Darwin Initiative Main: Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":
(https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/information-notes-learning-notes-briefing-papers-and-reviews/).

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

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2023

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Darwin Initiative Project Information

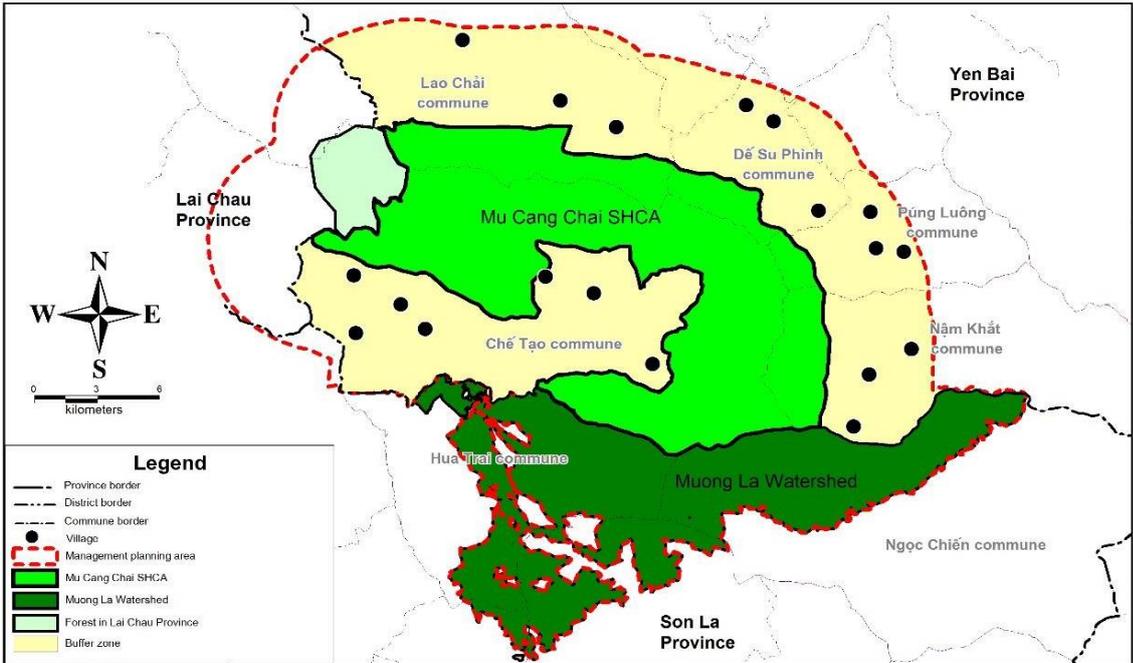|	
Project reference	28-020
Project title	Safeguarding globally important forests by improving livelihoods and strengthening governance
Country/ies	Viet Nam
Lead Partner	Fauna & Flora International
Project partner(s)	The Centre for Sustainable Rural Development (SRD)
Darwin Initiative grant value	327,783
Start/end dates of project	July 2021 – June 2024;
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2022 – Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2022- Mar 2023; Annual Report 2
Project Leader name	Lam Van Hoang, ███████████
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.facebook.com/FaunaFloraVietnam
Report author(s) and date	Le Hai Yen and Lam Van Hoang – 30th April 2023

1. Project summary

Western black-crested gibbon (Nomascus concolor) is now Critically Endangered (IUCN) with a global population of fewer than 1,400 individuals globally in 2006. The number today is likely far lower. It has been reduced to a few patches of primary forests, mostly due to tremendous deforestation, illegal hunting and wildlife trade, and weak law enforcement. In Vietnam, the contiguous forest block of Mu Cang Chai Species Habitat Conservation Area (MCC SHCA) and the Muong La Nature Reserve (MLNR) represent the country's last viable population, comprised of 19 groups and around 80 individuals. The conservation of this population in Vietnam is of critical importance not only from a genetic standpoint, but also as a distinct, separate and thus 'insurance' population against continued declines in neighbouring China and Laos. Most important to conservation efforts in the combined Mu Cang Chai – Muong La PA complex and buffer zone has been the operating the Community Conservation Teams (CCTs) established by FFI since 2003 with 22 CCT members (14 people/three teams in Mu Cang Chai and 10 people/three teams in Muong La).

With very high rates of biodiversity and endemism, notably in herpetofauna, avifauna, trees/flora and primates, two contiguous protected areas, Mu Cang Chai Species & Habitat Conservation Area (MCC SHCA) and Muong La Nature Reserve (MLNR), are among the most intact in terms

of the forest ecosystems and the assemblage of terrestrial wildlife, which elsewhere in Vietnam is being extirpated by hunting and snaring. Local populations primarily consist of poor and marginal ethnic minority Thai and H'Mong groups. Terraced rice fields, livestock and natural resources are key livelihoods, but also drive threats to biodiversity. Snaring persists in local forests, including these PAs, and there is a growing threat from cardamom cultivation. Grown under canopy in natural forests, cardamom drives the clearing of forest understory (severely impacted upon forest regeneration) and also thinning of the canopy; a form of forest degradation that is a direct threat to primate habitat. Illegal logging includes extraction of valuable Fokienia hodginsii (VU) and forest clearance for crops and timber removal.

A window of opportunity exists to address critical needs for transparent, collaborative governance around MCC SHCA and ML NR. Through a pioneering landscape planning framework - a first for Vietnam - that includes zoning plans (multiple scales), collaborative protected areas and improvements to local livelihoods, this project will empower marginalised ethnic minorities to become conservation champions, reduce poverty and assure the survival of Critically Endangered primates (including Western black-crested gibbon.

Photo 1: Map of project site – Mu Cang Chai SHCA and Muong La NR landscape

2.   Project stakeholders/ partners

After 20 years of operations in Mu Cang Chai SHCA & Muong La NR, FFI continues to be highly respected and able to work closely with our counterparts in the Vietnamese Government and local stakeholders. The core partnership in this project is with two key provincial government counterparts through our long-term MoUs with Yen Bai Provincial Forest Protection Department and Son La Provincial Forest Protection Department. Muong La Nature Reserve (MLNR) and Mu Cang Chai Species and Habitat Conservation Area Management Boards (MCC SHCA), (who are under their respective Department(s) of Agriculture and Rural Development / Forest Protection Departments, of Son La and Yen Bai Provinces). At sub-national level, the primary decision makers are the Provincial People's Committees (PPC) equivalent to a provincial cabinet. The project occurs in two contiguous provinces (Yen Bai & Son La). The respective PPCs are responsible for approving the project and key components/deliverables. As mentioned at the annual report year 1, at the project start the project signed agreements with the management boards of the nature reserves at both sites. Cooperation also included joint field visits, attending CCT monthly meetings and, together with CCTs, developing work-plans on monthly basis. These are kept active through mechanisms including field visits, meetings, and work planning. In addition, workshops, and monthly feedback, with the opportunity to respond, are held with

representatives of relevant agencies, local authorities, and communities. All project activities are carried out in partnership. Also, the project informed partners all activities and project progress on monthly basis and received comments/feedbacks from them. In Year 2, the project conducted a study tour for PAs manager which allows all participants to learn about each protected area, share common goals, and to build trust and maintain strong professional relationships amongst the project teams and PA managers. Having said that, the project has strong partnerships, including government and civil society, that bring significant experience and authority to the conservation aspects of the project. For example, Mu Cang Chai District People's Committees issued an official document which sent out to all government departments at different levels such as commune and village to call for stopping an expansion of cardamom cultivation in the PAs. Most of the Darwin project activities have been well-received and uploaded on the Muong La NR's Website. For instance, please see the link about the METT workshop: http://kbttnmuongla.sonla.gov.vn/index.php?module=news&act=view&id=468

Regarding working with local Vietnamese NGO, the project continues to directly partner with the Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) to develop such opportunities for increasing sustainable livelihoods for local communities who live in and around the PAs. In general, formal and informal meetings were held between members of the project team, officials, and SRD. We also discussed project objectives and the work plan and received valuable feedback as well as commitments to participate from a variety of participants. During the reporting period, the project with supporting from FFI's UK technical specialists also delivered a number of training courses on market analysis, sustainable livelihoods for SRD staff.

3.   Project progress

3.1   Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1 – Quality and sustainability of community-based patrolling, crime prevention and PA monitoring is improved.

1.1 Implement SMART patrols by rangers and CCTs (20 members across both sites), providing support and training on snare removal, awareness raising, and SMART

This activity takes place continuously throughout the project life cycle. Field data collected from the 26 CCT members in both sites were fed into their respective SMART databases, from which patrol and threat locations were mapped over space and time. During the reporting (1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023), the 26 CCT team members conducted 3,241 patrol days, over 9408 kilometres with 6,854.15 patrol hours, that stopped 17 illegal logging cases; remove 62 illegal tools to hunting wildlife including snares and gun; stop 21 people who enter PAs area without permissions; stop other activities operation thereby providing protection to critically important forest habitat for black gibbons and other species. This information was used to strategically plan future patrol sites to target at-risk areas and elicit greater on-the-ground impact. During the reporting period, the project also provided a range of field supplies for patrolling work such as purchasing 3 cameras and tripods, 6 binoculars, 2 BlackView mobiles, and several other equipment and personal belongings.

The Vietnam Forestry Administration (VNForest) has just signed Decision 197 on July 4, 2022 on promulgating the process of using the data management toolkit and patrolling report (SMART) in special-use and protection forests. The purpose of establishing a national database through a unified SMART data is to be shared across special and protection forests. Fauna & Flora International is the leading organization to synchronize new SMART model for supporting a national database. The FFI technical team and PA managers attended several national workshops to make a significant contribution to revise a new SMART model. In February 2023, the project team organized 2 days training on the new SMART data model for all CCTs and rangers at both sites. Actually, recorded incidents of illegal hunting have increased due to the way to collect data has changed in more details in line with the national data set. More importantly, the community patrol team members have sufficient capacity from FFI and PA staff to deliver effective patrol trips. During the current reporting period, CCTs team members recorded a range of endangered species in both sites including the Asia Bear. This means the operations of CCT model continues to prove its effectiveness in reducing threats to the existence of the western black crested gibbons.

Photo: a couple of black gibbons in Muong La - @Nguyen Van Toan/FFI

The project is keeping providing various training for CCTs to develop their skills and to continue to work effectively. Based on the results of training needs assessments using the IUCN Competency Standards for Protected Areas, the project delivered law enforcement training workshops in both PAs in June 2022. The two training courses were attended by 20 PAs staff, 26 CCTs, and 8 commune police officers at both sites. The courses were taught by the Head of Law Enforcement of Yen Bai/Son La Forest Protection Department (FPD) and the Vice Head of the Police District department in Muong La and Mu Cang Chai districts. In project landscape, where strong law enforcement is not the most strategic approach, these courses related to building a law enforcement curriculum for forest rangers, CCTs, and commune policers and opened discussions on many issues, including how to improve knowledge and skills in judicial assessment, investigations, and handling of violations in the forestry sector. Having government officials based in Yen Bai and Son La districts as trainers ensured that the material delivered was suitable to a context where heavy handed law enforcement is not the most suitable and strategic approach.

The project also delivered a first aid training for all CCT members, PA staff and rangers in MCC-ML April 2022. A Vietnamese consultant named Well-being has been selected to be a trainer for this 2 day training. This training helped CCT members and PA staff understand and address first aid injuries, make better plans regarding field safety and risk/management, while carrying out work in forest. Since 1st June 2023 under Fauna & Flora's policy, all CCTs and stakeholders could not allow to take a patrol related to the project's activity without a certification of completion on a first aid training. The rest of CCTs and stakeholders will be required to participate in a first aid training in May 2023.

1.2 Conduct forest cover, quality and connectedness surveys at project start and end.

Photo: The project team conducted forest cover in MCC in March 2022.

This activity was completed in Q2 Year 1 at project start.

During Year 1, Fauna & Flora is partnership with Aiforgood Asia, an international NGO focused on AI and technology for environmental and social governance (ESG) projects to explore innovative and cost-effective solutions to track changes in the forest and measure the extent of habitat degradation (https://www.crayon.com/resources/case-studies/Fauna-and-Flora/)

By mapping the locations most affected by cardamom, Fauna & Flora together with its government partners will be better able to devise and target strategies to reduce the degradation of this most sensitive of habitats. Fortunately, the Fauna & Flora team was able to provide ground truth data for conducting forest cover with the help of a grant from the Darwin Initiative in March 2023. The project used geo-referenced and orthomosaiced drone images gathered during their ground truth expeditions to accurately label the cardamom areas. Data were processed in DroneDeploy software, as part of a partnership with Fauna & Flora.

After the field trip, above, the biodiversity team shared initial results with all project partners. There is a shared concern – i.e. a threat – from cultivation of cardamom to natural forest habitat, which it is evidently increasing. Although this is the first ever robust, systematic and hi-res study (and baseline) ever conducted, we know anecdotally and subjectively that there is very much more cardamom than there used to be, from around 5-10 years again. With this fact, the Director of Muong La NR agreed to assign at least one ranger to join patrol with CCTs on monthly basis to strengthen law enforcement in the PA. The project is in the process of analysing field data and drafting report. The report, which will include the work with Crayon, will provide a current statement on forest cover, gibbon population monitoring, and related cardamom farming issues. This is be the evidence-base to provide recommendations and suggestions for activity planning. As a result, from these project activities, Mu Cang Chai District People's Committee issued an official document to stop expansion of cardamom farming and cardamom drying process in the forest in November 2021. In addition, the project team plans to deliver a national workshop with PA managers to discuss viable solutions and next steps to dealt with cardamom expanding in 2023. The project will plan to conduct a forest cover at project end by April 2024.

1.3 Develop a sustainable incentive programme for CCT and PA rangers to motivate them beyond salary and SMART-based performance monitoring (annual payments).

This activity was planned from Q1 Year 2 to by the project end. Over the years, the project organised annual meetings with CCTs and protected areas managers partners, at both sites, to discuss the performance of CCT model, how to improve CCT performance and plan in the coming year (s).

Based on the 2022 SMART data, all CCT members have been improving their performance and member are more motivated, in deed. Actually, all CCT members are working in a team. There are seven sub-group across two sites (four sub-groups in Mu Cang Chai and three sub-groups in Muong La). Therefore, all participants who attended this annual meeting decided that all 26 CCTs members received small cash rewards ($25) from the project for their contributions to conservation over a year. Besides that, all motivated CCTs were been invited to attend gibbon festivals in both sites to share their patrol stories to inspire local people and students
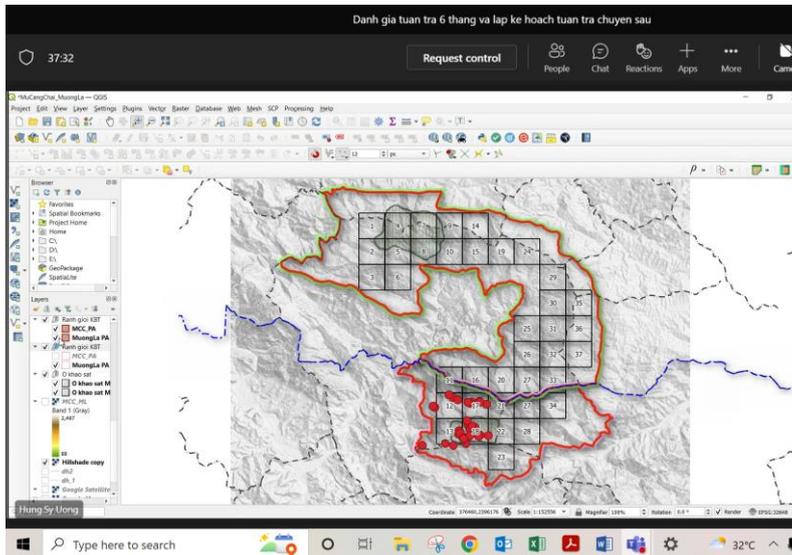
For the next coming year(s), the project has been working with Yen Bai and Son La Provincial FPD, Mu Cang Chai & Muong La PA managers to develop a "wildlife hero program" to build a new role model for motivating CCTs team and local young people. An award/ incentive would be given to CCT outstanding individuals who are working out in the field to stop illegal activities and make significant impacts on nature and people.

1.4 Conduct intensive annual snare removal surveys by CCT and PA rangers, supported by Youth Union and volunteers.

This activity was planned in Q1 Year 2. However, the project work with PA managers to deliver intensive patrol trips that schedule it quarterly.

FFI's Senior Technical Advisor Dr. Oliver Wearn has developed a grid cell map of the two protected areas included in this project to direct intensive patrol trips towards areas particularly affected by biodiversity loss and illegal activity (See Annex). Each large cell has an area of 400 hectares and is divided into 16 small cells with an area of 25 hectares. The snare removal team at each PA will be divided into 3-4 sub-groups and have 3 - 5 people per sub-group, each sub-group was to carry out 3-4 small cells per day (about 80-100ha/day/group). The routes our model proposes are expected to cover areas with higher poaching risk as compared to the original sampled routes.

In July 2022 and October 2022, intensive snaring removal campaigns was completed to a high standard following this model and involved capacity building for rangers, local government official including the local youth, and CCTs. There were 6 sub-groups with 30 participants at both sites to join 5-days intensive patrolling trips. There were ways to ensure that substation performance is maintained including the rotation of rangers and teams into different locations; ensuring police and local authorities join, and conducting unscheduled substation checks based on a grid-cell method. A brief report of intensive snare removal surveys has been released. (See Annex).

Annex 1: A grid cell map of Mu Cang Chai – Muong La for intensive patrol trips; FFI -the technical team had a meeting to plan an intensive removal snare trip with Muong La PA staff & stakeholders

These intensive campaigns complement the activities above and serve to significantly reduce threats in the short-medium term while also raising local awareness of the law and its enforcement, and helping to improve the transparency and accountability around the snaring issue, without alienating counterparts. In the coming months, the project plan to organize a transboundary patrol trip between Muong La NR and Mu Cang Chai SHCA which improve the patrol effort along the common boundary across this forest complex. It would be developed primarily to provide cross border conservation managers with advice on how to work more effectively and how to address the challenges that are specific to this area.

Photo: Muong La NR and local partners conducted an intensive enforcement campaign.

1.5 Sign conservation agreements with community leaders and specific households (of known hunters), specifying project benefits and conditionality of benefits

This activity was planned in Q3, Q4 Year 1 and Q2 Year. This activity is integrated with the activity 2.5. Please also see Activity 2.5.

1.6 Conduct annual METT assessments at project start (to establish baseline), mid-project and project end.

METT assessments have been planned in Q1 Year 2, Q1 Year 3 and Q1 Year 4. To measure METT scores at project start, the project conducted annual METT assessments to establish baseline at Mu Cang Chai SHCA in December 2021 and Muong La NR in June 2022. Due to the COVID-19 situation in Muong La NR, the baseline METT assessments will be organized in June 2022 (Q1 Year2).

More than 35 participants attended including from the Son La FDP, Muong La NR staff, local authorities from Muong La district and buffer communes of Ngoc Chien, Nam Pam and Hua Trai, Women Union, Youth Union and CCTs participate in a Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) workshop in June 2022. The METT is designed to be a basic and simple mechanism for monitoring progress towards more effective management over time. The 2021 METT score (report) for Muong La NR was in Vietnamese and the score is 68 of 123. To boost effectiveness, there are many areas needing to improve in coming years at both sites will help to improve it through capacity building, including training, supported learning and study tours. The project also plans to deliver an annual METT workshop for both PAs in coming months (scheduled as Q1Y3) to re-assess and track the changes in comparison with the METT result at project start.

1.7 Develop and implement a bio-monitoring protocol, for black gibbons and key indicators species, in addition to SMART monitoring.

This activity has been scheduled throughout the project life cycle. Since the beginning of the project, the project team has worked with the technical team to develop Conservation & Patrol Oriented Patrol Standards (COPS) for MCC SHCA and ML NR. Over months, the first COPs version will be used to support PA managers, local rangers, CCTs team members in maintaining an effective protection and enforcement capacity to mitigate the impact of users, and illegal activities. This COPS is a simple guideline for local and regional compliance and enforcement initiatives. Please see the first version of COPs as attached.

Photo: One of CCT members made a record on gibbon listening
at Listening Post 6 (LP6) during his patrol trip.

1.8 Conduct annual market/wildlife trade surveys in surrounding districts and urban centres in Son La and Yen Bai (overt, not covert, data collection, including risk assessments).

This activity has been scheduled annually. This activity is combined with the activity 2.9. Please see the activity 2.9

Output 2 – PA governance is effective, sustainable and collaborative.

2.1 Develop collaborative PA management plans, including discussion facilitation and technical input, maintaining and supporting SMART ranger and CCT patrols.

This activity was planned from Q4 Year 1 to Q1 Year 3. The project has started this activity at the early stage of this Darwin project. A quarterly meeting, mid-year, annual meeting schedule are five times a year to review good practices and challenges to inform future work and planning. Project planning meetings bring together all of the different stakeholders and CCTs involved in the project. These meeting determine short-term operational strategies, i.e., for the next activity quarter, to help the project maintain steady success. Having regular conversations about the project performance allows managers adapting protected area management plans. Monthly SMART reports with key highlights and suggestions from the project have been shared with PA managers, other stakeholders.

Photo: The Muong La Deputy Director (right hand side) jointed a patrol with CCTs

The project team kept the two PAs managers and FPD fully informed of its activities through regular briefings and presentations to senior staff teams

Photo: Director of FFI – Vietnam programme had the 2022 mid-year meeting with Director of MCC SHCA and their rangers as focal point contacts.

In relation to develop PA management plans, the project has stimulated cooperation and exchange of experiences on conservation & forest-related matters among several protected areas and national parks involved. Following this idea, the project team also facilitated an exchange visit between four protected areas including Mu Cang Chai SHCA & Muong La NR which FFI collaborates with in May 2022. This exchange was organized in conjunction with a meeting of develop collaborative PA management plans to allow mutual support and exchange

among high-level positions and experts including Yen Bai & Son La FPD and Mu Cang Chai SHCA and Muong La NR. Please see at the activity 2.6 for more details.

2.2 Develop and deliver training courses for PA staff, based on training needs assessments using the ARCBC/IUCN Competency Standards for Protected Areas.

This activity was planned in Q2 Year 1; Q1, Q2 Year 2; and Q1 Year 4. The training needs assessments has been completed in Year 1 as scheduled which using IUCN Competency Standards for Protected Areas. Since the project began, the project team conducted a range of different training courses for PA staff which mentioned at the activity 1.1

During the reporting period, the project conducted various trainings for rangers, PAs staff and CCTs to build capacity. For example, in April 2022, the project provided further training on SMART to 14 staff in Muong La Nature Reserve (NR). The 2-day training focused on using the SMART Mobile application for patrol data collection, including how to collect patrol data, declare patrol information, how to start/finish patrol and upload data to the cloud after each patrol; as well as guidance on how to divide and plan complementary motorbike and foot patrols.

Photo: A SMART training was held for Muong La NR staff.

Based on the result of training needs assessment, further training courses will be held in Year 3.

2.3 Maintain and strengthen Collaborative Management Advisory Committees (MAC), including regulations, scope and memberships, and inclusive of MAC facilitation and technical advice.

This activity has been scheduled throughout the project life cycle. A MAC strategic meeting has been held in June 2022 with 16 delegates including Mu Cang Chai SHCA management board, Mu Cang Chai District People Committee, district police officers, 5 buffer-zone communes, representatives of other departments, and civil organizations. This meeting gave an opportunity for policymakers and PA managers to sit down together to open discussion which then advises the PA management board but also acts like a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) to represent the local communities. Participants have agreed to maintain MAC meetings and build an effective advisory committee as a contribution towards the co-management MCC SHCA to ensure that it represents the views and voices of all community members. However, the Director of MCC SHCA advised that this MAC model needs to be discussed with the law authorities to see if it is based on Vietnamese regulations, decisions, and laws in relation to establishing a CSO. The project continues to seek legal documents to revise/update MAC regulations and membership, to ensure it still supports collaborative PA management, and to ensure it follow Vietnam's law.

Photo: A MAC strategic meeting has been held in June 2022

While waiting for revising MAC regulations, the project continues have been making effort to engage these stakeholders by inviting them to attend annual meetings and/or key events. As a result, all local partners have learned how PA multi-stakeholder forest dialogue mechanism accelerated the transfer of responsibilities for forest management; ensuring political support can enhance collaborative the project and partners.

Photo: A multi stakeholder meeting between MCC SHCA managers, Head of Mu Cang Chai Political Department other local government departments and Asia -Pacific FFI Director of Regional Programme Development in November 2022

2.4 Develop site-specific/PA social safeguards, monitoring plan and grievance redress mechanism (GRM), through village-level, household and focus group discussions, ensuring participation of women and vulnerable groups.

This activity was planned to carry out in Q4 Year 1 to Q3 Year 2. However, the project considered that this activity has been scheduled throughout the project life cycle

This activity is integrated with the Activity 3.1. Please also see Activity 3.1

2.5 Conduct Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour (KAB) surveys at project start (baseline), mid-project and project end.

This activity was planned annually to collect data at project start, mid project and project end.

For the baseline survey, the project carried out the KAB & annual socio-economic survey in November 2021 at the beginning of project. The report has released and distributed to partners. All indicators and recommendations have been recorded to develop and design upcoming

activities. In Year 3, the project plans to carry a KAB and socio-economic survey in June 2023 as mid-project.

2.6 Develop awareness-raising and communications strategies about the project at local (trainings, events, printed literature, schools curricular), sub-national (workshops, study tours), and national (fora) levels.

This activity was planned in Q3 Year 1, Q3 Year 2 and Q3 Year 3.

During August and September 2022, the project successfully held gibbon festivals in Ngoc Chien Commune of Muong La NR; Che Tao and Pung Luong commune at Mu Cang Chai SHCA. Approximately 2,000 local people and 200 students joined the festivals. These were the first-ever festivals in Muong La and Mu Cang Chai with a series of community-based and cultural activities. The focus of the event included student drawing competitions on forests and wild animals' protection; a competition among each village teams depicting stories about Muong La- Mu Cang Chai forest's biodiversity in connection with the local, endangered Black-crested gibbons - the pride of Muong La forest; Men's and Women's soccer tournament; Traditional folk games. The festival was well-welcomed by the locals, and well-supported by the local governance and Muong La Nature Reserve Management board. The festival was an event for the community to get connected and to raise local people's awareness about Black-crested gibbon conservation in Muong La. In this series of festival activities, all participating ethnic minority people and students signed a conservation commitment to protect black gibbon, wildlife and forest. The main message of the festival was: "Black-crested gibbon - The pride of Muong La/ Mu Cang Chai"; "Say no to illegal wide animals hunting, trading, and use".

There was [Viet Nam National Natural Resources and the Environment Newspaper coverage](#) of the first gibbon festival in Ngoc Chien, Muong La; and [Yen Bai provincial TV Station](#) and [Mu Cang Chai District Newpaper](#)s was published about this festival in Pung Luong commune.

Photo: A gibbon festival in Ngoc Chien Commune, Muong La.

From 13th to 17th May 2022, the project team also facilitated a study tour between four protected areas which FFI collaborates with. Representatives of 48 participants including 32 MCC SHCA, Muong La NR management board staff, rangers and local authorities were able to visit Pu Mat National Park. This study tour enabled them to adjust their management plans to better manage their protected area, both in general and with a focus on gibbon conservation specifically. In the discussion session, participants were able to ask further questions about different funding mechanisms used by different PAs (Muong La with PFES, Pu Mat with tourism and NTFP cultivation). Muong La representatives shared that the district is planning to develop new tours into the NR and NTFP cultivation. This means that the seminar was a good opportunity for PAs with little experience to learn from Pu Mat NP's experience in implementing these activities. Following the seminar, participants also visited Pu Mat NP's rescue center and museum. These are arguably well-designed and high-quality PA facilities, which are not common in Vietnam, and

can be great examples for PAs that want to develop similar models for tourism. The participants were invited to do a field trip to Khe Bu ranger station to learn gibbon monitoring/ patrolling activities; visit several livelihood model/ ecotourism in Pu Mat. The field trip to Khe Nua ecotourism lodge by the Thai ethnicity was highly successful. Participants had a chance to hear from the cooperative's director about the early days and growth of the business and asked clarifying questions to see if the model would work in their respective sites.

Photo: Mu Cang Chai SHCA, Pu Mat NP and FFI staff were in the study tour.
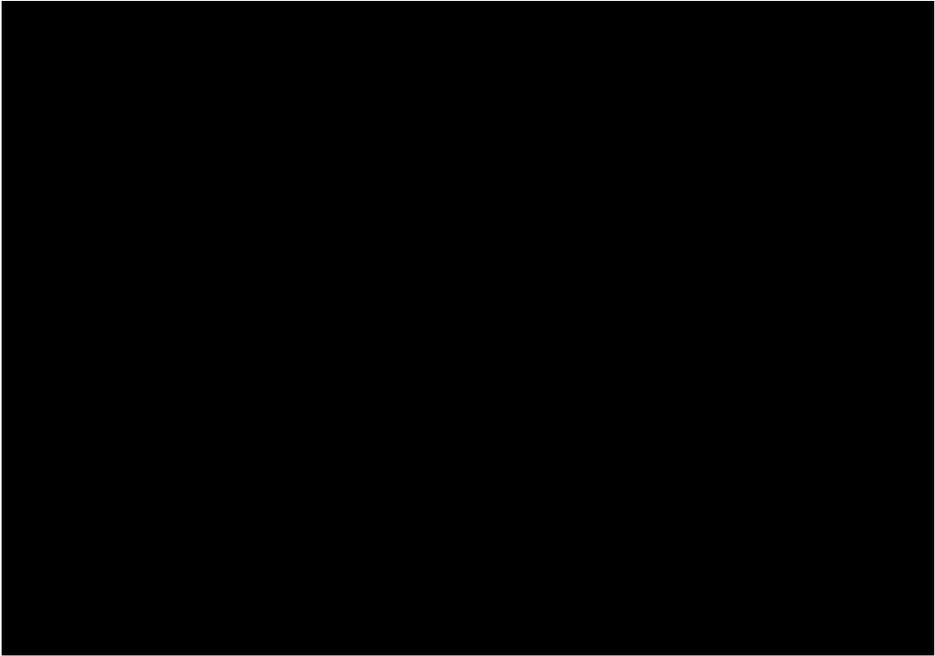

Photo: The Ring The Bell program for students in Muong La NR

The Ring the Bell program themed "Protection of Muong La forests and the Black-crested gibbon - a rare wildlife living at the locality" was well received by Nam Pam's pupils in November 2022. FFI, Muong La Department of Education, Muong La Nature Reserve Management Board and Nam Pam Primary & Secondary School were cooperated in design of the questionnaire and event organization 130 pupils participated in the event under great cheers of teachers and pupils. In a fun atmosphere, the story of nature and gibbon conservation was conveyed in easy-to-remember and interesting questions. "I really like the program and want to participate in more activities," said Lo Thi Mai Huong, the 5th grade. From the teachers view, this activity is useful and refreshing, adding more knowledge to formal curricular. It helps to enrich pupils' knowledge on biodiversity protection and natural resources in Muong La.

2.7 Undertake IUCN Green List assessments for both PAs.

This activity was scheduled for Q4 Year 1, Q2 Year 2, Q4 Year 3 and Q2 Year 4.

The project has been working with IUCN experts at the Vietnam office in regard to learning more about the IUCN Green List and the benefits for sites which covers four areas good governance; sound design and planning, effective management, and positive conservation outcomes. This helped to further understand the process of assessing the IUCN Green List criteria and preparing materials and documents for introductory workshops for Mu Cang Chai SHCA and Muong La NR.

An official workshop to assess the two sites against IUCN Green Lists criteria was held in February 2023 by the National Coordinator of IUCN in Vietnam. Over 15 delegates from Muong La – Mu Cang Chai forest managers attended this virtual workshop. At this workshop, the IUCN speaker provides a suitable measure for strengthening conservation outcomes and improving equitable and effective management of protected and conserved areas within local context. The workshop also guided a step to step for PA managers and supporters to achieve an IUCN Green Lists. For the next step, the IUCN expert will conduct several in-person meetings with PA staff to develop a road map for Mu Cang Chai Species Habitat & Conservation Areas & Muong La Natural Reserve join the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. "This workshop provides us rich information of Green List criterion, and we do hope to gain some perspectives and identify chances for Muong La NR which can be applied for the Green Lists in the near future," said Mr. Tuan Anh – Director of Muong La Nature Reserve.
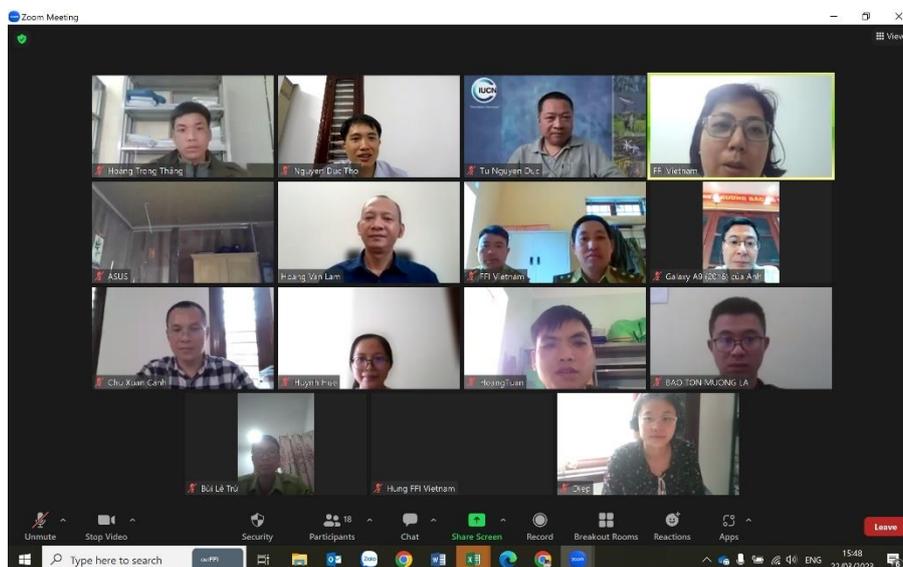

Photo: The virtual workshop to introduce the Green Lists to Mu Cang Chai & Muong La PA managers

2.8 Develop a feasibility study for upgrading MCC HSCA to full Nature Reserve status and actively support the upgrade through consultation and data sharing.

This activity was planned during Q3 Year 2 to Q1 Year 3. Actually, this activity has scheduled through the project's timeline. As reported in the first annual report, this project met with potential consultants to discuss the scope of work and expected outcomes. Unfortunately, these candidates were not able to arrange the work schedule to carry out this activity and some of them did not guarantee the expected outcomes. Therefore, while the project continues to seek external resources to support a progress with this feasibility study, the project manager has been made efforts to collect all official documents related to upgrade Mu Cang Chai SHCA and starting writing a draft policy brief. In the meantime, to further and thoroughly understand the local context and requirements for upgrading MCC SHCA, the project team has conducted a series of formal and informal meetings with Yen Bai Provincial FPD, MCC SHCA managers, and local people to discuss options and the next steps to gently push the (political and administrative) process forward and to ensure the new PA is granted a Management Board, which does not currently

have. As a highlight, through these meetings and advocacy process, the project team has supported MCC SCHA management board to submit an application package to Yen Bai Provincial Department of Agriculture & Rural Development to upgrade MCC SHCA to the full nature reserve statu in December 2022. However, the Vietnamese government is applying the downsizing policy to public employees receiving government salary over last 10 years. This means the chance to establish a new PA as granted a new management board would be hard than ever. To put more efforts, the Country Director scheduled a ministerial-level meeting with Division of Special Use Forest Management under Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development to discuss a road map to upgrade MCC SHCA to MCC Natural Reserve. Further meetings with high level ministries and provincial FPD would give it high priority in Year 3. Having said that, since the project began, the project team has significantly advanced the support of this progress through consultation and data sharing.

Photo: Director of FFI – Vietnam had a high-level meeting with Division of Special Use Forest Management in February 2023

2.9 Develop and implement a Situational Crime Prevention Strategy for each PA, working in close cooperation with commune authorities and police departments.

This activity was planned Q4 Year 1 to Q1 Year 3. With support from a Technical Specialist in the IWT team in UK, the project has started doing semi-structured interviews with key informants on the issue in MCC SHCA, including restaurants, CCTs members, village leaders, rangers, PA management board members, departments of police departments at district level In March 2022. The key findings from this survey was valuable for developing a Situational Crime Prevention Strategy. However, the project is working on the restaurant/trading part but due to sensitivies of wildlife meat consumption in the landscape, the project team has taken more time to devise suitable questions/methods to obtain meaningful responses. The project will continue to survey using the same approach in Muong La NR and a town nearby in May 2023. All data and information will be analysed and reported after completing the survey in Muong La NR.

Since the project began, the project team is actively working with the technical support of FFI UK's Wildlife Trade Technical Specialist – Dr. Laure Joanny to develop a crime prevention strategy for MCC SHCA and ML NR. During the reporting period, the project team worked on strengthening the evidence base on illegal hunting issues in the two protected areas. We drew on a range of sources such as key informant interviews, SMART patrolling data (see Annex) to develop crime scripts of commercial illegal hunting in the landscape. Crime scripts are step-by-step account of the actions and decisions involved in preparing, carrying out and benefiting from an illegal activity, including all the people, places and times involved. They are a useful tool to analyse how this illegal activity can be disrupted. To develop crime scripts for commercial illegal hunting in MCC SHCA and MLNR, the project built on a range of sources including past internal reports, academic literature, the wildlife trade assessment conducted in Year 1and SMART data collected during patrols between 1st April 2022 to 30th March 2023. in October 2022, the project

team also interviewed key stakeholders such as CCT members, community leaders and PA staff for complementary information on snaring and other illegal activities in the landscape (See Annex).

Situational crime prevention (SCP), an approach familiar to criminologists and urban police forces, is still new to conservation. To engage PA partners and communicate the value of an SCP approach, the project team conducted a workshop at MLNR on 10th October 2022. During this meeting the team introduced the process and aim of crime scripting, verified and completed crime scripts with participation from MLNR staff, and presented the principles of the SCP approach as well as steps required to develop a strategy to reduce opportunities for illegal activity. The project also presented the 25 techniques that can be drawn upon to reduce the opportunities of engaging in illegal activities. 19 members of staff (17 men, 2 women) from MLNR joined. After the workshop, an overwhelming majority of participants reported an improvement in their understanding of and confidence in using crime scripting for forest protection and declared that would be able to apply what they learned in the workshop to their work.

Following on from this promising introductory workshop and key findings of wildlife trade survey the project team have been preparing suggested snaring and gun hunting prevention activities based on the 25 SCP Techniques to discuss with MLNR Management Board at a meeting in June 2023. In Q2 of Y3 the project will also conduct a similar introduction and share salient findings from the crime scripting process with MCC SHCA management.

For testing one of SCP techniques, hosted by Muong La District Police, Hua Trai Commune Police and Vice-director of Muong La NR, the project has implemented a 3-day raising awareness regarding hunting gun confiscation at three "hotspot" H'Mong villages in Hua Trai commune, Muong La NR and make sure there will be no convictions once hunters hand over hunting guns during the course of year two. At least, there was around 90 local Hmong people and village leaders who joined this village meetings. The project will continue to conduct hunting gun confiscation in the coming year(s) at both sites to spreading messaging and illegality of gun ownership and hunting in PAs.

Photo: Associated village meetings to spread messaging and illegality of gun ownership in Hua Trai commune, Muong La NR.

Photo: Introduce and develop a SCP in Muong La NR

By the end of year two, the project has made some good progress by working with Muong La NR to integrate SCP interventions into their work plan. In particular, learning from 25 SCP techniques, Muong La NR applied a SCP technique to design 4 billboards to remove excuses for individuals to engage in illegal activity. These billboards were funded by the government funding which were built in centres of buffer communes.

Photo: A new billboard was built in Hua Trai commune to post instructions
so individuals are aware of the rules

Output 3 – Resilience of forest-using communities is increased by land-use planning and sustainable livelihoods, creating result-based incentives for forest protection leading to reduced negative impact on forests and species.

3.1 Facilitate and produce Participatory Resource/Land-Use Maps and Plans (PRUM/PLUPs) in 17 villages in the buffer zones surrounding the two PAs, following an FPIC process.

This activity was planned in Q2 to Q4 Year 1. This activity is integrated with activity 2.4. Since the project began, the project has carried out lots of activities in relation to social safeguards.

To develop MCC SHCA and MLNR social safeguards, including land-use mapping and planning, grievance redress mechanism (GRM) and stakeholder Analysis, a series of internal discussions were held with the project team and technical support from FFI UK Technical Specialist, Social Equity and Rights– Dr. Timur Jack-Kadioglu from January to September 2022. This planning was a crucial phase for the project team to reflect and adapt in terms of social safeguards, FPIC to Vietnam contexts for each protected area and help to identify, avoid, and minimize harm to local people. In addition, all project staff were required to complete a training course on social safeguarding. Additional guidance and support is also available from our Social Equity and Rights

staff for programme managers, partners and others directly involved in project design, implementation, MEL and fundraising/comms.

Photo: A technical workshop on social safeguards in Sep 2022

Photo: Left - Two local women shared about land use mapping in Nam Hong Village, Hua Trai commune, MLNR; Right – a village meeting was held in Ke village, Ngoc Chien commune, MLNR.

In early this year of 2023, the project team carried out a range of meetings, focus group discussions across 17 key villages at both sites to deliver land-use mapping and social safeguarding. There were up to 1,000 local people attend these meeting. All people agreed with the project activities. In terms of grievance redress mechanism (GRM) following an FPIC process, the project also works with local people to deliver channels on how to raise grievances about the project. For instance, each village decided to establish a GRM committee including community leaders, gatekeepers, women union, youth union, elderly person to receive grievances from villagers. The phone hotlines of PA managers and FFI Country Director have also shared with local people and community leaders. Through these meetings, the project provided various posters and leaflets for local participants. In addition, each village was be to a hang large poster in the community house to give them an overall of the project and a guideline to raise grievances.

Regarding of this activity - 3.2 Support a consultative process of the review and strengthening of land tenure, the project team has been working with District Department of the environment & Natural Resources to share with them concerns and feedback from the village meetings. In Year 3, the project aims to develop further activities to support social safeguarding and support the review and strengthening of land use tenure. The report will be distributed to stakeholders in Year 3.

Photo: Left – a leaflet to share with local people; Right: Hanging a larger poster at each community house

3.2 Support a consultative process of the review and strengthening of land tenure, in partnership with a local lawyer, following an FPIC process.

This activity was planned in Q4 Year 1 and Q1 Year 2. This activity is related to Activity 3.1 and is reported there.

3.3 Collect socio-economic and social impact assessment data bi-annually, including a participatory identification of associated indicators of change that can be used for monitoring.
This activity is combined with the activity 2.5. Please also see the activity 2.5

3.4 Conduct a review of existing farming systems, participatory SWOT and gap analyses, and farmer surveys, to inform and monitor agri-livelihoods interventions.

As reported in the Year 1 report, this activity was completed in Q3 and Q4 Year 1 as planned

3.5 Implement PMSD process in 17 villages to select products for market analysis and development, evaluating products under social and biodiversity criteria.

This activity was planned in Year 2 and was completed in August 2022 as scheduled. The results of this activity was shared with local government officials, district policy makers, two protected areas managers, private sectors and local community. Please see Annex for your reference.

3.6 Develop and implement an action plan based on multi-stakeholder workshop(s) with market actors and communities, ensuring participation of women and vulnerable groups.

This activity was planned in Year 2. The multi-stakeholder PMSD workshops were held from 31st October to 4th November 2022 in MCC SHCA and MLNR as planned. The report has been released. (Please see Annex)

Photo: The multi-stakeholder PMSD workshop was held in Ngoc Chien Commune, Muong La NR

3.7 Pilot five livelihood models, including agriculture and ecotourism interventions, developed and co-implemented with SRD, including business planning and training for communities on: crop diversification, yield maximisation, supply chains and market access.

This project activity was progressing slow in Year 1. Activities picked up during this reporting period (Year 2) and progressing towards achieving outputs by EoP. By the end of this year 2, a total of around 200 households benefitted from the livelihood project, through, trainings to set-up a farmer collective model for seasonal vegetables. Project facilitated meeting with market actors including cooperatives, and an MOU between local cooperative and this farmer group is now signed (Please the annex). Based on this agreement, the local cooperative will purchase products from the farmer group set up by project. We are expecting success of the current farmer group model will inspire more community participation in existing groups and formation of new group organically.

The project also aims to increase crop yields by 40% by setting up more farmer groups consisting mostly women. This will contribute significantly to local food security particularly women and vulnerable people. The project will aim to target at least 60% female headed households or 50 households within a year in the pilot areas in year 3.

To scale up the livelihood models, the project aims to secure further funding from international donors in the future.

Photo: Local farmers participated in the field based training on tomato growing.

3.8 Implement an eco-stove design and procurement work-stream to reduce local fuel wood requirements for households and for cardamom drying.

This activity was planned in Year 1 and Year 2.

A fuelwood-saving solution is critically needed to reduce the massive collection of fuelwood for energy. With recently increasing interest in reducing deforestation, an improved cookstove project is seen as an ideal method for reducing fuelwood consumption with easy-to-use technologies for forest-dependent communities

Photo: A traditional cookstove in MCC SHCA and MLNR

As reported in the first annual report, this project made good progress in its first year of implementation. In Year 1, the project worked with local supplier to deliver 198 eco-stoves for 198 households at both sites. Each household shared cost which accounted for 14 percent ($2.2). Early this year of 2023, as well as developing and testing this stove model, the project team carried out of a quick assessment on effective of eco-stoves. Recipients of the stove replied that this stove can save up to 50-60% of the amount of firewood. Using this stove also helps people especially women save a lot of cooking time. As a result, local governments, PA managers and local communities suggested FFI would consider to purchasing more eco-stoves for local people. With support from the Darwin grant, the project was able to purchase 180 eco stoves in Feb 2023. A cost sharing from each household was accounted for 33.3% ($5.1). Overall, the project will continue to work with local governments, communities to scale up this type of eco stoves for family cooking; and design a large stove for cardamom dry in the near future. Indeed, the project should seek for more funding to support this.

Photo: The eco-stove helps women to save cooking time and reduce fuelwood consumption

Output 4 – Novel sustainable finance approaches for enforcement and PA management are piloted for both PAs.

4.1 Explore innovative sustainable financing options for enforcement and PA management, developing a business plan to secure PES (and other) funding for these, including at least one additional CCT group.

This activity takes place continuously throughout the project life cycle. In 2022, the annual revenue for Muong La NR through the Payment for Environmental Services scheme was VND 133.609.500 (c. $5,000) accounting for 47% of the annual budget for CCT member salaries. Although PES is not yet accounting for 100% of CCT salaries, progress made during the project marks a significant achievement and step forward. The project continues to conduct consultation meetings with PA management boards and FDP to obtain additional funding for the operations of CCTs model. For MCC SHCA, the management board considers this sustainable financing model in Muong La is a good model for supporting CCT group too. However, MCC SHCA is still waiting for an upgrading to a full natural reserve status. This would mean this PA would have their own management board to make their decisions to grant a funding for at least one CCT. The project will keep facilitating this model and scale it up to include Mu Cang Chai SHCA.

Photo: 10 CCT team members in Muong La NR received their 2022 PES revenue

4.2 Obtain legally binding government approval of all PES agreements, for community-based forest protection, through a process of collaborative policy development and advocacy.

This activity takes place continuously throughout the project life cycle.

The slow in process of advocating a districtwide business plan and landscape management slowed down in Year 1. Although PFES is not yet accounting for 100% of CCT salaries, progress made during the project marks a significant achievement and step forward. The project continues to conduct consultation meetings with PA management boards and FPD to obtain additional fund. The project has several informal meetings with PA management board at both sites to explore viable PES agreements. The project continues to conduct consultation meetings with PA management boards and FDP to obtain PES agreements throughout the project life cycle.

3.2   Progress towards project Outputs

As shown above, all scheduled activities for the reporting year have either been completed or are well underway, and the project is therefore on or ahead of schedule in relation to Outputs 1, 2, 3, and 4, with remaining project activities continuing or commencing in April 2023 and extending through to project end in June 2024 as scheduled.

Output 1 – Quality and sustainability of community-based patrolling, crime prevention and PA monitoring is improved

By Year 2, the project continues to support the operation of CCTs both at Mu Cang Chai SHCA and Muong La NR through technical training and oversight, to build their capacities, and through financial support, including the facilitation of sustainable financing from PES (Please also see output 4). They have been patrolling gibbon habitat for at least 10 days per month, including threat mitigation and snare removal, and improved gibbon monitoring. Monthly SMART reports collected and shared with stakeholders. During Year 2, to support the operation of CCTs, the FFI biodiversity assistant with 3 years of work experience took in charge of assisting in coordinating this CCTs at both sites. Therefore, the community patrol team members have sufficient support (from FFI and PA staff), capacity (built by FFI as needed) and ongoing motivation to undertake the required forest patrols. Several crime prevention activities are developed and integrated into PA's workplan.

The progress towards this output is being achieved. The proposed indicators at output level are still the best indicators that the project will achieve.

Output 2 – PA governance is effective, sustainable and collaborative.

During the reporting period the project has continued to build and develop our understanding of the opportunities for collaborative management. The project continues to pursue options for collaborative management through conducting an exchange visit, introducing METT assessments and Green Lists at both sites. Situational Crime Prevention Strategy has been developed and implement several techniques at Muong La NR. As noted above the report also highlighted the increasing interest and number of activities in and around MCC SHCA & MLNR with a collaborative management focus. For example, a snare density patrolling trip (led by PA management board) was conducted as planned, and a cross border patrol trip between MCC-ML will be held in Year 3. SMART data were shared with Yen Bai & Son La Provincial FPD, PA managers and used to measure inform adaptive management. Also, this SMART dataset of MCC-ML is revised to contribute to a national database. Conducting various of village meetings & focus group discussions regarding Social safeguards and Grievance Redress Mechanisms are in place in Year 2. During the reporting period, no grievances raised, and all participants and local government agreed with the project activities. Having said that, the Output 2 - PA governance is effective, sustainable and collaborative – is on definitely schedule. These activities will allow the Output to achieve the project purpose is underway. The indicators still are adequate and appropriate.

Output 3 – Resilience of forest-using communities is increased by land-use planning and sustainable livelihoods, creating result-based incentives for forest protection leading to reduced negative impact on forests and species.

During the reporting period, the project has implemented a range of activities to achieve Output 3. In particular, market survey has been undertaken through 17 key villages. Multi-workshop with communities (mostly women), local government, private sector including local cooperatives has been conducted for the first time at both sites. Action plan development has been developed by all participants. Selected by local communities, the first pilot livelihood model focuses on seasonal vegetable plants has been implementing in Ngoc Chien commune, Muong La NR. An MOU between the cooperative and a group of interest household was signed. Several livelihood training was conducted to improve capacity of local farmers.

Work towards these outputs focused on identifying how to develop incentive for livelihood and ensure well- being of local communities. In the current reporting period, project has made significant progress in terms of improving market access and pilot livelihood model. By engage communities in the planning, development and implementation of sustainable livelihoods, an action plan has been implemented by taring with a small-scale livelihood model. A long- term vision to scale up this model to ensure suitability have been developed. One of a significant

achievement is that gibbon festivals were successfully organized in both sites. More than 2,000 local people attended and signed conservation agreements. Also, the eco-stove model has been introduced to local people which reduce cutting tree from PAs. Land-use mapping and social safeguarding process and community consultations undertaken in all 17 target villages (mostly women) as planned. Key communication channels between communities, PA manager, and the project has been established. Key recommendations to inform this process and the report on land use mapping is currently being drafted and will be ready in Year 3. Information is being handled confidentially given the sensitive information on land use.

In Year 2, the project has made good progress in terms of community rights and wellbeing which are fully protected & enhanced. The proposed indicators at output level are still the best indicators that the project will achieve.

Output 4 – Novel sustainable finance approaches for enforcement and PA management are piloted for both PAs.

4.1 Community patrol payments (for CCT) are part-funded, at least 10%, by Payments for Forest Ecosystem Services (PES) by Q1Y3

4.2 Patrols are taking place as contracted and payments (from FFI and PES) are performance-based, based on SMART/GPS data

4.3 PES funding is made available to support the operational costs of both PAs (baseline: 0; at project start all PES monies go to communities or admin)

As reported in the first annual year, in effort to maintain and strengthen CCT's patrol, with advice of FFI, Muong La Nature Reserve officially legalized a finance model to which a partial budget of PFES is to add on 10 Muong La CCT members' monthly income. Through a range of an informal & formal meeting and study tours, the model has been shared with Yen Bai Provincial relevant partners. Mu Cang Chai SHCA management board would like to copy this model to allocate a funding to the operation of CCTs shortly.

The project continues to assist the progress to get PES agreements, which contributes to the long-term sustainable financing of CCT operations in Muong La NR and Mu Cang Chai SHCA. As reported, in 2022, the annual revenue for Muong La NR through the Payment for Environmental Services scheme was VND 133.609.500 (c. $5,000) accounting for 47% of the annual budget for CCT member salaries. This achievement continues to be addressed to the Output 4, focusing on novel sustainable finance approaches. Having said that, the project progress toward outputs at this stage is on trach. The proposed indicators at output level are still the best indicators.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

The outcome of the project is two priority PAs in Northern Vietnam demonstrate improved and sustainable protection of forest habitats and associated species through enhanced governance, sustainable finance and improved local wellbeing.

Overall, the project has made good progress in moving towards all outputs. Assumptions and indicators that were identified in the original proposal still seem valid. Although the project has not yet achieved fully outcome but remarkable achievements. These all results and progress can demonstrate that project will achieve its outcome by the end of project.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Project Outcome: Two priority PAs in Northern Vietnam demonstrate improved and sustainable protection of forest habitats and associated species through enhanced governance, sustainable finance and improved local wellbeing.

Assumptions:
- Evidence that monitoring by local people (patrol teams) and rangers is accurate and consistent, and produces reliable data sets.

- The gibbon census is able to record a significant (enough) proportion of the population and occupancy from which to infer change.
- Target communities / project beneficiaries have the sufficient capacity (including time), and/or the project mitigates any shortcomings (e.g. language or literacy barriers) and continues interest to engage in and benefit from the project as planned.

Comments:
The project has made considerable progress towards the project Outcome over the last year. The means of verification for project outcome still hold.

Outputs 1. Quality and sustainability of community-based patrolling, crime prevention and PA monitoring is improved.

Assumptions:
- The community patrol team members have sufficient support (from FFI and PA staff), capacity (built by FFI as needed) and ongoing motivation (internal but also linked to incentives) to undertake the required forest patrols (approx. 15 days/month).
- CCT and ranger patrols and snare removal, coupled with awareness raising and crime prevention activities, is enough to significantly reduce threats.
- That FFI financial support to the CCT patrollers incentivises effective enforcement / monitoring
- That target species has the time and ecological ability to respond to improved protection outcomes and demonstrate changes in population, abundance or occupancy in the timeframe of the project.

Comments: The project also provides a series of trainings based on based on training needs assessments using the IUCN Competency Standards for Protected Areas to increase capacity for rangers and the community patrolling team members. Further training courses will be delivered in Year 3.

CCT members and rangers were trained to support rangers with SMART patrols, species and threat monitoring and continue to undertake forest patrols. A SMART dataset which is in line with National dataset has been revised and applied for all CCTs sub-group. A dynamic biodiversity assistant joined the project to improve community-based patrolling. Lots of training course on first aid training, law enforcement was trained for CCTs and PA staff. A sustainable incentive programme will be revised and implemented to motivate CCT members. An innovation program "wildlife hero" to motivate CCTs have currently developed. During the report time, as noted above the report also highlighted the increasing interest and number of activities in and around MCC SHCA & MLNR with a collaborative management focus. SCP strategies, METT plan have been integrated to PA's plan. The project in collaboration with PA rangers, police departments is to develop two PA Situational Crime Prevention strategies and further follow up activities will be implemented to reduce illegal wildlife crime in Year 3. Means of verification remain the same. The important assumptions identified in the project proposal still hold true.

Output 2. PA governance is effective, sustainable and collaborative.

Assumptions:

1. Management effectiveness tools reflect the genuine condition of and change in PA management effectiveness

2. Improvement of local patrolling and law enforcement, by state and non-state actors, is a sufficient deterrent to change local behaviour / reduce threats. SMART data/reports will be used to measure this and inform adaptive management or other interventions, as needed

3. That local government authorities and other state actors, including PA management boards, remain – and are increasingly – open to the active participation of local community members and/or CSOs in PA/forest governance

4. That local community members / representatives maintain interest in and/or have the time and (other) capacity to meaningfully engage in PA management

Comments:
This assumption is holding true as evidenced by strong governments, PA managers engagement in implementing project's activities (see output 2).
CCTs team members and rangers has been built capacity and keep continuing to take patrolling and gibbon monitoring. SMART data and reports have been sharing it with PA management boards to develop workplans toward enhancing good governance. In addition, MCC SHCA management board took a chance to share a good SMART model with other PAs and national parks at a SMART workshop in March 2023. The development of MAC in Mu Cang Chai SHCA is under negotiation and expect to undertake a MAC meeting in Year 2. In addition, the roadmap to upgrade MCC SHCA to a full natural reserve status has made some good process to access the feasibility study. Moreover, management effectiveness tracking (METT) workshops was conducted annually to help PAs and local stakeholder help track and monitor progress in the achievement year by year. Crime Presentation strategy was developed by PA managers, staffs, and commune offers and integrated to PA's plan. IUCN Green Lists has introduced to PA managers. A variety range of community consultations in terms of social safeguards and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) were in place by end of Year 2. All local people and community leaders show their interest in the project activities at different level.

Means of verification remain the same by far. By the project toward completion, the assumptions made regarding this output still hold true.

Outputs 3. Resilience of forest-using communities is increased by land-use planning and sustainable livelihoods, including results-based incentives for forest protection, leading to a reduction in negative impacts on forests and wildlife.

Assumptions:

1. That local community members have the capacity, and continue to have motivation, to engage in the planning, development and implementation of sustainable livelihoods

2. That local government authorities maintain openness to the clarification and/or strengthening of tenure and customary legal and land rights

3. That no unexpected events happen to substantially, negatively affect local attitudes and behaviours towards forest and gibbon/wildlife conservation

4. That the locally-owned development of safeguards and grievance redress, through processes that enable equitable participation, results in mechanisms that are ultimately appropriate, such that community rights and wellbeing are fully protected, enhanced, and take into account the differing roles, power and status of men and women, and other vulnerable groups (relates also to Output 2)

Comments:

By the end of year 2, a significant number of community members and stakeholders have been impacted by the project – through community consultations, raising awareness activities, livelihood activities other informal contacts. The process of land use mapping, social safeguarding, community outreach activities were undertaken to engage communities and enhance community rights. In addition, Participatory Market System Development (PMSD) has been conducted. The results of PMSD and the action plan has been developed by communities and enterprises including cooperatives. Means of verification remain the same. This assumption appears to be holding true based on the results of outputs, ongoing activities and a long-term vision. However, it has become clear that the project team will need to invest a lot of time to work with enterprises and the communities to establish benefit-sharing agreements for agricultural products in terms of developing a road map for scaling up the livelihood models. We will take steps in Year 3 to ensure that assumptions on trach through the project.

Output 4 – Novel sustainable finance approaches for enforcement and PA management are piloted for both PAs.

Assumptions:
4.1 Explore innovative sustainable financing options for enforcement and PA management, developing a business plan to secure PES (and other) funding for these, including at least one additional CCT group.

4.2 Obtain legally binding government approval of all PES agreements, for community-based forest protection, through a process of collaborative policy development and advocacy.

Comments: This assumption is holding true as evidenced securing a PES funding. Study tours at another protected areas held to show a successful sustainable financing case study in Muong La as well. Although, the slow in process of advocating a districtwide business plan and landscape management slowed down. However, the project put in lots of effort to go between provincial levels and ministries levels to advocate for upgrading MCC SHCA to a full natural reserve status and approval PES agreements as well. Therefore, the assumptions made regarding this output still hold.

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

By the end of year 2, the project has identified a wide range of activities where link between poverty reduction and support biodiversity.

A PMSD workshop was facilitated to select products that have clear social impact (reduction of poverty) and biodiversity impacts. Some products, for example cardamom had high economic returns to community but was not promoted by the project because of the significant deforestation risks. Thus, products such as tomato and other vegetables were supported by the project as they pose less deforestation risk (land for vegetable cultivation away from forest and less scope of expansion as land for cultivation already available for community members). Thus carefully choosing right products, project is linking livelihood to social and biodiversity outcomes.

Building on this, a livelihood strategy that aligns with biodiversity goals is being developed. The farmer group set up by this project will reach out to market different products. This will enable more private sector partnerships and unlock value chain finance going forward.

Regarding the higher goal/impact of biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation, the project raised concerns of direct threats to the biodiversity Mu Cang Chai SHCA and Muong La NR, among the most intact in terms of the forest ecosystems and the assemblage of terrestrial wildlife, which elsewhere in Vietnam is being extirpated by hunting and snaring. The operations of 24 community members (CCTs) take patrolling at least 10 days/month to reduce threats to biodiversity and habitats. In the meantime, to be part of CCT teams, all participants received to a salary per month to support their livings. All members are ethnic minority people who are living at poor areas. Indeed, the project has facilitated a process to get PES funding for 10 CCT members in Muong La NR. Having said that this means the model of community-based conservation has made a significant contribute to conserve biodiversity and reducing poverty.

By the end of year 2, the project also focuses to address these root causes of hunting, deforestation and degradation, supporting minority communities in developing sustainable livelihoods strategies, clarifying customary rights, and providing livelihoods diversification opportunities. One of main reason why local people still want to go to forest to cut tree, collect non timber products, expanding cardamom farming because they want to get more income from forest resources. To address these issues, the project has been developed a variety range of activities to make positive impacts on biodiversity and human wellbeing. There are some highlights as bellow:

- The project distributed up to 400 eco stoves to help local communities reducing reduce local fuel wood requirements in PAs and carbon reduction too.
- Conservation agreements were signed by local participants who are currently participate in the project activities
- Based on PMSD results, the project co-implemented with SRD facilitated multi-stakeholders workshop to develop pilot five livelihoods models. These interventions include business planning (by connecting an interest farmer groups to local cooperatives and local restaurants); providing training (both in house training and at field) for communities; Developing crop diversification (seasonal vegetable, traditional rice; Hmong chicken and Hmong pig). The project plans to facilitate this small -scale model and will work with stakeholders to scale this model in the near future, for example support local farmers to establish and capacity new cooperatives. Earning sustain income from alternative livelihoods would help people shifting cardamom farming to alternative livelihoods. All activities expected to help people earn more income from sustainable ways which definitely contribute to biodiversity.

We should see impacts on biodiversity conservation and human wellbeing start to emerge in the final year of the project.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

The project does intend to help Vietnam meet the Conventions commitments under the CBD and UNFCCC as bellow.
In order to achieve both national targets and the CBD targets, the following project activities are implemented to support: i) Ensuring maintenance of a national system of Protected Areas (terrestrial/ forest, wetland, and marine) and ensuring critical ecosystems are safeguarded and protected; ii) Conservation priority is to be granted to Protected Areas in critical eco regions; iii) Promote biodiversity conservation and management at three levels namely ecosystem, species and genetic diversity.
The project is supporting Vietnam NAP plan to meet UNFCCC. For example, the project activities are supporting for enhancing resilience and adaptive capacity of natural, social, and economic systems for sustainable livelihood (Vietnam NAP plan, 2.3.3. Land use, land use change, and forestry). The project definitely is to contribute to the Protection of existing natural forest areas in mountainous areas, with priority given to hot spots of deforestation and forest degradation; protection and special-use forests; restoration of protection forests and special use forests; improvement of the quality and carbon stock of poor natural forests.

5. Project support to poverty reduction

The project worked to alleviate poverty at different levels. The project has been contributed to poverty reduction in the project area:

Directly benefits from the project:

- The expected impacts on the ethnic minority communities residing within the geographic limits of Muong La Nature Reserves, Species and Habitat Conservation Areas in the communes of Che Tao, Ngoc Chien, and Hua Trai include unstable livelihoods, poverty, and limited knowledge. These communities live in close proximity to the nature reserve and are considered the most economically disadvantaged compared to the Kinh community. With expected impacts

- Increase income for households/communities: support people with experience, knowledge and skills to improve existing agricultural production activities to improve income and living standards through (i) stabilize food by maintaining vegetable, tuber and fruit species suitable to natural characteristics, people's farming ability (ii) improving output, reducing input costs by applying farming techniques trained by the project (ii) to increase consumption by linking producers with purchasing and processing cooperatives (iv) to improve the value of products through better packaging and preservation, introduce and perfect the brand. Deploying demonstration models on potential product farming, circular agriculture so that people can observe - learn - learn from and compare effectively with existing farming, from which they can apply use farming model for their household.

- The project also aims to promote responsible production by implementing guidance on environmentally friendly agricultural farming techniques. This will involve reducing the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and implementing practices for circulating agricultural waste. These techniques will be tailored to potential plant species and will aim to improve productivity while reducing input costs and minimizing the impact on soil and water environments.

- Another important aspect of the project is to raise awareness about livelihood activities that have little impact on conservation and biodiversity. People will be provided with information on the importance of forest protection, conservation, and biodiversity preservation through meetings, forums, and training activities organized by the project. In addition to receiving technical assistance on livelihoods, households must also commit to complying with regulations on conservation and protection of biodiversity.

- By promoting the dual benefits of livelihoods and conservation, the project will ensure that both aspects are maintained throughout its duration. This will help to ensure that livelihood activities have a minimal impact on the environment, and that the biodiversity of the area is protected for future generations.

Indirect:

- The project will also focus on improving community governance by establishing community groups to facilitate production coordination and enhance linkages and sharing among households. These groups will serve as a platform for the community to come together, discuss, share experiences, and better manage their resources. They will also help maintain a common voice for achieving project goals.

- To improve community understanding, the project will allow communities living near the project area to directly observe the project's models and participate in group meetings. They will also listen to successful households sharing their experiences with the project. This will help spread the effectiveness of livelihoods and increase awareness throughout the commune and district. Additionally, the project's information and effectiveness will be shared through documents, publications, and local programs, which will be presented in village meetings and commune meetings.

By the end of this year 2, a total of around 100 households benefitted from the project, with connecting with multi stakeholders, training, set-up a livelihood mode covered, an MOU between local cooperative and a group of local farmers signed through the project. The project aims to increased crop yields by 40%, set up more interest groups (mostly women), contributing significantly to local food security (particularly important in women and vulnerable people). The project will aim to target at least 60% female headed households or 50 households within a year in the pilot areas in year 3. To scale up the livelihood models, the project aims to secure further funding from international donors in the future. By spreading the concept to establish local cooperatives, capacity building and benefits of the programme are accessible to more people through a snowball effect by the end of project.

Having said that, the project will contribute to the overall sustainability of the environment and the community's livelihoods.

6.   Gender equality and social inclusion

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board[1].	For the project team - Under the leadership from Country Director as Project Leader, the project manager as a woman who takes in charge to manage, develop and implement all project activities (100% full time).
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which	Both of SRD's director and SRD's the programme manager are women who

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[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.

have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women[2].	partnered with the project to implement livelihood activities.

Actually, the project has deliberately selected a number of women for leading roles during the consultation activities, contributing greatly to gender equality. The project aims to encourage equal participation of men and women in livelihood interventions, KAB survey, village meetings, training course, project implementation and management.

In the last year, there has been active participation by women in the livelihood activities from participating in market survey, multi-stakeholder workshops, attending livelihoods trainings. In particular, to empower women leadership, the project worked with Thanh cooperatives who the leader is a woman. Female staff have also been engaged in develop collaborative PA management plans. For example, around 50% female staff participated in an exchange visit amongst 4 PAs & National parks.

To enhance local ethnic minority women in community consultants, at least 50% of women attended village meetings and group discussions through social safeguarding and land use mapping process though 17 key villages. As a highlight, members of Women Union were nominated to a part of committee as a key communication channel between project, PA managers and local community in terms of grievance redress mechanism. Still, several female officers participated in MAC meeting and involved in developing MAC revision. The project made sure that 100% households with headed women received eco stoves. Regarding community outreach, women were given a chance to be representative across the wider community.
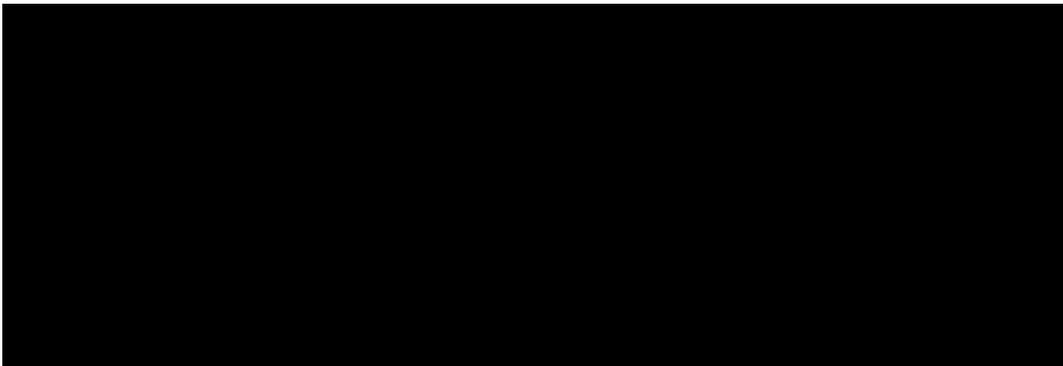

Photo: Left – A female student participated in the drawing contest at the gibbon festival in Muong La NR
Right: A process of land use mapping in Chom Khau village led by the ethnic minority woman

7.   Monitoring and evaluation

Fauna & Flora uses the same tracker that was developed at the beginning of the project (based on project logframe) as a guide to collect M&E data. M&E responsibility is shared between Fauna & Flora and SRD – the local partner organisation. The project manager worked closely with MEL officer to develop data collection instruments and make sure that data collected are sound evidence for indicators of achievements. The project continuously monitored its impact through data collected by field staff and reported on to the Project Leaders. The Project Manager and Project M&E Officer had worked together to determine from which sources the indicators/monitoring data is collected, as well as where and how to store them. Afterwards, an M&E tracker (Excel file) containing data forms was designed to specified what data need to be collected and to store monitoring data. The monitoring data, both quantitative and qualitative, will be collected during activities implementation and input into the tracker immediately subsequent to implementation stage. FFI takes the main responsibility to collect and manage the M&E data;

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[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.

however, a small number of livelihoods-related indicators are collected by partner organisation – SRD and then submitted to FFI.

SMART patrol is ongoing at project sites, during which data on patrol routes, threat locations and illegal cases were recorded. This information would be presented back and analysed with the patrol team as well PA managers on a monthly basis to strategically plan future patrols and target at-risk areas. Additionally, more in-depth analysis of illegal activities was conducted to develop a Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) strategy.

To support effectiveness PA management, the project helped organised the METT workshop for PAs. The results METT workshop were combined with training needs assessment and patrol performance review (included in monthly meeting with patrol team and PA managers) to develop a suitable capacity building program for PA staff, which can equip them with necessary assets to deliver high quality work and achieve their target METT score. The project keeps track of METT score, pre- and post-training survey results as evidence for improved PA management capacity and effectiveness.

Socio-economic and KAB surveys were conducted to assess the impact of livelihood support and awareness raising activities. Results from these surveys were used to inform project manager, designing awareness raising activities and materials that can effective redirected local communities' attitude and behaviour towards pro-conservation. The project aims to collect KAB data which is comparable over the years understand better the shift in local knowledge, attitude and behaviour, and important factors causing such changes.

The project also keeps track of annual PES revenue for Muong La NR, and how much of the revenue is contributed to patrol payment. The current PES revenues make up for 47% of the annual budget for CCT salaries, marking a significant achievement and step forward. In the next phase, the project will continue to work with PA management boards to obtain additional PES payment and explore wider ideas for sustainable financing.

In general, the project has been consistently using the indicators from the project logframe for data collection and reporting; therefore, the project is confident that the Outputs and Activities will contribute to project Outcome.

8. Lessons learnt

Regarding M&E, the project team aim to gather M&E data in one single database with periodical review of the data. It is suggested that project manager and MEL officer can have a meeting bi-monthly or quarterly to review the database and add complementary data if needed. The meeting can also be a space to gain deeper insight in to M&E needs and challenges. This is expected to foster borderless and more efficient M&E process.

Second, further lessons learned to date are principally related to ways to schedule the smooth village meetings with local community. Lots of villages are based on the most remoted areas. For example, six villages of Che Tao commune (based on the core zone of MCC SHCA) is really far to the MCC town. Four of these villages did not have electricity and no signal mobile. The project team are mostly based in Ha Noi – the capital of Vietnam. To schedule a village meeting, the project team must to communicate with PAs staff as coordinators. The lesson learned here is that PA staff are fully engaged in all activities which are contributed to the success of activities.

In addition, the lessons learned to date are principally related to partner with another NGO. Actually, SRD is a sub-contract of the project. SRD is responsible for most activities related to livelihood sector. The point is that the cost norm of SRD is higher than the project. With a limited budget of GBP 50,000 across three years and a higher cost norm policy, the remaining cost for livelihood interventions is very limited as well. To solve it, the project worked with SRD to ensure that the cost norm in the field (including travel, accommodation) follows FFI's cost norm. The project also encouraged people to share costs with the project's activity as well. Logistically, the project is working well now. More consideration to how the project cooperated with SRD and communities can evaluate our outputs and outcomes in relation to the project purpose will be made by the end of project.

The project team was highly appreciate the recommendations received through the annual feedback. As a consequence, the main comments provided by the reviewers of the first annual report are addressed below:

"There does not appear to be any private sector involvement among direct project partnerships, leaving the impression that the essential livelihoods component of the programme relies on one partner. Clarification of how SRD will link rice and other commodities to markets and how this will be accomplished would be helpful to improve the project outcome" – This has been responded at the half year report. However, this has been seriously noted by the project leader. The project took seriously to worked with SRD team, PA management board to discuss this important point. By the year 2, the project made lot of efforts to engage more private sectors whenever possible. Lots of traders, collectors, local/ district cooperatives were participated in market surveys, workshops, and livelihood interventions. The project team understand that several livelihood activities might be not engaged diversified enterprises due to many reasons. However, the project is confident that the first step to engage local farmers to cooperatives made a good progress. A long-term vision will be clear in Year 3.

10. Risk Management

The project does not aware any risk management during the period reporting.

11.   Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

No significant difficulties have been encountered to date; At very beginning of piloting of livelihood model, the only development relevant here is that it is taking the project lots of efforts to scale up the livelihood products to make significant outcome for sustainable livelihood.

12.   Sustainability and legacy

The project is based on long-term working collaboratively with key government counterparts at provincial from the very start of the project to ensure that the experience and lessons learned are continued beyond the life of the project. In particular, the Darwin project has been approved by Yen Bai and Son La Provincial People's Committee according to the Decree 80/2020/ND-CP use of grant aid not in the form of official development assistance of foreign agencies. Sustainability of the project comes through core findings being implemented beyond the end of the project period by local stakeholders and communities including cooperatives and for communities to take ownership of the livelihood initiatives, eventhougt the starting model has started at small scale. Getting an PES funding for CCT operations, the project is further discussing the potential of expanding this model for future financial self-sustainability of CCTs in both sites.

In addition, this project was fully recognised by local people, stakeholders, and other NGOs working in the region. The voices of local communities were respected in whole protected area development process. Representations of communities will be involved in protected area management decision making. Through workshops, newsletters, online resources, reports and peer-reviewed literature information about the project continues to be disseminated and handover of know-how and technology to both local stakeholders and the wider public is achieved.

13.   Darwin Initiative identity

As reported at the first annual report, the Darwin Initiative is duly acknowledged for supporting though project activities. The logo has been displayed in presentations, newsletters, reports, calendars, posters, workshop invitations, FFI Vietnam Programme Facebook Fan page's post. During year 2, The Darwin Initiative is now very well known in Mu Cang Chai SHCA and Muong La NR due to a series of highly successful community outreach activities which were

participated by communities, governments departments and new papers magazines, local TV station. In particular, the Darwin identity has been reached out to the wider Vietnamese audiences through Viet Nam National Natural Resources and the Environment Newspaper coverage of the first gibbon festival in Ngoc Chien, Muong La;

The new project funded by Darwin have been kick offed in Trung Khanh, Cao Bang Province, Vietnam. This mean the Darwin identity has further been acknowledged and familiar to most FF's project site from Konplong, Kon Tum Province, Viet Nam.

Photo: The Darwin logo and identity have been prominently referenced a public outreach event

14.   Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	**Yes**
Have any concerns been investigated in the past 12 months	**No**

Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	**Yes** Contacts of focal points as bellows: 1. Le Hong Viet; Administrative Officer; ████████████████ ████████████████ 2. Nguyen Ha Anh Project MEL Officer ████████████████ ██████ ████████████
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	**Yes** [*If yes, please provide date and details of training*] It is essential that all FFI staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and how to report an allegation, and for this reason the training is mandatory for all staff. All project staff requited to enrol Summary of Safeguarding Essentials (kayaconnect.org). The course itself takes between 1 hour and 90 minutes to complete. The main contents of this course aims to: - Know the five non-negotiables of conduct

	- Recognise safeguarding concerns - Understand the importance of safeguarding - Know what to do if you observe or hear testimony or rumour about another individual causing harm, exploitation or abuse - Act and report safeguarding concerns. All project staff were also required to already completed our 'FFI's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy' course on Mangrove, and gain certificates before starting working at FFI
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 100% - 20 people including cross cutting team. Planned: All new staff must be required to receive formal training on Safeguarding .
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses. Not applicable	
Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify. Whilst safeguarding focuses on the behavior of staff, associates and partners operating through our programmes, FFI also ensure the adoption of social safeguards, which focus on managing the risk of adverse impact on human rights as a consequence of our programmes and operations. FFI – Vietnam programme will plan to conduct a training on sexual harassment to the project staff in the coming months.	

15. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure <u>during the reporting period</u> (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2022/23 Grant (£)	2022/23 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	106,227.09	106,227.09		

Table 2: Project mobilising of matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

	Matched funding secured to date	Total matched funding expected by end of project
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project.	███████████████████	███████████████████
Total additional finance mobilised by new activities building on evidence, best practices and project (£)	███████████████████	███████████████████

16. 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 Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption, country and credit	Online accounts to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
Video clip	http://kbttnmuongla.sonla.gov.vn/index.php?module=video&act=view&id=53	Vietnam		

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2022-2023

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact Insert agreed project Impact statement Globally important forests in northern Vietnam are flourishing under sustainable, collaborative protection and use, supporting thriving populations of gibbons, langurs, and other threatened and endemic species		(Report on any contribution towards positive impact on biodiversity or positive changes in the conditions of human communities associated with biodiversity e.g. steps towards sustainable use or equitable sharing of costs or benefits) The project is underway for successfully implementing in MCC-ML protected areas. As the project has started up well towards positive impacts on biodiversity and the conditions of local communities. - The project has been maintaining forest protection and gibbon monitoring by maintain CCT model, slowly phasing out financial and technical support for full handover towards project end. - The project definitely made very good progress, focusing on PA management capacity and governance improvements measured via a range of tools, such as introducing IUCN Green Lists; successfully intergrated METT (The management effectiveness tracking tool) plan and SCP plan to PA's workplan. - The project has been continued to develop of PES mechanism contributes to	

		sustainable financing for forest protection and community development.	
		- The project conducts a significant number of training course to support management capacity building, exchange experience.	
		- The project has started five pilots of diversified and more resilient, sustainable livelihoods are operational. Lots of activities related to social safeguarding, land use mapping has been took in place to enhance community rights.	
Outcome (Insert **agreed** project Outcome statement) Two priority PAs in Northern Vietnam demonstrate improved and sustainable protection of forest habitats and associated species through enhanced governance, sustainable finance and improved local wellbeing	(Insert **agreed** Outcome level indicators) 0.1 Recorded/Reported incidents of illegal hunting (firearms/bows) have reduced by 10% by project end, from 2019 baseline 0.2 Recorded/Reported incidents of snaring have reduced by 10% by project end from 2019 baseline 0.3 By project end, for at least 400 women and men (approx. 20% of the local population) in 17 villages (in three communes: Che Tao, Ngoc Chien and Hua Trai) community wellbeing has improved by 10% against 2019 baseline 0.4. METT data (coupled with threat/SMART and key species data) shows measurable improvement in PA	(Report against the indicators on progress towards achieving the project Outcome) The foundation work that the project purpose is underway, the indicators still are adequate and appropriate. - Incidents of illegal activities recorded through SMART monthly - Community member have the capacity through trainings, workshops, and continue to have motivation, to engage in the planning, development and implementation. - Community consultation and public outreach has engaged community to develop good attitudes and behaviours towards forest and gibbon/wildlife conservation	(Highlight key actions planned for next period) The main focus in Year 3 will be on pilots of sustainable livelihoods are fully operational and expand a scale to wider community. A road map for sustainable livelihoods will be developed During Year 3, the project also will focus on capacity building for PAs management board, and support good PA governance, such us conduct the mid METT workshop.

	governance of both sites by project end, compared to baseline. 0.5 By project end, the attitude and actions of local people have shifted significantly towards, and in support of, achieving conservation objectives, compared to baseline (to be established at project start) 0.6 By project end, at least 15% of CCTs' salary comes from PES payments	- A METT data collected at project start and integrated to PA's workplan. - The PES funding is secured for 10 CCTs member in Muong La NR	
Output 1. (Insert **agreed** Outputs with activities relevant to that Outputs in lines below. Activities relevant to more than one Output should be cross-referenced rather than repeated) Quality and sustainability of community-based patrolling, crime prevention and PA monitoring is improved.	(Insert original Output level indicators) 1.1 SMART data is collected accurately and regularly, according to work plans and Terms of References, from Q2Y1 to project end 1.2 No detectable decreases in forest cover, quality (degradation) or connectedness within or between the PAs between project start and end 1.3 There is a measurable reduction in cumulative, reported incidents of illegal hunting and snaring (see 0.1/0.2) both within and outside of the two PAs, by project end. 1.4 SMART data used by PA managers to inform monthly patrol plans and adaptive PA management inform monthly patrol plans and adaptive (on-the-ground) PA management, throughout project duration 1.5 Gibbons (flagship species), and at least 3 'threat indicator' species (chosen to indicate changes in forest	*(*Report general progress against indicators, comment on their appropriateness, and reference where evidence is provided e.g. *Evidence provided in section 3.2 of report and Annex X))* SMART data has been gathered monthly and yearly and use by PA mangers to develop patrol plans. Workplans and Terms of References for CCTs has been reviewed and developed; A revised SMART dataset is developed in Year 2 and will finalised during Year 3. Forest cover survey has been completed at project start and results is distributed to main stakeholders. Gibbons monitoring survey is combined with patrolling activities has been recorded monthly. We are therefore confident the output indicators were adequate to measure success of Output 1.	

condition and hunting threats, e.g. butterflies, orchids and/or Owston's civet) , show measurable increases in population, or abundance, or occupancy, by project end, from 2019 baselines, following a detailed monitoring plan that will be developed		
Activity 1.1 Insert activities relevant to this Output Activity 1.1 Implement SMART patrols by rangers and CCTs (20 members across both sites), providing support and training on snare removal, awareness raising, and SMART (including using SMART reports to inform adaptive PA management).	(Report completed or progress on activities that contribute toward achieving this Output) This activity has been ongoing though project cycle. Lots of training course carried out in Year 1 and will continuedly be carried out in Year 3.	(Outline what will be carried out in the next period) - The project plan to provide trainings on FPD rangers and CCTs. Some exchange visits will be organized for FPD and PA managers.
Activity 1.2, Etc. Activity 1.2 Conduct forest cover, quality and connectedness surveys at project start and end.	This activity has been completed at project start.	The survey is expected to carry out at project end. Further activities such as organizing a national workshop to share this result is developed.
Activity 1.3 Develop a sustainable incentive programme for CCT and PA rangers to motivate them beyond salary and SMART-based performance monitoring (annual payments).	This activity has been completed.	A sustainable incentive programme will be revised for Year 3
Activity 1.4 Conduct intensive annual snare removal surveys by CCT and PA rangers, supported by Youth Union and volunteers.	This active has been completed.	This will be carried out in Year 3 A cross border intensive removal survey between MCC SHCA and ML NR will be delivered in Year 3
Activity 1.5 Sign conservation agreements with community leaders and specific households (of known hunters), specifying project benefits and conditionality of benefits.	This active has been completed.	Local people who participated in community outreach activities will be invited to sign conservation agreements in Year 3.
Activity 1.6 Conduct annual METT assessments at project start (to establish baseline), mid-project and project end.	This activity has been completed for both sites at project start.	Annual METT assessments at project mid will be conducted by June 2023

Activity 1.7 Develop and implement a bio-monitoring protocol, for black gibbons and key indicators species, in addition to SMART monitoring.	A draft has been released; and best practices will be reviewed and recommendations developed in Year 3	Finalised a bio-monitoring protocol and share with stakeholders and CCTs .
Activity 1.8 Conduct annual market/wildlife trade surveys in surrounding districts and urban centres in Son La and Yen Bai (overt, not covert, data collection, including risk assessments).	This activity is integrated with the implementation of SCP and best practices will be reviewed and recommenations developed in Year 3	Finalise a report on wildlife trade/ SCP recommendations developed in Year 3.

Output 2. (Insert **agreed** Output)	(Insert **agreed** Output level indicators)	*(Report against the indicators on progress towards achieving the Output)*
PA governance is effective, sustainable and collaborative.	2.1 Both PAs show evidence of improved management at project end compared to project start, by a 25% increase in METT scores (and associated improvements in threat reduction shown in SMART data) 2.2 20% more local people, of whom 100% are from local, ethnic minority groups and at least 50% are women, are engaged in PA management/oversight and 80% report having a greater influence on PA management, throughout the project period 2.3 Feasibility study for upgrading MCC Species and Habitat Conservation Area to a Nature Reserve completed by end of Year 2 2.4 Social safeguards and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) are in place by end of Year 1, and either no grievances recorded or all grievances have been redressed 2.5 A Situational Crime Prevention Strategy has been developed and implemented for each PA, by Q4Y2	METT 4.0 scores for both sites has been published at project start. An annual METT workshops will be held to compared with the project start. Report on IUCN 'PA job competency standards' assessments has been completed. And the following trainings have delivered to PA staff and CCTs Socio-economic condition and KAB reports at project start have been completed at project start. Social safeguards and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) were in place across 17 villages. A Situational Crime Prevention Strategy has been developed and implemented gradually in Muong La NR. The project has made some good process to support the upgrading MCC SHCA to a nature reserve status.

Activity 2.1 Develop collaborative PA management plans, including discussion facilitation and technical input, maintaining and supporting SMART ranger and CCT patrols.	This activity has been ongoing though project cycle.	The project will provide a range of training course and organize monthly meetings, develop workplan with stakeholders. Several exchange visits will be conducted in Year 3.
Activity 2.2 Develop and deliver training courses for PA staff, based on training needs assessments using the ARCBC/IUCN Competency Standards for Protected Areas.	This active has been completed.	Training courses will be developed. The follow up training will be carried out in Year 3, including: refresh SMART training, Law enforcement, and study tours, etc.
Activity 2.3 Maintain and strengthen Collaborative Management Advisory Committees (MAC), including regulations, scope and memberships, and inclusive of MAC facilitation and technical advice.	Under way at present	A multi stakeholder meeting will be held in Mu Cang Chai SHCA to revise MAC in Year 3
Activity 2.4 Develop site-specific/PA social safeguards, monitoring plan and grievance redress mechanism (GRM), through village-level, household and focus group discussions, ensuring participation of women and vulnerable groups.	Completed	The activity was completed as planned. However, the project will continue to support community consolations which integrated with village meetings.
Activity 2.5 Conduct Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour (KAB) surveys at project start (baseline), mid-project and project end.	The baseline survey has been completed at project start	This activity will be carried out by June -July at mid-project.
Activity 2.6 Develop awareness-raising and communications strategies about the project at local (trainings, events, printed literature, schools curricular), sub-national (workshops, study tours), and national (fora) levels.	This activity has been completed	The project plan to conduct awareness-raising campaigns in schools in Year 3.
Activity 2.7 Undertake IUCN Green List assessments for both PAs.	Introduction IUCN Green lists has been introduced and follow-up activities are under development	This activity will be carried out in Year 3
Activity 2.8 Develop a feasibility study for upgrading MCC HSCA to full Nature Reserve status and actively support the upgrade through consultation and data sharing.	This activity is ongoing and best practices will be reviewed and recommendations developed in Year 3	The project team will conduct a formal high-level meeting with Yen Bai Provincial Government to tevelop a roadmap to upgrade MCC SHCA to full Nature Reserve status. Conduct effective stakeholder consultation for upgrading MCC SHCA to full Nature Reserve status

Activity 2.9 Develop and implement a Situational Crime Prevention Strategy for each PA, working in close cooperation with commune authorities and police departments.	Strategy has been developed and several activities has implemented. Further activities will conduct in Year 3 at both sites.	Situational Crime Prevention Strategy produced and shared with FPD, PA managers in Year 3 Further activities will conduct in Year 3 at both sites.
Output 3. Resilience of forest-using communities is increased by land-use planning and sustainable livelihoods, including results-based incentives for forest protection, leading to a reduction in negative impacts on forests and wildlife.	3.1 Local capacity built for livelihood skills (heritage crops varieties, medicinal plants, market systems and ecotourism – see 3.7) in 17 local ethnic minority communities (ensuring gender equality and access), by Year 2 of the project. 3.2 90% of local ethnic minority Communities who are directly engaged in project activities report feeling more empowered (in their own lives and with specific regard to PA engagement/steering), at project end compared to project start. 3.3 Land-use planning (process) undertaken in all 17 target villages with engagement from local people of whom 50% are women, by end of Year 1 3.4 Land-use plan implementation is observable in 17 keys villages, reducing negative biodiversity impacts on the two PAs (see Outputs 1 and 2) and underpins both livelihoods improvements and clarification of land-use and rights (see following indicators 3.5-7), between completion of planning (end of Year 1) and end of project. 3.5 Security and/or clarity of land tenure and rights for local communities around the PAs is improved through formal recognition of land-use rights within and outside the PA boundaries,	By the end of year 2, Land-use planning (process) undertaken in all 17 target villages The project was slow in deliver this output during Year 2 but it is now on progress to achieve output. Series of social economic assessment, farming system review, market survey, land-use planning in all 17 target villages have been completely conducted. By the end of this year 2, a total of around 120 households benefitted from the project, with connecting with multi stakeholders, training, set-up a livelihood mode covered, an MOU between local cooperative and a group of local farmers signed through the project. The project aims to increased crop yields by 40%, set up more interest groups (mostly women), contributing significantly to local food security (particularly important in women and vulnerable people). The project will aim to target at least 60% female headed households or 50 households within a year in the pilot areas in year 3. To scale up the livelihood models, the project aims to secure further funding from international donors in the future. By spreading the concept to establish local cooperatives, capacity building and benefits of the programme are accessible to more people through a snowball effect by the end of project This activity is ongoing and best practices will be reviewed and recommendations developed in Year 3

	further supported by approved land-use plans. 3.6 Participatory Market System Development (PMSD) has been undertaken in all 17 target villages by end of Y1, including market analysis and action plan development. 3.7 Five pilots of diversified and more resilient, sustainable livelihoods are operational by end Y2, and demonstrating measurable benefits (e.g. improved yields) by end Y3 (project end) against baseline (to be established at project start), including diversification of crops/commodities cultivated, market access improvements, and community-based tourism. Baseline data to be established at project start (e.g. actual yields, estimates of yields, or perception of yields), and repeated at project end.	
Activity 3.1 Facilitate and produce Participatory Resource/Land-Use Maps and Plans (PRUM/PLUPs) in 17 villages in the buffer zones surrounding the two PAs, following an FPIC process.	This activity has been implemented as planned	No need for this activity.
Activity 3.2 Support a consultative process of the review and strengthening of land tenure, in partnership with a local lawyer, following an FPIC process.	This activity has been implemented as planned	Further discussions with department of natural resources will be held. Report and the best recommendations will be distributed to stakeholders.
Activity 3.3 Collect socio-economic and social impact assessment data bi-annually, including a participatory identification of associated indicators of	This active has been completed at project start.	This activity will be carried out at by July 2023 at mid-project.

change that can be used for monitoring.		
Activity 3.4 Conduct a review of existing farming systems, participatory SWOT and gap analyses, and farmer surveys, to inform and monitor agri-livelihoods interventions.	This activity has been completed	No need for this activity.
Activity 3.5 Implement PMSD process in 17 villages to select products for market analysis and development, evaluating products under social and biodiversity criteria.	This activity has been completed	No need for this activity.
Activity 3.6 Develop and implement an action plan based on multi-stakeholder workshop(s) with market actors and communities, ensuring participation of women and vulnerable groups.	This activity has been completed	No need for this activity.
Activity 3.7 Pilot five livelihoods models, including agriculture and ecotourism interventions, developed and co-implemented with SRD, including business planning and training for communities on: crop diversification, yield maximisation, supply chains and market access.	This activity has been implemented as planned	Some activities carried out in Year 2 but this activity will mainly be carried out in Year 3
Activity 3.8 Implement an eco-stove design and procurement work-stream to reduce local fuel wood requirements for households and for cardamom drying	198 eco-stoves were delivered to 198 local households This activity has been completed	This activity is completed as scheduled, however further actions to explore how to scale this type of eco stoves to dry cardamom outside of forest.
Output 4. (Insert agreed Output) Novel and sustainable finance approaches for enforcement and PA management are piloted for both PAs.	*(Insert agreed Output level indicators)* 4.1 Community patrol payments (for CCT) are part-funded, at least 10%, by Payments for Forest Ecosystem Services (PES) by Q1Y3 4.2 Patrols are taking place as contracted and payments (from FFI and PES) are performance-based, based on SMART/GPS data	(Report against the indicators on progress towards achieving the Output) As reported, in 2022, the annual revenue for Muong La NR through the Payment for Environmental Services scheme will be VND 133.609.500 (c. $5,000) accounting for 47% of the annual budget for CCT member salaries. This achievement continues to be addressed to the Output 4, focusing on novel sustainable finance approaches. Having said that, the project progress toward outputs at this stage is on trach. The proposed indicators at output level are still the best indicators.

	4.3 PES funding is made available to support the operational costs of both PAs (baseline: 0; at project start all PES monies go to communities or admin)	SMART data recorded monthly.
Activity 4.1 Explore innovative sustainable financing options for enforcement and PA management, developing a business plan to secure PES (and other) funding for these, including at least one additional CCT group.	On-going	The project plans to continue to explore options for securing PES at both sites.
Activity 4.2 Obtain legally binding government approval of all PES agreements, for community-based forest protection, through a process of collaborative policy development and advocacy.	On-going	The project continues to conduct consultation meetings with PA management boards and FDP to obtain PES agreements.

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 forests in northern Vietnam are flourishing under sustainable, collaborative protection and use, supporting thriving populations of gibbons, langurs, and other threatened and endemic species			
Outcome: Two priority PAs in Northern Vietnam demonstrate improved and sustainable protection of forest habitats and associated species through enhanced governance, sustainable finance and improved local wellbeing	0.1 Recorded/Reported incidents of illegal hunting (firearms/bows) have reduced by 10% by project end, from 2019 baseline 0.2 Recorded/Reported incidents of snaring have reduced by 10% by project end from 2019 baseline 0.3 By project end, for at least 400 women and men (approx. 20% of the local population) in 17 villages (in three communes: Che Tao, Ngoc Chien and Hua Trai) community wellbeing has improved by 10% against 2019 baseline 0.4. METT data (coupled with threat/SMART and key species data) shows measurable improvement in PA governance of both sites by project end, compared to baseline. 0.5 By project end, the attitude and actions of local people have shifted significantly towards, and in support of, achieving conservation objectives, compared to baseline (to be established at project start) 0.6 By project end, at least 15% of CCTs' salary comes from PES payments	0.1 SMART reports; Annual reports of local wildlife trade (district and provincial markets and restaurants) 0.2 SMART reports; Annual reports of local wildlife trade (district and provincial markets and restaurants); specific snare density baseline and project end surveys 0.3 Direct wellbeing measures (metrics), e.g. happiness, hunger, employment, and cumulative indicators for material conditions, quality of life and future sustainability (natural, social, human and economic capital) for ethnic minority people living around the PA complex, as measured against 2019 baselines, via: Social impact assessment; Annual KAB reports; Annual socio-economic reports; Annual social safeguard (SIS) and grievance redress (GRM) reports 0.4 Annual METT scores (reports) for both PAs 0.5 Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour (KAB) survey reports; SMART data/reports 0.6 FFI finance reports (showing amount and proposal of CCT salary	1. Evidence that monitoring by local people (patrol teams) and rangers is accurate and consistent, and produces reliable data sets. 2. The gibbon census is able to record a significant (enough) proportion of the population and occupancy from which to infer change 3. Target communities / project beneficiaries have the sufficient capacity (including time), and/or the project mitigates any shortcomings (e.g. language or literacy barriers) and continues interest to engage in and benefit from the project as planned

		covered) and corroborated by annual finance records from FPD	
Output 1 Quality and sustainability of community-based patrolling, crime prevention and PA monitoring is improved.	1.1 SMART data is collected accurately and regularly, according to work plans and Terms of References, from Q2Y1 to project end 1.2 No detectable decreases in forest cover, quality (degradation) or connectedness within or between the PAs between project start and end 1.3 There is a measurable reduction in cumulative, reported incidents of illegal hunting and snaring (see 0.1/0.2) both within and outside of the two PAs, by project end. 1.4 SMART data used by PA managers to inform monthly patrol plans and adaptive PA management inform monthly patrol plans and adaptive (on-the-ground) PA management, throughout project duration 1.5 Gibbons (flagship species), and at least 3 'threat indicator' species (chosen to indicate changes in forest condition and hunting threats, e.g. butterflies, orchids and/or Owston's civet) , show measurable increases in population, or abundance, or occupancy, by project end, from 2019 baselines, following a detailed monitoring plan that will be developed.	1.1. SMART reports (with GPS tracking data) 1.2 Land cover change detection for both sites – e.g. Google Forest, the Norway-Planet tool or Global Forest Watch 1.3 SMART reports; Annual reports of local wildlife trade (district and provincial markets and restaurants); specific snare density surveys at project start (baseline) and project end. 1.4 SMART data is collected around 15 days/month throughout project duration by CCT (and by CCT and rangers in ML NR) and turned into monthly SMART reports by PA staff each month from project start to end 1.5 Gibbon monitoring data (monthly); gibbon census at project end (against 2019 baseline); and annual camera-trapping / bio-indicator surveys (reports). Changes in Phayre's langur (Grey leaf monkey – *Trachypithecus crepusculus*) will also be monitored during gibbon surveys, SMART and bio-monitoring / patrol activities.	1. The community patrol team members have sufficient support (from FFI and PA staff), capacity (built by FFI as needed) and ongoing motivation (internal but also linked to incentives) to undertake the required forest patrols (approx. 15 days/month) 2. CCT and ranger patrols and snare removal, coupled with awareness raising and crime prevention activities, is enough to significantly reduce threats 3. That FFI financial support to the CCT patrollers incentivises effective enforcement / monitoring 4. That target species have the time and ecological ability to respond to improved protection outcomes and demonstrate changes in population, abundance or occupancy in the timeframe of the project
Output 2 PA governance is effective, sustainable and collaborative.	2.1 Both PAs show evidence of improved management at project end compared to project start, by a 25% increase in METT scores (and	2.1 METT scores (annual) and ACB/IUCN 'PA job competency standards' assessments at project start	1. Management effectiveness tools reflect the genuine condition of and change in PA management effectiveness

	associated improvements in threat reduction shown in SMART data)

2.2 20% more local people, of whom 100% are from local, ethnic minority groups and at least 50% are women, are engaged in PA management/oversight and 80% report having a greater influence on PA management, throughout the project period

2.3 Feasibility study for upgrading MCC Species and Habitat Conservation Area to a Nature Reserve completed by end of Year 2

2.4 Social safeguards and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) are in place by end of Year 1, and either no grievances recorded or all grievances have been redressed

2.5 A Situational Crime Prevention Strategy has been developed and implemented for each PA, by Q4Y2 | and end; at least one PA is eligible for IUCN Green List nomination

2.2 (i) Annual MAC reports; (ii) Social-economic and KAB reports (baseline and project end)

2.3 Feasibility study for PA upgrading (submitted to Yen Bai Provincial People's Committee)

2.4 (i) Safeguards (list) and final report; (ii) The GRM are producing regular reports from Q1Y2 to project end

2.5 Situational Crime Prevention Strategy for each PA; SMART reports; annual reports of local wildlife trade (district and provincial markets and restaurants); specific snare density surveys at project start (baseline) and project end. | 2. Improvement of local patrolling and law enforcement, by state and non-state actors, is a sufficient deterrent to change local behaviour / reduce threats. SMART data/reports will be used to measure this and inform adaptive management or other interventions, as needed

3. That local government authorities and other state actors, including PA management boards, remain – and are increasingly – open to the active participation of local community members and/or CSOs in PA/forest governance

4. That local community members / representatives maintain interest in and/or have the time and (other) capacity to meaningfully engage in PA management |
| **Output 3**

Resilience of forest-using communities is increased by land-use planning and sustainable livelihoods, including results-based incentives for forest protection, leading to a reduction in negative impacts on forests and wildlife. | 3.1 Local capacity built for livelihood skills (heritage crops varieties, medicinal plants, market systems and ecotourism – see 3.7) in 17 local ethnic minority communities (ensuring gender equality and access), by Year 2 of the project.

3.2 90% of local ethnic minority Communities who are directly engaged in project activities report feeling more empowered (in their own lives and with specific regard to PA engagement/steering), at project end compared to project start. | 3.1 Reports of gender-disaggregated community empowerment training, pre-PMSD

3.2 Community consultations and KAB reports
3.3 Consultation reports; Land-use plans; KAB reports; SMART data/reports

3.4 17 village level land-use plans; Community consultation and SMART / biodiversity data and reports | 1. That local community members have the capacity, and continue to have motivation, to engage in the planning, development and implementation of sustainable livelihoods

2. That local government authorities maintain openness to the clarification and/or strengthening of tenure and customary legal and land rights

3. That no unexpected events happen to substantially, negatively affect local |

		3.5 Social impact assessments at project start and end and annual socio-economic reports; participatory exploration of customary legal systems and their application, and potential for forest land allocation (report)	attitudes and behaviours towards forest and gibbon/wildlife conservation
	3.3 Land-use planning (process) undertaken in all 17 target villages with engagement from local people of whom 50% are women, by end of Year 1		4. That the locally-owned development of safeguards and grievance redress, through processes that enable equitable participation, results in mechanisms that are ultimately appropriate, such that community rights and wellbeing are fully protected, enhanced, and take into account the differing roles, power and status of men and women, and other vulnerable groups (relates also to Output 2)
	3.4 Land-use plan implementation is observable in 17 keys villages, reducing negative biodiversity impacts on the two PAs (see Outputs 1 and 2) and underpins both livelihoods improvements and clarification of land-use and rights (see following indicators 3.5-7), between completion of planning (end of Year 1) and end of project. 3.5 Security and/or clarity of land tenure and rights for local communities around the PAs is improved through formal recognition of land-use rights within and outside the PA boundaries, further supported by approved land-use plans.	3.6 PMSD reports; market analysis reports; action plan 3.7 Livelihoods pilot reports; annual crop/production (farmer) surveys; social impact assessments and socio-economic reports at project start and end	
	3.6 Participatory Market System Development (PMSD) has been undertaken in all 17 target villages by end of Y1, including market analysis and action plan development.		
	3.7 Five pilots of diversified and more resilient, sustainable livelihoods are operational by end Y2, and demonstrating measurable benefits (e.g. improved yields) by end Y3 (project end) against baseline (to be established at project start), including diversification of crops/commodities cultivated, market access improvements, and community-based tourism. Baseline data to be established at project start (e.g. actual yields, estimates of yields, or perception of yields), and repeated at project end.		

| **Output 4**

Novel and sustainable finance approaches for enforcement and PA management are piloted for both PAs. | 4.1 Community patrol payments (for CCT) are part-funded, at least 10%, by Payments for Forest Ecosystem Services (PES) by Q1Y3

4.2 Patrols are taking place as contracted and payments (from FFI and PES) are performance-based, based on SMART/GPS data

4.3 PES funding is made available to support the operational costs of both PAs (baseline: 0; at project start all PES monies go to communities or admin) | 4.1 FFI financial reports (linked to 1.1) and governmental agreements or local policy / ordinance on payments and benefits sharing

4.2 SMART / GPS data and monthly & annual SMART reports (including track data / route maps)

4.3 MAC meeting minutes / reports and verbal reports from PA managers (with written confirmation, if possible | 1. The government (local/provincial authorities) approve for approx. 10% of household PES payments to be pooled for community-based forest patrolling

2. That both the local communities and the local government, including PA Management Boards, are all in support of using a proportion of PES income for PA management, to bolster operational budgets |

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

Output 1 – Quality and sustainability of community-based patrolling, crime prevention and PA monitoring is improved.
1.1 Implement SMART patrols by rangers and CCTs (20 members across both sites), providing support and training on snare removal, awareness raising, and SMART (including using SMART reports to inform adaptive PA management).
1.2 Conduct forest cover, quality and connectedness surveys at project start and end.
1.3 Develop a sustainable incentive programme for CCT and PA rangers to motivate them beyond salary and SMART-based performance monitoring (annual payments).
1.4 Conduct intensive annual snare removal surveys by CCT and PA rangers, supported by Youth Union and volunteers.
1.5 Sign conservation agreements with community leaders and specific households (of known hunters), specifying project benefits and conditionality of benefits.
1.6 Conduct annual METT assessments at project start (to establish baseline), mid-project and project end.
1.7 Develop and implement a bio-monitoring protocol, for black gibbons and key indicators species, in addition to SMART monitoring.
1.8 Conduct annual market/wildlife trade surveys in surrounding districts and urban centres in Son La and Yen Bai (overt, not covert, data collection, including risk assessments).
Output 2 – PA governance is effective, sustainable and collaborative.
2.1 Develop collaborative PA management plans, including discussion facilitation and technical input, maintaining and supporting SMART ranger and CCT patrols.
2.2 Develop and deliver training courses for PA staff, based on training needs assessments using the ARCBC/IUCN Competency Standards for Protected Areas.
2.3 Maintain and strengthen Collaborative Management Advisory Committees (MAC), including regulations, scope and memberships, and inclusive of MAC facilitation and technical advice.
2.4 Develop site-specific/PA social safeguards, monitoring plan and grievance redress mechanism (GRM), through village-level, household and focus group discussions, ensuring participation of women and vulnerable groups.
2.5 Conduct Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour (KAB) surveys at project start (baseline), mid-project and project end.
2.6 Develop awareness-raising and communications strategies about the project at local (trainings, events, printed literature, schools curricular), sub-national (workshops, study tours), and national (fora) levels.
2.7 Undertake IUCN Green List assessments for both PAs.
2.8 Develop a feasibility study for upgrading MCC HSCA to full Nature Reserve status and actively support the upgrade through consultation and data sharing.
2.9 Develop and implement a Situational Crime Prevention Strategy for each PA, working in close cooperation with commune authorities and police departments.
Output 3 – Resilience of forest-using communities is increased by land-use planning and sustainable livelihoods, creating result-based incentives for forest protection leading to reduced negative impact on forests and species.

3.1 Facilitate and produce Participatory Resource/Land-Use Maps and Plans (PRUM/PLUPs) in 17 villages in the buffer zones surrounding the two PAs, following an FPIC process.

3.2 Support a consultative process of the review and strengthening of land tenure, in partnership with a local lawyer, following an FPIC process.

3.3 Collect socio-economic and social impact assessment data bi-annually, including a participatory identification of associated indicators of change that can be used for monitoring.

3.4 Conduct a review of existing farming systems, participatory SWOT and gap analyses, and farmer surveys, to inform and monitor agri-livelihoods interventions.

3.5 Implement PMSD process in 17 villages to select products for market analysis and development, evaluating products under social and biodiversity criteria.

3.6 Develop and implement an action plan based on multi-stakeholder workshop(s) with market actors and communities, ensuring participation of women and vulnerable groups.

3.7 Pilot five livelihoods models, including agriculture and ecotourism interventions, developed and co-implemented with SRD, including business planning and training for communities on: crop diversification, yield maximisation, supply chains and market access.

3.8 Implement an eco-stove design and procurement work-stream to reduce local fuel wood requirements for households and for cardamom drying.

Output 4 – Novel sustainable finance approaches for enforcement and PA management are piloted for both PAs.

4.1 Explore innovative sustainable financing options for enforcement and PA management, developing a business plan to secure PES (and other) funding for these, including at least one additional CCT group.

4.2 Obtain legally binding government approval of all PES agreements, for community-based forest protection, through a process of collaborative policy development and advocacy.

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

The Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs) use high quality and accessible Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) to enable scaling, replication and increase the impact of the funds and the projects we support.

By asking project teams to align indicators with the Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators, we aim to increase our contribution to the global evidence base for activities that support biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction and capability & capacity.

The tables below are provided to assist project teams in reporting against Standard Indicators. Please report against the Standard Indicators that you have selected specifically for your project in Table 1 below. Refer to the Standard Indicator Guidance & Menu available on the Darwin Initiative website for guidance on how to select indicators, as well as how to disaggregate reporting within your chosen indicators.

New projects should complete the Y1 column and also indicate the number planned during the project lifetime. Continuing projects should copy and paste the information from previous years and add in data for the most recent reporting period.

We recognise that our menu cannot cover all the potential monitoring needs for all projects – where necessary you can select indicators from other sources or develop your own. See our BCF MEL guidance on best practices for selecting and developing indicators.

Table 1   Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
E.g. DI-A01	E.g. People who attended training on CBD Reporting Standards	E.g. Number of officials from national Department of Environment who attended training on CBD Reporting Standards	People	Men	20			20	60
E.g. DI-C17	E.g. Articles published by members of the project team	E.g. Number of unique papers published in peer reviewed journals	Number	None	1			1	4
DI-A01	People who attended SMART and gibbons monitoring trainings	Number of CCTs & PA staff from MCC SHCA & ML NR who attended SMART & gibbon monitoring	people	men	26	43		43	70
DI-A01	People who attended law enforcement trainings	Number of CCTs, PA staff, commune policer who attended Law enforcement training in MCC SHCA & ML NR	people	Women (4) Men (48)	0	52		52	55
DI-A01	People who attended METT workshop in MLNR	Number of PA staff, CCTs, government officials who attended METT workshop in MLNR	People	Women (11) Men (24)	48	35		83	83
DI-A01	People who attended the first aid trainings	Number of CCTs, PA staff, who attended the first aid training in both sites	people	Women (0) Men (41)	0	42		42	48
DI-A01	People who attended the meeting of Collaborative	Number of officials, PA managers who attended the	People	Women (3)	0	16		16	16

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
	Management Advisory Committees (MAC) in MCC	meeting of Collaborative Management Advisory Committees (MAC) in MCC		Men (13)					
DI-A01	People who attended the Year-end meetings in Muong La NR	Number of officials, PA managers who attended the meeting of year-end meetings	People	Women (5) Men (44)	49	49		98	100
DI-A01	People who attended the exchange visit	Number of officials, PA managers who attended the exchange visit	People	Women (5) Men (44)	0	34		34	34
DI-A01	People who attended the workshop IUCN Green List assessments for both PAs.	Number of officials, PA managers who attended the exchange visit	People	Women (4) Men (11)	0	15		15	20
DIA04	People who attended the Crime Prevention workshop in Muong La NR	Number of PA managers/staff reporting that they are applying new capabilities regarding Crime Preventation workshop 6 months after training.	People	Men (15) Women (2)	0	17		17	27
DI-B07	People who attended the community based conservation group	Number of CCTs participating in community-based management groups and received PFES	People	Men (26)		26		26	26
DI-B12	Number of policies developed or formally contributed to by projects and being	Number of policies developed or formally contributed to by projects and being implemented by appropriate	Number	1		1		1	2

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
	implemented by appropriate authorities	authorities (Preventing cardamon farming in the MCC SHCA)							
DI-A07	Number of government institutions/departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues	Number of government institutions/departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues	Governe ment departme nts (Yen Bai & Son La PPC; MCC SHCA, ML NR; Muong La & MCC DCP)	6		4		4	4
DI-B05	Number of people with increased participation in local communities / local management organisations (i.e., participation in Governance/citizen engagement)	Number of local people & students increased participation in community outreach/ sign conservation agreements	people	Men (700) Women (1300)		2,000		2,000	3,000
DI-B10	Number of individuals /households reporting an adoption of livelihood improvement practices as a result of project activities.	Number of households reporting an adopt of tomato growing model	Househo lds	15		15		15	40
DI-C15	Number of Media related activities.	Number of Media related project activities.	Number	10	3	13		16	22

In addition to reporting any information on publications under relevant standard indicators, in Table 2, provide full details of all publications and material produced over the last year that can be publicly accessed, e.g. title, name of publisher, contact details, cost. Mark with an asterisk (*) all publications and other material that you have included with this report.

Table 2   Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)
2022 Year Calendar	Calendar	FFI, 2023	Female	Vietnamese	N/A	Printed and electronic copies
Together young generation protect primates	Cap	FFI, 2023	Female	Vietnamese	N/A	N/A
Black gibbon – The pride of Mu Cang Chai MCC & Muong La NR	Drawing	FFI, 2023	Male	Vietnamese	N/A	N/A
Black gibbon – The pride of Mu Cang Chai MCC & Muong La NR	Backdrop & check in area for gibbon festivals	FFI, 2023	Female	Vietnamese	N/A	N/A
The conservation project – black gibbon	Leaflet	FFI, 2023	Female	Vietnamese	N/A	N/A
The conservation project – black gibbon	Poster	FFI, 2023	Female	Vietnamese	N/A	N/A

Checklist for submission

	Check
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?	Yes
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	Yes
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.	No
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.	Yes
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	No
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 16)?	Yes
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Yes
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Yes
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	