Darwin Initiative Main: Annual Report

Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	28-006
Project title	Protecting Mongolia's Gobi Desert for wild camels & herder communities (MDI-2)
Country/ies	Mongolia
Lead Partner	Zoological Society of London, Outer Circle, NW1 4RY, UK
Project partner(s)	Ministry of Environment and Tourism Mongolia (MET)
	Gobi 'A' Strictly Protected Area (GGASPA) Administration Office (GGASPA)
	GGASPA Collaborative Management Council (CMC)
	Secondary Schools of GGASPA buffer zone soums
	Soum Buffer Zone Councils/Citizen Representative Khurals
	National University of Mongolia (NUM)
	UNDP/GEF ENSURE project
	GiZ/SPACE project/My Green Mongolia Movement
	Hanns Seidel Foundation in Mongolia
Darwin Initiative grant value	£ 497,046.00
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1. Project summary

The project aims to conserve globally important wildlife, like wild camels in the Mongolian Altai-Gobi (Great Gobi), while also prioritizing the welfare and socio-cultural traditions of herder communities by promoting sustainable use of the delicate desert ecosystem. Since becoming state protected in 1975, the Great Gobi stands as the largest protected area worldwide. This milestone not only benefited Mongolia but also served as a model for establishing large, protected areas globally. Part A of the Great Gobi SPA (GGASPA) spans 4.6 million hectares, making it the largest nearly unpopulated protected area in Mongolia ██████). Its remote location, minimal human impact, and vast size allow for natural dynamics to thrive undisturbed, holding exceptional value. GGASPA houses one of only two remaining populations of wild camels worldwide and is the sole habitat for the gobi bear—an evolutionary marvel of brown bears uniquely adapted to extreme desert conditions, found exclusively in this region. Proposals are

underway for the Great Gobi, including GGASPA, to be nominated as a serial World Natural Heritage Site. A crucial aspect supporting this nomination is the area's ability to provide critical habitats for a diverse array of rare, endangered, and endemic species, despite the challenging environmental conditions. Additionally, the vast and varied desert landscape facilitates large-scale animal migrations. The MDI-2 project is geared towards addressing the declining population of wild camels (*Camelus ferus*) within the GGASPA.

Fig 1. Camera-trap photos in 2023: Herd of wild camel in the oasis and Gobi bear at the feeder stations
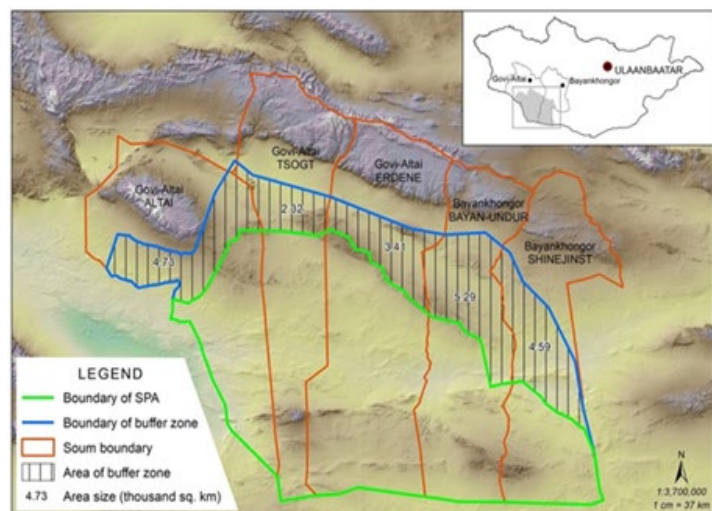

Fig 2. Map of the GGASPA

In addition to its diverse wildlife, the Great Gobi region is inhabited by pastoral communities that adhere to nomadic traditions and cultural values that emphasize harmonious coexistence with nature. Recognizing this, the project focuses on assisting local communities and stakeholders in GGASPA in conserving invaluable species and ecosystems that are integral to the livelihoods of the residents in GGASPA buffer zone (BZ) soums/districts - Altai, Erdene, and Tsogt soums in Gobi-Altai aimag/province, as well as Bayan-Undur and Shinjinst soums in Bayankhongor aimag.

Tackling the wild camel population decline requires addressing multiple other factors that contribute to this. These include the minimal biodiversity (BD) monitoring capacity to assess wildlife populations and the condition of their habitats, water scarcity, lack of coordination among BZ stakeholders to undertake the integrated landscape management (ILM), competition with domestic livestock for forage, and overgrazing in BZ and limited use zone areas. These socio-ecological issues have been exacerbated by climate change. Unfortunately, the local government and communities lack mechanisms and resources to tackle these threats collaboratively. Thus, the project seeks to institutionalize robust evidence-based environmental management, implement scalable waterhole habitat management, strengthen collaborative governance, enable community-led awareness raising, and improve sustainable rangeland management and herder livelihoods.

2.   Project stakeholders/ partners

The ZSL Mongolia team comprising six members, has effectively managed the project, handling various aspects including financial management and communication with national and local partners. Regular meetings with GGASPA's Collaborative Management Council (CMC) twice a year and other soum-level meetings have facilitated dialogue and coordination with stakeholders. Notably, in Y3, the project management did not encounter any major challenges during the reporting period, indicating smooth operations and effective oversight. The close collaboration between the ZSL Mongolia team and the GGASPA Administration team, as a key project partner, has ensured seamless liaison with the CMC, which unites representatives from the five soum BZ Council (BZCs) through the soum Citizen Representative Khurals (CRKh). The CMC's role in integrated landscape management is crucial, as it brings together all stakeholders in the GG for cohesive planning, progress monitoring, and decision-making at the landscape level. Despite not being a registered legal entity, the CMC holds local legitimacy through an agreed Constitution, structure, and activities practiced across the BZs, contributing significantly to the management of GGASPA. This collaborative approach, with strong local support and effective coordination mechanisms like the CMC, enhances the project's impact and sustainability by promoting inclusive decision-making and collective actions for landscape conservation and management. The National University of Mongolia (NUM) particularly its Biology Department, plays a vital role as a research partner in the project. The Biology Department conducted a rangeland health survey of the Idren Mountain Range, a critical winter and spring grazing area for herder households in the GGASPA. This survey provided valuable insights into the ecosystem's health and sustainability, informing conservation efforts and pastoral practices. Moreover, instructors and graduates from NUM, engaged through service contracts with ZSL Mongolia, contributed significant professional and methodological support to the GGASPA Administration team. Specifically, they assisted in implementing the SMART program, enhancing the efficiency of ranger operations and monitoring within the GGASPA. Additionally, their expertise was instrumental in conducting camera trap research focused on capturing behavior of large mammals in the GGASPA, aiding in biodiversity monitoring and conservation initiatives. The collaboration between NUM and the project team has not only enriched research capabilities and data collection but has also fostered knowledge exchange and capacity building within the conservation community. To further ensure research rigor and to aid in the development planning of soums, including rangeland management, ZSL Mongolia fostered strategic collaborations with several prominent Mongolian academic and research institutions. Partnerships with the Mongolian University of Science and Technology (MUST), the Mongolian University of Life Sciences (MULS), and the Institute of Geography and Geo-ecology, at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences enhanced the scope and depth of research initiatives. Through these collaborative efforts, a comprehensive package of studies was conducted, covering critical areas such as oasis water quality, support for natural regeneration of Gobi tree/brush species, livestock production management, and rangeland management in the Great Gobi. The findings and recommendations from these studies not only informed the GGASPA Administration's plans but also reached the authorities at the soum level as well as BZ VSLA groups, facilitating more informed and effective decision-making processes. This integration of scientific research into practical conservation and management strategies significantly strengthens local capacities in sustainable development and environmental stewardship. Besides, the project actively cooperated with the following organizations: (EEC) of the NUM, , International Takhi Group and received small amount of co-funding from GiZ/SPACE and Hanns Seidel Foundation for activities 4.1- 4.3 (environmental education and communication for local communities via eco-clubs) and 4.6 (First forum of the VSLA groups).

The project has effectively leveraged collaborations with a range of organizations to enhance its environmental education and communication initiatives aimed at local communities. Partnerships were established with the Environmental Education Center (EEC) at the NUM, UNDP/GEF ENSURE project, GiZ/SPACE project/My Green Mongolia Movement, Hanns Seidel Foundation in Mongolia, and the International Takhi Group (ITG). These collaborations have been instrumental in broadening the reach and enhancing the efficacy of the project's engagement efforts. Specifically, the project secured a modest amount of co-funding from GiZ/SPACE and the Hanns Seidel Foundation to support key activities within its framework. These activities include environmental education and communication extended to local communities through Eco Clubs (activities 4.1 to 4.3) and the organization of the First Forum of the VSLA groups (activity

4.6). The co-funding was crucial in ensuring these initiatives were successfully executed, providing essential resources to engage community members more effectively.

3.   Project progress

3.1   Progress in carrying out project activities

ACTIVITIES contribute towards to *OUTPUT 1: "GGASPA monitoring programme is informing effective GGASPA and CMC management, and future-proofed by building the capacity of mongolia's future conservationists"* **(in total 10 activities: 70% are completed; 10% partially completed, and 20% ongoing)**

1.1 Procure field equipment for ongoing camera-trap surveys and SMART patrols, including necessary office equipment for research programme (year 1): **COMPLETED in Y1**.

1.2 Organize GGASPA and Border Defence Agency annual training on camera-trap and SMART monitoring and co-develop GGASPA monitoring plan: **COMPLETED** in **Y3**. An intensive training program was organized in May, 23 with collaboration of the National Working Group on SMART for 46 participants (43 male and 3 female) representing the WCS, ZSL, SLT, TNC, and WWF in Mongolia. A refreshment course was conducted for 14 rangers and 3 specialists (17 male) of the GGASPA Administration in Sep, 2023 that adhered to the A/219 method, approved by the MET.

1.3 Conduct rangeland health survey (aboveground biomass, species richness, soil stability) inside GGASPA (5 plots) vs BZ areas 5 plots (Y1 and Y3): **COMPLETED** in **Y3**. The NUM team conducted a rangeland health survey from October 2021 to March 2023 across BZ. During the survey, the team documented plant species, canopy cover, and conducted plant biomass sampling at 60 randomly selected locations (points) within the site. These data were integrated to refine and advance the rangeland models. Soil samples were collected from the designated points to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of their physical and chemical properties. Soil analyses conducted in the NUM soil laboratory for ensuring the relevant and scientifically sound method. According to the metric assessment, rangeland condition of the GGASPA varied in that regions with medium- to- low pasture conditions are heterogeneously located along the BZ. Most of the chosen sites had ratings of less than 50, particularly on the east side of the GGASPA. Rangeland report

1.4 Create and maintain a database interface for storing data collected by camera-trap surveys and SMART patrol reports integrated with rangeland survey results: **COMPLETED** in **Y3**. A dataset of the GGASPA Administration were uploaded to the MET server, accessible at www.metconnect.smartconservationtools.org/server in September 2023 and handed over to Choijingiin Bayarbat, Director of the GGASPA Administration and his team for further maintenance, processing to use for their conservation decisions. Besides, the NUM team mentioned above (1.3) organized an on-site workshop for GGASPA team and shared rangeland research findings. The workshop also included training sessions on rangeland health survey techniques and carrying capacity estimation methods. These training sessions were aimed at equipping the rangers responsible for conducting surveys in the forthcoming years. The NUM team developed a guidance that elucidated the survey methods and provided insight into the common plant species found in desert steppe based on the rangers' requests and BZ herders.

1.5 Conduct quarterly monitoring surveys through SMART patrol and feed into the integrated database (year 1 second half, 2 and 3, total 12 Qs) GGASPA: **COMPLETED** in **Y3**. The GGASPA rangers and an inspection specialist conducted the first joint patrol using SMART in June 2023, covering 910 km and primary water sources. The patrol included the photo monitoring of 14 animals, documented 10 animal carcasses, and 4 water points, and recorded essential data at 120 points winter camps of the HHs. In September 2023 the second patrol with SMART refreshment training took place. This 3-day patrol covered 4,076 km through 4 routes going across five specific locations. During this extensive patrol, the team meticulously documented violations, monitored wild animals, and observed wells. All pertinent data collected was efficiently recorded and stored in the SMART database, contributing to the comprehensive preservation and management of the GGASPA. Another 5 days SMART patrol through 1039 km that recorded wildlife and water points information organized in March 2024 for 5 days across core zone (SMART patrol) and limited zone of the

GGASPA. Notably, no illicit activities were detected during the entire patrol. Since project has been started there were 13 patrols conducted within SMART app. SMART report

1.6 Deploy camera-traps and maintain camera-trap grid (SD cards and batteries), for a total of two field trips each year (6 times): **ONGOING** as the ZSL Mongolia team conducted fieldwork for the maintenance of automatic cameras installed across water points with GGASPA rangers from 16-23 September 2023. Initially, the project installed 40 cameras at water points. Unfortunately, due to incidents such as theft of the SD cards, and wildlife interference, there are now only 20 automatic cameras that are recharged and fully operational. It shows there is a need for more promotion among HHs and border guards about the importance of camera-trapping surveys. In addition, lockable cases might need to protect the cameras. A BA student/ assistant researcher mentioned in activity 1.8/indicator 4 processed and analysed a total of 319'469 images (exact data 50'959) from these cameras. Since the project started, 5 field trips have been conducted for this purpose. Camera-trap report

1.7 Feedback results of GGASPA SMART monitoring, rangeland survey and camera trapping into the development of the GGASPA MP (year 2 and 3): **ONGOING** as the results from the research and monitoring were taken up to Annual Action Plan of the GGASPA. A joint review of the GGASPA MP is planned at the end of the project (in April-June, 24).

1.8 Mongolian MSc students will work on research of rangeland survey and wildlife camera trap study, and defend by the end of Y3: **PARTIALLY COMPLETED** Sainbayariin Munkhbayar, Assistant Researcher of the ZSL Mongolia is graduated from NUM (Biological Department, School of Art and Science) with a Bachelor's degree in Ecology by Education and Science Ministerial order No. A/18 in Jan, 23. His thesis titled "Daily activity of water use of the large mammals in the GGASPA" was defended with a grade 96 (A+). With this research work, he won 3rd and 2nd place of student competitions working on the camera data, including (i) Bachelor Students' Academic Conference competition and (ii) Mongolian Young Researchers' II Research Conference under the theme "Natural Resources Use and Protection" organized by the Environmental Research and Analysis Center, MET. The other student, Ms. Sarnai, a candidate for the MSc, is working on rangeland data. She is going to defend her thesis on rangeland survey on 17 May, 2024. Diploma

1.9 CMC receives Brief on Monitoring results and uses them for AWP: **COMPLETED.** The CMC regularly received a brief on results of monitoring water points/camera trapping, water quality, experiment on supporting natural regeneration of oasis shrubs, and rangeland health survey. Specifically, project consultants Dr. Uuganbayar Budjav from the MUST and Dr. Undarmaa Jamsran from the MULS spoke at the CMC meeting in April, 2023 (CMS training) to provide scientific information on sustainable rangeland management and future forecasts in the GGASPA BZ's socio-economic and environmental indicators. ZSL Mongolia Conservation biologist Bilguun Batkhuyag presented results of the multiple studies at CMC meetings in September, 2023 and in March, 2024. PPTs of studies Soft and hard copies of research reports handed over to Mr. Bayarbat Choijin, Director of GGASPA Administration and newly appointed CMC head – Mr. Jargalsaikhan, Head of CRKh of Shinejinst soum, Bayankhongor for further planning use. Water quality report

1.10 Camera and SMART data analysis training online, data collection design and data analysis: **COMPLETED Y2.**

2 **ACTIVITIES** contribute towards to *OUTPUT 2* *"Scalable habitat management and waterhole restoration model areas are demonstrating effective conservation interventions to restore the GGASPA desert ecosystem, to support the recovery of Bactrian Camels and other BD"* **(in total 5 activities: 90% completed and 10 ongoing)**

2.1 Map GGASPA camel habitat, waterholes and oases and prioritise habitat management intervention sites: **COMPLETED Y2**

2.2 Restore two priority waterholes with a small reservoir for wildlife: **COMPLETED Y2**

2.3 Support GGASPA Administration to implement habitat management interventions at least at three sites: Fence poplar patches and natural springs preventing browsing of young trees and protecting water recharge points and planting native grasses in oases: **COMPLETED** The restoration experiment commenced in Y2 at the oasis in Baruun Sharga, was completed.

This included fencing off degraded patches and dispersing seeds within these enclosed plots to assess their natural regeneration capabilities. The experiment was expanded to two additional sites in Y3, Bayantooroi and Buuryn Khyar, between June and September 2023, where a total of 360 trees and shrubs were planted in June. (Habitat) As of September 2023, the survival rates were observed as follows: 20-40% for poplar trees in Bayantooroi and Buuryn Khyar, 50% for Nitre-bush (Nitraria), 30-75% for saxaul (Haloxylon), and only 5% for Russian box thorn (Lycium). Unfortunately, none of the trees and shrubs planted at the oasis in Baruun Sharga demonstrated viability. The primary factors contributing to these low survival rates included prolonged periods without precipitation and predation by rabbits and birds, despite the presence of fencing. However, these challenges have offered valuable insights into improvements for fencing design and the necessity of initial watering practices to support the natural regeneration process. Oasis rehab report

2.4 GGASPA conduct annual, including pre and post-intervention surveys in each habitat intervention site to measure change and efficacy GGASPA and CMC informed on results of habitat restoration and reflects it in its AWP: **COMPLETED** The project fiished the habitat rehabilitation experiments conducted jointly with the GGASPA Administration. During the fieldwork, Dr. Ganchudur, ZSL consultant organized a practical training on the cultivation and assessment of endangered trees and shrubs for the GGASPA team, including 19 rangers and 5 specialists (24 male). Thus, they gained skills to measure changes in each habitat intervention site independently for future restoration efforts. Oasis rehabilitation

2.5 Ensure incorporation of intervention results in GGASPA MP and CMC Plan for possible replication across other threatened camel habitat sites: **PARTIALLY COMPLETED**, a joint review is planned before the project closure (see activities 1.7 and 1.9). CMC Plan 2024

3 **ACTIVITIES** contribute towards to **OUTPUT 3:** *Collaborative and inclusive governance institutions are in place and making coordinated, landscape-level management decisions, employing adaptive management approaches informed by robust ecosystem monitoring (***in total 3 activities: 100% completed).**

3.1 Support CMC during annual meetings to ensure smooth function of a democratic and representative BZ management institution (6 workshops 3-year plan and 3 reports) to plan (GGASPA MP) and review the progress: **COMPLETED.** In **Y3**, the CMC met 3 times. Here by: (i) Meeting in Bayan-Undur soum, Bayankhongor Province in 14-15 April, 2023 during the Workshop/Training for Representatives of the CRKh/BZC; (ii) CMC Meeting in 29-30 Sep, 2023 in Erdene soum, Gobi-Altai Province during the Annual Forum of Eco-clubs; and (iii) VI Official Meeting of the GGASPA CMC in Bayankhongor Province Center at 11-13 March, 24. ZSL Mongolia provided financial and technical support to the GGASPA Administration in organizing these meetings. (CMC meeting) The latter was organized in cooperation with the Bayankhongor Aimag Citizens' Representatives' Khural and Aimag Department of Environment and Tourism, MET. CMC meeting docs

3.2 Oversee by CMC the formulation, approval, and implementation of Soum BZ MPs based on GGASPA MP: **COMPLETED** the CMC met 6 times since its establishment in 2021 with 23 members representing each stakeholder. As per the CMC Constitution, each BZ soum presented progress briefing, formulated a 'Three-year BZ Management Plan' and elected the CMC Chairman for the following year. The CMC as well as BZCs well comply with the Constitution. In March, the CMC convened to review the implementation of the previous year's plan and to approve the strategic plan for 2024. During this meeting, the CMC expressed a positive evaluation of the project results, which underscored the effectiveness and achievements of the past year's efforts. Additionally, the project outcome documents were formally received from the ZSL team, providing detailed insights and assessments essential for future planning and continuation of the project's success. This review and approval process highlights the CMC's ongoing commitment to informed and strategic decision-making in advancing their objectives. CMC 3 year plan

3.3 Conduct social surveys using representative samples of BZ communities across BZ soums to collect baseline data in Y1 and at project end in year 3 ZSL: **COMPLETED Y3.** The end-line social survey conducted in January-March, 2024 involving 70 BZ HHs. The study evaluated the socio-economic conditions of the HHs using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), and herders' knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) about natural resources,

degradation, conservation of wildlife to measure changes in the project outcomes by comparing the baseline and end-year measures. Social study report

4   **ACTIVITIES** contribute towards **OUTPUT 4:** *Ground-up awareness-raising about GG uniqueness by environmentally conscious GGASPA communities that are empowered with the skills and knowledge to improve livestock management and comply with the Responsible Rangeland Management Regulation/RRMR* **(in total 6 activities: 100% completed)**

4.1 Develop Eco-Club capacity building programme through BZC to awareness-raising implementation plan (including training, exchange workshops, annual Eco-club forum, and development of Gobi biodiversity textbook as part of BZ school curricula): **COMPLETED in Y1/Y2.** In **Y3**, the project provided soum eco-club members with uniform (T-shirt) displaying wild camel. Each eco-club's uniform has a specific color, and members wear them to community events to promote wild camel conservation. The local project officer and eco-club teacher attended training on 'How to use drama methods for public awareness campaign' (Community Theatre Training) in June, 2023 and the ToT in September 23. They shared what they've learned to other eco-clubs. GIZ campaign docs and Eco-club teacher

4.2 Oversee the design of a public awareness package and campaign by each soum Eco-Club to advocate GGASPA BDC as part of GGASPA BMP: **COMPLETED.** A public awareness campaign tailored to each eco-club was developed based on the trainings in Y1/Y2. Each eco-club (in total 7) has its own plan linked with the integrated CMC plan and GGASPA MP. In Y3, GiZ/SPACE project and Environmental Education Center (EEC) of NUM played a crucial role by contributing both financially and physically in designing a joint public awareness package and campaign under the name of "Wild Camel Conservation "and as part of the national movement 'My Green Mongolia'. Events included "On-site Training on Methods and Tools of Interactive EEC for Eco-clubs"; and "ToT on 10 steps to organize a campaign in regarding to EEC". GIZ campaing plan

4.3 Implement Eco-Club public awareness campaign (i.e. field trips, festivals, SMS/MMS text campaign) to target HHs as part of GGASPA BMP: **COMPLETED** Y3. In 2023-2024, the environmental campaign under "My Green Mongolia" initiative was conducted across the buffer zone (BZ), utilizing the "Nomadic trunk" as an awareness tool. This campaign reached seven schools, over 540 adults, and 753 pupils distributed across five soums and one village during April-June, September 2023, and January 2024. The campaign supported the Eco-club Forum 2023 which brought 134 individuals. (Eco-club) From October 7-18, 2023, two instructors from GiZ/SPACE Dr. R.Sunjidmaa and Ya.Narangerel delivered lectures across the BZ soums to nearly 1000 residents, including pupils from seven schools. The topics covered included "Our Earth," "Ecological Footprint," "Sustainable Development," and "Eco-Friendly Mongolian Lifestyle." All members of the eco-clubs, comprising 200 children in grades 6-12, engaged with knowledge stations such as "The World Our Underfoot," "Leave it Alive," and the "Seeds' Journey." Additionally, the project produced a series of five posters highlighting the challenges faced by wild camels. These were disseminated through the project's webpage and Facebook channel. Hard copies of the posters were also handed over to the GGASPA Administration for their further use. Posters

4.4 Support CMC-level planning and enforcement strategy for RRMR and get approved Soum Pasture management plan by each CRK: **COMPLETED**. The project facilitated the BZ management planning at the CMC level, emphasizing rangeland management. Training sessions were organized in April and June 2023 for each soum authority to guide strategies for RRMR. As a result, Soum Agriculture and Livestock Management Plans have now been approved by the respective soum Citizens' Representative Khurals (CRK). Link to copies of approved plans. Additionally, an assessment of the existing RRMR of Shinejinst soum in Bayankhongor aimag, and draft RRMRs for Bayan-Undur, Erdene, and Tsogt soums was conducted by Ochirbal Ragchaa, a lawyer specializing in land affairs. His evaluation critiqued the quality of these draft policies concerning their ability to address rangeland degradation, compliance with existing laws, and inclusion of key or important articles as requested by BZ stakeholders. The assessment revealed that the implementation of the approved regulations was compromised due to poor designs. Based on these findings, Ragchaa provided stakeholders with recommendations and suggestions to enhance the draft regulations. Assessment

4.5 Train BZCs and target HHs on sustainable rangeland management, including basics of ecosystem management, reduction of risks of zoonotic diseases and HH financial management: **COMPLETED.** The project conducted a comprehensive training series for local authorities and target households (HHs) annually. Specifically, in Y3, several educational initiatives were implemented: (i) In April 2023, over 100 participants attended a lecture on Rangeland and Livestock in the Great Gobi, as well as another on the Socio-Economic and Environmental Trends of the GGASPA projected until 2040. (ii) In June 2023, training on habitat rehabilitation and tree planting was conducted in soum centers, engaging 37 participants (29 men and 8 women). (iii) A training session on developing and implementing RRMRs was held in June 2023 for 165 participants, enhancing local capacity in sustainable land use planning. (iv) Regular advisories were provided to the VSLAs 1-2 times per month, offering consistent support and guidance. (v) The first forum for the VSLAs took place in October 2023, facilitating a collaborative event for knowledge exchange and community engagement in natural resource management among 50 representatives of VSLAs. (vi) In November 2023, professional lecturers conducted onsite visits to the VSLAs, including relevant soum officers. These visits focused on advising on effective management of rangelands and herds. ([Herders' training](#)) Additionally, from September to November 2023, a competition for small grants in sustainable rangeland management was announced, selected, and funded among VSLAs. This initiative funding seven VSLAs encouraged and financially supported innovative small projects proposed by the community groups, fostering practical improvements in their grazing management. Link to six training reports and VSLA reports. [Training report](#)

4.6 Support organization annual BZ Herder forum to enable exchange of best rangeland practices among 5 soum herders and inform on progress of RRMR: **COMPLETED.** The project supported the [First Forum of the VSLAs](#) in the GGASPA BZ jointly with the Hanns Seidel Foundation Mongolia held in Bayantooroi village (1000 km away from the capital city) in 28-29 Oct, 2023. ([First Forum](#)) During the forum the herders exchanged their knowledge and best practices for rangeland and livestock management. The forum also included a section addressing the issue of hybridization of wild camels with domestic camels that is a threat to wild camels. [VSLA info and training](#)

5 **ACTIVITIES** contribute towards **OUTPUT 5** *Remote rural herders have improved wellbeing and financial stability built through a successful and sustainable community banking model that supports sustainable resource use efforts e.g. through rangeland management actions and Eco Clubs*) **(in total 4 activities: 90% completed and 10% partially completed)**

5.1 Support CRKs to implement RRMR by assessing pasture conditions in BZ bags and mapping grazing areas under RRMR and establishing pasture use contracts with HHs: **COMPLETED.** The NUM team completed the assessment of the BZ rangeland health (activity 1.3), resulting in the production of a 'grazing areas' map. These were instrumental in informing the CRKs' rangeland management plans, ensuring that they are based on accurate and current data regarding grazing patterns and land health. To further enhance the quality of rangeland management policies, the project assisted soum authorities in improving both approved and draft RRMRs by commissioning the legal review (4.4). The approved Soum Agriculture and Livestock Management Plans now include strategic actions aimed at improving rangeland management through advanced livestock breeding and enhanced veterinary services. These plans prioritize the enhancement of livestock breeding programs and veterinary services, focusing on achieving higher quality outcomes in livestock management. The improved strategies ensure alignment with sustainable practices that not only benefit the environment but also support the local communities that depend on these resources. As the plans were recently, approved the government has not yet initiated the pasture use contracts with the herders.

5.2 Facilitate formation of VSLAs among herders sharing seasonal pastures to increase herder access to financial services to support long-term livelihood development (i.e. livestock migration and fodder support and accessing veterinary services): **COMPLETED.** The project supported the creation of 7 VSLA groups with 116 (49 men, 67 women) members of 84 HHs in 5 BZ soums. These groups have a VSLA governing structure as per the approved constitutions in place. The members have access to the loan fund when needed without collaterals with a modest interest rate. For example, a member of Buyan-Arvijikh group

N.Jargaltogtokh who recently got married took a loan of ₮1,000,000 MNT (£302.2) and built a new camp. (VSLA meeting) They use the social fund to finance environmental protection and other group collective activities such as restore well, stream rehabilitation and sacred place conservation etc.,

5.3 Support VSLAs for their initiatives for rangeland conservation (water source protection, fencing key grazing areas, supporting natural regeneration and planting of native trees, creating ponds harvesting rain water) through small grants: **COMPLETED.** VSLA herders use their social/conservation funds for their collective actions to protect local resources. For instance, herders of the VSLA group 'Mazaalai' from Bayan-Undur soum, Bayankhongor aimag initiated an action to protect spring origin of Baga River. Also, 'Tsenkher Nomin' VSLA, Shinejinst soum fenced tamarisk at the head of spring Sukhaitiin Shand; another VSLA group of this soum 'Zadgai Kheer' started to plant native grass and vegetables; trees creating a windbreak In Y3, a call for small grants was announced in September 2023 to support the initiatives of the VSLAs aimed at rangeland conservation. A specially appointed selection committee reviewed all seven submitted proposals based on the agreed criteria. After careful consideration, two projects were selected: a) "Reconstruction of hand-well and creation of a pond in Ulaanchuluut," proposed by the Shand Khairkhan VSLA group of Erdene soum, and b) "Protecting the head of stream – Baga Gol," proposed by the Mazaalai VSLA group of Bayan-Undur soum, Bayankhongor aimag. Each of the selected projects received funding of ₮3,500,000 MNT (approx. £1,057 GBP). The results of these small grant will be evlauted in May. The project awarded a sum of ₮500,000 MNT (£152 GBP) to other five groups by contributing to their Conservation Funds. This was intended to facilitate the implementation of their conservation projects and promote sustainable management practices. Link to VSLA report.

5.4 Support construction of two wells in bufferzone areas to limit livestock entry into SPA in search of water: **COMPLETED in Y2**.

3.2   Progress towards project Outputs

OUTPUT 1: GGASPA monitoring programme is informing effective GGASPA and CMC management, and future-proofed by building the capacity of Mongolia's future conservationists (with 6 indicators)

Building on prior years' work, the GGASPA monitoring program has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of GGASPA and CMC management in Y3 by providing vital data and insights from various monitoring activities such as camera trapping, rangeland health surveys, SMART patrolling, and wildlife analysis. Through these efforts, the program has not only informed current management practices but also future-proofed conservation efforts by building the capacity of young conservationists and operating rangers through training, education, and practical fieldwork experiences, ensuring a sustainable and informed approach to wildlife and habitat conservation in the GG.

A monitoring programme of the GGASPA established with dataset of a) wildlife camera-trapping at the 12 water points and oases water analysis, b) SMART patrolling data, and c) rangeland health survey across BZ as baseline and future trend. (**indicator 1.1**); The NUM team conducted the rangeland health assessment (grazing condition and carrying capacity) across BZ and/or Idren Mountain Range both baseline and endline to inform further research on rangeland ecosystem and GGASPA management. According to the NUM survey, the grazing condition across BZ varies, but the eastern part was more degraded; and carrying capacity was higher in southern part of Idren mountain range (**indicator 1.2**). On the other hand, the project end-survey among the 71 BZ HHs showed that rangeland condition across the targeted area has improved over the past 3 years; rangeland restoration and protection by herders has increased; and condition of saxaul forests has improved; The GGASPA team attended to SMART training in Sept and received updated information on recent government decisions for using SMART across Mongolia's PAs. The team also received NUM training on plant identification during the rangeland survey. In Y3, SMART patrolling conducted 3 times collecting data, which were integrated into the SMART data by being uploaded to the MET server at www.metconnect.smartconservationtools.org/server (**indicator 1.3**); The CMC meeting in Sept received the information on the results of the studies, and also benefited from lectures by the University professors on the district long-term development planning and rangeland

management, which informed BZC work on RRMR development and implementation (Indicator 1.4). NUM researchers supervised the analysis of camera-trap data from 26 automatic cameras in 12 water points in the GGGASPA, which covered 319'469 images in total and identified 50'959 images of 11 species. Also, in consultation with NUM researchers, SMART data were analyzed to inform GGASPA management. Also, the SMART patrol protocol was developed jointly with GGASPA team and handed over to the Administration for their use. (indicator 1.5). One of the NUM students Sainjargaliin Munkhbayar, Assistant Researcher of the ZSL Mongolia graduated from NUM (Biological Department of the Science School) with a Bachelor's degree in Ecology by Education and Science Ministerial order No. A/18 in Jan, 23. His thesis is "Daily activity of water use of the large mammals in the GGASPA" was defended with the grade 96/A+ (indicator 1.6). **Species** and **Diploma**

OUTPUT 2: Scalable habitat management and waterhole restoration model areas are demonstrating effective conservation interventions to restore the GGASPA desert ecosystem, to support the recovery of Bactrian Camels and other BD (with 3 indicators)

By integrating solar panels into the restoration of waterholes in Y2, the project has notably enhanced water availability for wildlife in the core zone and concurrently bolstered economic opportunities for BZ herders (**Indicator 2.1**). An automatic camera data analysis revealed the presence of 10 mammal species and various bird species utilizing the restored water points, further illustrating the success of the restoration efforts (**Indicator 2.2**). The experimental research at the Baruun Sharga oasis highlighted the potential for improving vegetation cover despite that the survival rate was low due to the predation by rabbits which gave an important lesson. The experiment at Bayantooroi and Buuriin Khyar in Y3, demonstrated the feasibility of oasis restoration using seedlings cultivated in plastic pots to replant to the water points within the core zone. However, to optimize outcomes, future efforts should integrate a more sophisticated array of technologies for soil moisture retention and efficient irrigation practices. The result observed in the Bayantooroi experiment serves as a valuable model for local communities, highlighting the potential impact of habitat restoration practices within desert ecosystems. The experiment also provided valuable practical experience and learning to GGASPA team for future rehabilitation efforts (**Indicator 2.3**). Habitat management

OUTPUT 3: Collaborative and inclusive governance institutions are in place and making coordinated, landscape-level management decisions, employing adaptive management approaches informed by robust ecosystem monitoring (with 4 indicators).

The three-year CMC Management Plan, developed through participatory approaches, approved in Y1 guided the agreement, implementation, and assessment of yearly action plans across the five BZ soums during Y3 through three CMC meetings chaired by the elected representative of Erdene soum's CRK, Mr. Janchivdorj Tsevegmid (**Indicator 3.1**). Donor projects such as UNDP and KfW, with a focus on the Great Gobi in collaboration with the GGASPA Administration, have effectively communicated the outcomes of their implemented activities to the CMC (**Indicator 3.2**). Within the 23-member CMC, 47.8% are women and 30.4% are herders, signifying a diverse and inclusive representation. The active involvement of VSLAs' representatives in CMC meetings, facilitating herders' contribution to discussions and decision-making processes, has proven effective (**Indicator 3.3**). The endline socio-economic survey was conducted and compared with the measures of the baseline survey. The survey showed that over the past three years, 94.4% of BZ households received vital information on nature conservation and engaged in related training sessions, with an average participation in 2.5 trainings, marking a 50.9% increase from the baseline. Notably, 93% of households actively participated in training sessions focused on improving the rangeland ecosystem and combatting rangeland degradation, attending an average of 2.1 sessions—an increase of 72.7% compared to the baseline. However, participation in biodiversity monitoring had a slight decrease of 12.4% from the baseline, possibly attributed to the expansion of water points within the GGASPA, potentially impacting wildlife migration patterns into the BZ (**Indicator 3.4**). CMC meeting in Bayankhongor

OUTPUT 4: Ground-up awareness-raising about GG uniqueness by environmentally conscious GGASPA communities that are empowered with the skills and knowledge to improve livestock management and comply with the RRMR (with 4 indicators).

Y3 was the dynamic year for Eco Clubs organizing the yearly forum, participating in an international forum organized by MET, and benefitting from three training events a) drama

method to run public awareness; b) 10 steps to conduct public awareness; and c) on-site methods and tool for environmental education campaign led by training experts. **(indicator 4.1)**. In Y3, Eco Clubs organized a Wild Camel Conservation campaign under My Green Mongolia national program that reached over 1200 Gobi people including 540 adults. The annual Eco Club forum in Oct. 2023 featured presentations of their acheivements and performances showcasing their skills (**Indicator 4.2**). To enable the formulation and approval of the RRMR, the project facilitated two training sessions for soum government officials in April and September, aimed at guiding their work. Furthermore, a legal assessment was commissioned to review both existing policies and draft versions, in order to identify any weaknesses and offer recommendations for enhancements. These strategic efforts significantly contributed to the approval of the Soum Agriculture and Livestock Management Plans, which now include objectives focused on sustainable rangeland management. This approach not only strengthens the policy framework but also supports the overall goals of sustainable land use and agricultural practices within the Great Gobi. (**Indicator 4.3**). Socio-economic survey The VSLA herders engaged in regular monthly meetings, with at least two sessions being directly facilitated by ZSL team members. Additionally, more than 130 herders benefited from specialized training in rangeland management delivered by range experts visiting them in June and November. This training played a crucial role in guiding their rangeland improvement initiatives, which were supported by the project through small grants awarded in November. These grants primarily focused on fencing off degraded pasture patches and water sources to prevent further deterioration. Furthermore, in October, over 50 herders from seven different VSLAs participated in the inaugural Forum of CBNRM groups in the Great Gobi. This forum provided a valuable platform for herders to engage with one another, learn from each other's experiences, and showcase their projects to key stakeholders in the Great Gobi region, thereby enhancing collaborative efforts and community engagement in sustainable rangeland management. (**Indicator 4.4**). The results of the independent socio-economic survey among the households highlighted notable improvements in rangeland and ecosystem conservation awareness perhaps, partly attributed to the eco-clubs' training sessions, and conservation activities. Over 500 herders from five BZ soums participated in capacity-building activities jointly conducted with the eco-clubs (**Indicator 4.5**).Eco-club info

OUTPUT 5: Remote rural herders have improved wellbeing and financial stability built through a successful and sustainable community banking model that supports sustainable resource use efforts e.g. through rangeland management actions and Eco Clubs (with 6 indicators).

As of Y3, there were 7 VSLA groups (community banking fund mechanisms for herders) with 116 (49 men, 67 women) members of 84 HHs in 5 BZ soums. Such organized groups had much increased access to training and learning facilitated by the project compared to non-VSLA herders spread across the BZ. Nevertheless, due to the delayed approval of the Soum Agriculture & Livestock Management Plans, VSLAs have not yet entered into pasture use contract with the Soum (**indicator 5.1**). Each VSLA has a loan and a social/conservation fund. Members have an easy access to loans when needed, and the grant from the social fund to finance environmental protection.. In total, 67 female VSLA members equally participating in the community banking decisions **(indicator 5.2)**. Community banking social/conservation funds support rangeland resource management implementation. For example 'Mazaalai' VSLA group mobilized their own funds to protect Baga gol spring origin. Also, all VSLAs received small grants (£150 to £1000) to fund their initiatives for rangeland management. **(indicator 5.3)**. As per the end-line survey, in 2021, the household average annual income was ₮21,760,290 (£6'576.4), which increased to ₮27,049,521 (£8'174.9) in 2023, (19.6% increase for the past 3 years) **(indicator 5.4). VSLA info**

3.3   Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome: Conservation of wild camel and desert ecosystem enhanced in GGASPA through strengthened management and stakeholder collaboration, with communities empowered to improve rangeland management and herder well-being (**with 6 indicators**).

In Y3, the project-supported biodiversity monitoring capacity provided essential information for conservation management in the GGASPA. For instance, the project end-survey among HHs in BZ revealed that the number of wild animals sighted has increased by 29.2% over the past 3

years (except wild ass and wolf). The baseline and final survey results showed that sightings of black-tailed gazelle, wild camel, and snow leopard increased, while sightings of wild ass and wolf decreased. This observation was confirmed by the camera trap data analysis, which showed increased frequency of large mammals and the diversity of species visiting the water sources. According to the prior wild camel population survey, the population stood at 436 individuals in 2015, which was updated to 464 in the genetic research conducted by Anna Jemmett between 2021 and 2023. ZSL Mongolia, in collaboration with GGASPA, provided essential support in gathering all the necessary data for Jemmett's research. These findings provide valuable insights into the dynamics of wildlife populations in the area, guiding future conservation efforts and highlighting the impact of the ongoing initiatives aimed at promoting biodiversity and sustainable ecosystem management within the GGASPA. **(indicator 1)**.   Wild camel count

Regarding habitat conservation, the entire territory of the GGASPA serves as the primary habitat for the main range of the wild camel population. Key habitats within this region include Kharkhairkhan, Buuriin Khyariin Nuruu, Kholboo Zangad, Davkhar Khariin Nuruu, Baruun Sharga, Zuun Sharga, the foothills of Atas and Inges Mountain, Bogts Tsagaan Ders, Tsagaan Baishintiin Nuruu, and Tsagaan Shavartiin Nuruu, covering a total area of 13,225.9 km2. Considering this significant habitat, the project team, in collaboration with the GGASPA, undertook the experiment to support natural regeneration of Gobi trees and brush, including poplar tree at the oases located along key camel migratory routes, specifically in Baruun Sharga and Buuriin Khyar. The research experiment revealed lower survival rates of tree species within fenced plots, primarily attributed to flaws in the design of the fencing structures. Despite this outcome, the project drew valuable insights and lessons learned that will be instrumental in shaping future conservation endeavors and refining strategies for protecting and nurturing tree species within the GGASPA. By acknowledging and understanding the shortcomings encountered during the experiment, the project team can adapt and improve their approaches, ensuring more effective solutions moving forward (**indicator 2**); The collaborative and participatory approach to integrated landscape management, which involves multiple stakeholders from the BZ, received high praise and appreciation from the GGASPA Administration, BZ soum authorities, and provincial government Environmental Departments during the March 2024 CMC meeting. This recognition underscores the effectiveness of engaging diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes that impact the management of the landscape and its natural resources.

Moving forward, the project plans to share its results and experiences with the MET and other national-level stakeholders during an upcoming workshop in May **(indicator 3)**. As mentioned earlier, the local herders reported improvement of rangeland condition over the past 3 years compared to the baseline survey. They believe that this increase is due to increased efforts to restore and protect rangelands **(indicator 3 and 4)**. Members of seven VSLA groups reported changing their grazing practices based on training series and targeted activities from the project **(indicator 5).** The project baseline Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was recorded at 0.114 in 2022, signifying that 28.2% of the households were living in poverty. Following the project activities and interventions, the end-survey conducted in 2023 reflected a modest improvement, with the MPI reduced to 0.091, indicating that 29.9% of households were still impoverished. On a positive note, the average annual income of households showed significant progress, rising from ₮21,760,290 (£6'453.22) in 2021 to ₮27,049,521 (£8'021.80) in 2023. This increase of 19.6% compared to the income levels of the previous two years signifies an improvement in the economic well-being of the participating households. While there is still work to be done to alleviate poverty, these income advancements reflect a positive impact of the project on the economic conditions of households within the target region. Overall project delivery is with 86% having to complete four activities in the remaining two months (1,6 – 1,8, 1.10 and 2.5) where most work is to ensure sustainability of the project activities by completing data collection (camera trap and SMART) and their integration into the current plans.

3.4   Monitoring of assumptions

Project Outcome and Output level assumptions still hold true. There have not been yet any changes in the assumptions.

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

In Y3, significant progress was made towards the goal of safeguarding wildlife such as wild camels while ensuring the well-being of herder communities and preserving their socio-cultural traditions through sustainable practices. The project successfully completed most planned activities, resulting in the creation of five outputs and achieving the desired outcome. By leveraging various research methods including genetic studies, camera traps, rangeland health assessments, oasis water surveys, and SMART patrol data, valuable scientific insights were compiled regarding the wild camel population and its habitat. This data now equips the GGASPA Administration, the primary conservation body responsible for protecting endangered Gobi species, with crucial information on water sources, habitat health, and monitoring tools to guide management decisions effectively.

Recognizing the pressing threat of climate change, the project undertook experiments aimed at improving degraded water points and desert steppes to support wild species and the natural growth of Gobi tree and shrub species. While challenges were faced in restoration efforts, such as low survival rates of planted seedlings, valuable lessons were learned to enhance future restoration projects and habitat protection strategies.

The project fostered collaboration and coordinated planning among stakeholders through the formation of CMC, enhancing integrated landscape management within the GGASPA area. Institutional capacity building initiatives, regular meetings, and increased public awareness activities, particularly through school Eco clubs, further strengthened the project's impact on community engagement and conservation efforts. Despite obstacles such as delays caused by mining disputes and environmental factors like drought, the project persisted in promoting sustainable pasture management practices and supporting herder communities through initiatives like VSLAs. While challenges remain, the establishment of soum-level rangeland management plans demonstrates progress towards enhancing rangeland conditions in the GG through coordinated efforts involving CMCs, Soum plans, and VSLAs.

4.   Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

ZSL's collaboration with the National Focal Point (NFP) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Ms. Uranchimeg Tserendorj, highlights the importance of the partnership in overseeing the project's efforts in the Great Gobi, a crucial habitat for wild camels and other CMS-listed species within the GGASPA. With the backing of the NFP, who serves as the Department Director of Natural Resource Management at the MET, the project receives vital support and endorsement for its significant contributions to CMS initiatives in Mongolia.

This project aligns closely with Mongolia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2025) and actively contributes to various international conventions and agreements, including the Aichi Targets, the CMS, the UNFCCC, and the SDGs (1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, and 17). By supporting these frameworks and agreements, the project underscores its commitment to promoting biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, climate action, and the welfare of local communities in Mongolia.

5.   Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

 The multidimensional poverty index was 0.114 at the baseline survey and 0.091 at the final survey. Specifically, 28.2% of the HH members included in the basic survey are affected by poverty, which is 0.4% higher than the poverty coverage of Mongolia. However, 29.9% of the family members included in the final survey are affected by poverty, which is 2.8% higher than the poverty coverage of Mongolia (Poverty coverage of Mongolia in 2022 is 27.1). At the time of the baseline survey, the poverty intensity was 0.406, and 40.6% of all poverty-stricken HHs were poor for all indicators. At the time of the end-survey, the poverty intensity was 0.306 and 30.6% of all poverty-stricken HHs were poor for all indicators. However, the average annual income of HHs increased from ₮21,760,290 (£6'453.22) in 2021 to ₮27,049,521 (£8'021.80) in 2023, which is an increase by 19.6% compared to the income of the previous two years.

The project has aimed to benefit 1,272 herder households in 7 bags, empowering them to actively participate in conservation decisions through the participation in soum CRKs or BZCs and the CMC. A key focus has been on promoting inclusivity by ensuring greater representation of women and vulnerable groups, with the goal of achieving 20-40% participation in BZCs and VSLAs. According to the project records, over 1200 people were reached including school pupils, soum

center residents and VSLA herders in various environmental events, training and forums. Now, through VSLA meetings and CMC meetings herders have increased voices for decisions regarding rangeland management and livelihood support. The baseline and final surveys showed increased environmental awareness and positively changed attitudes among the VSLA members. These surveys also revealed a positive trend in poverty reduction among households involved in the project. The MPI decreased from 0.114 to 0.091, indicating an improvement in overall well-being. While the percentage of households affected by poverty slightly increased from the baseline to the final survey, it is noteworthy that the project participants were slightly above the national poverty coverage rates. The poverty intensity also decreased, with a lower proportion of households experiencing poverty across all indicators at the end-survey compared to the baseline. Additionally, there was a significant boost in the average annual income of participating households, rising from 21,760,290 MNT in 2021 to 27,049,521 MNT in 2023, representing a notable 19.6% increase over the past three years. This indicates a positive economic impact on the project beneficiaries and highlights progress towards improving their livelihoods and economic resilience.

6. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

The project has increased women's participation in decision-making processes through the establishment of CMC and BZCs, supported by a series of capacity-building training courses. In Y3, the CMC have achieved 48% female representation, while BZCs have surpassed a 50% female participation rate. These forums prioritize women's needs and perspectives when discussing policies, plans, and collaborations, ensuring that women play a pivotal role in shaping conservation initiatives within their communities. Additionally, the project has facilitated the enhanced engagement of women and marginalized groups in VSLAs, where 58% of members are women. Notably, one out of every seven VSLAs is women-led, which promotes gender equality by granting women equal access to financial resources and social support. Women actively participate in the management of VSLAs, including implementing environmental protection projects with the help of small grants. Furthermore, the Eco-clubs have seen significant female representation, with 62% of members being girls and 80% of teachers being female. These teachers received training and resources from the project, enabling them to conduct environmental awareness sessions for their peers and community members in the soums. By empowering more girls to join the clubs and educating adults about social and gender-related issues concerning the GG landscape and ecology, the project fosters a culture of environmental stewardship and gender equality within the community.

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board[1].	42.8% (Country Director, Conservation Program Officer, Finance Officer)
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women[2].	5 soums' BZC – 20% Eco-clubs – 100% NUM – 100%

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of	**X**

[1] A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

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

	women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	**X**
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

7.   Monitoring and evaluation

The project's M&E processes have been robust and systematic. The ZSL Mongolia team conducts weekly meetings to review progress towards accomplishing weekly milestones. These milestones are tracked using the project annual workplan and logical framework. Monthly ZSL reports, which include updates on activities, key indicators, and financial tracking, are submitted through ZSL's web-based systems. In addition to monthly reporting, the project generates half-year and annual reports, serving as essential benchmarks for monitoring and evaluating performance over time. These reports play a critical role in assessing the project's effectiveness and impact. To keep partners informed and engaged, monthly highlights are shared through social media channels like Facebook. Furthermore, detailed reports are presented during CMC meetings at GGASPA, ensuring that project progress and achievements are transparent and accessible to all stakeholders involved. This structured approach to M&E and reporting not only facilitates effective project management but also fosters accountability, transparency, and information sharing among partners and stakeholders.

8.   Lessons learnt

In Y3, the project learned valuable lessons from its restoration experiments, as highlighted in previous sections. One positive outcome was the ability to secure additional co-funding from other international organizations that shared similar conservation objectives. For instance, collaborations were established with organizations like GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) through the "My Green Mongolia" campaign and with the Hans Seidel Foundation to support legal education projects. Leveraging these opportunities, the project effectively organized initiatives such as the Wild Camel conservation campaign and the First VSLA Herders Forum in the GG. By tapping into external funding sources and building partnerships with organizations aligned with the project's goals, the project expanded its reach and impact in conservation efforts. These collaborations not only provided crucial financial support but also created platforms for raising awareness, fostering community engagement, and sharing best practices.

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

In response to the feedback received on last year's Annual Report, we have implemented several improvements and provided further clarifications as described below:

- Project stakeholders/partners: We have updated the stakeholder and partner section of the report to clearly outline the full extent of interactions between various partners involved in the project. This description includes each major collaborator's role within the framework of the project, enhancing transparency and understanding.
- Implementation of activities: We have documented any variations from the original logical framework. The status of Y3 activities is now clearly indicated with markings for "completed," "partially completed," and "ongoing." Additionally, we have included links to our Facebook page and other websites where stakeholders can view associated photos and supplementary material provided in the Annex for verification and deeper engagement.
- Progress towards outcomes: Our approach to addressing the previous feedback includes:
    - i.   Providing supporting evidence such as analyzed camera-trap data.
    - ii.   Showing increased wildlife presence at water points through empirical data.
    - iii.   Detailing the operational aspects of the CMC.

     iv.   Simplifying the explanation of rangeland management strategies.

     v.   Including a table with clear information covering each of the seven VSLA groups.

- <u>Progress towards outcome</u>: We have included specific evidence regarding:
  - i.   The conservation status of umbrella species.
  - ii.   Results from habitat restoration experiments.
  - iii.   Documentation of the CMC's collaborative actions, planning, and reports.
  - iv.   Information about key plant species relevant to the project.
  - v.   Updates on herders' grazing practices and overall wellbeing.
- <u>Progress towards impact</u>: A summary section has been included to outline the status of the overall impact expected from the project's outcomes and outputs. This section integrates both quantitative and qualitative assessments to provide a holistic view of the project's contributions to environmental conservation and community development.

10. Risk Management

The project has not had any risks arising in the last 12 months. However, the team developed a risk register as an existing project in accordance with the template on the Darwin Initiative website. <u>Darwin Initiative website</u>.

10.   Sustainability and legacy

The project is dedicated to enhancing the capacity of key stakeholders including the CMC, GGASPA Administration, Eco-clubs, and BZ herder community institutions. The biannual CMC meetings streamlined strategic plans and hosted educational workshops for Eco-clubs using innovative tools like the "Nomadic Trunk" and drama for public awareness. Herder households were introduced to the VSLA model, equipping them with approaches for sustainable access to finances and collaborative decision-making and supporting their conservation efforts. Similarly, the GGASPA Administration received specialized training in environmental monitoring techniques like camera-trapping and SMART patrols, further supported by ongoing research analysis to improve ecosystem management. Collectively, these initiatives aimed to empower stakeholders with the necessary skills for effective collaboration and informed decision-making, fostering a more integrated approach to landscape management across the GGASPA. By the end of Y3, all these stakeholders gained sufficient capacity to maintain the process and keep the sustainability of conservation efforts. However, the major hindrance might be the shortage of stable funding to support exchanges and field actions.

11.   Darwin Initiative identity

The project ensures recognition of its funding source across all stakeholder engagements and collaborative activities. We display the DI logo on all project materials, such as presentation slides, posters, and publications, ensuring it maintains a strong, distinct identity among stakeholders at both national and local levels. A notable instance of this branding is in the series of posters created for the '<u>Wild Camel Conservation' campaign</u> under '<u>My Green Mongolia' movement.</u>

The DI is well-recognized within the Mongolian conservation community, including government organizations, CSOs, and INGOs, as a major UK government fund supporting environmental conservation. The ZSL website features a dedicated page under the Mongolia projects section that provides comprehensive information about the project and highlights its funding source. Additionally, the ZSL Mongolia Facebook page has grown increasingly popular, serving as a dynamic platform for engagement and information dissemination. For stakeholders without access to digital media, we provide hard copies of training materials, reports, and guidelines translated into the local language, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for local project partners, herder communities, and eco-clubs.

12.   Safeguarding

As in prior years, in Y3, ZSL implemented its safeguarding policies, including the "**Global Safeguarding Policy**" and "**Global Code of Conduct**," to ensure the safety and well-being of both the communities it serves and its staff. These policies clearly define the responsibilities of ZSL's staff to prevent harm, abuse, exploitation, bullying, or harassment of children and vulnerable adults involved in operations and programs. Specific protocols, like the "**Policy and Procedure to Safeguard Children and Adults at Risk**," guided staff in identifying safeguarding

concerns, particularly in overseas projects, and provide crucial links to local safeguarding resources. Every ZSL employee has access to these policies and receives training to ensure they are well-acquainted with the procedures and their roles in upholding them. Additionally, ZSL mandated thorough risk assessments before field trips and projects, developing Emergency Response Plans to minimize and manage risks effectively. Staff were instructed to report incidents appropriately if they identify anyone at risk during these endeavors. ZSL's HR department administered mandatory Code of Conduct training ensuring all staff are aware of and adhere to expected behavioral standards.

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	Yes/**No**
Have any concerns been reported in the past 12 months	Yes/No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	**Yes**/No [*If yes, please provide their name and* ██ B █████████████]
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	Yes/**No** [*If yes, please provide date and details of training*]
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 100% [6] Planned: 50% [3]
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses. **None**	
Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify. **None**	
Please describe any community sensitisation that has taken place over the past 12 months; include topics covered and number of participants. **None**	
Have there been any concerns around Health, Safety and Security of your project over the past year? If yes, please outline how this was resolved. **None**	

13. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure <u>during the reporting period</u> (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 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)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	**143,444.00**	**143,709.00**	**-0.18%**	

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources

Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)	01/12/2023	£ 5465.70	GiZ
	24/10/2023	£ 3651.67	HZF
	20/01/2024	£ 901.34	ITG

11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

There were not any significant difficulties encountered during the year. We have no issues to raise with the Darwin Initiative.

12. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

A significant achievement of the project was the support extended to GGASPA for the implementation of the "Law on Buffer Zones," a law that has had limited nationwide enforcement to date. A pivotal success was the establishment of the operational Collaborative Management Council (CMC), which brought together formerly independent Buffer Zone Councils, transforming it into an innovative, democratic, and multi-stakeholder decision-making body. The CMC spearheaded various transboundary protection measures such as instituting SMART patrols, hosting annual Eco Club forums, and organizing the landmark VSLA Herders Forum, marking a milestone in the integrated landscape management efforts within the expansive GGASPA. (same video 2:15-4:25)

A set of educational tool with 25 environmental lessons - "Nomadic Trunk", that was introduced to 7 eco-clubs in the BZ GGASPA in Y2, is travelled a total 1'100 km through all 5 soums and reached a total of 1149 people included school kids, civil servants, herders and foreign visitors. During this period, all teachers and members of the eco-clubs have fully mastered the teaching method of the "Nodamic Trunk" (video and photo info). Most recently, an invitation was received from a neighboring protected area – Great Gobi B to recieve the lessons from the trunk to their eco-clubs. Thus, one of the GGASPA eco-club – 'Kid of the Great Gobi' that belongs to Erdene soum travelled with trunk across Altai Mountain Range 1900 km and taught selected lessons to 410 people in the Great Gobi B (see this link).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
Video about training on Nod	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=278132298587310	'Nomadic Trunk' training in the GGASPA by	Video | Facebook	**Yes** / No

amic Trunk		ZSL Mongolia		
Photos to show a travel with the Nomadic Trunk to the Gobi B PA	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086423275114	Travel of the 'Nomadic Trunk' to the Gobi B Protected Area by eco-club 'Khavtgai' (Wild camel) of Altai soum, Gobi-Altai province	https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=394644200093019&set=pcb.394649566759149	**Yes** / No

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2023-2024

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact: Globally important wildlife, including the **wild camels**, thrive in the Mongolian Altai-Gobi with the welfare and **socio-cultural traditions of herder communities** secured through **sustainable use of the fragile desert ecosystem**	The MDI-2 project is contributing substantially to preserve this precious land in its entirety and actively participating for its nomination as a serial World Natural Heritage Site. As a result of the EEC past 3 years for future generation of the Great Gobi, over 1000 kids educated as a conservationist and 8 of them are studying in area of biology/ecology. One of the got Mongolian Presidential Scholarship and studying abroad.	The project will contribute to the nomination process to be a Natural Heritage Site. Will continue planned activities to educate kids of the Great Gobi via the eco-clubs.
Outcome: Conservation of wild camel and desert ecosystem enhanced in GGASPA through strengthened management and stakeholder collaboration, with communities empowered to improve **rangeland management** and **herder well-being**.		
Outcome indicator 0.1: Stable or increasing counts of representative populations of **Wild camel** species (*Camelus ferus*), and key indicator ungulate species e.g. **Asiatic wild ass** *Equus hemionus*, and **Goitered gazelle** *Gazella subgutturosa* by Y2 and Y3 at sample sites (baseline= 436 wild camels in 2002)	According to the wild camel population survey 1943-2015, there were 436 heads in 2015 and this number changed as 646 in accordance wild camel's genetic research by Anna Jemmett in 2021-2023 based on data collected by ZSL Mongolia.	Get counts of key indicator ungulate species e.g. Asiatic wild ass *Equus hemionus*, and Goitered gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa* by Y4 at sample sites
Outcome indicator 0.2: At least **20% of poplar tree oases** (c. 21) across key **camel migratory routes are protected and demonstrating signs** of rehabilitation by Y4.	Jointly with the GGASPA, poplar tree oases are protected across key camel migratory routes including Baruun Sharga and Buuriin Khyar in the frame of the research on natural regeneration of water points.	To measure size of square covered poplar tree in Y4
Outcome indicator 0.3: The **collaborative participatory approach** for buffer zone management by the GGASPA and CMC is supported and promoted by the MET as best practice for other PAs by Y4.	In year 3, the ollaborative participatory approach for BZ management by the GGASPA and CMC is supported and promoted by the branch of MET in Bayankhongor province via local TV and Mongolian National Broadcaster.	MET support to the BZ CMC via GGASPA Administration will be recognized and CMC will be promoted as best practices to other PAs in Y4.
Outcome indicator 0.4: 20% increase in abundance of **key plant species** (indicators of rangeland health) in GGASPA buffer-zone by end of Y3 (baseline and indicator species set by NUM in Y1).	According to the social survey taken from BZ HHs, rangeland conditions have improved over the past 3 years, with a 51.4% increase compared to the baseline.	Increase/decrease of abundance of key plant species in BZ GGASPA will be clear after the defence of NUM student for MSc in May, 24
0.5 40% of herder HHs (c.1272) report changing grazing practices to adopt and comply with the **RRMR** by end of Y3 (baseline set in Y1).	There are 7 herder groups established in accordance with the VSLA model. Now they have 116 members of 84 HHs and changing their grazing practices based on trainings and targeted activities from project.	The improved drafts of the RRMR will be taken up by CRKs in 2024

0.6 10% improvement in **wellbeing** of c. 318 herder households (25% of 1272) including vulnerable groups, with women and men benefiting equally by end of Y3 (baseline median household wellbeing index score = 4.2 in Y1).	A baseline set up as the MPI was 0.114, indicating that 28.2% of the HHs were impoverished in 2022. According to the project end-survey, the multidimensional poverty index was 0.091, indicating that 29.9% of the HHs are impoverished in 2023. Despite, the average life satisfaction reported by herders increased from 4.2 to 4.3 in Y 3 which is 3.4% improvement in wellbeing. The average annual income of HHs increased from 21,760,290 MNT in 2021 to 27,049,521 MNT in 2023, which is an increased by 19.6% compared to the income of the previous two years.	Completed.
Output 1: GGASPA monitoring programme is informing effective GGASPA and CMC management, and future-proofed by building the capacity of Mongolia's future conservationists.		
Output indicator 1.1: GGASPA monitoring programme established (baselines set by camera-trapping, rangeland health surveys and SMART by the end of Y1)	A monitoring programme of the GGASPA established with datasets of camera-trapping at 13 water points, rangeland health survey across BZ as baseline and future trend, SMART patrols were conducted 13 times since it was introduced, water quality research and rehabilitation experiments in 3 plots were uploaded in the MET server at www.metconnect.smartconservationtools.org/server	Completed.
Output indicator 1.2: % of improved health status (current ecosystem health defined by NUM-led rangeland surveys) in 5 rangeland sites in GGASPA and 5 buffer-zone sites at end of Y3 (baseline to be set in Y1).	The grazing conditions across BZ varies, but eastern part was more degraded; and carrying capacity was higher in southern part of Idren mountain range. Project end-survey among 71 HHs representing BZ herders showed that rangeland condition across the targeted area has improved over the past 3 years; rangeland restoration and protection by herders has increased; and condition of saxaul forests has improved.	Measure size of the square of covered poplar tree in Y4 and exact assessment result will be ready in May 24 after defence of the NUM student for MSc.
Output indicator 1.3: GGASPA management actions are being informed by quarterly SMART patrols; six-month camera-trap surveys of the priority waterholes and rangeland sites, by the end Y2	GGASPA management actions are informed by the 13 SMART patrol data (3 in the reporting year) which was conducted since the start of the project and camera-trap survey at 13 waterholes was conducted twice per year.	Completed.
Output indicator 1.4: CMC are applying adaptive management through integration of GGASPA monitoring results (SMART, camera trap, rangeland health surveys) by end of Y2.	GGASPA monitoring results presented in each CMC meeting (in total 6) and included into the yearly plan of soum BZC.	Completed.
Output indicator 1.5: NUM researchers are able to conduct primary analysis of camera-trap data and SMART patrolling data following series of online training by ZSL UK experts by end of Y2 and able to do independent analysis by end of Y3.	Online training (in total 5) on SMART by ZSL UK experts and national specialists was organized in Y1/Y2, SMART patrolling of the GGASPA Administration was stabilized and patrolling data was uploaded to the main server. An analysis of camera-trap data from 26 automatic cameras in 12 water points that	Completed.

	was placed by the GGGASPA took 319'469 images in total and identified 50'959 images of 11 species.	
Output indicator 1.6: Two NUM postgraduate students achieve MSc after working closely with the GGASPA to generate data from rangeland health and camera trap surveys, to support effective management of GGASPA and CMC by Y4.	One of the NUM students, Sainjargaliin Munkhbayar, Assistant Researcher of the ZSL Mongolia has graduated from NUM (Biological Department of the Science School) with a Bachelor's degree in Ecology and obtained a diploma by Education and Science Ministerial order No. A/18 in Jan, 23. His thesis is "Biodiversity and Water Use of the Large Mammals in certain oasis and its surrounding area of the GGGASPA" was defended with the grade 96/A+	Other MSc student is Ms. Sarnai who will defend her thesis on the rangeland health survey in May, 24.
Output 2. Scalable **habitat management and waterhole restoration model** areas are demonstrating effective conservation interventions to restore the GGASPA desert ecosystem, to support the recovery of Wild Camels Species and other BD.		
Output indicator 2.1. GGASPA and its BZ are delineating degraded and p**riority habitats, critical waterholes and oases identified** by end of Y1.	Four boreholes restored with solar panel installation and its related construction for rangeland and wildlife water supply. Two of these boreholes were restored in the core zone with a combination of solar panel operated wells and a pond for wildlife, and the remaining two boreholes in the BZ have been equipped with a solar panel operated well for target HHs in Y2.	Completed.
Output indicator 2.2. Two key waterholes' water supply restored: **2.2.1** Two small reservoirs are fully functional inside GGASPA by end of Y2; **2.2.2** Increased wildlife presence at key waterholes (i.e. wild camel, gazelle or Asiatic wild ass) by Y4 (baseline to be set in Y1); **2.2.3** Decreased or zero presence of domestic head of livestock at key wildlife waterholes by Y4 (baseline to be set in Y1).	Solar panels were installed in 4 wells and a 30-tonne water storage pond was established in the GGASPA. (2 wells and a pond in PA of the SPA reaching a target of 2 reservoirs in the BZ) The remaining 2 wells in the BZ installed with solar panels allow herders of the BZ (only 18HH) to water their livestock during 6 months of the year. As a result, the water supply for wild animals in the core zone has increased, meanwhile herders' work became easier in the buffer zone, and their economic standing improved in Y2.	Completed.
Output indicator 2.3. Three oases (identified in Y1) demonstrating recovery: **2.3.1** Trialling assisted rehabilitation interventions (including reforestation, encouraging plant diversity) by Y4; **2.3.2** Vegetation coverage and erosion surrounding waterholes shows recovery by Y4 (baseline = year 1).	Natural restoration in Baruun Sharga oasis was done in Y2. The restoration expanded in other two places – Bayantooroi and Buuriin Khyar as comparative research for rehabilitation in Y3. Result of this experiment showed that the oasis restoration can be achieved by using seedlings grown in plastic pots to support natural regeneration at water points in the desert region. To enhance the results, a more detailed combination of technologies for soil moisture retention and efficient irrigation regimes should be introduced in the future. Besides, experiment in Bayantooroi plot became a good demonstration for local communities.	Completed.

Output 3: Collaborative and inclusive governance institutions are in place and making coordinated, landscape-level management decisions, employing adaptive management approaches informed by robust ecosystem monitoring		
Indicator 3.1 Three-year BZ Management Plan designed and agreed using participatory approaches are in place (baseline: One-year BM plan) by end of Y1	A three-year CMC MP was designed and agreed using participatory approaches. Annual action plan among BZ 5 soums was drafted, implemented and assessed during the CMC bi-annual and annual meetings in Y2 and Y3.	Completed.
Indicator 3.2 Fully operational CMC meeting independently chaired by elected CRK representatives, meeting at least two times per year, with decision making and annual MP development being informed by environmental results from GGASPA and BZC by end of Y2.	A fully operational CMC meeting held 3 times in the reporting year, chaired by elected Mr. Janchivdorj Tsevegmid, the Erdene soum's CRK representative. The donor projects (UNDP, KfW) with focus on Great Gobi jointly with the GGASPA Administration were informed of the results of joint activities.	Completed.
Indicator 3.3: % increase of confidence in transparent and equitable BZC governance reported by women and men in herder HHs by end of Y3 (baseline= 35% in Y1)	Compared to the baseline survey in 2021, the BZ HHs' knowledge of CMC activities increased by 44.1% (78.9% of herders in Y3 compared to baseline 34.8%). The herders who participated in the survey: 62% male and 38% female. Out of 23 members of the CMC, 47.8% are women and 30.4% are herders. Representatives of VSLA groups are invited to the CMC meetings and actively participate in annual report discussion and decision-making process.	Completed.
Indicator 3.4: 50% of men and women in HHs (c.1272) report **greater access to and understanding of environmental data to support sustainable NRM decisions** by end of Y3 (baseline = average of 29% in Y1).	In the last 3 years, 94.4% of the HHs in BZ received information on nature conservation and participated in this type of training (compared to baseline of 43.5%). On average, one participant attended 2.5 trainings and meetings, an increase of 50.9% compared to baseline. In particularly, 93% of HHs participated in the training to improve the rangeland ecosystem and reduce rangeland degradation (compared to baseline 20.3%). A participant attended an average of 2.1 this type of training sessions, an increase of 72.7% compared to baseline.	Completed.
Output 4. Ground-up awareness-raising about Great Gobi uniqueness by environmentally conscious GGASPA communities that are empowered with the skills and knowledge to improve livestock management and comply with the Responsible Rangeland Management Regulation (RRMR).		
Indicator 4.1 Five **Eco-Clubs (1/BZ soum)** better resourced and re-activated with:	There are 7 schools in 5 soum and 1 village across the BZ, each has an eco-club with 20-40 members. The eco-clubs re-energized through targeted activities from the project such as thematic trainings, newly developed textbook, eco-camp, waste management, annual forum, international forum etc., and they better resourced by a mobile package for public awareness; training tools with environmental lessons;	Completed.

	information board outside of school, fully equipped cabinet for ecological training.	
Indicator 4.2 Community-led **public awareness campaign** in target buffer BZ bags in each soum (c. total 1,272 HHs) reaches: **4.1.1** 100 children (representative of community demographics) trained and empowered to participate in annual public awareness campaign by end of Y1; **4.1.2** receiving supplementary sustainable financing from Community Banking Groups by Y4.	The eco-clubs have in total 8-10 teachers (2 male teachers, part-time), and 222 pupils (male 84 and female 138) for this academic year were capacitated by the project. They in turn, reached out to their school mates and teachers and raised awareness, which was part of the plan, approved at the beginning of the academic year. Since May, 22 to March 24 since the first joint campaign was organized across the BZ soums, there were over 3000 (by duplicate number) BZ citizens involved to the training/event organized by eco-clubs with support of GGASPA/ZSL.	Planned activities including public awareness campaign will be held by the eco-clubs for the remainder of the academic year (Apr-Jun, 24)
Indicator 4.3 Pasture management improved through: **4.3.1** CRK-approved Buffer-Zone pasture management plan implemented in 5 soums by end of Y2; **4.3.2** plans are adaptively improved using feedback from annual soum herder forums by end of Y3.	According to the end-survey among the HHs, rangeland and livestock management improved through trainings, restoration, and conservation. In other words, the indication that the rangeland condition has improved over the last 3 years has increased by 51.4% compared to the baseline survey. Existing VSLA approach in the GGASPA that promotes good practices such as sustainable rangeland and livestock management was introduced during First Forum of the Herders.	Actions will be taken by GGASPA Administration based on the result of NUM survey and assessment on the RRMR after the project.
Indicator 4.4 Minimum 300 households (from c. 1272) representative of local demographics have RRMR capacity with: **4.4.1** HH identified from 7 target baghs (soum subdistricts) for RRMR, including financial management training, by end of Y2; **4.4.2** 30% of HH participating in rangeland management training report improved capacity to apply RRMR by end of Y3 and 60% by Y4.	There are over 500 herders of 8 bags/5 soums in the BZ involved to the capacity building activities from the project jointly organized with eco-clubs. Targeted 84 HHs are participating in rangeland management training including about RRMR.	Completed.
Indicator 4.5 At least 40% of households on average (c. 1272) report improved awareness of environmental and rangeland management issues, with 40% reporting themselves more likely to make environmentally-led decisions, by end of Y3.	In the reporting period, following educational activities organized by experts in relevant field. Here by: (i) Lecture on the Rangeland and Livestock in the GG; Lecture on the Socio-Economy and Environmental Trend of the GGASPA until 2040 for over 100 participants in Apr, 23; (ii) Training on habitat rehabilitation and planting trees in soum centers for 37 (man 29, woman 8) participants in Jun, 23; (iii) Training on rangeland management and RRMR for 165 participants in Jun, 23; (iv) Regular advice to the VSLA groups 1-2 timed per month; (v) First Forum of the VSLA groups in Oct, 23; (vi) Professional lectures' onsite visit to the VSLA groups including soum	Completed.

	relevant officers and advice their management of rangeland and herds in Nov, 23; (vii) A competition for small grants in the field of sustainable rangeland management was announced, selected and funded among VSLA groups in Sep-Nov, 23.	
Output 5. Remote rural herders have improved wellbeing and financial stability built through a successful and sustainable community banking model that supports sustainable resource use efforts e.g. through rangeland management actions and Eco Clubs.		
Indicator 5.1 Five community banking fund mechanisms in place with the constitution and environmental fund: **5.1.1** Developed and agreed by each of the 5 Buffer Zone Council (BZC) by the end of Y1; **5.1.2** 25 BZC members trained on managing five community banking funds by end of Q2 Y2; **5.1.3** 10 soft-loans are dispersed to men and women in vulnerable herder households (among target 318) by end of Y2.	There are 7 community banking fund mechanisms (VSLA groups among herders) in place with the constitution and environmental fund in the GGASPA (against target 5) The VSLA groups have 116 (49 men, 67 women) members of 84 HHs belonging to 8 bagh/5 soums in the BZ. Each group has a savings fund that consists of loan and social fund. Members could be easily borrowing from the loan fund when needed, and from the social fund to finance environmental protection.	Completed.
Indicator 5.2 Community banking **GESI plan** implemented with: **5.2.1** 40% female participation in community banking fund decision making by end of Y2; **5.2.2** 20% of soft-loans are issued to most marginalised households by end of Y3.	In total, there are 67 women members in the 7 VSLA groups (58%) and they participate in the community banking decision making.	Implementation of the GESI plan will be assessed in May-Jun, 24 before close the project.
Indicator 5.3 Community banking environmental funds supporting RRMR implementation, through: **5.3.1** financing construction of two wells for herder HH by end of Y2; **5.3.2** Five rangeland restoration projects relevant to 2 key waterhole sites (e.g. water source protection, fencing key grazing areas, natural regeneration planting native trees) by end of Y3.	Community banking social funds supporting rangeland management implementation, through small grants to VSLA groups. In the reporting period, the following small grants issued 1. Herders of the VSLA group 'Mazaalai' that belongs to Bayan-Undur soum, Bayankhongor aimag is implementing a self-initiated small action to protect spring head of Baga River. 2. VSLA group 'Tsenkher Nomin', Shinejinst soum fenced tamarisk in head of spring Sukhaitiin Shand; 3. another VSLA group of this soum 'Zadgai Kheer' started to plant native grass and vegetables; trees to protect the field from the wind.	Implementation of the all five small grants will be assessed in May-Jun, 24 before close of the project.
5.4 40% Community banking fund member HHs report **improved financial security** by end of Y3 (baseline=2.9% in Y1).	In 2021, the average annual income of the HHs' was ₮21,760,290 (£6'576.4), and it was ₮27,049,521 (£8'174.9) in 2023. In other words, the total annual income of HHs increased by 19.6% during past 3 years.	Completed.

| | By Y3, 92.8% of HHs belong to VSLA groups (exceeding 40%) and as of March 2024, VSLA groups have 33 million MNT in the savings fund, improving the financial security. | |

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

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Globally important wildlife, including the wild camels, thrive in the Mongolian Altai-Gobi with the welfare and socio-cultural traditions of herder communities secured through sustainable use of the fragile desert ecosystem.			
Outcome: Conservation of wild camel and desert ecosystem enhanced in Great Gobi 'A' Strictly Protected Area (GGASPA) through strengthened management and stakeholder collaboration, with communities empowered to improve rangeland management and herder well-being.	0.1 Stable or increasing counts of representative populations of Wild camel species (*Camelus ferus*), and key indicator ungulate species e.g. Asiatic wild ass *Equus hemionus*, and Goitered gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa* by Q2Y3 at sample sites (baselines set in Y1) 0.2 At least 20% of poplar tree oases (c. 21) across key camel migratory routes are protected and demonstrating signs of rehabilitation by Y4. 0.3 The collaborative participatory approach for buffer zone management by the Great Gobi 'A' Strictly Protected Area (GGASPA) and Collaborative Management Council (CMC) is supported and promoted by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism as best practice for other PAs by Y4. 0.4 20% increase in abundance of key plant species (indicators of rangeland health) in GGASPA buffer-zone by end of Y3 (baseline and indicator species set by NUM in Y1). 0.5 40% of herder households (HH) (c.1272) report changing grazing practices to adopt and comply with the Responsible Rangeland Management Regulation (RRMR) by end of Y3 (baseline set in Y1).	**0.1 – 0.2** SMART patrol data, camera-trap data; GGASPA research programme reports; habitat/rangeland survey and waterhole restoration reports. **0.3** Recognition by the national government of GGASPA work as protected area best practice, and Soum Citizen Representative Khural (CRK) reports. **0.4** Rangeland health survey report; SMART patrol data; and camera-trap data and herders' observations from Socioeconomic survey **0.5** Socio-economic study report to identify baseline and changes in rangeland management practices, attitudes towards wildlife, and livelihoods in year 1, and 3; SMART patrol data, National University of Mongolia (NUM) rangeland study report	• There are no extreme climatic events (e.g. droughts, fire, dzuds) and/or disease outbreaks that destabilise flora and fauna populations. • Survey methods and location will be broadened in Y1 to set baselines for **0.1**. Current camera trap sampling (78 cameras) produced 221 wild camel detections, 50 Asiatic wild ass and 90 Goitered gazelle in the GGASPA. • Wild camels remain an ecologically suitable umbrella species for conservation efforts, with large home range requirements, and habitat interventions supporting other Gobi biodiversity. • The site remains free from interventions from corporate or political stakeholders, such as mining licences being issued. • The Mongolian government remains stable during the project; maintains supportive of environmental protection and community-based conservation under the RRMR regulations. • Local herder communities continue to support and be engaged in sustainable rangeland management and

	10% improvement in wellbeing of c. 318 herder households (25% of 1272) including vulnerable groups, with women and men benefiting equally by end of Y3 (baseline to establish median household wellbeing index scores) set in Y1).	**0.6** CMC statistics; Soum CRK reports, Socio-economic survey report	developing diversified livelihoods. • Demonstrable success from DI-funded Arkhangai project achieving impressive VSLA results; from a zero baseline, 9 VSLAs with 183 (48% women) members reaching £9500 loan fund with 100% repayment, and £2020 for social fund Members benefitted 22-45% increase in shares annually. We can have similar results for among remote Gobi herders as need for accessing financial services is even greater.
Output 1 GGASPA monitoring programme is informing effective GGASPA and CMC management, and future-proofed by building the capacity of Mongolia's future conservationists.	1.1 GGASPA monitoring programme established (baselines set by camera-trapping, rangeland health surveys and SMART by the end of Y1). 1.2 % of improved health status (current ecosystem health defined by NUM-led rangeland surveys) in 5 rangeland sites in GGASPA and 5 buffer-zone sites at end of Y3 (baseline to be set in Y1). 1.3 GGASPA management actions are being informed by quarterly SMART patrols; six-month camera-trap surveys of priority waterholes and rangeland sites, by the end Y2. 1.4 CMC are applying adaptive management through integration of GGASPA monitoring results (SMART, camera trap, rangeland health surveys) by end of Y2. 1.5 NUM researchers are able to conduct primary analysis of camera-trap data and SMART	1.1 Camera-trap protocol; SMART data model; rangeland health survey methodology; GGASPA monitoring programme plan. 1.2 Rangeland survey raw data and results. i.e. above-ground biomass, species richness, soil stability. 1.3 Camera-trap database; camera-trap raw photos; SMART patrol reports showing patrol frequency, coverage and composition. 1.4 CMC research reports; workshop meeting minutes; agenda; attendee list. 1.5 Agreed online training program, training reports, training records, research reports on camera-trap and SMART patrol data. 1.6 MSc project dissertations; GGASPA survey results.	• The Mongolian government remains stable and any turnover in GGASPA management does not impact GGASPA focus on conservation and research as strategic park priorities. Risk of theft of cameratraps remains low; natural disasters (particularly drought) or wild animals such as Gobi bear do not damage or severely impede camera-traps and survey effort.

	patrolling data following series of online training by ZSL UK experts by end of Y2 and able to do independent analysis by end of Y3. Two NUM postgraduate students achieve MSc after working closely with the GGASPA to generate data from rangeland health and camera trap surveys, to support effective management of GGASPA and CMC by Y4.		
Output 2 Scalable habitat management and waterhole restoration model areas are demonstrating effective conservation interventions to restore the Great Gobi 'A' Strictly Protected Area desert ecosystem, to support the recovery of Wild Camels Species and other biodiversity.	2.1 GGASPA and its buffer-zone are delineating degraded and priority habitats, critical waterholes and oases identified by end of Y1. 2.2 Two key waterholes water supply restored (identified by 2.1): **2.2.1** Two small reservoir are fully functional inside GGASPA by end of Y2; 2.2.2 Increased wildlife presence at key waterholes (i.e. wild camel, gazelle or asiatic wild ass) by Y4 (baseline to be set in Y1); **2.2.3** Decreased or zero presence of domestic head of livestock at key wildlife waterholes by Y4 (baseline to be set in Y1). 2.3 Three oases (identified in Y1) demonstrating recovery by: **2.3.1** Trialling assisted rehabilitation interventions (including reforestation, encouraging plant diversity) by Y4; **2.3.2** Vegetation coverage and erosion surrounding waterholes shows recovery by Y4 (baseline = year 1). **2.4** GGASPA institutionalise successful habitat recovery models into their	**2.1** GGASPA and its bufferzone waterholes and oases map. **2.2 - 2.3** Waterhole restoration and habitat management photographs; waterhole restoration survey results and report; camera-trap data; SMART patrol reports; annual GGASPA habitat monitoring reports and satellite imagery (i.e. vegetation coverage and gully erosion change over time). **2.4** GGASPA management plan; workshop; workshop attendees; report of GGASPA habitat restoration results.	• No severe natural disasters, including fire, drought, or dzud, impact GGASPA habitat and waterholes. • Reservoirs will be supported by solar-powered pump – technology, which will be able to managed and maintained by trained GGASPA staff • Hydrological assessment for existing water hole by government identified optimal sites to priority water holes for management intervention GGASPA management budgets continue to be able to support habitat recovery efforts.

	management plan, for scaling to other areas and informing CMC on long-term utility of recovery interventions by end of Y3.		
Output 3 Collaborative and inclusive governance institutions are in place and making coordinated, landscape-level management decisions, employing adaptive management approaches informed by robust ecosystem monitoring.	**3.1** Three-year Buffer-zone Management Plans designed and agreed using participatory approaches are in place (baseline: One-year BM plan) by end of Y1 at: **3.1.1** GGASPA management level agreement of the plans together with a Collaborative Management Council (CMC), led by Citizen Representatives Khural (CRK) (baseline: no formal agreement); **3.1.2** Five Soum-level (100%) plans agreed by each Buffer-Zone-Council (BZC) by the end of Y1 (baseline: no plans).	**3.1** CMC constitution (CMC composition, function, management); upgrading and CMC management planning workshop; approved soum-level buffer-zone management plans; attendee list; Citizen Khural biannual community consultation meeting minutes.	Local government (aimag and soum) remains stable, and willing to participate in buffer-zone management. Local government leadership continues contributing to conservation by allocating human resource and budget. Local herder communities remain engaged and interested in managing rangeland more sustainably; with the CMC framework enabling impartial merit-based decisions for awarding small grants.
	3.2 Fully operational CMC meeting independently chaired by elected CRK representatives, meeting at least two times per year, with decision making and annual management plan development being informed by environmental results from GGASPA and BZC by end of Y2.	**3.2** CMC meeting minutes; CMC attendance records, BZC reports, Eco-club reports.	
	3.3 % increase of confidence in transparent and equitable BZC governance report by women and men in herder HH by end of Y3 (baseline set in Y1). **3.4** 50% of men and women in herder households (c.1272) report greater access to and understanding of environmental data to support sustainable natural resource management decisions by end of Y3 (baseline set in Y1).	**3.3 – 3.4** Baseline socio-economic study report; Survey instruments, and Final socio-economic study report; Citizen Khural bi-annual community consultation meeting minutes, survey results.	

Output 4 Ground-up awareness-raising about Great Gobi uniqueness by environmentally conscious GGASPA communities that are empowered with the skills and knowledge to improve livestock management and comply with the Responsible Rangeland Management Regulation (RRMR).	**4.1** Five Eco-Clubs (1/bufferzone soum) better resourced and reactivated with: **4.1.1** 100 children (representative of community demographics) trained and empowered to participate in annual public awareness campaign by end of Y1; **4.1.2** receiving supplementary sustainable financing from Community Banking Groups by Y4. **4.2** Community-led public awareness campaign in target buffer zone bahgs in each soum (c. total 1,272 HHs) reaches: **4.2.1** >40% of community HHs by end of Y2; **4.2.2** 60% community HHs by end of Y3. **4.3** Pasture management improved through: **4.3.1** CRK-approved Buffer-Zone pasture management plan implemented in 5 soums by end of Y2; **4.3.2** plans are adaptively improved using feedback from annual soum herder forums by end of Y3. **4.4** Minimum 300 households (from c. 1272) representative of local demographics have RRMR capacity with: **4.4.1** HH identified from 7 target baghs (soum subdistricts) for RRMR, including financial management training, by end of Y2; **4.4.2** 30% of HH participating in rangeland management training report	**4.1** Printed Biodiversity textbook; approved teaching method; list of student pupils and their grades; Eco-Club public awareness campaign roadmap; community banking group meeting minutes and environmental fund reports. **4.2** Eco-Club reports; socioeconomic survey data; Telecom provider SMS-text message data. **4.3** CRK approved BZC management plan; herder forum meeting minutes; attendee lists. **4.4** RRMR training schedules and records, exchange visit records; socio-economic survey data; attendee lists. **4.5** Socio-economic survey data; CMC statistics.	• Soum Buffer-zone Councils and school management remain supportive of children's engagement in conservation awareness-raising activities. • Eco-Club members are supportive of their children's passion, and Soum Buffer-zone Council and school management take necessary measures for health and safety of children during the campaign. Local government (aimag and soum) remains stable, and willing to participate in buffer-zone management efforts

	improved capacity to apply RRMR by end of Y3 and 60% by Y4.		
	4.5 At least 40% of households on average (c. 1272) report improved awareness of environmental and rangeland management issues, with 40% reporting themselves more likely to make environmentally-led decisions, by end of Y3.		
Output 5 Remote rural herders have improved wellbeing and financial stability built through a successful and sustainable community banking model that supports sustainable resource use efforts e.g. through rangeland management actions and Eco Clubs	**5.1** Five community banking funds fund mechanisms in place with constitution and environmental fund: **5.1.1** Developed and agreed by each of the 5 Buffer Zone Council (BZC) by the end of Y1; **5.1.2** 25 BZC members trained on managing five community banking funds by end of Q2 Y2; **5.1.3** 10 soft-loans are dispersed to men and women in vulnerable herder households (among target 318) by end of Y2. **5.2** Community banking GESI plan implemented with: **5.2.1** 40% female participation in community banking fund decision making by end of Y2; **5.2.2** 20% of soft-loans are issued to most marginalised households by end of Y3. **5.3** Community banking environmental funds supporting RRMR implementation, through: **5.3.1** financing construction of two wells for herder HH by end of Y2; **5.3.2** 5 rangeland restoration projects relevant to 2 key waterhole sites (e.g.	**5.1 - 5.2** BZC community banking constitution and agreement; GESI engagement plan for community banking funds; socio-economic survey data; ZSL Wellbeing Index; CMC statistics; community banking training curriculum. **5.3** Well construction photographs; rangeland restoration reports, photographs. **5.4** Socio-economic survey data; ZSL Wellbeing Index; Community banking repayment records, CMC statistics.	• Local government (aimag and soum) remains stable, and willing to participate in buffer-zone management. • No natural disasters, including drought and dzud severely affecting buffer-zone rangeland ecosystem. • BZC soft-loan scheme accumulate sufficient - interest to support action grants. DI-funded Arkhangai GBP 19500 loan fund with 100% repayment over two years. • DI-funded Arkhangai project achieved impressive VSLA results; from zero baseline, 9 VSLAs created with 183 (48% women) members DI-funded Arkhangai has an active social/environmental fund with minimum £2000 reserve at any given time. DI-funded Arkhangai Members benefitted 22- 45% increase in shares annually

	watersource protection, fencing key grazing areas, natural regeneration planting native trees) by end of Y3. **5.4** 40% Community banking fund member HHs report improved financial security by end of Y3 (baseline set in Y1).		

Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

1.1 Procure field equipment for ongoing camera-trap surveys and SMART patrols, including necessary office equipment for research programme (year 1) ZSL

1.2 Organise GGASPA and Border Defence Agency annual training on camera-trap and SMART monitoring and co-develop GGASPA monitoring plan. ZSL

1.3 Conduct rangeland health survey (aboveground biomass, species richness, soil stability) inside SPA (5 plots) vs Bufferzone areas 5 plots (year 1 and 3) NUM

1.4 Create and maintain a database interface for storing data collected by camera-trap surveys and SMART patrol reports integrated with rangeland survey results NUM+ZSL UK

1.5 Conduct quarterly monitoring surveys through SMART patrol and feed into the integrated database (year 1 second half, 2 and 3, total 12 quarters) GGASPA

1.6 Deploy camera-traps and maintain camera-trap grid (SD cards and batteries), for a total of two field trips each year (6 times) ZSL + WCPF +GGASPA

1.7 Feedback results of GGASPA SMART monitoring, rangeland survey and camera trapping into the development of the GGASPA Management Plan (year 2 and 3) NUM+ZSL UK

1.8 Two Mongolian MSc students will work on research of rangeland survey and wildlife camera trap study, and defend by the end of year 3 NUM

1.9 CMC receives Brief on Monitoring results and uses them for AWP

1.10 Camera and SMART data analysis training online, data collection design and data analysis (IZ & ZSL UK)

2.1 Map GGASPA camel habitat, waterholes and oases and prioritise habitat management intervention sites ZSL

2.2 Restore two priority waterholes with a small reservoir for wildlife (through a bid)

2.3 Support GGASPA Administration Office to implement habitat management interventions at least at three sites:, fence poplar patches and natural springs preventing browsing of young trees and protecting water recharge points, and planting native grasses in oases GGASPA+NUM

2.4 GGASPA conduct annual, including pre and post-intervention surveys in each habitat intervention site to measure change and efficacy GGASPA

2.5 Ensure incorporation of intervention results in GGASPA Management Plan and CMC Plan for possible replication across other threatened camel habitat sites GGASPA+NUM

3.1 Support CMC during annual meetings to ensure smooth function of a democratic and representative buffer-zone management institution (6 workshops 3-year plan and 3 reports) to plan (GGASPA MP) and review the progress CMC+GGASPA

3.2 Oversee by CMC the formulation, approval, and implementation of Soum Buffer-zone management plans based on GGASPA BMP CMC+GGASPA

3.3 Conduct social surveys using representative samples of buffer-zone communities across five buffer-zone soums to collect baseline data in year 1 and at project end in year 3 ZSL

4.1 Develop Eco-Club capacity building programme through BZC to awareness raising implementation plan (including training, exchange workshops, annual Eco-club forum, and development of Gobi biodiversity textbook as part of buffer-zone school curricula) BZC/CRK

4.2 Oversee the design of a public awareness package and campaign by each soum Eco-Club to advocate GGASPA biodiversity conservation as part of GGASPA BMP Ecoclub/CRK+CMC

4.3 Implement Eco-Club public awareness campaign (i.e. field trips, festivals, SMS/MMS text campaign) to targeted households as part of GGASPA BMP Ecoclub BZC/CRK

4.4 Support CMC-level planning and enforcement strategy for RRMR and get approved Soum Pasture management plan by each CRK CMC+ZSL+CRK;

4.5 Train BZCs and target herder households on sustainable rangeland management, including basics of ecosystem management, reduction of risks of zoonotic diseases and household financial management CRK+ZSL;

4.6 Support organization of annual bufferzone Herder forum to enable exchange of best rangeland practices among five soum herders and inform on the progress of RRMR implementation CMC+ZSL+CRK

5.1 Support CRKs to implement RRMR by assessing pasture conditions in bufferzone bags and mapping grazing areas under RRMR and establishing pasture use contract with herder households NUM+ZSL+CRK

5.2 Facilitate formation of VSLAs among herders sharing seasonal pastures to increase herder access to financial services to support long-term livelihood development (i.e. livestock migration and fodder support, and accessing veterinary services) ZSL+BZC+CRK

5.3 Support VSLAs for their initiatives for rangeland conservation (water source protection, fencing key grazing areas, supporting natural regeneration and planting of native trees, creating ponds harvesting rain water) through small grants ZSL+BZC+CRK

5.4. Support construction of two wells in bufferzone areas to limit livestock entry into SPA in search of water ZSL+BZC+CRR

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

13. Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DIA04	**0.3** The collaborative participatory approach for BZM by GGASPA and CMC is supported and promoted by the MET as best practice for other PAs by Y4.	Number of officials from the GGASPA BZ CMC who attended training on the planning and applying new skills. Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.	People	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group; Training typology (BD, SD, finance, PM, safeguarding, gender etc.)	15	15	15	15
DI-D10	**0.5** 40% of HHs (c.1272) report changing grazing practices to adopt and comply with the RRMR by end of Y3 (baseline set in Y1).	Area of improved sustainable pasture and herding practices benefitting people to be more resilient to weather shocks and climate trends.	Area (hectares)	Typology of sustainable agriculture practices.	0	0	0	
DI-D16	**0.6** 10% improvement in wellbeing of c. 318 HHs (25% of 1272) including vulnerable groups, with women and men benefiting equally by end of Y3 (baseline to establish median household wellbeing index scores) set in Y1).	Number of households that joined to the VSLA groups reporting improved livelihoods.	HHs	As measured through HH surveys, livelihood metric (income, education, health etc.).	84	84	84	84

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type	Detail	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers	Available from
	(e.g. journals, best practice manual, blog	(authors, year)			(name, city)	(e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)

	post, online videos, podcasts, CDs)					
Anti-hybrid of the Wild Camel	online video	R.Bolor	Female	Mongolian	Profix LLC.,	video
MDI2 project implementation	Online video	Ch.Bayarbat, R.Bolor	Female	Mongolian	Profix LLC.,	video
Interview about planning activities for the eco-clubs and VSLA groups	Interview via national radio (MNB)	Mongolian National Broadcast	Female	Mongolian	MNB	video

Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the **correct template** (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and **deleted the blue guidance text** before submission?	
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com 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.	
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see Section 16)?	
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.	