-CF areas with land use zones to produce an effective map showing areas of forest being protected ▪ Get sign off from different levels of authority to ensure sustainability of agreed HCV-CF areas
<p>Activity 3.3 Facilitate focus groups in each village to set and review specific agricultural targets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation exercise held in each of the 14 communities to identify specific agricultural support for each community ▪ Expected yield targets identified from intervention 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review implementation against specific agricultural support for each of the 14 communities from Year 2 ▪ Agree and update targets in Year 3 (including potential new crop production)
<p>Activity 3.4 Facilitate development of village specific land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs / other community forest to be protected) through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process</p>	<p>No work specified in Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approach to Community Forestry and the development of land use plans starting to be aligned to 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to align approach to landscape land use planning work with other projects and government stakeholders

	<p>broader landscape work being undertaken in this area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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
<p>Activity 3.5 Facilitate development of village level agricultural training plans through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training undertaken in 14 villages in line with establishment of nurseries, demonstration plots and clearance of fields for IVS rice 	<p>Review training plan in line with review of agricultural targets</p> <p>Undertake any further training as required in line with agreed changes in agricultural targets (including potential identification of new crop production)</p>
<p>Activity 3.6 Use qualitative social science techniques to understand key social science issues including factors that constrain participation in project</p>	<p>Reviewed baseline data to improve targets and measures around food security and diet diversity</p> <p>Hold focus group discussions to ascertain general themes surrounding barriers to participation.</p> <p>Conduct semi-structured interviews with non-participants (using purposive sampling)</p> <p>Explore barriers and motivations for participation for men and women, across different socio-economic and demographic groups.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews and direct field observations have been made across Darwin communities and different aspects of project implementation. This has yielded valuable insights into the social landscape, GRC-community relations, power structures and land-use decision-making processes, and communities' perceptions of the barriers they face for improving food security.</p>	<p>The project social scientist will produce a detailed analytical report based on data collected through year 2. This will include: the relevant livelihood, food security and project participation issues that have been identified; a conceptual framework as a tool to guide the design of livelihood approaches; key recommendations for the Darwin project and for livelihood support work across GRC more generally.</p> <p>The project social scientist will train and support GRC field staff to develop effective data collection methods for evaluating livelihood interventions as they are implemented. This will facilitate adaptive development of interventions based on observed outcomes. The project social scientist will support GRC staff to analyse results and present them in regular staff meetings to discuss how findings can be integrated into practices.</p> <p>The project social scientist will train a newly appointed GRC social scientist and will co-develop and implement a focused research project to explore a</p>

	<p>Several factors relating to (non-) participation have been identified, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - level of trust in GRC, which is affected by underlying perceptions of the community development fund distribution process, and the capacity of the organisation to enact timely and effective information-sharing. - availability of sufficient labour and time resources to implement livelihood support programmes - low adult literacy for programmes such as village savings and loans schemes - lack of ownership by communities of livelihood projects - insufficient communication with communities to ensure expectations remain realistic, responsibilities are understood, and there is genuine co-development of targets and goals. <p>A survey was used to identify where challenges remain in effectively communicating messages among all community members. This has led to discussion about development of new communication strategies that use sound social marketing principles, with one outcome being a plan to develop drama groups in the coming year.</p>	<p>specific aspect of participation in greater depth. The details of this research project will be identified based on the analytical report and input from the GRC social scientist.</p>
<p>Activity 3.7 Carry out baseline / EOP sample household surveys on food insecurity/dietary diversity (using the Food Insecurity Access Scale and Household Diet Diversity Score) in control and intervention villages</p>	<p>No work in Year 2</p>	<p>No work in Year 3</p>
<p>Output 4: Target communities trial implementation of land use and agricultural training plans which regulate natural resource use in HCV-CFs sites / other community</p>	<p>4.1 Nurseries (where applicable) and community demonstration / on-farm research plots established through Farmer Field Schools by end of Y3 Q1</p>	<p>4.1 ON TRACK – Nurseries were established in 8 communities in Year 2 and 4 on-farm research plots have been cleared in other communities ready for the planting of IVS rice at the start of the rainy season</p> <p>4.2 ON TRACK – (Need to get BH / AMINATA t</p>

<p>forests being protected whilst increasing crop production / diversification in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on HCV0CF sites / other community forests being protected.</p>	<p>in all 14 target communities with required inputs provided by the project.</p> <p>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 in their communities by end of Y3 Q2.</p> <p>4.3 At least one new or diversified forest-based livelihood being implemented in each target village by end of Y4 Q2.</p> <p>4.4 A savings and loan scheme running in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women by end of Y1, with further schemes established in Y2 where there is a demand, and with women in leadership roles in the majority of schemes.</p> <p>4.5 Other groups within villages have benefitted from food / cash for work schemes in connection with crop production / diversification by end of Y4 Q2</p> <p>4.6 Improved access trails through 'food/cash for work' schemes by end of Y3 increasing ease of access to market for at least 40% of households.</p>	<p>4.3 NOT YET ADDRESSED – This will be addressed in Year 3</p> <p>4.4 SUCCESSFULLY UNDERTAKEN BUT WITH LIMITATIONS – In addition to the 14 schemes established in Year 1 another 9 schemes were established in Year 2 (Need to get information from Gamanga to see if we achieved the target of 50% women in leadership positions in new groups – I suspect it has not been so cannot say it has been successfully met)</p> <p>4.5 ON TRACK – Food/cash for work schemes were undertaken in supporting communities to clear land for the planting of IVS rice in 4 of the 4 communities</p> <p>4.6 ON TRACK – A food/cash for work scheme was established to support the improvement of the access route to the northern Darwin communities through the access point of Saigahun Junction</p>	
<p>Activity 4.1 Establish managed nurseries (where required and community demonstration plots (1 per village) and supply essential inputs (e.g. seeds for target value chain crops like rice, cassava, groundnuts, vegetables and cocoa) through Farmer Field Schools (FFS)</p>	<p>Nurseries established in 9 communities focused on improving production of cocoa</p> <p>Cocoa and shade tree seedlings established in nurseries</p> <p>Land cleared and demarcated in 4 communities focused on production of IVS rice</p>	<p>Nurseries established in 9 communities focused on improving production of cocoa</p> <p>Cocoa and shade tree seedlings established in nurseries</p> <p>Land cleared and demarcated in 4 communities focused on production of IVS rice</p>	<p>Plant IVS rice (at start of rainy season)</p> <p>Relocate cocoa seedlings into demonstration plots</p> <p>Establish new nurseries and demonstration plots (depending on additional agricultural targets identified in Year 3)</p>

<p>Activity 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 into practice on their own farms.</p>	<p>Trained xxx farmers across 9 communities in the establishment of nurseries and growth of seedlings ???</p>	<p>Identify further training opportunities in line with the establishment of Year 2 nurseries and demonstration plots including planting and marketing</p> <p>Identify new training requirements based on review of agricultural targets and training</p> <p>Train farmers in line with agreed training requirements for Year 3</p>
<p>Activity 4.3 Train farmers in new forest-based livelihoods and support implementation (at least one in each target village)</p>	<p>No work in Year 2</p>	<p>Identify in consultation with key stakeholder groups (including women) what forest-based livelihoods communities are looking to develop</p> <p>Establish plan for implementation including GRC support and budget</p> <p>Provide training in line with identified livelihoods</p>
<p>Activity 4.4 Establish a savings and loan scheme in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women, with women in leadership roles in the majority of groups</p>	<p>Review of success of initial VSLA groups established and issues encountered</p> <p>Solutions put in place to improve VSLA groups where there have been issues</p> <p>Additional 9 Village & Savings Loan Associations (VSLA) established and trained in Darwin communities</p>	<p>No work planned for Year 3 but the VSLA Officer will continue to monitor the associations and provide support as required</p>
<p>Activity 4.5 Undertake crop production / diversification 'food / cash for work' schemes in villages</p>	<p>Food/cash for work schemes identified in line with agriculture extension work</p> <p>Food/cash for work schemes run in 4 communities establishing IVS rice to support clearance of demonstration plots</p>	<p>Identify further food/ cash for work schemes in line with new agricultural targets for Year 3</p> <p>Provide funding / oversight for new food/cash for work schemes</p>
<p>Activity 4.6 Undertake access trail 'food/cash for work' schemes that improve access to local markets</p>	<p>Food/cash for work scheme agreed with local communities</p> <p>Provide funding and oversight of food/cash for work scheme to improve</p>	<p>Identify support for new other access routes from short list and agree work with communities</p>

		main access route into the northern Darwin communities	Undertake additional food/cash for work scheme on access routes
<p>Output 5: 14 Target communities have committed to protect HCV-CF sites / protect other areas of community forests in return for tailored agricultural training and equipment to increase yields sustainably through the GRC REDD+ programme and this will be embedded in Conservation Agreements.</p>	<p>5.1 In each village a Natural Resource Management committee that represents the breadth of forest users within each village elected to support the protection of HCV-CF sites / other areas of community forest being protected through implementation of land use plans, bylaws, management plan and Conservation Agreements by end of Y2 with terms of reference agreed by end of Y3.</p> <p>5.2 Community by-laws protecting HCV-CFs / Community Forests agreed by 14 villages by end of Y3 Q3.</p> <p>5.3 Communities engaged in the development of the Community Forest process through the development of Forest Management Plans by end of Y3 Q3 (with project HCV-CF sites included as zero deforestation zones)</p> <p>5.4 Bylaws, land use and management plans including HCV-CF sites and other community forest areas being protected are signed off by the relevant local authorities up to and including district level by end of Y3.</p> <p>5.5 Conservation Agreements between the 14 target communities and GRC signed by EOP. In these GRC will commit to deliver agricultural support tailored specifically to communities' needs, as well as support for community protection of HCV-CF sites / other areas of community forest being protected, through the REDD+ programme, in return for communities protecting and sustainably managing agreed areas of community forest</p>	<p>5.1 ON TRACK – Natural Resource Management committees have been established in Year 2 and training has been undertaken on roles and responsibilities. There will be a focus on building capability in these institutions</p> <p>5.2 – 5.5 NOT YET ADDRESSED – These will be addressed in Year 3</p> <p>5.6 NOT YET ADDRESSED – This will be addressed in Year 4</p> <p>Note that whilst the measurable indicators in this year are not identified as not being on track as they are not yet planned to have been undertaken delays in the earlier part of the community forestry process are likely to out some of them at risk from being completed on time as they are dependent on some earlier activities having been implemented before they can be effectively addressed</p>	

	(including ensuring zero deforestation in HCV-CF sites). 5.6 Paper submitted to the Forestry Department which shares lessons learned from this project to inform Community Forestry policy across Sierra Leone by EOP		
Activity 5.1 Support communities establish Natural Resource Management committees that represent the breadth of forest users within each village to manage HCV-CF sites / other community forest areas being protected		Natural Resource Committees set up in all 14 Darwin communities Selection process to elect members supported Natural Resource Committees trained in roles and responsibilities	Provide initial training on gender inclusive planning and governance
Activity 5.2 Support village communities develop bylaws to protect HCV-CF and other community forest areas being protected within each village		No work in Year 2	Develop draft bylaws Review draft bylaws with key representatives from communities Finalise and agree bylaws Hold awareness sessions on bylaws with local leaders
Activity 5.3 Facilitate the development and agreement of forest management plans within each village		No work in Year 2	Agree areas to demarcate as HCV-CF and other community forest areas within each village Work with NRMs in each village to agree how these areas will be managed Draft, in consultation with each village, forest management plans Secure sign off for management plans from relevant stakeholders
Activity 5.4 Facilitate communities' engagement in the Community Forest process		No work in Year 2	Through the Natural Resource Management committees engage local communities in the marking of community boundaries

		<p>Through the Natural Resource Management committees engage local communities and in particular different user groups in the identification of HCV-CF sites to be protected</p> <p>Through the Natural Resource Management committees involve communities and in particular different user groups in drafting the management plan and by-laws</p>
Activity 5.5 Write and disseminate paper to the FDA and other relevant audiences.	No work in Year 2	No work in Year 3
<p>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.</p>	<p>6.1 Community representatives (including paramount chiefs) from all 6 neighbouring chiefdoms visit Darwin project villages by Y4 Q1</p> <p>6.2 By EOP GRC Directors (including the Paramount Chief representative) hold a Darwin project review meeting.</p>	6.1 – 6.2 NOT YET ADDRESSED – This will be addressed in Year 4
Activity 6.1 Facilitate visits by representatives from all 6 neighbouring chiefdoms to Darwin project villages.	No work in Year 2	<p>Organise exchange visit for key Darwin communities to visit an area where there has been significant impact on food security based on the poor conservation of ecosystem resources</p> <p>Facilitate representative s from 6 neighbouring chiefdoms to Darwin project villages (note that this is dependent on progress and may be postponed to Year 4 when the visits are likely to be more impactful (this will need to go into a change request)</p>
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.	No work in Year 2	No work in Year 3
<p>Output 7: Project partners increase their capacity to implement the Gola programme.</p>	7.1 By end of Y2 CSSL staff are contributing to the Gola work programme in Malema and are working in an integrated fashion with GRC	7.1 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN Y2 – CSSL staff are working primarily on community engagement and in Year 2 worked in a more integrated fashion with GRC and RSPB colleagues on the project, expedited by monthly project management meetings and conducting roadshows and radio programmes with

	<p>7.2 By EOP CSSL staff in partnership with GRC staff, have developed a post project plan for community development work for the Malema Chiefdom and CSSL project staff have Gola project activities built into their annual workplans.</p> <p>7.3 By end of Y3 GRC is submitting financial reports to RSPB using Darwin templates and by EOP directly to donors for projects GRC is leading and having them approved without significant revision</p> <p>7.4 By end Y2 the Project Social Scientist has given at least 2, and by EOP at least 4, presentations to project / RSPB staff or the wider conservation community (e.g. Cambridge Conservation Initiative) on measurement of social impact of conservation projects / value of social science in conservation projects.</p> <p>7.5 By EOP at least 4 members of staff from across 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.</p>	<p>colleagues from other workstreams and through reviewing effectiveness of messaging with the Project Social Scientist</p> <p>7.2 NOT YET ADDRESSED – This will be addressed in Year 4</p> <p>7.3 ON TRACK – The target date for this was pushed back as part of the change request to reflect the fact that there was a delay in a new Finance Technical Advisor being deployed. This deployment has now happened and the organisation is on track to input a new finance management system this year that will support improvement in financial reporting</p> <p>7.4 ON TRACK – Although no more presentations were given in Year 2 (mainly due to the coronavirus pandemic) two presentations were given in Year 1 and another 2 are planned for Year 3</p> <p>7.5 ON TRACK – In Year 2 the Project Social scientist worked with two members of staff and a volunteer from GRC in carrying out social science work. In addition to this a new Social scientist will be recruited in GRC in Year to benefit from the presence of the Project Social scientist and to build longer lasting capacity in GRC</p>	
Activity 7.1: CSSL in partnership with GRC staff develop a post project plan for community development in Malema chiefdom		No work for Year 2	No work for Year 3
Activity 7.2: CSSL in partnership with GRC staff build Gola project activities into their annual workplans.		No work for Year 2	No work for Year 3
Activity 7.3: RSPB finance staff continue to build GRC staff capacity in financial reporting		No work in Year 2 (based on revised log frame submitted agreed as part of the Year 2 Change Request) – however a new Technical Advisor was	Put in place robust GRC budget combining both organisation and project expenditure Review controls and address issues

	recruited and was deployed in Q4 to lead the activities in Year 3	<p>Set up and embed finance calendar for clear identification of timelines and responsibilities</p> <p>Establish new financial system (QuickBooks) and train finance staff</p> <p>Review and redesign key GRC financial processes (budgeting, forecasting, financial reporting, management reporting)</p> <p>Identify specific finance training requirements and undertake training in at least one area with RSPB financial staff</p>
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.	No work for Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present at Anthropology and Conservation conference on Gola (organised by the Royal Anthropology Society) • Hold internal talk at RSPB
Activity 7.5: GRC/CSSL staff trained in the use of social science techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands on training of staff in social science fieldwork methods (GRC) • Training lectures about the use of behaviour science in conservation practice (GRC) • Workshop discussions around tailoring conservation messaging (CSSL and GRC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further hands on training of staff in social fieldwork methods (GRC) • Training lectures about the use of behaviour science in conservation practice CSSL) • Additional lectures about specific topics on the use of behaviour science in conservation practice (GRC) • Train and mentor new GRC social scientist

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

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<p>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.</p>			
<p>Outcome:</p> <p>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 approach across Malema Chiefdom and pilot approach in another 3 Chiefdoms</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>0.2 By EOP 50% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% female, 50% male) are able to demonstrate they are more involved in forest protection activities than at the start of the project, and that the level of involvement has increased more in target villages than in control villages</p> <p>0.3 By EOP 70% of target households in the highest quartile (i.e. the 25% of households with the highest food insecurity) have improved their HFIAS score by 3 points or more and that the overall level of improvement is higher in target villages than in control villages.</p> <p>0.4 By EOP 70% of target households in the lowest quartile (i.e. the 25% of households with the lowest dietary diversity) have improved their Household Dietary Diversity Score by 1 point or more and that the overall level of improvement is higher in target villages than in control villages.</p> <p>0.5 By EOP 50% of 182 target households (127 households, 1045 people, 50% female, 50% male) are able to demonstrate an improved understanding of the concept that forest</p>	<p>0.1 Before and after comparison of community forest deforestation rates comparing annual rates at beginning / EOP in intervention and control areas using freely available Landsat and Global Forest Watch data ground-truthed with field surveys</p> <p>0.2 Baseline and EOP sample household survey report on household involvement in forest protection activities</p> <p>0.3 Baseline and EOP sample household survey report on food security using the Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS)</p> <p>0.4 Baseline and EOP sample household survey report of diet diversity using the Household Diet Diversity Score (HDDS)</p> <p>0.5 Baseline and EOP sample household survey report of local communities' knowledge of the importance of maintaining HCV-CF / community forests to the REDD+ project</p> <p>0.6 Minutes of project review meeting</p>	<p>Malema communities willing to engage in this project.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Agricultural yields can be increased enough, along with other support and messaging through the Darwin project and REDD+ programme, to enable communities to protect 25% of their forest.</p> <p>We think this will hold true because our work so far with communities suggests that yields can be transformed with sustainable methods and that this combined with other support and messaging linking conservation of forests with improved diet diversity and food security will be enough for communities to agree to protect some of their forest</p> <p>Exchange rates do not devalue the grant/cofunding available such that the project cannot meet its objectives.</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>protection increases food security and are stronger advocates for the continuation of forest protection through the REDD+ project, and that the overall level of improvement is higher in target villages than in control villages.</p> <p>0.6 By EOP GRC Directors 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 20 villages in Malema chiefdom, b) pilot the concept across 3 other chiefdoms</p>		<p>is more likely, but we have costed our budget conservatively.</p> <p>No external influences on deforestation – e.g. immigration, external development pressures.</p> <p>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. Furthermore, GRC has a mandate to address any external influences that may impact the National Park and this includes the leakage belt if there is likely to be a negative impact on the National Park</p> <p>GRC and Malema communities willing to revise MOUs.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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 identify focused area in which to undertake on the ground surveys to</p>	<p>1.1 Report and map showing location of and presence / absence of GTS across target area to support the identification of areas to survey</p> <p>1.2 Report of baseline deforestation survey of area including potential HCV-CFs derived from remotely sensed data</p> <p>1.3 Survey report / map of known species occurrence</p>	<p>Survey methods/equipment are appropriate to terrain.</p> <p>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).</p>

	<p>identify potential HCV-CF sites by end Y1 Q3.</p> <p>1.2 Deforestation rates in potential area in which HCV-CF sites could be located and in control area assessed by end of Y1 Q3 and future deforestation risk is modelled by EOP</p> <p>1.3 Surveys of forest birds and GTS of mammals (chimpanzee, pygmy hippo, elephant) and habitat surveys in the area where potential HCV-CF sites may be located conducted to clarify species occurrence by end of Y2 Q3</p> <p>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 of Y2.</p> <p>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 Y3.</p> <p>1.6 Potential HCV-CF sites and their priority for conservation identified from joint distribution modelling and habitat and deforestation data gathered by end of Y2 and reviewed following data from camera trapping study along the Malema / Liberian Gola Rainforest border by end of Y4 Q1</p> <p>1.7 Deforestation rates in HCV-CF sites / other community forest areas bring protected assessed to identify variance in rates before and after project</p>	<p>1.4 Activity reports and maps from each community</p> <p>1.5 Map and report showing species distribution along Malema / Liberian borders</p> <p>1.6 Map showing potential HCV-CF sites and their priority for conservation and report following camera trapping along Malema / Liberian border to identify if there are any other potential HCV-CF sites</p> <p>1.7 Report showing variance in deforestation rates before and after the project both within the Darwin communities and in relation to the control area</p>	
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	intervention and against control areas by end of Y4 Q3		
<p>Activity 1.1: Use existing species records and landcover data to map and assess target area (4,000-6,000 ha) to identify focused area in which to undertake surveys to identify potential HCV-CF sites used by globally-threatened species and present results in a baseline report.</p> <p>Activity 1.2: Use remote sensing data to assess deforestation rates in potential areas for HCV-CF sites and present results in a deforestation survey report.</p> <p>Activity 1.3: Conduct surveys of forest birds and GTS mammals and forest species in target area (in particular chimpanzee, pygmy hippo and elephant) and habitat surveys to quantify sites that support GTS and model species-habitat relationships to help guide identification and prioritisation of potential HCV-CF sites.</p> <p>Activity 1.4: Capture local communities' knowledge of globally threatened species in target area and participatory mapping of globally threatened species/community conflict 'hotspots'</p> <p>Activity 1.5: Undertake camera trapping study of key biodiversity hotspots along the Malema / Liberian border to establish pygmy hippo areas of activity and elephant and chimpanzee migration routes to identify sites vital to connectivity</p> <p>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 generated in Output 1 and map potential HCV-CF areas and their priority for conservation, refining modelling and maps when data from Activity 1.5 becomes available</p> <p>Activity 1.7: Assess deforestation rates in HCV-CF sites, other protected community forest areas and the control area through a before and after control intervention comparison, supported by GRC ground truthing, and present results in a report</p>			
<p>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.</p>	<p>2.1 Six education roadshows and ten radio broadcasts are held over the course of the project in the target area.</p> <p>2.2 1-2 Species Champions for globally threatened species (Pygmy Hippo, Forest Elephant or Western Chimpanzee depending on species present) trained per village by end of Y2</p> <p>2.3 Species Champions undertake community forest surveys and patrols on a regular basis to identify species signs and deforestation particularly in HCV-CF sites from start of Y3 and take part in EOP survey in Y4</p>	<p>2.1 Copies of activity reports / photos</p> <p>2.2 Copies of training certificates for Species Champions</p> <p>2.3 Copies of Species Champions monthly recording sheets and maps / EOP survey report</p>	<p>Community members willing to and have the opportunity to engage in awareness raising and conservation/monitoring activities.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Activity 2.1: Run a total of 6 education roadshows and 10 radio broadcasts in the project area during the course of the project</p> <p>Activity 2.2: Train 1 or 2 (depending on village size) Species Champions for globally threatened species (Pygmy Hippo, Forest Elephant or Western Chimpanzee depending on species present) in each village to undertake surveys & patrols to identify species signs in community forests and deforestation in HCV-CF sites</p> <p>Activity 2.3: Support Species champions to undertake monthly surveys & patrols to identify species signs in community forests and deforestation in HCV-CF areas</p>			

Activity 2.4: Carry out baseline / EOP sample household surveys to assess project impact on local communities' knowledge of the importance to the REDD+ project of maintaining HCV-CF sites / other areas of community in control and intervention villages.

<p>Output 3: Communities in target area develop village land use and agricultural training plans to regulate natural resource use in HCV-CF sites / other community forest areas being protected whilst increasing yields in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on community forests.</p>	<p>3.1 Consultation meetings held with all 14 villages with agreement to implement the Darwin project, including the development of land use plans.</p> <p>3.2 Community boundaries and land use zones (including potential HCV-CF sites / other community forest areas being protected) mapped for the 14 communities via participatory rural appraisal and GPS data collection by end Y3 Q1.</p> <p>3.3 14 Village specific agricultural targets (e.g. yield increases, improvements to processing) set by farmers through focus groups using a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process by end of Y2 Q2 and reviewed in Y3 and Y4 with 75% of villages having met (or on course to having met) their specific targets by EOP.</p> <p>3.4 14 Village specific land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs and other community forest areas being protected) completed through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process by end Y3 Q2.</p> <p>3.5 14 Village level agricultural training plans developed through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process by end of Y2 Q3 and reviewed in Y3 and Y4.</p> <p>3.6 Key social factors impacting the project including constraints on participation are understood by end of Y4 Q1</p>	<p>3.1 Copies of kick off meetings attendance sheets</p> <p>3.2 Copies of draft maps</p> <p>3.3 Copies of agricultural targets and Farmer Field Reports</p> <p>3.4 Copies of land use plans</p> <p>3.5 Copies of agricultural training plans</p> <p>3.6 Copies of reports on key social factors impacting project</p>	<p>Inputs provided by project e.g. rice mills can be replaced with no further donor funding.</p> <p>We think this will hold true because the request to purchase items such as rice mills will be directed through community benefit sharing schemes under the REDD+ programme where part of the training is to ensure that when equipment is used or hired there should be enough to cover the cost of repairs, and if there is a need through the project to provide capital equipment of this nature we will have supported communities to establish Village Loan Scheme Associations – we will provide equipment to Village Savings & Loans 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.</p> <p>Training can be maintained i.e. passed on to other farmers in community.</p>
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Activity 3.1: Hold consultative meetings with villages at the beginning of the project to agree to the undertaking of project activities

Activity 3.2: Map land use zones using satellite imagery as well as community boundaries and HCV-CF area / other community forest areas being protection using GPS and PRA techniques in 14 villages

Activity 3.3: Facilitate focus groups in each village to set and review specific agricultural targets

Activity 3.4: Facilitate development of village specific land use plans (including potential HCV-CFs / other community forest to be protected) through a participatory, inclusive gender sensitive process

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

Activity 3.6: Use qualitative social science techniques to understand key social science issues including factors that constrain participation in project

Activity 3.7: Carry out baseline / EOP sample household surveys on food insecurity/dietary diversity (using the Food Insecurity Access Scale and Household Diet Diversity Score) in control and intervention villages

<p>Output 4: Target communities trial implementation of land use and agricultural training plans which regulate natural resource use in HCV-CFs sites / other community forests being protected whilst increasing crop production / diversification in existing farmland to meet community food needs and prevent encroachment on HCV0CF sites / other community forests being protected.</p>	<p>4.1 Nurseries (where applicable) and community demonstration / on-farm research plots established through Farmer Field Schools by end of Y3 Q1 in all 14 target communities with required inputs provided by the project.</p> <p>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 in their communities by end of Y3 Q2.</p> <p>4.3 At least one new or diversified forest-based livelihood being implemented in each target village by end of Y4 Q2.</p> <p>4.4 A savings and loan scheme running in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women by end of Y1, with further schemes established in Y2 where there is a demand, and with women in leadership roles in the majority of schemes.</p> <p>4.5 Other groups within villages have benefitted from food / cash for work schemes in connection with crop</p>	<p>4.1 Farmer Field School reports</p> <p>4.2 Farmer Field School reports / EOP Household Survey</p> <p>4.3 Farmer Field School reports / EOP Household Survey</p> <p>4.4 Village Saving & Loans Scheme reports</p> <p>4.5 Activity reports</p> <p>4.6 EOP Household Survey</p>	<p>Security does not deteriorate significantly, and the rural population maintains access to land.</p> <p>We think this will hold true because the political situation is stable.</p>
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	<p>production / diversification by end of Y4 Q2</p> <p>4.6 Improve access trails through 'food/cash for work' schemes by end of Y3 increasing ease of access to market for at least 40% of households.</p>		
<p>Activity 4.1: Establish managed nurseries (where required and community demonstration plots (1 per village) and supply essential inputs (e.g. seeds for target value chain crops like rice, cassava, groundnuts, vegetables and cocoa) through Farmer Field Schools (FFS)</p> <p>Activity 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 into practice on their own farms.</p> <p>Activity 4.3: Train farmers in new forest-based livelihoods and support implementation (at least one in each target village)</p> <p>Activity 4.4: Establish a savings and loan scheme in each village to fund new enterprises with participation of men and women, with women in leadership roles in the majority of groups</p> <p>Activity 4.5: Undertake crop production / diversification 'food / cash for work' schemes in villages</p> <p>Activity 4.6: Undertake access trail 'food/cash for work' schemes that improve access to local markets</p>			
<p>Output 5: 14 Target communities have committed to protect HCV-CF sites / protect other areas of community forests in return for tailored agricultural training and equipment to increase yields sustainably through the GRC REDD+ programme and this will be embedded in Conservation Agreements.</p>	<p>5.1 In each village a Natural Resource Management committee that represents the breadth of forest users within each village elected to support the protection of HCV-CF sites / other areas of community forest being protected through implementation of land use plans, bylaws, management plan and Conservation Agreements by end of Y2 with terms of reference agreed by Y2.</p> <p>5.2 Community by-laws protecting HCV-CFs / Community Forests agreed by 14 villages by end of Y3 Q3.</p> <p>5.3 Communities engaged in the development of the Community Forest process through the development of Forest Management Plans by end of Y3 Q3 (with project HCV-CF sites included as zero deforestation zones)</p> <p>5.4 Bylaws, land use and management plans including HCV-CF sites and other community forest areas being protected are signed off by the relevant local</p>	<p>5.1 Terms of Reference of Natural Resource Management committees and Natural Resource Management committee registration documents for each target community</p> <p>5.2 Copies of bylaws for each target community</p> <p>5.3 Copies of management plans for each targeted community</p> <p>5.4 Signed off bylaws, land use and management plans including identified HCV-CF sites and other areas of community forest being protected by the end of Y3</p> <p>5.5 Copies of Conservation Agreements</p> <p>5.6 Copy of paper and dissemination report</p>	<p>Communities respect by-laws.</p> <p>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</p> <p>Communities are willing to and have the opportunity to engage in the Community Forestry process as it develops in Sierra Leone.</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>authorities up to and including district level by end of Y3</p> <p>5.5 Conservation Agreements between the 14 target communities and GRC signed by EOP. In these GRC will commit to deliver agricultural support tailored specifically to communities' needs, as well as support for community protection of HCV-CF sites / other areas of community forest being protected, through the REDD+ programme, in return for communities protecting and sustainably managing agreed areas of community forest (including ensuring zero deforestation in HCV-CF sites).</p> <p>5.6 Paper submitted to the Forestry Department which shares lessons learned from this project to inform Community Forestry policy across Sierra Leone by EOP</p>		<p>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.</p>
<p>Activity 5.1: Support communities establish Natural Resource Management committees that represent the breadth of forest users within each village to manage HCV-CF sites / other community forest areas being protected</p> <p>Activity 5.2: Support village communities develop bylaws to protect HCV-CF and other community forest areas being protected within each village</p> <p>Activity 5.3: Facilitate the development and agreement of forest management plans within each village</p> <p>Activity 5.4: Sign off bylaws, land use plans and management plans including HCF-CV areas and other protected community forest areas at village, section, chiefdom and District level</p> <p>Activity 5.5: Facilitate development and agreement of Conservation Agreements between the 14 target communities and GRC</p> <p>Activity 5.6: Write and disseminate paper to the Forestry Department and other relevant audiences.</p>			
<p>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.</p>	<p>6.1 Community representatives (including paramount chiefs) from all 6 neighbouring chiefdoms visit Darwin project villages by Y4 Q1</p> <p>6.2 By EOP GRC Directors (including the Paramount Chief representative) hold a Darwin project review meeting.</p>	<p>6.1 Activity reports from visits</p> <p>6.2 Minutes of project review meeting</p>	

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

Activity 6.2 GRC organises and holds 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.

<p>Output 7 Project partners increase their capacity to implement the Gola programme</p>	<p>7.1 By end of Y2 CSSL staff are contributing to the Gola work programme in Malema and are working in an integrated fashion with GRC</p> <p>7.2 By EOP CSSL staff in partnership with GRC staff, have developed a post project plan for community development work for the Malema Chiefdom and CSSL project staff have Gola project activities built into their annual workplans.</p> <p>7.3 By end of Y3 GRC is submitting financial reports to RSPB using Darwin templates and by EOP directly to donors for projects GRC is leading and having them approved without significant revision</p> <p>7.4 By end Y2 the Project Social Scientist has given at least 2, and by EOP at least 4, presentations to project / RSPB staff or the wider conservation community (e.g. Cambridge Conservation Initiative) on measurement of social impact of conservation projects / value of social science in conservation projects.</p> <p>7.5 By EOP at least 4 members of staff from across 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.</p>	<p>7.1 Copy of CSSL staff midterm report on engagement with the Gola programme</p> <p>7.2 Copies of CSSL / GRC Malema Community Development Plan and CSSL staff annual workplans</p> <p>7.3 Copies of GRC financial reports and donor approvals</p> <p>7.4 Copies of presentations</p> <p>7.5 Copies of data collected by GRC / CSSL staff</p>	
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Activity 7.1: CSSL in partnership with GRC staff develop a post project plan for community development in Malema chiefdom

Activity 7.2: CSSL in partnership with GRC staff build Gola project activities into their annual workplans.

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

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.

Activity 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	17		184	300
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		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		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							
22	Number of permanent field plots and sites to be established during the project and continued after Darwin funding has ceased			12			20	22 (based on 25% of the 88 field sites for camera trapping being in areas which will become HCV sites)
23	Value of resources raised from other sources (i.e., in addition to Darwin funding) for project work							

Table 2 Publications

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

Annex 4 Onwards – supplementary material (optional but encouraged as evidence of project achievement)

Checklist for submission

	Check
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to Darwin-Projects@itsi.co.uk putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with Darwin-Projects@itsi.co.uk about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	