

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	27-004
Project title	Building future resilience for wildlife and communities in Ambondrobe
Country/ies	Madagascar
Lead organisation	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
Partner institution(s)	DREDD, DRAEP, GSDM, Graine de Vie, Marie Stopes Madagascar
Darwin grant value	£290,410
Start/end dates of project	01 July 2020 – 31 March 2023
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2020 – Mar 2021) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2021– March 2022 Annual Report 2
Project Leader name	Clarice Nirina
Project website/blog/social media	www.durrell.org/wildlife
Report author(s) and date	Clarice Nirina, Hanitra Rakotojaona

5. Project summary

Poverty is one of the main drivers of unsustainable natural resource use and habitat degradation in Madagascar. Eighty percent of Madagascar’s 25.6 million people are living in rural communities with limited access to tools for, or methods of, sustainable natural resource use. Across much of Madagascar, including Ambondrobe, this has led to a continuing cycle of severe environmental degradation, loss of natural resources, reduced biodiversity and further reduction in human wellbeing.

Durrell began working in Ambondrobe in 1998, leading to the designation of the 7,000Ha lake-forest complex as a Protected Area in 2015. As designated PA Manager, Durrell works with local communities to address the principal threats of shifting cultivation, illegal logging, marsh clearance and invasive water hyacinth. These negatively impact human wellbeing and threaten endemic biodiversity, including the Critically Endangered Madagascar side-necked turtle. Situated in the dry west of the country, climate change is also an increasing threat. This project will replicate a model of sustainable rural development activities already being implemented by Durrell at three other sites across Madagascar under a Jersey Overseas Aid funded project to

2022. It will enable communities in Ambondrobe (6400 people in 1000 households) to break the cycle of environmental destruction. The provision of skills training, support and resources will improve food security, financial prosperity, and reproductive health, and enable more robust governance at the local level. In doing so, the pressure that communities exert on Ambondrobe’s natural resources will be reduced. Alongside practical habitat restoration efforts and community-led patrolling, these activities will reduce and begin to reverse the trend of destruction. Activities will help ensure Ambondrobe’s ecosystems provide essential and sustainable services to communities, leading to increased human well-being and ensuring threatened species are more resilient to anthropogenic threats and climate change.

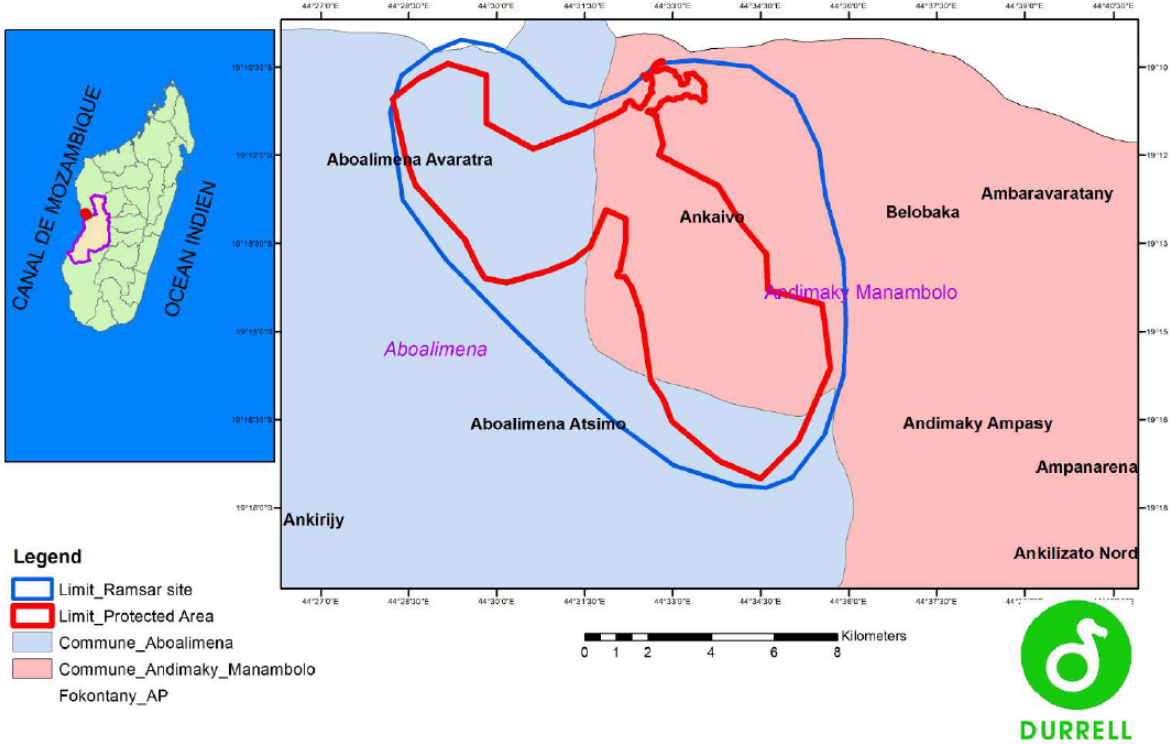


Figure 1: Map, Fokontany of Ambondrobe PA

6. Project partnerships

DREDD (the Regional Director of Environment and Sustainable Development)

The DREDD team continued to support and engage with the project this year through the following activities

- Continued communication and distribution of SMART patrol data reports to DREDD
- Collaboration with DREDD in June 2021 for reforestation monitoring
- Issues with illegal cutting of Rosewood detected by community patrols were escalated to DREDD level, with a DREDD enforcement team executing a mission in October 2021
- Awareness-raising activities on the fight against fires, against lemur hunting and information on law and regulations were carried out by DREDD.
- An enforcement mission around the protected area led by the DREDD and the national gendarmerie team was carried out in November 2021, resulting in 6 people being given custodial sentences.

DRAE (the Regional Director for Agriculture, Farming)

The DRAE, through the CiRAEP (District of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries), continued providing supports regarding the implementation and scaling-up of the Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) techniques. They provided recommendations and approval for the CSA technical guidance sheets to be used for the 2021-2022 main crop season.

They also participated in evaluating the 2021 agricultural yields during the harvest period (June-August 2021) and provided technical recommendations regarding how the project can address issues such as crop pests and diseases, the main causes of the yields decrease.

The MOU is almost at completion and is with DRAE for his final review and signature. The signed version will be available at the end of April 2022.

GSDM (Groupe de Semi-Direct de Madagascar)

An action plan for the implementation of the Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) strategies across Durrell's intervention areas was developed with GSDM in Y1 which informed Durrell's agricultural work plan and technical guidelines. To strengthen the implementation of these strategies, GSDM conducted a field monitoring mission in Q2 Y2 to five villages to follow-up the progress of the implementation of the CSA techniques by the FFS members. Some farmers crop fields were visited to assess the uptake of CSA techniques, to identify the main constraints and issues in implementing CSA techniques and offer technical solutions. As a result of these visits, CSA action plans were reviewed and updated.

Marie Stopes Madagascar

The MSM team through the SPO (Single Provider Outreach) agents continues to provide family planning services to Durrell communities across the 9 intervention villages. Field visit schedules are discussed and sent to MSM (central and regional) two months in advance to allow MSM to organise the SPO visit at their level. Once the schedule has been validated at MSM level, the villages and CHVs (Community Health Volunteers) are informed of the SPO's visiting schedule - 14 CHVs also collaborated and supported Durrell and MSM in undertaking community sensitization and mobilisation for the promotion and uptake of family planning services in the villages. These 14 CHVs were trained by the SPO on family planning methods and awareness raising for reproductive health.

Graine de Vie

Graine de Vie (GdV) is Durrell's main partner reforestation across the conservation sites. Collaboration with GdV concretely started in Y2, and an MoU was developed to set up nurseries within 3 villages (Aboalimena, Ankaivo and Belobaka), to train village nursery teams and Durrell field-based staff and to assist the village communities during tree plantation phase. GdV has supplied the trees seeds and seedlings (mainly for fruit trees) and the equipment for the establishment of the three nurseries.

7. Project progress

7.3 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Outcome level monitoring activities

0.1 Undertake household surveys in Year 1 and Year 3

No household survey took place this year. The baseline report is attached to this report.

0.2 Undertake annual population surveys of key species Madagascar Pond Heron and Madagascar side-necked turtle

Monthly pond heron surveys have continued to be conducted at Lake Ambondrobe with five to 270 individual pond herons identified monthly. Bi-annual surveys were completed in July 2021 and February 2022 conducted across the entire Ambondrobe Ramsar site.

The Madagascar side-necked turtle (rere) surveys by capture-recapture, took place between 24 November 24th to December 15th, 2021. With the 20 traps for 23 days (460trap-days), 88 individuals were caught: 36 adults, 37 subadults and 16 juveniles. Rere nest monitoring surveys were carried out October – March 2022. Results are included in section 3.6.

0.3 Undertake annual assessment of forest cover and marsh quality.

In December 2021, the drone team undertook a field trip to the Ambondrobe site (Aboalimena and Ankaivo) to collect actual data on the state of the forest cover, to identify and assess the forest coverage status to help in forest protection and conservation and to use using drones to validate Landsat data with high resolution images (5cm/Pixel vs 30m/pixel for satellite images). Three overflights over a total area of 33.19 ha were carried out at the Ambondrobe site of Durrell.

Information about the findings of these activities is included in Section 3.6.

Output 1: Improved community engagement reduces negative impacts on and is actively restoring lake and forest habitat by 2023

1.1: Undertake community patrols

Between April 2021 and March 2022, **545** patrols were completed by **114** people using **3409** person-days. These efforts, covering **3137.89 km**, detected **135 incidents**. Y2 has seen a significant increase in patrol effort and decrease in threats., covered in section 3.4

Community patrols in Ambondrobe cover the Protected Area and all the four natural resource management transfers (NRMT) associated with the PA. Two new groups of patrollers were created and trained in February 2022 and began patrols in March, which led to an increase in patrol effort in the last month of the year. They still require additional capacity building and experience in the use of SMART mobile and patrol techniques which is being provided. More efforts are still needed for the Aboalimena Sud group (Ankirijy included) to cover the core zone of their NRMT (fig. 2). The profile and distribution of threats is detailed in section 3.2.

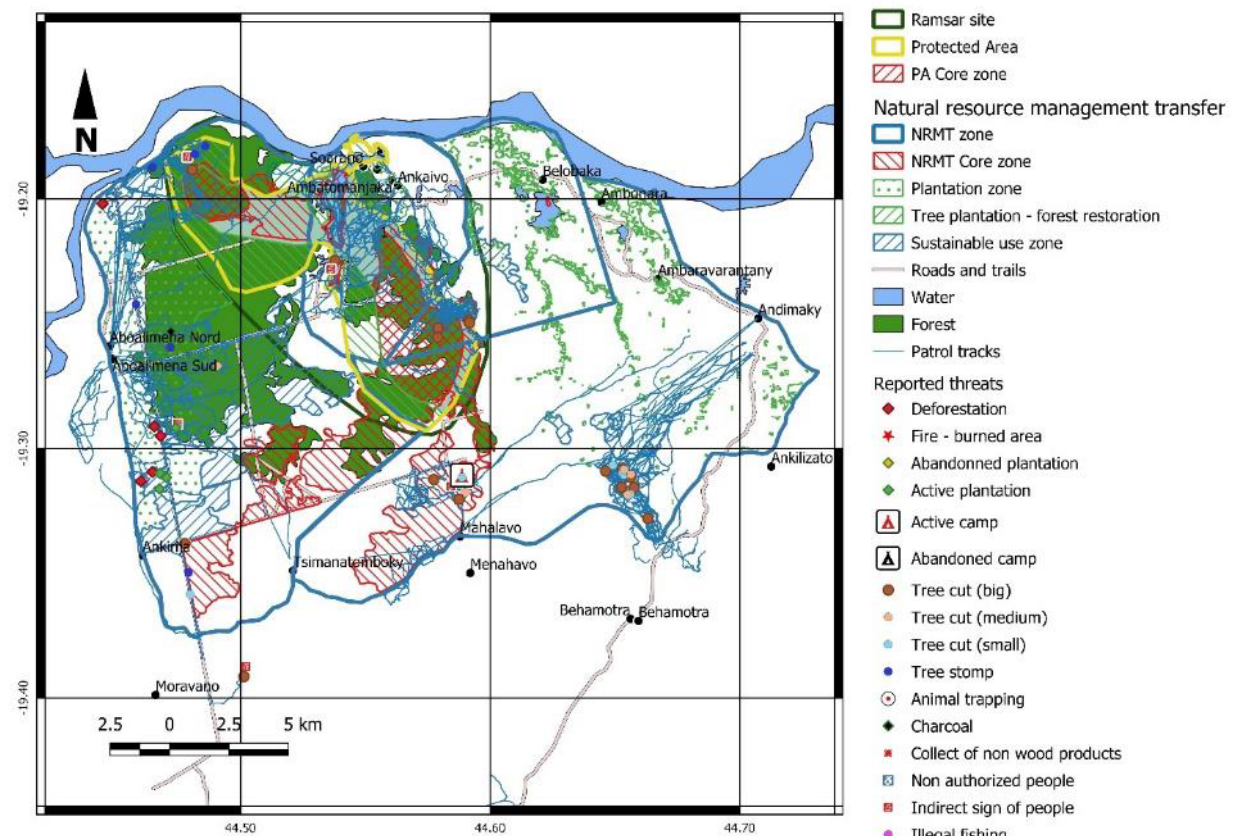


Figure 2: Patrol tracks for April 21-March '22

This activity is on track with an average of 45 patrols per month throughout the year. After initial challenges at the beginning of the year, issues with PDAs were solved and the number of patrols started to improve in July 2021, with 60 patrols per month since November 2021. The two new patrol groups (since March 2022) will bring the expected amount in Y3 to 84 per month, with patrol coverage extended. Patrol figures are included in 1.3 below.

A new staff member responsible for ecological surveys for Ambondrobe was recruited in February 2022 and trained on the use of SMART desktop and SMART mobile. He is now overseeing patrol activities in Ambondrobe. We hope that his input will improve patrol efficiency and analysis, with increased ability to respond to patrol observations and threats detected.

1.2: Monthly evaluation of community patrols to feedback and improve performance. Throughout project.

Monthly meetings in each village between four community associations (VOIs), field teams and patrollers continue to be held, with a total of 40 meetings held over this period (none were held in December and January).

The data quality of these patrols has been improved as a result of the verification from these meetings, and has led to targeted interventions to address illegal activity. An example of this is the reports of illegal cutting of rosewood raised as a concern during July and August meetings in Aboalimena. In response, patrols were redirected to the border of the management transfer area of Aboalimena and boundary of Belo Commune on Tsiribihina to target the logging locations. This information was also escalated to the level of DREDD Menabe (Regional Ministry of Environment) in October and as a direct response, in November, DREDD's team with Gendarmes (Policemen) went to Ambondrobe, around Soahazo (part of Aboalimena's NRMT) to arrest illegal wood (palisander) cutters. Four people from Amboenalika were arrested and are awaiting sentencing.

1.3: Processing and analysis of data by Durrell’s data team in Tana.

SMART patrol data analysis continues as planned. Monthly SMART reports have been produced and an example is attached to this report as supporting documentation. The tables below show the summary data for patrols conducted between April 2021 and March 2022. **Please note: NO patrol data should be made public due to the sensitive nature of this work and the threats to the species, we work to protect.**

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1.4: Production of and dissemination of SMART reports to wider Durrell team, Government and law enforcement agencies.

[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

1.5: Train local community patrollers in use of SMART/Cybertracker software in Yr1. Undertake refresher training in Yrs 2 and 3.

[REDACTED]

1.6: Plant 10Ha phragmites reed each year

Marsh restoration activities continued with planting of *Phragmites communis* and *Tipha mangostifolia* across 11ha in August 2021. Engagement and mobilisation of community members was done through the the Chiefs of Fokontany and VOI presidents. A total of 44 people from Ankaivo fokontany, six villages and the camps around the lake including four women's associations, were involved in this 14 day-long activity. The areas of marsh prioritised for restoration, including critical breeding habitat for water birds and fish, were identified using drone footage.

1.7: Undertake water hyacinth clearance annually

Community sensitization and mobilisation for hyacinth clearance was carried out with the Chief of Fokontany and the VOIs presidents. The removal of water hyacinth from Lake Ambondrobe took place in August 2021 by 39 people from Ankaivo fokontany. A total of 8ha of water hyacinth-occupied area was removed over 14 days. In Y3, the water hyacinth management strategy will focus on clearing the peripheral lakes connected with Lake Ambondrobe to reduce the entry of this species.

1.8: Undertake weekly nursery maintenance

The collaboration with GdV started in Y2, and three nurseries were maintained in the villages of Aboalimena, Belobaka, Ankaivo in August 2021. Three nursery staff were appointed and paid by the project to take care of the nurseries. Training was delivered to three nursery staff, 47 VOI members and two Durrell staff received training on the setting up of the nurseries, seed treatment, planting methods and the maintenance of the seedlings by GdV.

GdV provided the seeds and seedlings and the necessary equipment for the maintenance of the nurseries (spades, watering cans, shovels). The communities were responsible for setting up the nursery beds, fencing and the fire breaks.

The seasonal objective was to produce 10,000 seedlings per nursery of three native forest species including *Commiphora sp*, *Cordyla madagascariensis*, *Albizia lebeck* and other fruit tree species (papaya, orange and olive) were planted.

As of January 2022, a total of 34,200 seedlings were produced in the three nurseries: Aboalimena (4,700), Ankaivo (20,000) and Belobaka (9,500). During this year of the project, this region suffered from security issues and therefore GdV had to reduce the frequency of their visits to the villages from October to December 2021.

1.9: Undertake annual tree planting (February).

In Y2, a total of 46ha was reforested using 34,200 native seedlings (including *Cordyla madagascariensis*, *Albizzia lebeck*, *Commiphora sp*). exceeding our target of 20ha/ year. Reforestation activities were undertaken between February and March 2022 through collaboration with 400 members of the VOIs, 45% of whom are women. The Chef Cantonement de l'Environnement et des Forêts (representative of the DREDD at District level) also participated in the supervision of the communities during the planting phase.

1.10 Monitor planted areas.

Monitoring of the 2021 reforestation area was undertaken in collaboration with DREDD Menabe and some representatives from the village communities in June 2021. The results of the survival rates per site were 59.23% for Aboalimena, 81.66% for Ankaivo and 84.66% for Belobaka villages. Data collection on survival rates of the trees planted in Y2 will take place in July 2022 and will be planned jointly with DREDD Menabe. Patrollers and field staff from Durrell carry out monthly monitoring missions to monitor the reforestation area and record the presence of water hyacinth on the lake. These reports are used to inform where to prioritise water hyacinth clearance activities.

Output 2

2.1 Recruit Ambondrobe Agricultural technician.

2.2: GSDM train Durrell staff in climate smart techniques including suitable crop options (Yr1)
Completed Y1.

2.3: Develop Ambondrobe work plan with support from GSDM. September– November (Yr1)

In August 2021, a follow-up and evaluation mission on CSA was organised with project partners GSDM in five villages. Based on the results of these evaluations, the action plans for CSA implementation were reviewed and updated, with the following recommendations for the 2021-2022 crop season:

- Respect of the cultivation calendars
- Prioritising exchange visits between farmers and the visits outside the intervention sites
- Improve uptake of agroecology practices proposed by GSDM

2.4: Identify, create and structure FFS (Farmer Field Schools) groups in each association. September– November (annually)

For the 2021-2022 cropping season, 11 FFS groups were created in eight fokontany with a total of 215 members (94 women). To establish these groups the same process was followed as Y1 (widespread sensitization, identification of beneficiaries and then validation of the list of beneficiaries by committees composed of the Head of Fokontany and the VOIs presidents).

Of the 11 FFS groups, 7 groups with 140 members (88 men and 52 women) were engaged in the main crop season and have cultivated on the *tanety* (hillside lands) and on the *moka* (areas cleared and abandoned after the third year of cultivation). Four new FFS groups were created in March 2022, with a total of 75 members (33 men and 42 women). They practiced off-season cultivation on baiboho (lowland) with rice and vegetable crops.

2.5: Train and support FFS groups in techniques. November – end project

The 215 members of the 11 FFS groups received technical training from Durrell's agricultural technician. Agroecology guidance sheets were developed with the support of GSDM and endorsed by the DRAE Menabe and used during the training and shared with the farmers. The high uptake of this scheme (171 Y1, 215 Y2) means that we have already exceeded the project-end target of FFS member participation (320). We expect to increase this number again next year.

2.6: Implementation of agricultural techniques. December – end project

The cropping season started in November 2021, which marks the beginning of the rainy season. A total of 11 FFS demonstration sites were set up in the intervention villages, serving as collective learning, observation, and reference sites for the members. For Y2, the choice of the crops remains the same as Y1:

- Peanut crop (Fleur 11 seed variety) associated with leguminous plants (Cajanus). The leguminous plants are used as soil cover plants, as soil fertility restoration agent and a food supplement for the local population;
- Rice crop (irrigated rice crop and rain-fed rice crop) associated with Niebe crop
- Black eyed peas associated with Maize crop (IRAT 200 variety seeds) which will be planned to be cultivated during the off-season campaign 2022 (April to July 2022) in the fokontany of Aboalimena, Ankilizato, Ankaivo

FFS group members were provided with agricultural inputs and materials. The quantities of seeds and materials distributed are summarised in Annex 6.

2.7: Establish school vegetable gardens. September– November (annually)

Co-funding for this activity was secured from The Ambassador’s Special Self Help Fund at the US Embassy in Antananarivo (ended in September 2021). Four vegetable gardens, covering a total of 6ha, have been established and are now operational, managed by trained members of the Parent Teacher Associations from four local primary schools. The provision of agricultural inputs and training has directly benefitted 90 households across the four villages involved in this project, with indirect beneficiaries of a further 130 households across all villages. The first successful school canteen project benefitted 110 pupils, with the planned canteens expected to benefit a further 420 pupils. An additional 100 households benefitted from wells built under this project, through both improved irrigation, and access to domestic water. We would be happy to provide the final report sent to the US Embassy upon request.

2.8: Annual agricultural surveys

Crop yield assessments for the Y1 agricultural season were undertaken in all villages from April - August 2021. The district representative of DRAE (Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock) participated in the field assessment of crop yields with Durrell’s technicians and with the FFS groups. The crop yields results are summarized below:

Crop types	Yields (T/ha)	Regional average yields (T/ha)
Peanuts	1.7	1.1
Rice crops	6.9	3.5
Black eyes peas crops	2.7	2.5
Maize	2.8	3.5
Vigna crops	3.2	2.6

In general, crop yields exceeded regional averages, mainly due to the use of improved varieties and crop maintenance. The yield result for rice is remarkable because of the fertility of the soil on *baibo* (lowland field) and the use of improved seed varieties. The result for maize is below the regional average due to delay and low levels of rainfall.

Output 3

3.1 Recruit Ambondrobe Social Coordinator to lead process.

This year, unfortunately our social coordinator resigned, and therefore we had to re-recruit. We are at the final stage of recruitment the successful candidate will take up the position at the beginning of April 2022

3.2 Assess the feasibility of establishing VSLAs in Ambondrobe

Completed Y1

3.3 If feasible, train Ambondrobe staff in VSLA process

Four Durrell staff members received a VSLA refresher training in December 2021 to supervise and monitor VSLA groups and support the formation of new groups. Nine training modules were delivered:

- Self-assessment and self-selection-
- Creation and management of the group-
- Role and responsibility, election of management committees-
- Solidarity fund regulations and management of material goods-
- Internal regulations on savings and credit-
- Elaboration of the group's internal regulations-
- First savings meeting: account keeping and register-
- First loan disbursement meeting, loan repayment-
- Capital distribution meeting (handling calculation tools)

This refresher course offers the opportunity for the trainer can refer to real life situations and allow experiences sharing between field staffs (eg. various activities of VSLA groups to increase the fund, rules applied by different groups for access and repayment of loans).

3.4 Establish pilot VSLA groups and train members in VSLA process.

Of four pilot groups created in 2020, three groups remain operational and have already done their first fund sharing round. One group could not continue the VSLA process because some members had to leave the village due to instability.

Village	Number of groups	Number of members	Number of women
Ankaivo	2	44	18
Belobaka	1	19	12
Total	3	63	30

3.5 Monthly meetings with VSLA groups to track progress through the full cycle.

Weekly meetings were conducted for the pilot groups until the end of the cycle when the groups shared the savings funds. Durrell field-based staff regularly monitored these meetings but after the sharing of funds, Durrell's monitoring frequency became monthly as the groups became more autonomous. However, due to the resignation of the Socio-Organisation officer in November 2021, the monitoring of the groups (old and new) was less frequent as it had to be carried out by the other team members.

3.6 Roll out VSLA to all other fokontany

In Y2, the VSLA approach was scaled up to four other villages (Aboalimena, Apanarenana, Ankilizato, Aboalimena Nord). Seven new VSLA groups with 127 members (including 95 women) have been set up since April 2021. Women are motivated to join VSLA groups (74.8% motivation) as they have seen that the system can help them to improve household budget management. These new groups were provided with VSLA toolkits and were trained on VSLA modules.

Village	Groups	Number of members	Number of women
Aboalimena	FIRAIKANKINA	15	15
Aboalimena	SOATAHIRY	18	18
Aboalimena	VONONA MANDRAKARIVA HIFANKATIA	17	17
Apanarenana	SOANATAO	18	18
Ankilizato	MIATRIKY	18	0
Ankilizato	MAHASAROMBAKY	23	17
Aboalimena Nord	MAHALOMBA	18	10
	TOTAL	127	95

To date, the VSLA approach is operational in 6 of 9 villages. Due to regional insecurity, the team has not yet been able to create groups in Andimaky, Ambaravaratany and Ankirijy villages.

3.7 Take members of the Women's associations to annual regional fair in Morondava

A regional forum on sustainable agriculture in the capital of the Menabe region was organised by the Ministry of Agriculture in September 2021. The objectives of the forum are mainly to promote sustainable socio-economic development of the region through sustainable agriculture and agricultural value chains and to strengthen resilience to climate variability. Five representatives of FFS groups (including 3 women) participated in the Menabe sustainable agriculture forum and were able to exhibit their crop products at the event. Exchanges with other groups, cooperatives and partners took place and they were able to have contacts of economic operators for their commercial opening.

3.8 Research and identify market value chains for locally produced products

This activity aims to promote value chains of local products around conservation areas to improve the income of communities and sustainable exploitation of natural resources. The study of the technical feasibility and economic viability of value chains was conducted by Durrell's Agroeconomist with the support of an intern, in Q1 2022. The study aims to identify the most strategic value chains for the project and the actions that could be taken to develop them. The study included 3 main steps:

1. Pre-selection of value chains (VC) and development of the methodological approach

i. Development of selection criteria and pre-selection of target value chains

Criteria for the selection of value chains were defined considering the commercial aspects necessary for the functioning of the value chains and other criteria such as the valorisation of natural resources and environmental protection. Based on these criteria, a consensual pre-selection of value chains to be analysed was made. The pre-selection criteria used are

- A VC included in the management plan of the protected area
- A VC developed in the region (agro-ecological approach)
- A VC promoted by the project
- A functional market opportunity for distribution
- A VC that reaches the target population (standard of living, gender)

ii. Development of questionnaire

Based on the selection criteria, questionnaires were developed to collect information and data. Questionnaires were developed for the different groups of stakeholders targeted in each of the value chains.

2. Field Data Collection

The field survey was conducted in 6 villages (Aboalimena, Aboalimena Nord, Ankaivo, Andimaky, Apanarenana, Ankilizato). Data collection was carried out in two phases:

- 1) Targeting producers, fishermen and livestock farmers who were members of VSLA groups. For the household surveys, 30 individuals per village and one focus group per village were undertaken. In total, 174 households were surveyed (including focus groups) in the 6 villages.
- 2) Surveys and interview with other value chain actors, such as collectors, collectors, transporters, service providers, input sellers. They were mainly based at district and regional levels.

3. Data analysis

The survey data was complemented by a review of available secondary data (agricultural statistics, regional development plans, national food and crops assessment, national periodic household surveys, etc.). Technical and economic analyses to validate the technical feasibility and economic profitability of each pre-selected sector are currently underway. After the data processing and analysis, the next step will be to present the VC analysis results to the community members and local authorities, and the action plan will be drawn up with them to involve them in the process.

Output 4

4.1 Develop an operational plan with MSM.

A coordination meeting between the central MSM team and the Durrell team in Tana took place in June 2021 to strengthen the organisation and intervention methods on site (planning, logistics, collaboration between the two teams, etc.)

4.2 Organise community information meetings on reproductive health in each fokontany.

Y2 saw 24 community village information meetings undertaken by the community health agents in the nine villages to engage communities in family planning initiatives.

4.3 Collect baseline information and health assessment.

Completed Y1

4.4 Appoint community health workers and carry out reproductive health clinics.

During Y1, we started working with 1 CHV per village but in Y2, it was decided to increase to two CHVs per village to strengthen awareness at the village level and increase the number of beneficiaries. These two CHVs provide awareness raising, information on long term family planning methods and organise the SPO village visits. They act also as facilitators between the project, MSM and the communities. To date, four periodic visits were undertaken in 9 villages by MSM, during which 257 women benefited from family planning services. The FP services provided during the 4 visits are detailed below:

Visit	FP Methods		Number of clients
	Implant	IUD (intra-uterine device)	
June 2021	60	09	69
September 2021	49	07	56

December 2021	63	16	79
March 2022	40	13	53

4.5 Community Health Volunteer Training Program developed and launched.

A refresher training session was organised for 14 community health agents (including 7 women) working around Ambondrobe village. The training was conducted jointly by MSM-SPO and Durrell staff. The main themes discussed were long-term family planning methods, appropriate awareness-raising methods for community reproductive health and the PHE (Population-Health-Environment) approach.

4.6 Collate monthly reports from MSM.

Four periodic reports corresponding to the MSM visits were drawn up by the SPO agent.

Output 5

5.1 Evaluation of four local associations and assessment of needs undertaken.

Completed Y1

5.2 Develop training curriculum based on evaluation and needs assessment.

Using the results of 5.1, nine main modules have been developed which covering all competencies. They are grouped into four themes:

- **Planning:** PPP 02: Establish regular and systematic planning and monitoring of management activities
- **Associative life:** ORG 02: Manage the associative life of the community organisation.
- **Communication:** CAC 01: Maintain effective communication and good working relationships with stakeholders and partners; CAC 02: Organise and deliver presentations and meetings at local/regional level; CAC 03: Identify, prevent and resolve interpersonal conflicts.
- **Good governance:** FRM 01: Contribute to the development, implementation and monitoring of a business plan; FRM 02: Manage the financial resources of the community organisation; APC 01: Make effective decisions; APC 02: Demonstrate a commitment to transparency and participation.

5.3 Deliver training programme to community leaders

In total, 47 leaders from the 4 VOIs were trained on the 3 training modules. From 12-31 July 2021, the competences and skills of the 45 board members from the 4 VOIs in Ambondrobe were strengthened so that they could:

- PPP 02: Establish regular and systematic planning and monitoring of management activities.
- ORG 02: Manage the associative life of the community organisation.
- FRM 01: Contribute to the development, implementation and monitoring of a business plan.
- FRM 02: Manage the financial resources of the community organisation.
- CAC 01: Maintain effective communication and good working relationships with stakeholders and partners.
- CAC 02: Organise and deliver presentations and meetings at local/regional level.
- CAC 03: Identify, prevent and resolve interpersonal conflicts.
- APC 01: Make effective decisions.
- APC 02: Demonstrate a commitment to transparency and participation.

Name of commune	Name of VOI	Number of members trained
Aboalimena	Vonona Ho Maitso	11
Andimaky	Magnirisoa Soatalily	13
Ankaivo	Soatahiry	10
Belobaka	Mahateza Soa	11

Figure 3: Name and number of VOI trained

5.4 Undertake an assessment of impact of training programme

At the beginning and end of the training, participants filled in two evaluation forms. This is to find out their level of knowledge on the topics. The level of knowledge varied from "does not know at all", "has some knowledge", "masters" to "masters perfectly". Almost all the answers given on the pre-training assessment are either "don't know at all" or they have "basic knowledge". There are still some who say they have mastered or are mastering it perfectly. It is the VOI presidents who have mastered the themes.

For the post-training evaluation, their knowledge improved because they answered either "moderately" or "yes" to some of the key questions. An impact assessment will be carried out after one year of training.

5.5 Establish agreements and protocols with communities for construction of association offices

In June 2021, four protocols were developed with community villages from Aboalimena, Ankaivo, Belobaka, Andimaky villages for the construction of VOI offices.

These protocols, which stipulate the mode of land acquisition, the responsibilities of each stakeholder, and the contributions of the VOI members, were validated and signed by the Chiefs or fokontany, the VOI presidents, the commune to which they belong and Durrell.

5.6 Identify contractor to construct offices

In July 2021, the call for bids for the construction of the fokontany offices was issued to four local contractors, with only one tender received. The contract with the builder for the construction of the 4 VOIs offices (Aboalimena, Andimaky, Ankaivo, Belobaka) was signed in November 2021 and the construction budgets were developed in collaboration with Durrell.

5.7 Procure materials and construct offices and noticeboards

The building of the 4 VOIs offices started in January 2022. All the construction materials were already purchased and transported to the 4 construction sites. The land for the construction was donated either by the commune, or by the fokontany, or by the members of the VOI. However, the administrative donations of land were officially formalised with the commune. The building of the VOI offices for Aboalimena and Andimaky are currently being finished and those of Ankaivo and Belobaka will start in April 2022. The inaccessibility of the sites during this rainy season, the seriousness of the insecurity that prevents workers from reaching the construction sites, the difficulty of transport are the main causes of the delay for in starting construction in Ankaivo and Belobaka. Nevertheless, the 2 offices are expected to be completed in July.

5.8 Monthly meetings with local associations

At the end of each month, meeting with the communities composed of VOI members, village patrollers, Chief of fokontany and traditional authorities as well as women members of FRAM (parents associations) and FFS groups were held in each village (Aboalimena, Ankaivo, Belobaka and Andimaky).

For Y2, 10 monthly meetings could be organised, and each meeting had an average of 35 participants. The monthly meetings in December 2021 and January 2022 did not take place due to the inaccessibility of the sites during the rainy season and because most of the communities were busy with the start of the agricultural season.

5.9 Organise and hold annual football competition

The football competition was organised in Andimaky and Aboalimena communes in December 2021. Five villages in the commune of Andimaky and three villages in the commune of Aboalimena participated in the preliminary matches. A total of 154 shirts were distributed to the players in each fokontany. Compensations such as cups and money were distributed to the winners. During the matches, 4 women participated in the football teams.

These football tournaments developed a lot of interest and the speeches made by the local authorities such as the Chief of District and the Mayors focused on raising the awareness of young people around protection of the environment and participation in reforestation actions. It was noted that there was active participation by these young people during the January and February 2022 reforestation campaign.

7.4 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Improved community engagement reduces negative impacts on and is actively restoring lake and forest habitat by 2023.

This year saw an increase in indicator species, along with a decline in threats encountered through patrols. There was an increase in pond heron (*Ardeola*) observed in surveys (240 in February) and nere nests

detected (256 in Y2 up from 152 in Y1). Similarly, the number of traps observed decreased to 3-4 per month from December 2021, whilst from March to July 2021, 30 traps were observed monthly.

Type of Threat observed	Aboalimena Sud	Aboalimena Nord	Ampanarena	Andimaka	Ankaivo	Belobaka	Total
Animal traps/poaching	2	1		5			8
Illegal camps				4			4
Wooden charcoal		1					1
People seen in the PA	2	6		3	2		13
Tree cut	6	8	2	17	1	4	38
Deforestation	4	4					8
Fire/burned area	15	22		7	7	2	53
Illegal fishing					1		1
Plantation	6				1		7
Collect of other (non-wood) products				2			2
Total	35	42	2	38	12	6	135

Figure 4: Threats encountered on patrols per village, Y2

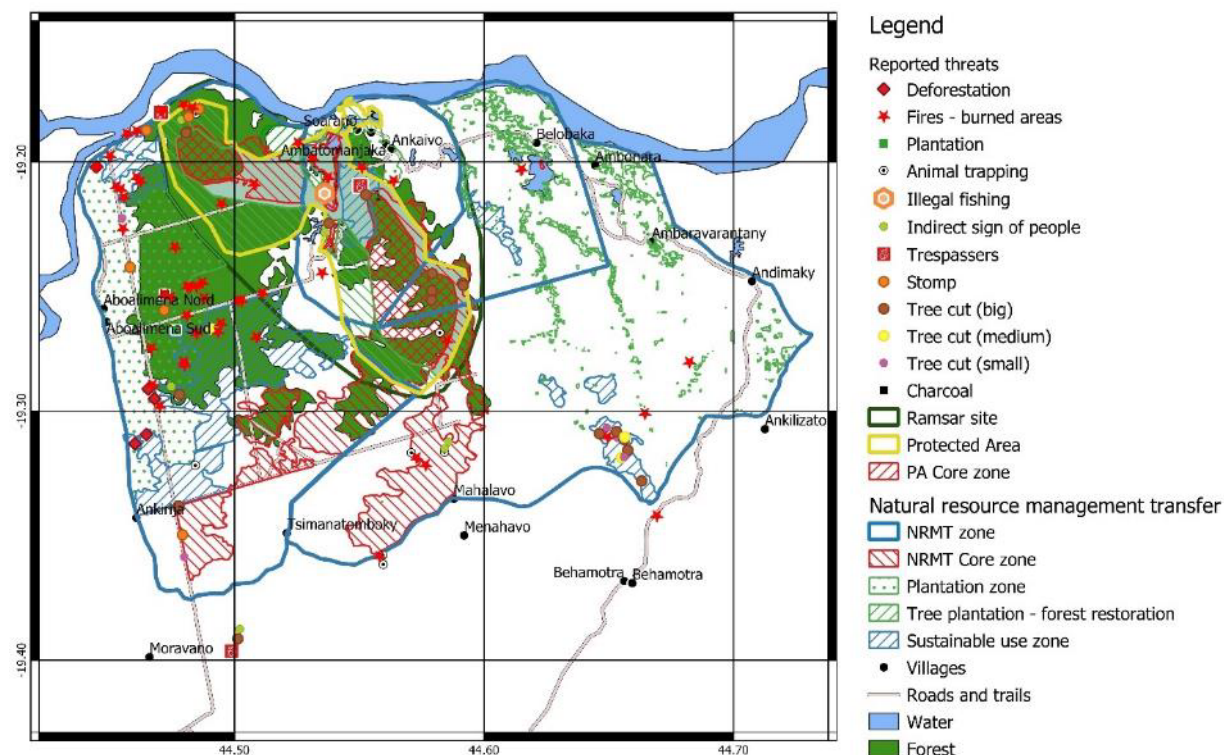


Figure 5: Threats detected through patrols throughout Y2

Output 2: Provision of Climate Smart Agriculture training through Farmer Field Schools leads to increased crop yields, improving income generation and food security for over 300 households whilst reducing harmful environmental impacts by 2023.

This year we continued to make excellent progress towards this objective. Y1 saw the formation of 14 FFS pilot groups (276 members) with a further 11 groups created in Y2, (215 new members). The current crop season began in January 2022 and, to date, a total of 72.5ha have been cultivated under CSA methods, with a further 18.75ha planned.

Output 3: Sustainable financial tools and market-based opportunities are developed for 9 fokontany and reach at least 270 individual members (60% of which are women) by 2023.

Seven new VSLA groups with 127 members (including 75% women) were set up in Y2, bringing the total number of individual members to 190. We are well on the way to achieving this output's target by 2023. Following the pilot groups established in Y1, there were high amounts of interest in the VSLA model and requests for support.

Output 4: All households across 9 fokontany in Ambondrobe have access to reproductive health support by 2023 to make choices concerning family planning and household wellbeing.

All 9 fokontany (circa 1200 households) have already been visited by the SPO and have had access to the SPO clinics. Increased access to Community Health Agents (CHAs) was created in Y2 by doubling the number per fokontany to two, and will continue to work as facilitators between the project, MSM and the communities. Four visits were conducted by MSM in Year 2 of the project, reaching 257 women.

Output 5: Local governance capacity and community cohesion is increased across 4 local associations (193 community members) through the provision of capacity building, improved local association infrastructure and social events.

Following delays in Y1 due to Covid-19, the good governance training curriculum was completed in Q2 of this year, and 52 VOI leaders have been trained to date. This has been accompanied by the construction of VOI offices (2 complete, 2 underway) and a well-attended football tournament in December 2021, which created community interest in reforestation activities (attendees were shared at both events).

7.5 Progress towards the project Outcome

The indicators have been categorised below. This year, only the ecological indicators and reproductive health indicators were monitored, as baselines for 0.4, - .8 were established in Y1 and will be monitored again in Y3 through household surveys and surveys with VOI members.

Indicators 0.1- 0.3: Ecological indicators

This year, through ground truthing of satellite imagery via drone footage, we were able to confirm the baseline of the state of forest cover, in order to confirm the baselines for outcome indicator **0.1** (deforestation rate) and **0.2** (marsh cover). Three flights over a total area of 33.19ha were carried out in Ambondrobe in December 2021. The images captured allow post-processing that can be used for analysis (reforestation, land use, delimitation). The comparison of the images obtained by drone with satellite images makes it possible to obtain the current and real state of the forest cover but also to have precise data in terms of classification. The baseline from this assessment is included in Annex 5. We have restored a total of 19.14ha of marsh to date, and this area will be monitored in Q3 (along with the area replanted in Y3).

This year, our monthly and annual species surveys saw outcome indicator **0.3 exceeded**, with the number of rere (side-necked turtle) nests observed (256 nests October - February 2022), the highest number found in 13 years of nest protection (158, 2011-12, 152, 2020-21). Photographs of these surveys are attached as Annex 4. To monitor this indicator, monthly monitoring surveys continued at Lake Ambondrobe and bi-annual surveys were completed in July 2021 and February 2022 across the entire Ramsar site. In July pond herons recorded at eight of the 12 wetlands visited, and in February 2022, they were observed on 11 satellite lakes. Rere populations were monitored through **nest monitoring** and rere surveys via **capture-recapture** methods. These surveys found 256 nests (Oct- March 2022), an increase of more than 60% of nests found compared to the 153 of the previous year. Unfortunately, 60 of these were destroyed (22 by people and 48 by wild boar). The number of young Rere released by the headstarting programme was 1622 (compared with 1882 from the previous year). However, the rere surveys (Nov-Dec 2021) detected 88 individuals (36 adults, 37 subadults and 16 juveniles), a decrease from Y1, possibly due to low water levels in the lake (only 3 were caught within vegetation surrounding the lake, compared to 42 in Y1). Through collaboration with fisherman during this period, 44 individuals were caught by net, 4 by hand and were measured – an increase from 15 last year. This shows the success of outreach with fisherman (who were asked to report when Rere were caught as bycatch). This difference between nests detected and wild individuals will continue to be monitored and outreach continues to be essential.

Community engagement is a key part of outcome monitoring. In preparation for rere surveys, meetings were held with community nest monitors in the four villages around Ambondrobe and eight community

members were appointed as nest monitors, with 78 other local community members trained on nest survey methods.

Indicators 0.4-0.5: Human wellbeing indicators

The baselines for these indicators were established in Y1 and are included in Annex 1. Further surveys in Y3 will monitor the impact of the project against these baselines.

Indicator 0.6: Reproductive Health

The comparison against the baseline for Y1 (65% of women used contraception) will be assessed again in Y3 through household surveys and comparison of data from family planning outreach clinics. This outcome indicator must assess whether women are provided access to contraception and the option to take it up, rather than just monitoring uptake. Therefore the final survey should assess awareness of family-planning methods.

Indicator 0.7: Good governance

Indicator 0.8: Financial resilience

The baselines for these indicators were established in Y1 and are included in Annex 1. Further surveys in Y3 will monitor the impact of the project against these baselines.

7.6 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumptions are listed. Where the same assumption applies to multiple outputs it is not duplicated.

Outcome:

Assumption 1: No significant reduction in current level of political stability.

Comments: Political stability was disrupted by demonstrations organized by opponents in Antananarivo in February 2021 but ultimately these were brought under control by the government in power. Technical services are functioning normally.

Assumption 2: Landsat etc. continue to offer imagery for free and it is readily available to us.

Comments: To date, the imagery service offered by Landsat is functional and free.

Assumption 3: Safety of field staff and local communities is maintained - no serious threats or incidents to staff and villagers.

Comments: Despite the presence of dahalo (bandits) in some villages, the safety of field staff and local communities is maintained. The insecurity in the region has interrupted some activities (and has caused them to be unviable in others). We will continue to monitor the situation. More information about this is covered in Section 14.

Assumption 4: Engagement from local communities towards the goals of the PA and rural development activities does not decrease negatively impacting recruitment of community staffing.

Comments: The commitment of local communities to PA objectives and rural development activities is not diminishing. It has improved with the creation of a new VOI group and the motivation of the VOIs to work with the FFS groups. This has also been shown by the high levels of engagement in the football tournament and the demand for VSLA training on the basis of the pilot VSLA groups.

Output 2:

Assumption 1: Environmental conditions change to negatively impact growing seasons and crop productivity e.g., increased cyclone activity, lack of rains/prolonged drought.

Comments: Environmental conditions have changed a bit and have a slight impact on growing seasons and crop productivity. Indeed, there was a delay in the rains, resulting in a prolonged drought until December 2020. But then the rain fell, and the team was still able to catch up with the crop calendar.

Output 3:

Assumption 1: Feasibility study shows not feasible due to insecurity reasons – keeping cash in a centralized and known location is not safe. Savers cannot be engaged in the schemes and therefore the schemes are not viable.

Comments: The feasibility study concluded that the VSLA can be implemented even if there are minor risks associated with the existence of dahalo.

Assumption 2: Community members default on the commitments to the VSLA during the process. To prevent this, a verbal agreement is established between members and unanimous agreement is needed regarding the amount members must pay in each month.

Comments: Community members made commitments to VSLA because of the outreach process on the approach. An agreement is made between the members regarding the amount that the members must pay each month.

Assumption 3: Theft of project savings occurs during implementation.

Comments: The members of VSLA groups have taken the maximum precaution to avoid theft of their groups' savings by distributing the keys to the chests to 3 different people. No theft of savings to date.

Output 4:

Assumption 1: Community members do not react negatively to reproductive health interventions. Financial or other circumstances do not force MSM to withdraw from the project partnership during project implementation.

Comments: Community members have remained receptive to reproductive health interventions in Y2. The project's partnership with Marie Stopes Madagascar has been working well so far. MSM is in a growth phase with new projects funded by UKAID.

Output 5:

Assumption 3: Willingness to engage from local associations and fokontany chiefs.

Comments: Following the sensitization made by the project staff, the community, local associations and heads of fokontany have shown their willingness to engage in the implementation and training activities organized by the project.

Assumption 4: The government contributes towards office building costs.

Comments: The municipality, the fokontany and the community have made their beneficiary contributions for the construction of fokontany offices through donating land and time.

7.7 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty alleviation

The impact the project is trying to contribute to is *Improved community well-being and protected area management is ensuring Ambondrobe's dry forest and wetlands are protected providing vital ecosystem services; improved ecological resilience and havens for threatened species.*

Progress toward this impact is evidenced in our responses to section 4 and 6 below, and in reporting progress against objectives above. The project's baseline household survey, which covered wellbeing, access to financial capital and perception of access to decision making, provided the basis from which we intend to demonstrate improved community wellbeing and more effective protected area management at the local level. The findings are covered in Annex 1, with key findings including 23% of those surveyed are satisfied with their life, 16% had financial savings and 39% felt they were able to influence decision-making in their communities. This data will be compared alongside the ecological indicators e.g., aerial forest/marsh coverage data and species surveys, and patrol data to assess project impact across Ambondrobe's social and natural systems. This project is making a significant contribution to the survival of a Critically Endangered species, the rere (*Erymnochelys madagascariensis*). This is done through support to protected area management of Ambondrobe, the first ever New Protected Area in Madagascar to be created primarily for the conservation of a single species (the rere). This project is contributing through community patrols and restoration of rere habitat, alongside community engagement and support to poverty alleviation, reducing reliance on destructive activities. Representative governance in these communities, alongside access to livelihood opportunities, will contribute to the wellbeing and resilience of the communities who are the guardians of these critically threatened habitats.

8. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

This project demonstrably supports CBD objectives by promoting and facilitating sustainable use of natural resources (Target 3, also ITPGRFA), fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilisation of natural

resources (Target 16, also ABS), and the transfer of appropriate knowledge and technologies to embed agricultural and Protected Area management practices that minimize adverse impact on biodiversity (Target 11). Restoration and habitat protection activities will reduce loss of these habitats (Target 5), help ensure ecosystems provide essential services (Target 14), enhance ecosystem resilience (Target 15) and protect populations of threatened species (Target 12), namely the Critically Endangered Madagascar fish eagle and Madagascar side-necked turtle, and the endangered Madagascar pond heron. This project has been developed in direct reference to the strategic objectives of Madagascar's National Biodiversity and Action Plan 2015-2025. The rere surveys undertaken under this project are providing data which is critical to the development of a Species Action Plan for the species, which is due to be undertaken in project Y3 (informed by a co-funded range-wide species survey, to be undertaken in 22-23).

Lac Ambondrobe and the surrounding watershed is a designated Ramsar site. In line with the Ramsar Convention mission, this project promotes the wise use of wetlands through sustainable implementation of environmentally sound agricultural practices (including use of short-cycle, disease and drought resilient genetic varieties), which increase household nutrition, crop yield and income whilst alleviating pressures on wetland habitats and dependent species.

9. Project support to poverty alleviation

At this stage, direct impacts on poverty reduction cannot yet be measured. However, in the short term, we have seen an increase in crop yields for target beneficiaries above the regional average. For example, in Andimaky FFS, rice yields were 6.9 T/ha, almost double the regional average of 3.4 T/ha. In the Famaitso, Miezaky and Vonona Hiray groups, the peanut (1.7 T/ha), black eyed beans (2.7 T/ha) and vigna umbellata (3.2 T/ha) yields all exceeded regional averages (1.1, 2.5 and 2.6 respectively) , providing increased food security and income generation capacity this year for our partner FFS groups. improvement of income for the target beneficiaries.

The access to finance and financial resilience through VSLAs has increased this year with the expansion of the VSLA model by 7 new groups to six villages (127 members). Three of the four VSLA groups created in Y1 have completed their first round of sharing. Financial education training this year has continued to build the capacity of beneficiaries to better manage financial benefits. Alongside the financial training delivered to VSLA members, the study of market potential for local value chains , which will be presented to community members in Q1 Y3 for exploration of alternative livelihoods.

Some activities continue to provide indirect incentives to the communities (VOIs, patrollers, village communities) to encourage them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in managing and conserving the natural resources and biodiversity. For instance, to join the FFS groups one must be an active member of VOI. CSA techniques are targeting crop productivity enhancement but also adaptation and mitigation to the negative effects of climate change. Moreover, family planning services are providing a long-term and sustainable solutions to food security, community wellbeing and biodiversity conservation efforts.

Patrollers receive payment of 8,000 Ariary per day for patrolling. As a maximum, they have each received 96,000 Ariary per month if they have been able to complete the 12 patrols planned. With the increased number of patrols this year (545 patrols by 114 people), the project's direct financial benefits to community members has increased in Y2.

10. Consideration of gender equality issues

The ongoing provision of knowledge of and access to long-term family planning methods within nine communities in Ambondrobe continues to improve reproductive health of women, giving women greater freedom of choice. Women are also continuing to actively participate in business and entrepreneurial activities, with 37.31% of FFS members and 62.62% of VSLA members being women.

However, the DRAE evaluation of FFS groups in August 2021 found that female participation in VOIs was not sufficient in one of the VOIs surveyed (Andimaky and Ankaivo), with an average of only 24% women. This will be addressed next year, to actively engage more women in the FFS training and identify barriers to participation.

11. Monitoring and evaluation

The baseline survey (completed in Y1) has created a solid basis for M&E of the project and will be repeated in Y3. This report provided information and references to better understand the target villages of intervention and to assess the progress made in the implementation of certain activities. Thus, with the activity of supporting the implementation of Family Planning services to be within the reach of women in 9 Darwin intervention villages, it was found that 65% of women in Ambondrobe have already had access to this service.

A need for additional capacity in M&E of the field staff was identified last year and on this basis, two training sessions were given to field staff, including technicians, the first on the project's M&E system and on how use monitoring forms (June 2021) and the second on the use and handling of the monitoring forms on a tablet (December 2021). These trainings were for the Site Coordinator, the Socio-Organiser and the Agricultural Technician. The second training in December was attended by our new Menabe M&E Assistant, responsible for M&E activities for both Menabe Antimena and Ambondrobe. The objective of these trainings was to collect monitoring data monthly from the technicians for processing and monitor progress against indicators.

Since these trainings, the agricultural technicians were responsible for data collection and monitoring forms – when they return from the field, monitoring sheets are made available to the M&E team on a monthly basis (electronic version) with supporting evidence (scan of attendance sheets, purchase invoice, distribution sheet of main seeds and materials to FFS members).

Completion of, and access to these monitoring sheets allowed the project to have databases on achievements by area, including BDD VSLA, BDD FFS (no. groups created, no. members, list of trainings conducted by group with their respective dates). With these databases, the project can respond to the data demands on project progress. After analysis, field verification visits were taken, to verify monitoring data and cross check progress in the field with the data included on the forms.

There remains challenges to collection of monitoring data during extremely busy periods (during the peak cropping season, agri-technicians were taken up with their agricultural work and not able to fill in the monitoring forms in time). In response to this, technicians introduced two days-post field visit into their plan to ensure the monitoring sheets were completed.

We also practiced adaptive management in response to partner M&E. Following the joint evaluation mission with CIRAE on the agricultural yield, CIRAE shared the results and suggested the introduction of the biological control technique "ady gasy" in June 2021, which allowed the young peanut plants, sown from January 2022 onwards, to grow well, without leaf-destroying insects, promising good results for the harvest.

12. Lessons learnt

For improved conservation, community participatory monitoring supported by Durrell and DREDD is essential. Thus, increasing the number of patrollers from 76 to 114 contributed to reduction in the number of tree cuttings from 48 in 2020 to 20 in 2021. In addition, the 33% increase in the number of patrollers (from 76 to 114) greatly motivated them with twice as many distances covered compared to last year (from 1122.39 km in 2020 to 3137.89 km in 2021).

Holding clear discussions of duties and expectations of each partner within written agreements/MOUs has proven to be successful. For example, DREDD, within the framework of the implementation of the COAP, carried out awareness sessions on the law relating to the hunting of lemurs and the management of bush fires. During Durrell's monthly meetings, encouraged the KMMFA to apply the measures taken, among other things the destruction of the traps observed. Consequently, the number of traps observed has decreased (approx. 30 monthly March -July 2021, 3-4 monthly from December 2021).

The successful implementation of the new ACI technique with an FFS group in one village has attracted other villagers to do the same. This is the reason for the increase in the number of FFS in the villages of Aboalimena, Ankaivo, Belobaka and Ankilizato. with 2 new groups created for each village in the year 2021.

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

We were very pleased to receive the positive and encouraging feedback from our Y1 annual report. The few minor points that were constructively raised are either addressed below.

Partnerships:

GSDM - *The MoU states that GSDM support will be limited to two month. Does this preclude further advisory support from GSDM over the course of the rest of the project?*

Response: For Y1, the MoU developed with GSDM focused on developing a CSA action plan for Ambondrombe site. For Y2, GSDM carried out a monitoring mission with recommendations based on their findings, and will continue to do the same in Y3.

M&E

- *It reports the development of a Monitoring-Assessment Plan, with monitoring tools developed from the project indicators related to both objectives and activities, but doesn't expand on this. The Report then focusses on its household surveys and data collection, rather than on the monitoring and evaluation of the project itself.*
- *It also highlights its regular contact with DREDD, DRAEP and its NGO partners to exchange information on project progress, problems encountered, indicating that the monitoring and reporting mechanisms in place for this appear to be working well. In the next annual report, the project could focus more on the details of these mechanisms.*

We have provided some examples of the details of these mechanisms and the outcomes in section 3 and section 11.

Covid-19

- *The project has not commented on whether any of its expected outcomes or impacts could assist with the response to COVID-19, or could reduce the risk of future pandemics, and has not indicated whether it hopes to continue with any new ways of working that it might have adopted over the past year, when the pandemic is over.*

This is addressed below.

Darwin logo use and identity

- *the logo is not included in two market garden Technical Reports in the Annex (or the attached reports in Malagasy (which do carry the Durrell logo)). The logo is also not included, and Darwin is not mentioned in three SMART Patrol reports, or a VOI evaluation report, all included in the Annex.*

The market garden reports are funded by the US Embassy, serving as co-funding for this project which is why the Darwin logo was not included. Where there are events for the public or external audiences, we have included the Darwin logo and improved this in response to feedback from last year's report.

Reforestation activities

- *The Red List of Dry Forest Tress of Madagascar indicates more than 900 tree species are found in the dry forests. More information on the rationale for the choice of tree species selected for planting would be useful. Will a larger number of trees be included when pandemic restrictions are relaxed?*
- *The project should also consider Kew's '10 Golden Rules for Reforestation' paper. The Framework Species Method might also be considered by the team (see citations in paper) as a method for accelerating the restoration and diversity of its regenerating forests.*

The species selected are among the most abundant native species in the area and characterize floristically the dry forest of Ambondrombe (this is for example the case of Commiphora sp). The seeds are abundant and available for a few months, are easy to collect *and to process, and are more resistant to disease.* These species adapt well to the climatic and edaphic conditions of the area and germination rates of these species are relatively high. This year, the VOI will start collecting other native species seeds to diversify the tree species reforestation. This year, on the recommendation of the GdV specialist, (and the existence of this species) led to us expanding the tree species planted to include Commiphora.sp, Cordyla madagascariensis and Albiza lebeck.

In 2022, Durrell intend to develop a reforestation strategy and a new staff member responsible for reforestation across all its Madagascar sites. This will be informed by the Framework Species Method and best practice for dry forests.

Patrols

- *Is the project concerned that the lack of patrols in January and February might encourage illegal activities at this time in future years?*

There were patrols carried out in January and February this year and therefore illegal activities were detected during these months. The barriers to carrying out patrols in Y1 have been addressed.

14. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

Regional Instability

As mentioned in the assumptions (above), there continues to be regional instability around Ambondrobe, which we are monitoring closely and mitigating risks where possible. The regional instability has caused the internal displacement of communities from some villages (Ambaravaratany in particular) which has caused the disbandment of the VSLA groups. Below are the ways we are keeping our staff, partners and beneficiaries safe.

For Durrell staff, the precautions taken are to:

- always travel in a group and avoid travelling individually as much as possible
- limit travel time (until 5:00 pm)
- avoid parts of the road that are considered dangerous (black spots)
- During the most dangerous periods (rainy period, harvest period), use gendarme services to accompany the staff during the travel at the black spots (Belo road to Andimaky or Belo road to Aboalimena)

For partners:

- Durrell accompanies partners and ensures they always travel in groups;
- During critical periods, partners are also escorted by gendarmes during their travel to the site

For communities:

- Durrell supported the visit of the District Chief and the gendarme to the most dangerous villages (such as Aboalimena Nord, Aboalimena Sud, Andimaky Ankaivo) to reinforce the application of Dina security and to reinforce the community security patrols
- For the most dangerous villages, sometimes it is necessary to change the meeting place to nearby, more secure villages
- End the meetings or trainings no later than 3:30 pm to allow the communities to return to their homes.

Durrell remains vigilant at monitoring the security situation, and invests heavily in our community relationships for support and information. The strategy adopted when visiting this village is to always be accompanied by a local person from the village to gain the trust of the villagers.

Durrell and its missions are known by all communities and to date, Durrell staff and partners have not experienced any direct threats. Ambaravaratany village is the most dangerous, but most villagers have already left the village and migrated to neighbouring villages because of the insecurity and very few villagers currently remain there.

We have also developed a flexible approach to continue support if the security situation worsens. During high-risk periods, the team limits travel to the most dangerous villages, instead relying on phone communication to collect field data and information (which is then validated when travel is allowed again). We have set up local structures for remote monitoring and support, such as lead farmers, CHVs (community health volunteers) and soon the VA (Village Agent) of VSLA, which can support the Durrell directly if the team is unable to reach the sites. In addition, the fokontany chiefs, leaders of the VOI and the KMMFA can also support Durrell's activities. Since 2021, the CSAO (Centre Spécial d'Aguerrissement Opérationnel) which is a gendarme department was set up in Andimaky village but it is not yet operational.

15. Sustainability and legacy

Since the start of the project and at regular intervals (through monthly community meetings), the Darwin project and its missions were presented and discussed with the project's main partners and local authorities at district, communes and fokontany levels.

We have continued to experience significant interest from the communities in relation to Darwin's activities, particularly those who responded to the pilot VSLA groups. particularly for agricultural activities, for which we have received many requests to join the FFS groups. The FFS sites continue to serve as promotional sites for CSA approached for others who may be interested.

The VSLA model, which later in the process will include Village Agents, is designed to be self sufficient in the long term and provide long term financial tools for communities. All value chains

which have been analysed for sale at markets are locally appropriate options, and support to the development of market linkages in Y3 will be done .

The project continues to train individuals as Community Health Volunteers and has expanded the number of CHVs this year. Although the contraception methods promoted by MSM are long term (up to 5 years), the women who have chosen these methods still need regular access to reproductive health support and access to health professionals to make decisions and changes according to their family choices. Therefore it is important that these women have access to reproductive health beyond the project period. Durrell is committed to Ambondrobe in the long term and our partnership with MSM will continue. We will also look to develop arrangements where MSM takes responsibility for the funding of reproductive health outreach in this area, incorporating it into its national strategy.

Since the start of the project, we have involved local grassroots community representatives such as VOIs, patrollers, CHAs and local authorities (Chef de Fokontany) as widely as possible including during introductions to the project activities, and verification of eligibility criteria during selection processes. So far, the project has made a lot of effort to build the capacity of these grassroots structures to enable them to have the skills needed to carry out their roles and responsibilities. The empowerment and capacity building of local communities are necessary for the sustainability and legacy of the actions, and this continues to be a central focus of the project.

16. Darwin identity

In general, the visibility of the financial support of Darwin and the British government, we put the logo of Darwin and UKaid on the attendance sheets of all Darwin activities (Patrol sheets, attendance sheets, UK government logo and Darwin as well as Durrell together on the VOI and fokontany desk). We also put these logos on the billboards in the culture areas of the FFS groups and also on the jerseys during the football competition.

During the speeches of the local authorities, and the authorities at the district level during the opening and/or closing of the meeting at the level of the chief town of the commune and the villages, they are always thanked the British government and the NGO Darwin thanks financial support for grassroots communities.

(Examples: monthly meeting of patrollers, official opening of football completion, awareness meeting at FFS group level and women's association).

17. Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery

Covid-19 has continued to have an impact on the project, albeit less major than in Y1. The impact has primarily been in the following ways:

- Staff members have been absent from their roles at various periods throughout the year. This has caused some project activities to be delayed or rescheduled at late notice. Where staff become ill, they are offered support for isolation and medical support where necessary;
- As mentioned in Section 14, we have also developed mechanisms for remote monitoring and support of community partners and activities where the team and partners are not able to visit.
- Over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, Durrell Madagascar (and UK) have made a significant switch towards virtual meetings and this will be maintained. There are weekly calls between senior members of staff in Madagascar and UK, where project progress and any arising issues are discussed. Durrell's M&E officers in the UK and Madagascar have regular calls to discuss technical issues and operational issues around M&E , which has meant that an in-country visit has not been necessary to ensure that it is being carried out at the highest technical standards. with Within Madagascar, where internet allows, remote

project meetings take place between senior technical staff and field managers. However, there remains significant challenges with speed of internet and phone coverage and therefore field trips remain critical (and will do so in the future).

- To ensure the health of staff and beneficiaries, Durrell staff wear masks inside where they are not able to socially distance, and meetings with communities take place outside and with hygiene measures in place. Larger gatherings are avoided where possible, with smaller groups (10-20) chosen for meetings and workshops where possible.

18. 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.

Durrell has updated the safeguarding policy, whistleblowing policy and Code of Conduct and this has been distributed to all staff. There have been no safeguarding concerns recorded during this project to date. Future concerns will be dealt with in accordance with our policies, and all concerns recorded on a register. Durrell will lead on this where the concern is for, or because of the actions of one of, our staff or project staff. The updated policies have also been provided to in-country partners. Where there is a concern relating to a staff member of one of our partners working on the project, Durrell will provide the safeguarding policy and request the partner organisation to respond according to our policy – and provide a written account to add to the register. Whilst Durrell supports community patrols and threat detection, we are not directly involved with law enforcement due to the delegated responsibilities in Madagascan Protected Areas.

In 2021 Durrell recruited a Human Resources Manager based in Antananarivo who is now responsible for overseeing the dissemination of all organisational policies to the team operating throughout Madagascar. In addition, Durrell has also hired a dedicated Global Safety and Risk Advisor (to commence in July 2022) who will be doing a complete review and update of all H&S policies and rolling out priority actions for the improvement of H&S for staff, partners and communities. A key part of their role will be updating safeguarding procedures and mechanisms to ensure they are contextually and culturally appropriate and rolling them out to all Durrell sites

19. Project expenditure

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				

Checklist for submission

	Check
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with Darwin-Projects@ltsi.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.	