Darwin Initiative Main: Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note": (https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/information-notes/)

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

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2024

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line

Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	**DIR28S1\1174 (29-018)**
Project title	Promotion of coexistence in human-elephant conflict hotspots in Northeast India
Country/ies	India
Lead Partner	British Asian Trust
Project partner(s)	Aaranyak
Darwin Initiative grant value	£585,619
Start/end dates of project	01 June 22/31 March 25
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2023 – Mar 2024) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024 Annual Report II
Project Leader name	Belinda Stewart-Cox
Project website/blog/social media	N/A uses British Asian Trust and Aaranyak socials
Report author(s) and date	British Asian Trust: Belinda Stewart-Cox, Auro Shashwat, Anna Mennella, Caroline Abraham; Aaranyak: Bibhuti P Lahkar, Alolika Sinha, Zakir Islam Bora 29/04/2024

1. Project summary

Human-elephant conflict (HEC) threatens elephants and impacts the overall wellbeing of the people in shared landscapes. The states of Assam and Meghalaya in Northeast India are strongholds of the Asian elephant population, and there has been an upsurge in HEC in these states. HEC impacts the food and nutrition security of people, threatening their lives and livelihoods. This leads to retaliatory killings of elephants, often undermining conservation efforts. Most HEC incidents are prevalent in rural areas, affecting marginalised people with low incomes.

Through this project, we aim to apply the IUCN SSC guidelines on human-wildlife conflict and coexistence in 20 target villages across six HEC affected districts in Assam and Meghalaya. We are working towards increased incomes for 600 households, ensuring improved protection for Asian elephants and other threatened species through conservation education, capacity building of stakeholders, empowerment of local communities, and supporting HEC mitigation tools like seasonal solar-powered electric fences, solar streetlights, and bio-fences. In protecting livelihoods

and increasing incomes, the project is reducing poverty whilst simultaneously protecting elephants and minimising the loss of biodiversity.

Figure 1. Target villages across five districts (Jorhat, Majuli, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia) in eastern Assam

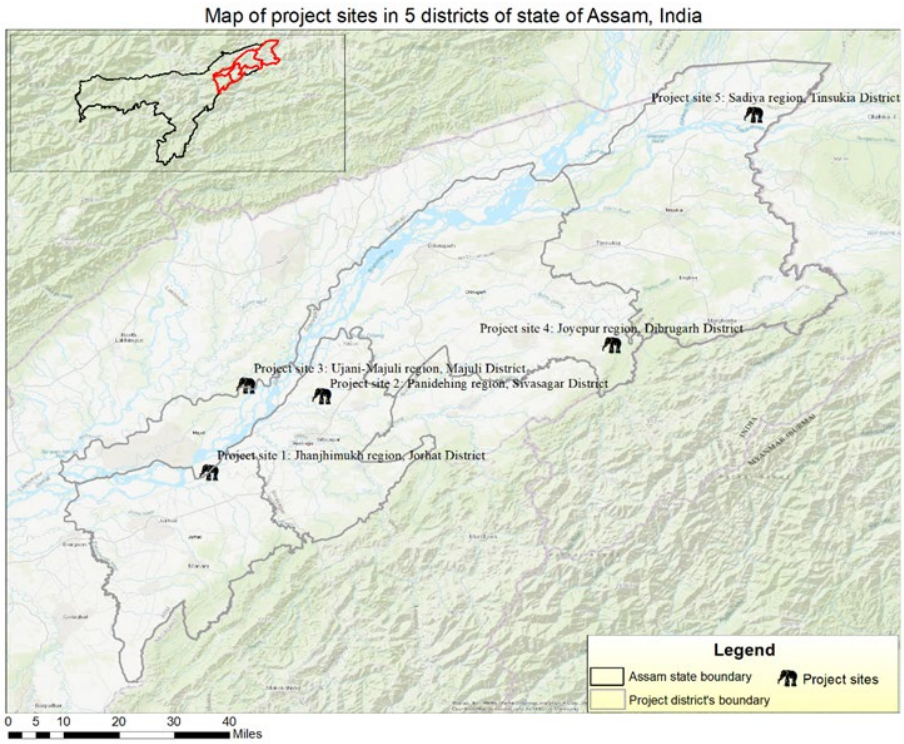
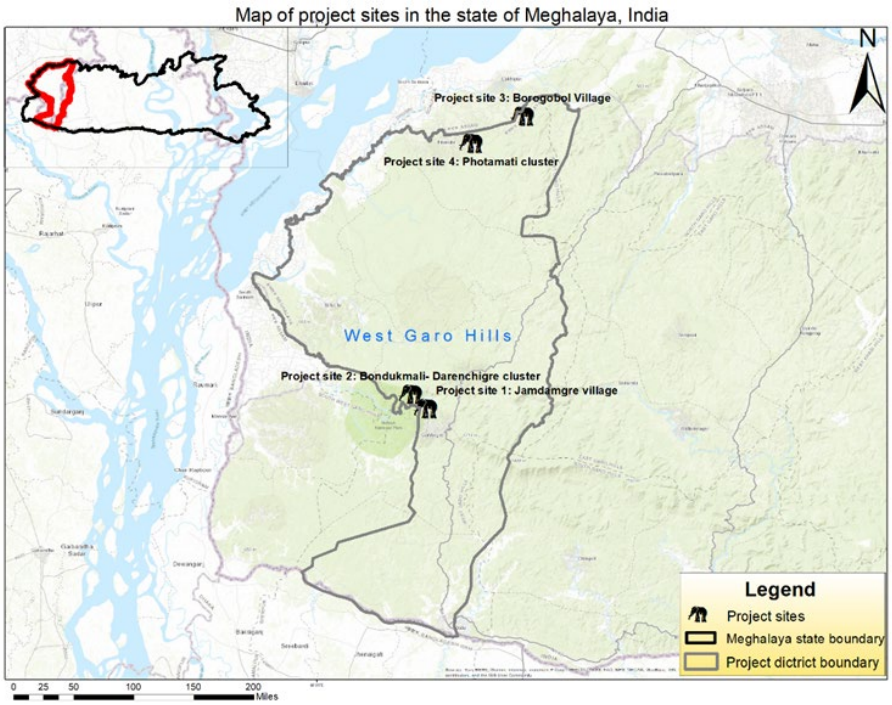


Figure 2. Target villages in West Garo hills District of Meghalaya



2. Project stakeholders/ partners

The British Asian Trust is working with our local partner, Aaranyak, to implement the project activities on ground. Our staff in India and our partner, Aaranyak, work in close collaboration. We conduct regular field visits, interact with the relevant stakeholders including local communities and discuss issues, challenges and way forward in a consultative manner. The Trust, as Project Lead, is responsible for the overall Programme and Grant Management, which includes

monitoring and data verification, as well as capacity building and regional/cross sectoral learning. Aaranyak, as the implementing partner, is responsible for on-ground implementation of project activities, local stakeholder management, and monitoring and evaluation. The partners are working closely together on the continual adaptive management of the project implementation, holding regular reviews of project data and feedback to ensure the project design and delivery responds to learnings and changes in context.

The project is not just a collaboration between the Trust and Aaranyak, but with the local communities and other key stakeholders, particularly local government. The project works with host country institutions, as demonstrated in both Assam and Meghalaya where the primary government line department (i.e., Forest Departments) are involved in implementing the activities. Aaranyak holds regular meetings with relevant authorities to update them on project progress and seek guidance when required. Other departments and establishments have been involved, such as Agriculture department, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK, which are research based agricultural centres that are part of the National Agricultural Research System), Dibrugarh University, Assam Power Distribution Company Ltd. (APDCL), Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI), media and others.

Local communities and other key stakeholders, including local governments alongside community leaders, youth groups, Village Development Committees and other community members, have been actively involved in identifying target villages related to HEC alongside the project team. We followed a bottom-up, participatory approach with the community to select the 600 beneficiaries and the alternative livelihoods they can undertake. We regularly engage with these 600 selected beneficiaries along with other community members through outreach programmes, capacity building training, and managing HEC alerts. We have been particularly successful in mobilising village leaders to promote engagement, including village heads. Lastly, the affinity of the community towards the project and the project team is evident during every visit and is an important indicator for success.

3. Project progress Outputs:

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1: Profiling the problem and building evidence

Activity 1.1 to 1.4: Completed in the Year 1.

Activity 1.5- Monitoring of HEC in and around Project village: We continue to regularly monitor elephant movement and HEC incidents that occur in and around the project villages through active participation of the project team members, village champions (VCs) and Rapid Response Units (RRUs) members (details in section 3.1). In the last year, we recorded 64 incidents of crop damage, of which 36 were reported from Meghalaya and 28 from eastern Assam, and 16 incidents of property damage from the 20 project villages (Details in Annexure 4). The number of HEC incidents documented during this reporting period is higher than the previous year. This can be attributed to the inclusion of the HEC occurrence data from West Garo hills, and the active vigilance and participation of the local communities through responses from RRUs and VCs in addition to the work of the project team.

Besides monitoring HEC, we documented the presence of other wildlife through direct sightings or indirect evidence by the project team members and the VCs (Annexure 19).

Activity 1.6- Data analysis and report writing: The project team has analysed the data collected in the last year and will subsequently share the findings with concerned stakeholders. Like last year, the information could not be shared with stakeholders at the end of the year due to the annual harvest festival in the region. We will share the findings in Q1-Y3. The information is available on request.

Output 2: Promoting security for people and elephants by raising awareness

Activity 2.1- Recruit village champion: Completed in Year 1

Activity 2.2 -Conduct workshops for education strategy and IEC: Completed in Year 1

Activity 2.3-Developing IEC materials: Based on the inputs from the education strategy and IEC workshop, Aaranyak/ Trust's project team's expertise and experience in developing learning strategy and information education and communications (IEC) materials for generating mass awareness, an outreach campaign was designed called *"Gajah Kotha"* (in Assamese, which translates to elephant stories), and *"Mongma Golpo"* (in Garo) for the general population. This campaign was to raise awareness on elephant ecology and behaviour, HEC, and measures of coexistence. Two sets of IEC materials were developed – Phase I (submitted with Annual report of Year I) highlighted basic elephant ecology, cultural relevance of elephants, and the need for conservation. Phase II of the IEC material (Annexure 5 and 6) highlights the drivers of HEC and methods to mitigate it. The IEC materials have been prepared in consultation with regional experts. We also referred to existing educational materials on biodiversity conservation and developed presentations relevant to our local context on biodiversity conservation; interdependence of species; nature-culture relationship, weather, climate & life.

Moreover, we made a documentary on community-managed solar-powered electric fencing as an effective HEC mitigation tool to protect crops and property (Link available in Section 12). We screened this documentary at strategic locations in project villages and published it on Aaranyak's social media platforms, with over 400 views on YouTube.

Activity 2.4: Train Village Champions- We conducted a "training of the trainers" programme for the "Village Champions" to help them conduct outreach programmes in their respective project villages to raise awareness about elephants, effective techniques to reduce HEC, and conservation of Asian elephants.
We organised three separate training events. On 28th April, 2023, a training was conducted for VCs using the IEC materials (of Gajah Katha Phase I, details in section 3.1) in Dibrugarh district, and 14 VCs of project villages in Assam participated. On 11th January, 2024, training on Gajah Katha Phase II (details in section 3.1) was imparted to seven VCs in Assam. Finally, three VCs from the project villages in West Garo Hills in Meghalaya along with three *Nokmas* (Village Heads) were present in the "*Mongma Golpo"* Phase I training held on 14th July, 2023.

Activity 2.5- Conduct awareness: An outreach campaign called "*Gajah Kotha*" (*Mongma Golpo* in Garo), which translates to elephant stories, was designed to generate awareness among the local communities and students. The *Gajah Kotha* was designed in two phases. In the first phase, we used well-illustrated IEC material to highlight basic elephant ecology, the cultural relevance of the elephants in local communities, elephants' protection, and conservation status. The second phase delved into drivers of HEC, mitigating HEC with tried and tested measures, and highlighted how with a little perseverance and simple mitigation tools one may coexist with elephants. For this phase, we designed a set of 20 IEC materials and conducted 100 such programmes (around five events/village) (Annexure 21) reaching 4126 people directly, of which 44.54 % (N= 1837) were women across six project districts (Annexure 7).

Besides *Gajah Kotha*, we generated awareness among people by conducting events on special days, such as Wildlife Day and Biodiversity Day. We also participated in community organised events, such as the Children Science Congress, organised by schools and others to interact with the masses and spread the message on the need for conservation. We used avenues, such as documentary screening, painting, photo exhibition, "*Binamulia Pathadan*" (free education camp), street plays, cycle rallies, bird watching, and targeted interaction events to reach people. We

conducted 122 such outreach events in this reporting period, and reached 7036 people directly, of which 26.29 % (N= 1849) were women (Annexure 8).

On World Elephant Day, we held a remarkable programme. Aaranyak, through its consistent work in the landscape, has catalysed collaborative work between the Assam and Meghalaya Forest Departments which resulted in joint monitoring of HEC incidents and paved the way for other elephant conservation efforts. Among the first collaborative efforts was the joint observation of World Elephant Day by forest officials including frontline staff, higher officials, and the project team from Aaranyak. A football match between the forest officials of both the states was held, termed as the "Elephant Cup". This was followed by appreciation towards the local community members, who volunteer to protect elephants that venture into human settlements. This joint event was also graced by the District Commissioner of Goalpara district, Superintendent of Police, Conservator of Forest (Territorial, Wildlife and Social forestry) Garo Hills Region, District Forest Officer (DFO) E&W Garo Hills Wildlife, Tura, DFO, Goalpara, DFO (Territorial), East & North Garo Hills and Assistant Deputy Commissioner, North Garo Hills of Meghalaya, and about 300 villagers.

With a focus on improving the participation of women who are important stakeholders for biodiversity conservation and often go unheard, we conducted 11 outreach events for women from the HEC-affected villages in eastern Assam with the aim to provide a platform for them to share their knowledge on local biodiversity and apprise them of their role in protecting the same. We worked with these women to boost their morale and build confidence. The events consisted of a cooking competition using locally available ingredients, environmental games, training on first aid, and an interaction with the project team on how to ensure human-elephant coexistence and biodiversity conservation (Details of the events are available in Annexure 9). Through these 11 outreach events, we reached out to 360 women directly across six districts in Assam.

Cumulatively, through direct interactions in outreach events, indirect communications (through social media platforms – Annexure 10 – and word of mouth) we reached around 80,000 people. We have considered that each person we interacted with is likely to have shared their knowledge with their family members (family size considered here as 4 members on an average).

Activity 2.6- Monitoring by village champions: The village champions along with the project team undertake surveys in the villages to monitor the measures adopted by the villagers to mitigate HEC incidents. During the reporting period, the VCs made at least 11 visits in eastern Assam, and had multiple informal interactions in project villages in both eastern Assam and Meghalaya to understand the current practices of HEC mitigation and suggest safer measures wherever needed (Details in Annexure 11).

Activity 2.7- Impact of Awareness: For the outreach campaign "*Gajah Kotha*/*Mongma Golpo*" conducted to raise awareness on elephants and HEC mitigation, a pre and post session evaluation was conducted using questionnaires to understand the knowledge gained by the audience. For Phase I of the *Gajah Kotha* programme, we evaluated 75% (n=59) of the conducted sessions, and 92% (n=41) of the conducted sessions for phase II. There has been at least 50% increase in the number of questions attempted between pre and post session evaluation.

Activity 2.8- Media Workshops: During the reporting period, we organised three workshops for media personnel and media houses on biodiversity conservation and human-wildlife coexistence to highlight their role and potential to help reduce HEC, emphasising the importance of using the appropriate language to grab the attention of policymakers while also garnering support from local communities. Through these workshops, we reached out to 24 journalists at Dhakuakhana (the nearest town to our project villages in Majuli district), 60 in Tinsukia district, in two separate

workshops. Besides the journalists, 15 students, two teachers, and one social activist joined these workshops. Through these workshops, we reached out to 93 people (Annexure 12).

Activity 2.9: Radio shows: We participated in two live radio talk shows, on 10th August 2023 and 20th October 2023 (Annexure 13), through which we interacted with people in Assam as they asked questions related to HEC, its mitigation measures, conservation issues of elephants, among others. The expert panel from Aaranyak, who interacted with the listeners during this hour-long show, consisted of Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar, Alolika Sinha, Jayanta Pathak, Niranjan Bhuyan and Rabiya Daimari. The programme was aired live from Guwahati and Dibrugarh radio stations in Assam. The show reached the length and breadth of Assam, as evident from the listeners who mentioned where they were calling from before posing questions during the show. Additionally, the project team gathered people across several project villages in eastern Assam (Basagaon, Sagunpara, Bezorchiga, Hatishal, Charguwa Kalita gaon, Halodhibari, Konwarbam, Jorchuka Kathoni) to listen in through radios, and ask questions to the panel, (Plate 1). We also recorded and aired two radio programmes which discussed how HEC impacts women in the community, nature-based solutions to mitigate HEC, and how education can lead to coexistence.

Output 3: Protecting livelihoods and assets

Activity 3.1- Hold dialogues with local communities: Completed in the Year 1

Activity 3.2: Village Fence Committee: The Solar-powered electric fence is an effective HEC mitigation tool when managed and maintained regularly. We have supported local communities with seasonal solar fences to protect crops and property and capacity-building through training prior to installation. A village fence committee (VFC) was formed in each village where a solar fence would be installed, and a two-day training was provided. The training module was designed to contain both theory and hands-on sessions. During the reporting period, we conducted four solar fence trainings, one each in Majuli, Sadiya (Tinsukia), Borogobal (West Garo hills), and Sivasagar districts. A total of 202 people were trained (Annexure 14 and 20)

The VFC's primary role is to regularly monitor the fence and carry out maintenance when required. They are also responsible for taking the fence down after harvest and reinstalling it during the cropping season. In Y3, these committees will be responsible for collecting money from each household protected by the fence to maintain a revolving fund of GBP300 for maintenance of the fences post-project.

Activity 3.3. - Seed Funding: Scheduled in Year 3.

Activity 3.4- Formation of Rapid Response Unit- We formed 10 RRUs, six in eastern Assam and four in West Garo hills (Meghalaya). The RRUs consist of local community members who manage an HEC-alert network. The network sends early warnings about elephants to villagers to ensure their safe passage. Currently, 398 people are engaged with 10 RRUs.

Activity 3.5- Training to RRUs: We conducted nine trainings for the RRU members, anti-depredation squad (ADS - a unit formed by the Forest Department), and frontline forest officials using a training module and trained a total of 250 people (the figure varies because many villagers joined the RRU groups post training as well) (Annexure 20). During this training, the participants learnt about elephant behaviour, how to act responsibly when they see elephants in their vicinity and spread the word through dedicated "WhatsApp groups" to alert the villagers and ensure that the elephants are not disturbed by people (Annexure 15). Based on the information on elephant presence shared by the RRUs for each of their localities, we have developed a map to understand the areas frequented by elephants in the village and their movement pattern (Annexure 16)

Activity 3.6: Produce a best practice manual: Our field experience showed that instead of formally publishing a best practice manual, a PowerPoint presentation with the same

information is more utilitarian, and we can then use it while training the RRUs. This has proven to be quite effective in the field as it is easy to access.

Activity 3.7: Provide the RRUs/ADS with field gear: To improve morale and to aid in monitoring of elephants in their vicinity, we provided RRU members with a field kit containing t-shirts, raincoats, and torchlights. So far, the RRU members, across 3 groups, have received 12 torch lights and will receive the rest of the kit post-election (National elections are underway in India and due to the model Code of Conduct for the elections, we have put distribution of materials on hold).

Activity 3.8: Solar fence manual: A manual on the use and installation of non-lethal solar-powered electric fences was designed and published in Assamese by Aaranyak for the community (Annexure 17). As mentioned in AYR1, a manual in Garo language is not required as the community in Meghalaya understands English.

Activity 3.9: Solar fence installation: Initially, we planned 120 km of solar-powered fencing. However, post community interactions and the approval of government supported permanent fencing in one project village, we have reduced the length to 80 kms of solar fencing. We also incorporated an additional bio-fence using Assam lemon. A formal change request approval was obtained from the Biodiversity Challenge Funds on 5th January 2024.

So far, 13.1 km of seasonal solar fence has been installed in Majuli (9.4 km), Borogobol in West Garo hills (1.4 km), and in Sadiya in Tinsukia district (2.3 km). We are implementing an innovative and cost-effective single strand installation, supported by poles installed at an angle of 45° facing outwards. Our experience shows that the angled poles have an advantage over straight ones, as the base of the poles are not easily accessible by elephants. The angled installation also reduces the cost of protecting the poles. This novel approach makes it both cost and time efficient, and easy to maintain. In the third year, we plan to install another 60 km of solar fence in Sivasagar, Jorhat and West Garo hills districts, and bio-fences of 21 km (7 km plantations in three rows) in Sadiya (Tinsukia district), Majuli, and Sivasagar districts.

Activity 3.10- Effectiveness of the solar fences: The project team has established a system to regularly monitor the solar fences and check whether the fence has been working effectively in all locations. At one instance in October, wild elephants damaged the fence. The fence was immediately repaired, and no such incidents were reported henceforth.

Output 4: Promoting supplementary livelihoods

Activity 4.1-Supplementing Livelihood: We conducted willingness surveys in the project villages to gain an understanding of the interest and preference of the beneficiaries' and their willingness to receive support. Based on the information collected, we provided beneficiaries with skill development training during this reporting period on weaving; fishery; poultry; mushroom cultivation; cultivation of cash crops such as mustard, lemon etc.; and pottery and supported them with required resources as well. So far, we have supported 466 beneficiary households in the 20 project villages. These households were selected based on preset criteria (details provided during year 1 annual report). Each beneficiary household is monitored regularly to ensure that they continue their efforts after receiving the training and earn additional income. The details of the income generated, increase from the baseline and how they spend/invest the additional income subsequently is provided in Annexure 18).

Weaving: A 2-day training module by experts provided hands-on training. We organised 11 such trainings in all six districts, and a total of 228 beneficiaries (comprising 100% women) as well as 50 other community members received the training. Each beneficiary received 5 kgs of cotton yarn (a total of 1090 kgs of yarn was provided) to kick-start their weaving initiative. The weaving-beneficiaries produced different kinds of merchandise such as *"Mekhela-sadors"* (traditional two-piece clothes worn by women in Assam), "*gamosa*" (a cotton towel with high cultural value), and stoles. Each merchandise was sold between INR 250 or GBP 2 (for *gamosa*) to INR 4500 or GBP 43 (for *Mekhela-sador*).

Fish Farming: We organised capacity-building training on fishery and aquaculture and renovated existing ponds in households where needed. Then we provided fingerlings of species that have high market value and are commonly reared in Assam, such as the common carp and grass carp. We have supported 15 beneficiaries (8 female and 7 male) with 98 kgs of fingerlings, of which around 59 kgs were harvested. Of these 59 kgs, 39 kgs were sold with a market value of INR 200/kg (GBP1.90/kg). However, many beneficiaries have not harvested their fish to get a better yield the following year.

Poultry Farming: A veterinary doctor trained 60 villagers who chose poultry farming in raising chicks, and informed them about the importance of regular vaccinations and veterinary care. A total of 600 chickens of *"Kamrupa "* breed from the Assam Agriculture University were provided to 60 beneficiaries (22 female and 37 male) from West Garo hills in Meghalaya, along with vaccinations to each chick and other essential veterinary care. However, the poultry farming efforts were futile, as by the end of the fourth month all the chicks died due to a sudden disease outbreak. The primary reason behind this was the lack of easy access to veterinary drugs in the area. Although there are primary veterinary hospitals near the villages, they remain dysfunctional. A major lesson was learnt from this exercise, and we will refrain from supporting livestock as a livelihood option in these areas due to lack of necessary facilities. However, we have interacted with these beneficiaries to find out other potential livelihood options that they would like to undertake. A few have opted for mushroom cultivation, while interactions are still ongoing with others to understand their preference.

Mushroom Cultivation: Training on cultivation of winter varieties of oyster mushroom was provided to six beneficiaries, (100% male), supported with 44 kg of mushroom spawn. The mushroom cultivation was extremely successful, and the beneficiaries could harvest 540 kgs of mushroom, of which 514 kgs were sold in the market at a price of Rs. 200/kg (GBP1.90/kg).

Agriculture Produce: Around 141 beneficiaries opted for cultivation of different winter crops, including cash crops. We collaborated with the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), which is a part of the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) and aims at assessment of location specific technology modules in agriculture and allied enterprises.

A total of 33 people, out of which 4 were female and 29 were male beneficiaries, cultivated potatoes, while 11 beneficiaries (100% male) cultivated mustard. Both mustard and potato cultivators mentioned that the seeds/bulbs received were of high quality, which resulted in minimal wastage and zero pest infestation. As a result, the harvest was good. For 1900 kg of potatoes provided to 33 beneficiaries, 9500 kgs of potatoes were harvested, of which 2830 kgs were sold at a rate between INR 12 to 25 per kg (GBP0.12 - 0.25/kg). The rest of the potatoes were stored for consumption and next year's cultivation.

A total of 11 beneficiaries received 22 kg of mustard and they harvested 738 kgs. The beneficiaries did not sell the mustard, rather stored it for themselves as a buffer stock, so they can sell it in a financial emergency. A total of 12 beneficiaries (10 male and 2 female) cultivated ginger (550 kg were provided to them), and 11 beneficiaries (100% male) received 3055 saplings of "*Bhut jolokia*" or the ghost pepper (local and the world's hottest chilli pepper and are not palatable to the elephants). These crops have not been harvested yet.

Assam lemon, which yields a good market value and can act as bio-fence when cultivated in a particular pattern was opted to serve as a livelihood option and eventually bio-fencing. So far, we have supported 69 beneficiaries (28 female, 41 male) with 18,750 saplings to be cultivated between the suitable time of March-April, and they will bear fruits in the next three years.

Other livelihood generation options that the beneficiaries opted for were: pottery - 6 beneficiaries (100% women) who received 10 tons of soil suitable for pottery; tailoring - 1 woman; bamboo handicraft - 1 man; food processing, including pickle making - 6 women; and bakery products - 1 woman. For each livelihood type, we provided training by either inviting experts from the

Government Department or conducting training collaboratively with the Government departments/agencies.

Activity 4.2. Completed in year 1

Activity 4.3 Details provided in Activity 4.1

Activity 4.4. Details provided in Activity 4.1. An annexure 18 is attached containing details of each beneficiary, the amount of support received, the additional income generated and how this income is invested/saved/spent.

Activity 4.5: We have collaborated with Dr. Himadri Barman, Assistant Professor, Centre for Management Studies, Dibrugarh University Dibrugarh University for conducting market assessment to enhance livelihood promotion.

Activity 4.6: Scheduled in year 3

Activity 4.7-Conduct annual evaluation and impact assessments: We regularly monitor the beneficiaries to understand if they are practising the livelihood activities post training and support, if they are facing any difficulties, and the efforts made to generate income through regular field visits. To facilitate the sale of their products, we held two village-level exhibitions and have plans to scale this further.

Activity 4.8- Document the case studies and share knowledge: We now have dedicated capacity for Conservation Communications at the British Asian Trust. Leveraging this resource, we have a communications strategy in place to document good practices from the project and share in different mediums. We published a blog on 20th March 2024 about four successful alternative crops that we have piloted in the project to mitigate losses from HEC in the project villages. In Y3, we will utilise the information from this Annual Report to publish a case study on our livelihoods initiative and share its success with relevant stakeholders.

Output 5: Sharing knowledge and building capacity

Activity 5.1: Join village meeting to share findings: Village meetings are conducted at regular intervals, mostly in informal ways to discuss the project initiative and progress and receive feedback/input from the beneficiaries and other villagers. In this reporting period, we held four such meetings with officials from the Trust and Aaranyak, two in West Garo hills (Meghalaya), one in Jorhat district, and one in Tinsukia district (Assam). Also, like last year, the information about this year's progress could not be shared with stakeholders at the end of the year due to the annual harvest festival in the region. We will share the findings in Q1-Y3.

Activity 5.2 Prepare reports/journal articles: The team presented about the work during the 19th International Elephant Conservation and Research Symposium, held in Chiang Mai (Thailand) to share learnings and findings from the project. An abstract was published in the "Book of Abstract" for the symposium. Moreover, two blog posts were published on the Trust's website focussing on the project's initiative to promote human elephant coexistence and seasonal solar fencing, and the work was further mentioned in two other blogs on the Trust's website. An article by Belinda Stewart-Cox was also published on the Darwin Initiative website on 12th January 2024. Links to these articles are available in Table 2 Publications.

Activity 5.3: Scheduled in year 3.

Activity 5.4: Due to the political situation in Myanmar, the scheduled knowledge exchange visit of the project personnel to and from the Trust's HEC intervention in Myanmar (Darwin 27-012) to learn and share knowledge could not be possible. Myanmar is currently not issuing VISAs to Indians to travel beyond Yangon. However, both projects teams were able to travel to the 19th International Elephant Conservation and Research Symposium, held in Chiang Mai (Thailand) from 14-17 November 2023. Taking advantage of this opportunity, we facilitated an exchange between the two project teams on the sidelines of the event. This exchange was very beneficial to both teams as they could learn from each other's initiatives. The Myanmar team is

keen to learn more about the livelihoods initiative of this project and the Aaranyak team is keen to learn about the cost-sharing model adopted by the community in Myanmar to set up the seasonal solar electric fences. We will continue to try and organise a visit in Y3.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Profiling the problem and building evidence: *Specific data gathered and analysed for the 6 target districts, including on the human population and local biodiversity, focusing primarily on elephants, HEC, and other rare species*

Most activities under this output were completed in Y1. Now, the team continues to regularly monitor elephant movement and HEC incidents that occur in and around the project villages. In the last year, we recorded 64 incidents of crop damage, of which 36 were reported from Meghalaya and 28 from eastern Assam, and 16 incidents of property damage from the 20 project villages (Details in Annexure 4). Using the information gathered from our regular monitoring and consultations with the community, we have compiled information on the spatial and temporal movements of elephants in and around our project villages (Annexure 16). We are confident that we will successfully complete this output by project end.

Output 2: Promoting security for people and elephants by raising awareness: *Knowledge and understanding of elephants, HEC and strategies to improve safety/security is increased for at least 50% of households in 20 villages across 6 districts (n=2600 households)*

As per the logframe, we have achieved Indicators 2.1 and 2.2. Now, there is one village champion in each village to record data and these champions actively support the project team in outreach activities and serve as the primary contact for HEC mitigation in the village (details available in Section 3.1) Also, the IEC materials in English, and local Assamese and Garo languages are ready. To achieve indicator 2.3 and 2.4, we have designed an outreach campaign called "*Gajah Kotha*" (*Mongma Golpo* in Garo), which translates to elephant stories, to generate awareness among the local communities and students. Till date, we have conducted 100 such programmes (around 5 events/village) reaching 4126 people directly, of which 44.54 % were women across six project districts (Annexure 7). We are on track to achieve both indicators by project end.

Output 3: Protecting livelihoods and assets: *A system of seasonal crop protection is established in 20 target villages, involving the installation of temporary fencing and the formation of local Rapid Response Units (RRU)*

We are progressing steadily on this output. We have designed a training module, which contains both theory and hands-on sessions. In line with Indicator 3.1, we conducted four solar fence trainings in this reporting period and trained 202 community members, compared to our target of 60 people for the project (Annexure 20). We have also achieved Indicator 3.3 and formed 10 RRUs – six in eastern Assam and four in West Garo hills (Meghalaya). The RRUs consist of local community members to manage an HEC-alert network that sends early warnings to the villagers about the presence of elephants and ensures their safe passage. Currently, 398 people are engaged in 10 RRUs. We have also conducted nine training sessions for the RRU members, anti-depredation squad (ADS - a unit formed by the Forest Department), and frontline forest officials using a training module, and trained a total of 250 people.

With respect to Indicator 3.2, our initial target was to install 120 kms of seasonal solar-powered fences. However, after detailed surveys of the area, consultations with the community, and knowledge of a government supported permanent fence in one project village, we reduced the length of the fence to 80 kms and incorporated a bio-fence using Assam lemon, for 21 kms (7 km plantations in three rows). This change was approved by the Biodiversity Challenge Funds team on 5th January 2024. Till date, 13.1 km of seasonal solar fence has been installed in Majuli (9.4 km), Borogobol in West Garo hills (1.4 km), and in Sadiya in Tinsukia district (2.3 km). The solar fencing activity has been delayed as the community took longer than expected to mobilise themselves, but we are on track to install the remaining 60 kms of solar fencing in Y3.

Output 4: Promoting supplementary livelihoods: *Income generation support through training opportunities and access to finance facilitated for 600 households in 20 target villages*

We have made significant progress towards achieving this output. We had already identified the 600 beneficiaries in Y1. Of these, 466 beneficiaries have received their chosen skill-based training (details in Section 3.1), thus contributing towards Indicator 4.1. We have also provided them with materials to start their initiatives and they have already begun earning an income from their selected trades, thereby contributing towards Indicator 4.2. The details of the income generated, increase from the baseline, and how they spend/invest the additional income is provided in Annexure 18. We are now monitoring the beneficiary households to successfully report on Indicator 4.3 by Q2Y3.

Output 5: Sharing knowledge and building capacity: *Skills, learning and best practices derived from this project, and from other national and international HEC projects, are shared locally, regionally and internationally to inform and capacity-build project partners and other human-wildlife coexistence (HECx) facilitators in India and elsewhere.*

While most of the indicators for this output are scheduled for Y3, we are progressing steadily. In line with Indicator 5.1, village meetings are conducted at regular intervals, mostly in informal ways to discuss the project initiative and progress and receive feedback/input from the beneficiaries and other villagers. In this reporting period, we held four such meetings. With reference to Indicator 5.5, the project teams were also able to travel to the 19th International Elephant Conservation and Research Symposium, held in Chiang Mai (Thailand) from 14-17 November 2023. They presented about the project and interacted with other experts working on elephant conservation across the globe. We will report on Indicators 5.2-5.4 next year.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Project Outcome: *Effective application of IUCN Guidelines-based HEC mitigation model in 6 HEC-prone districts in Assam/Meghalaya, resulting in increased incomes for 600 households and improved protection for Asian elephants/other rare species.*

All the project outputs planned have seen significant progress and are at par with the project timeline. With active cooperation of all the stakeholders and a dedicated project team on ground, we are certain that the project outcome will be achieved. Key progress towards the outcome include:

- A dedicated outreach campaign called "*Gajah Kotha*" (*Mongma Golpo* in Garo), which translates to elephant stories, highlighting basic elephant ecology, the cultural relevance of the elephants in local communities, elephants' protection, their conservation status, as well as drivers of HEC, and mitigating HEC with tried and tested measures to contribute towards Indicator 0.1;
- A thorough training module with both theory and hands-on sessions on installation of seasonal solar-electric fences; four training sessions for 202 community members, and 10 RRUs comprising of 398 people to contribute towards Indicator 0.2
- Incomes generated for 466 beneficiaries after receiving their chosen skill-based training and materials to start their initiatives to contribute towards Indicator 0.3;
- A robust mechanism in place to monitor HEC in and around project villages to contribute towards Indicator 0.4.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 1: Raising local awareness about elephants, their ecology & needs, and the causes of HEC, while also improving livelihoods and reducing the severity of HEC, will result in fewer elephant deaths

Comments: No elephant deaths were reported in and around the project villages during the reporting period.

Assumption 2: Raising household incomes and requiring project participants to sign a pledge to protect wildlife / nature (e.g. not kill rare species or engage in illegal logging) will help improve biodiversity at landscape level and protect other threatened species e.g. rhino, buffalo, hog deer, leopard, primates.
Comments: At the local scale biodiversity is improving as evident from the sighting records and indirect evidence of wild animals in the area.

Assumption 3: Evidence of the successful implementation of this approach, shared with and by key stakeholders, will facilitate replication of this model in other HEC hotspots in Northeast India
Comments: The villagers around the project village are keen to implement the HEC mitigation measures, and a few have undertaken solar fence training, which is indicative of replication at local scale. Project success and learning shared with a wider audience through articles and presentations will lead to replication at regional/national level.

Assumption 4: All the stakeholders, including relevant government departments, will support project activities to help reduce HEC
Comments: All the stakeholders are supportive towards HEC mitigation as evident from the collaborative work. The forest departments of Assam and Meghalaya are working jointly in the border areas (southwestern Assam and West Garo hills district). There is active involvement of governmental and educational institutes as well.

Assumption 5: Relationships among the partners and all key stakeholders remain constructive throughout.
Comments: The relationship among the partners and all key stakeholders are good, and no major difficulties were faced in implementing the project.

Assumption 6: Local communities and relevant households cooperate on collecting the information needed and engage with the project aims.
Comments: The project team received full cooperation and support from the local communities on data collection, and project implementation.

Assumption 7: Covid restrictions will not seriously impact project activities.
Comments: No impacts were seen during the reporting period.

Assumption 8: Stakeholders are supportive of the project initiatives and volunteer to collaborate with staff and field workers.
Comments: The stakeholders support the project and volunteer their time in form of HEC alerts (RRUs), assisting the project team (village champions), and installation of HEC mitigation tools (Village fence committee, village champions, RRUs, village heads, villagers).

Assumption 9: The selected local champions engage in project activities as per their agreed role.
Comments: All the village champions recruited during Year 1 of the project are actively engaged with the project and assist the team in monitoring HEC and conducting outreach.

Assumption 10: HEC continues to be a problem and target communities remain keen to use the HEC mitigation methods proposed and agreed
Comments: The local communities are supportive towards using proposed HEC mitigation measures as they have witnessed better crop protection through these measures. Learning about the effectiveness of the tried and tested mitigation measures elsewhere through our outreach programmes have built their confidence and they are keen to use these mitigation measures.

Assumption 11: Target community farmers remain keen to participate in erecting and maintaining solar-powered fences as per the agreed protocols, and to help train others
Comments: Post harvest, the villagers have taken the fence down to reinstall before the next crop season.

Assumption 12: Target community members are willing to form and implement RRU teams as per the agreed protocols to promote safety and reduce HEC.
Comments: Currently 398 people are engaged with 10 active RRUs. Each RRU shares information about elephant presence in their vicinity and sends alerts using WhatsApp groups to the villagers. Based on the RRU information on elephant presence, maps are prepared to highlight the elephant use areas in and around human habitation.

Assumption 13: Local communities will participate and accept the skill development training options and practise the supplementary livelihood options.
Comments: All the 466 beneficiary households received their preferred skill development training to supplement their livelihoods.

Assumption 14: Beneficiaries supported through this project will agree to sign a conservation pledge not to kill any key species or cause deliberate harm to biodiversity (e.g. through illegal logging).
Comments: All the beneficiaries who received support are keen to protect biodiversity and are not involved in any activities that cause harm to biodiversity. The project team and village champions monitor the beneficiaries regularly.

Assumption 15: Useful lessons emerging from this project will be of interest to/adopted by other conservation practitioners and HEC-affected communities.
Comments: The HEC mitigation measures adopted so far have been highly effective, and gaining acceptance among the local communities.

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

Intended impact: *Human-elephant coexistence enabled at landscape level in Northeast India by safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of people and elephants, resulting in improved welfare of communities and biodiversity protection.*

In the second year, we have made strong strides towards achievement of the project outcome - a good indicator that the project is contributing towards the intended impact as well. The project is working towards sensitising the community about elephants, HEC and effective measures of HEC mitigation, and supplementing livelihoods to offset the losses incurred due to HEC to bring about a positive behavioural change among the local communities and garner support towards biodiversity conservation.

With installation of seasonal non-lethal solar fences, the local communities now harvest a substantial yield, which has led to a positive inclination to secure elephant habitats among the people. For context, the project villages in Majuli lie on the riverbank and face annual flooding. Given, an embankment was constructed by the Government agencies. Dialogues are ongoing between the project team and the local communities to focus their farming activities on one side of the embankment, while making the land available on the other side for elephants to forage in. This is initial anecdotal evidence that the project is contributing towards initiating ideas of coexistence between people and elephants at the landscape level in Northeast India.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

The Asian elephants are listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

CBD: The project promotes in-situ conservation (Art.8); sustainable use of natural resources (Art.10); providing incentives to conserve biodiversity (Art.11); public education in the value and importance of biodiversity and natural resources (Art.13); technical/scientific cooperation in adopting a new approach to human-wildlife conflict mitigation (Art.18). The project aligns with the Global Biodiversity Framework of the CBD in its vision to achieve human-elephant coexistence and contributes towards net biodiversity gain in target areas, better understanding of the value of elephants and their habitats, equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits, and improved capacity and financial status of local stakeholders.

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species: The Indian sub-species of *Elephas maximus* has been added to Appendix 1 of the CMS because it is both endangered and crosses national jurisdictional and international borders. The elephant populations targeted by this project in northeast India regularly cross-national boundaries – from Assam to Meghalaya and Assam to Arunachal Pradesh – and national boundaries to Bangladesh and Myanmar. Darwin Initiative Main Annual Report Review 2023.

SDGs: This project will contribute to SDG1, 2, 5 and 15 by protecting and improving livelihoods among poor communities; improving the food security of households whose crops will be protected from damage; including women across all activities and supporting conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems.

India's National Biodiversity Action Plan: RRAs and PRAs have made initial steps to raise awareness about biodiversity. By raising awareness of the values of biodiversity and steps to use it sustainably, reducing degradation, fragmentation, and loss of natural habitats to improve the environment and human well-being (Tgt3); ensuring ecosystem services, especially those affecting human health/livelihoods/wellbeing, are safeguarded, considering the needs of women and local communities, particularly poor and vulnerable sections (Tgt8).

Kathmandu Declaration for Asian Elephant Conservation 2022: The project promotes coexistence by minimising HEC and engaging with local communities to gain their participation in biodiversity conservation and land-use planning; and provide sustainable and alternative livelihoods through financial support, technical guidance and support, and other measures.

5. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

The HEC incidents in Assam mostly occur in the rural areas, affecting farmers with low incomes. Crop foraging by wild elephants impacts food and nutritional security, as well as people's livelihoods. This project is already contributing towards poverty alleviation by supplementing livelihood opportunities of 466 beneficiary households currently in six districts of two states. By the end of the project, a 30% increase in annual income is predicted for 600 beneficiary households. During this reporting period, 466 households have received skill development training, and are practising their chosen livelihood options with the support of this project. We are supporting farmers to cultivate crops that are less palatable to elephants, have a good market price, and in instances such as Assam lemon, can act as bio-fence as well. The project demonstrates that there are more than monetary benefits to supporting people from low economies impacted by HEC in terms of skills development and knowledge generation. The indirect project benefits include reduction in HEC incidents (~40 % from crop & property damages; ~70% fewer human deaths due to HEC by project end), skill-development to augment livelihood, providing market-linkages and building confidence. Complementing livelihood opportunities with skill development and supporting local communities with effective HEC mitigation tools will have a positive impact on people's wellbeing and alleviate poverty.

6. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board[1].	The Project Board is 50% women and 50% men, with two women ([redacted]) and two men ([redacted])
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women[2].	The Trust's senior management team are 57% women (4 women, 3 men) Aaranyak's senior management has 20% women (5 women, 18 men). Aaranyak Project team- Three women are engaged with the project in supervising and decision-making regarding the project (1), implementing and supervising the team at ground-level (2). Besides, female interns were engaged with the project for data compilation.

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	X
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

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

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

The GESI context has been central to our approach. We believe we are on track to be Empowering on the GESI scale. Some notable achievements to back up this claim are:

- Our outreach campaign called "*Gajah Kotha*" (*Mongma Golpo* in Garo), which translates to elephant stories, was designed to generate awareness among the local communities and students, has reached out to 4,126 people directly, of which 44.54% are women across the six project districts (Annexure 7).
- Besides *Gajah Kotha*, we reached out to people for awareness generation by conducting events on special days, such as Wildlife day and Biodiversity Day. We conducted 122 such outreach events in this reporting period, and reached out to 7036 people directly, of which 26.29 % were women (Annexure 8).
- With a focus on improving the participation of women, who are important stakeholders for biodiversity conservation and often go unheard, we conducted 11 outreach events for women from the HEC-affected villages in eastern Assam with an aim to provide a platform for them to share their knowledge on local biodiversity and apprise them on their role in protection of the same. The events consisted of a cooking competition using locally available ingredients, environmental games, training on first aid, and interaction with the project team on how to ensure human-elephant coexistence and biodiversity conservation (Details of the events are available in Annexure 9). Through these 11 outreach events we reached out to 360 women directly across six districts in Assam.
- Out of 466 project beneficiaries, 65% (304) are women and we are on track to achieve 80% by project end.
- Output 3 has witnessed low participation of women as HEC mitigation is seen as a man's job as it is dangerous. But we are working with the community to change this mindset.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

The project incorporates a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework at various levels and has used the logframe to highlight the data that was needed (as noted in the measurable indicators and means of verification) and then designed our activities for the field teams. We also keep digital records of the data so that it can be shared and reviewed at regular intervals for monitoring and reporting purposes.

The project team holds weekly and monthly meetings to assess the progress in conducting activities, and monitors project progress and performance against the log frame, and timetable periodically. Subsequently the partner organisations have monthly meetings with each other to discuss project progress measured against the log frame, timetable and budget. Besides, regular updates are shared by the team members through a WhatsApp group. Moreover, monitoring of the project's beneficiaries takes the form of interaction and hand holding by the project team. In this reporting period, three visits were made by the Trust/Project Leader to monitor the project.

Moreover, Aaranyak has constituted an independent team for Project Monitoring and Evaluation, which sits every six months for evaluation. Our Senior MEL Manager in the UK is actively involved in the project and playing a key role to fine tune the MEL framework and support in creating a robust system to measure impact. The system is a work in progress and is being improved as issues are identified from the field. The process has helped the team to better the requirements of a good M&E process and the data needed to evaluate the impacts of project interventions.

8. Lessons learnt

The project completed its second year. Our activities are well underway and are starting to show results. Some of the notable learnings from the project are as follows:

- We utilised a bottom-up participatory approach to identify the different livelihood opportunities for the 600 selected beneficiaries across the two states. However, poultry farming failed as all the chicks died due to a sudden disease outbreak. This was an important learning and we have decided not to offer farm animals as a livelihood option going forward if there aren't adequate veterinary facilities in the vicinity.
- Our initial survey showed that we could erect 120 kms of seasonal solar electric fences around our project villages. However, a government supported permanent solar fencing was approved in one project village, so we changed strategy in consultation with the community and reduced our fencing to 80 kms. We have assimilated this learning and used it as an opportunity to pilot a bio-fence made of Assam lemon as a nature-based solution to mitigate HEC in the area.
- As we ended Y2 of the project, we learnt that active engagement and transparency about the aim of the project, taking due consent when and where necessary, on-ground presence of the project team, and cultivating relationships with stakeholders are key to project success. Also, highlighting the counterfactual with regard to our interventions, along with capacity-building among beneficiaries to resolve their own concerns confidently can go a long way in a project like this.
- Implementing this project has made it very clear that elephants, being a wide-ranging species, do not remain confined to protected areas and actively share resources with people. Enabling coexistence is the only way to conserve elephants and reduce HEC in the face of increasing demand for land resources.

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

Actions in response to the last Annual Report review are the following:

- The project risk register is attached.
- We have explicitly referred to the indicators in the relevant section of the report.

10. Risk Management

The project has not faced any risks in the last 12 months

10. Sustainability and legacy

Our exit strategy was as follows: By the end of this project, villagers in 20 target communities, and trained HEC champions in every village will also continue to raise awareness about elephants, tactics for avoiding HEC, and the value of biodiversity conservation. So more households will adopt the HEC mitigation measures promoted by this project. The trained fencers in every village, as well as informed fence committee members, will continue to install, maintain, monitor, and remove seasonal fences as needed to reduce crop and property damage.

Community RRU teams will continue to manage an HEC-alert network to warn villagers of the presence of elephants and ensure their safe passage, reducing the defensive-aggressive reactions in people and elephants that tend to exacerbate HEC. 100 households will continue to generate supplementary incomes from the enterprises established under this project, and trained individuals, most of them women, may use their knowledge to start other enterprises and/or share their skills with other villagers. Aided by the village champion and village committee members, community members will continue to access government loan/compensation schemes which can be used to finance more micro-enterprises.

Aaranyak will maintain its involvement with the target communities and associated district officials, but will advise or supervise, rather than manage, giving assistance as needed to help activities become embedded in communities' own cooperative systems.

As far as we know, this exit strategy and legacy is still valid and will continue to be valid so long as it is possible to implement project activities. Community members and local government officials are very keen on this project and indicate that they will contribute to its success.

11. Darwin Initiative identity

Darwin's name/logo are already well known in India through previously supported projects. Moreover, during project initiation, we had regular meetings with senior government officials at the state, district and local levels in the target areas where the Darwin Initiative was duly credited. In the UK, regular updates are sent to the British Asian Trust board and networks of ambassadors, among whom there is a high-level of interest and pride in this work.

We regularly share updates about the project on our social media handles and tag the Darwin Initiative (now Biodiversity Challenge Funds) handles. The project activities when published on social media handles, or published in local news and media acknowledges the support of the Darwin initiative (Annex 4). The IEC (Information Education Communication) materials published for conducting outreach activities also have the logo of the Darwin Initiative.

- **Websites, newsletters and media**: The British Asian Trust notes the support of Darwin and the UK Government online and in e-newsletters sent to more than 15000 supporters worldwide. The Trust and Aaranyak staff also post regular updates on LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram that have a combined following of over 65000. Also, funding from Darwin is highlighted in press interviews given by the team (Annexure 22).
- **NGO & field team recognition**: As this project builds on our previous work in India, there is clear recognition across the field teams of the Darwin Initiative and the UK Government support. This continues to be emphasised at all outreach events and on project materials.
- **T-shirts and banners**: The Darwin Initiative logo is highly visible on t-shirts used by the field team and banners used at workshops and training sessions.

12. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	Yes
Have any concerns been reported in the past 12 months	No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	*Yes* [redacted] is the POSH Lead in India.
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	No
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 80% [24] Planned: 20% [6]
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses. No	
Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify. Yes, we will have a refresher safeguarding course during the next M&E visit of the Project Leader.	

Please describe any community sensitisation that has taken place over the past 12 months; include topics covered and number of participants. Our signature awareness campaign, *Gajah Katha,* includes community sensitisation as it covers topics related to safety of the community. Till date, we have conducted 100 such programmes (around five events/village) (Annexure 21) reaching 4126 people directly, of which 44.54 % (N= 1837) were women across six project districts (Annexure 7).
Have there been any concerns around Health, Safety and Security of your project over the past year? If yes, please outline how this was resolved. No

13. Project expenditure

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

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)	[redacted]			
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	**179,827**	**179,212.99**	**1%**	

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

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)	[redacted]		Trusts and own resources
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			

11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

N/A

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

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

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
Image	Project Photos	Caption included under each photo (India, Aaranyak)	Instagram: @thebritishasiantrust ; @aaranyak_india X: @britishasiantst ; @aaranyak LinkedIn: @thebritiasiantrust @aaranyak Website: britishasiantrust.org ; aaranyak.org	Yes
Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LmHYipkD_M&t=670s	This documentary describes how community-operated solar-powered fences installed by Aaranyak across human elephant conflict (HEC) zones in Assam (India) have changed the lives of many communities from a life of misery to one of harmonious coexistence with elephants after the fences were installed and	Instagram: @thebritishasiantrust ; @aaranyak_india X: @britishasiantst ; @aaranyak LinkedIn: @thebritiasiantrust @aaranyak Website: britishasiantrust.org ; aaranyak.org	Yes

		properly maintained.		
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

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

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact Human elephant coexistence (HEC) enabled at landscape level in Northeast India by safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of people and elephants, resulting in improved welfare of communities and biodiversity protection.	Dialogues are ongoing between the project team and the local communities to focus their farming activities on one side of the embankment, while making the land available on the other side for elephants to forage in. This is initial anecdotal evidence that the project is contributing towards initiating ideas of coexistence between people and elephants at the landscape level in Northeast India.	[redacted]
Outcome: Effective application of IUCN Guidelines-based HEC mitigation model in 6 HEC-prone districts in Assam/Meghalaya, resulting in increased incomes for 600 households and improved protection of Asian elephants/other rare species		
Outcome indicator 0.1 **Community engagement and empowerment:** By end Y3, 600 households experience a 75% reduction in human deaths/serious injury.	Till date, we have conducted 100 "*Gajah Kotha*" programmes (around five events/village) reaching 4126 people directly, of which 44.54 % (N= 1837) were women across six project districts. We also conducted 122 additional outreach events on the significance of the Asian Elephant and methods for HEC mitigation in this reporting period, and reached out to 7036 people directly, of which 26.29 % were women.	The project's signature outreach event, Gajah Katha, will continue to raise awareness of the community members in the project area.
Outcome indicator 0.2 **Protecting livelihoods and assets**: By end Y3, 600 households experience a 40% reduction in property damage (i.e., to major structures - granary, house, shop - that is crucial to people's lives and livelihoods) and a 30% reduction in crop loss.	We conducted four training sessions on installation of seasonal solar-electric fences for 202 community members and 10 RRUs, comprising 398 people.	We will focus on monitoring the efficacy of the fences to protect the livelihoods and assets of our target communities.
Outcome indicator 0.3 **Livelihoods promotion:** By end Y3, 600 households experience 30% increase in household annual income.	Our skill-based training has empowered 466 beneficiaries to generate incomes from alternative livelihoods.	Next year, we will train the remaining community members to reach our target of 600 households and continue to monitor the households to ensure they

		achieve an income increase of 30%.
Outcome indicator 0.4 **Biodiversity Protection:** By end Y3, 40% fewer elephant killings in target areas and 20% increase in sighting/signs of key species.	A robust mechanism is in place to monitor HEC and the presence of other wildlife in and around project villages.	Season movement patterns of elephants have been plotted and will continue to be monitored.
Output 1 Profiling the problem and building evidence: Specific data gathered and analysed for the 6 target districts, including on the human population and local biodiversity, focusing primarily on elephants, HEC, and other rare species		
Output indicator 1.1 By Q3-Y1, 20 target villages experiencing high levels of HEC, are actively engaged in the project.	Completed	
Output indicator 1.2 By Q4-Y1, 20 target villages profiled, with findings informing planning, implementation and evaluation of project interventions.	Completed	
Output indicator 1.3 By Q4-Y2, information compiled on the spatial and temporal movements of elephants and other key species.	Using the information gathered from our regular monitoring and through consultations with the community, we have compiled information on the spatial and temporal movements of elephants in and around our project villages (Annexure 16).	Collection of information on elephant movement and other key species presence through village consultations during questionnaire surveys and ground truthing in the area will continue.
Output 2. Promoting security for people and elephants by raising awareness: Knowledge and understanding of elephants, HEC and strategies to improve safety/security is increased for at least 50% of households in 20 villages across 6 districts (n=2600 households)		
Output indicator 2.1. By Q2-Y1, one champion (n=20) recruited for each target village and trained to record data, help undertake outreach activities and serve as primary contact for village HEC activities.	Completed	
Output indicator 2.2. By Q4-Y1, education materials (print, audio, video) produced in local languages and used for HEC outreach to 100,000 people in 20 target communities.	Completed	

Output indicator 2.3. By end Q2-Y3, at least 1200 households have adopted HEC mitigation measures promoted by the project to reduce impacts on people and elephants.	Till date, we have conducted 100 "*Gajah Kotha*" programmes (around 5 events/village) reaching 4126 people directly, of which 44.54 % were women across six project districts (Annexure 7). We are on track to achieve both indicators by project end.	The project's signature outreach event, Gajah Katha, will continue to raise awareness of the community members in the project area.
Output indicator 2.4. By Q3-Y3, 50% of 2600 households (n=1,300) in 20 villages have increased knowledge and understanding of elephants/their needs, other key species, and are committed to their safety.	Till date, we have conducted 100 "*Gajah Kotha*" programmes (around 5 events/village) reaching 4126 people directly, of which 44.54 % were women across six project districts (Annexure 7). We are on track to achieve both indicators by project end.	The project's signature outreach event, Gajah Katha, will continue to raise awareness of the community members in the project area.
Output 3. Protecting livelihoods and assets: A system of seasonal crop protection is established in 20 target villages, involving the installation of temporary fencing and the formation of local Rapid Response Units (RRU)		
Output indicator 3.1. By Q4-Y1, 60 people (3 per village) trained as trainers to install, monitor and maintain safe and effective seasonal solar-power fences.	We conducted four solar fence trainings in this reporting period and trained 202 community members, compared to our target of 60 people for the project (Annexure 20).	We will hold refresher trainings, if required.
Output indicator 3.2. By Q4-Y2, 80km of seasonal solar-powered fencing and 7kms of biofences (3 rows of lemon plants) installed and materials required for crop & village protection (powerful torches and/or solar lights) being used by vulnerable households.	Till date, 13.1 km of seasonal solar fence has been installed in Majuli (9.4 km), Borogobol in West garo hills (1.4 km), and in Sadiya in Tinsukia district (2.3 km). This activity has been delayed as the community took longer than expected to mobilise themselves, but we are on track to install the balance 60km of solar fence in Y3.	We are on track to achieve this indicator in Q2-Y3
Output indicator 3.3. By Q1-Y2, 10 RRU teams formed, trained and operating an HEC alert-network using the best practice approach to facilitate safe passage for elephants.	We have formed 10 RRUs - six in eastern Assam and four in West Garo hills (Meghalaya). Currently, 398 people are engaged in 10 RRUs. We have also conducted nine training sessions for the RRU members, anti-depredation squad (ADS - a unit formed by the Forest Department) and frontline forest officials using a training module and trained a total of 250 people.	Completed
Output 4. Promoting supplementary livelihoods: Income generation support through training opportunities and access to finance facilitated for 600 households in 20 target villages.		

Output indicator 4.1. By Q3-Y2, 600 individuals (80% women) complete at least 1 skills-based training.	466 beneficiaries (304 women) have received their chosen skill-based training (details in Section 3.1). Based on the selected trades, some trainings are scheduled in Y3.	We will continue to provide support to the 466 beneficiaries and train the remaining 134 households.
Output indicator 4.2. By Q3-Y2, 100 households supported to adopt tried-&-tested alternative cash crop cultivation (e.g., turmeric, *Hololoma aromatica*, citronella, citrus plants, common flax/sesame)	We have also provided the 466 beneficiaries with materials to start up their initiative and they have already started earning an income from their selected trades	We are now monitoring the beneficiary households to track their income levels
Output indicator 4.3. By Q2-Y3, 70% increase in applications to government for compensation, loan schemes and other benefits by target community members.	Scheduled in Y3	
Output 5. Sharing knowledge and building capacity: Skills, learning and best practices derived from this project, and from other national and international HEC projects, are shared locally, regionally and internationally to inform and capacity-build project partners and other human-wildlife coexistence (HECx) facilitators in India and elsewhere.		
Output indicator 5.1. By Q4-Yr3, 3 meetings held (one at end of each year) with each target community (total=60) to share project findings, lessons learned and results.	Village meetings are conducted at regular intervals, mostly in informal ways to discuss the project initiative and progress and receive feedback/input from the beneficiaries and other villagers. In this reporting period, we held four such meetings.	We will continue to hold regular meetings with the community to share project findings, lessons learned and results.
Output indicator 5.2. By Q3-Y3, analysis of HEC and HEC mitigation strategies in project area, with case studies and learning collected during the project, effective for enabling coexistence shared and published.	Scheduled in Y3	
Output indicator 5.3. By Q4-Y3, lessons learned from this project shared through online/offline (n=10) workshops with partner organisations, HECx, practitioners and decision makers. including representatives of Government agencies who have a role to play in mitigating HEC such as Forest Department, Civil Administration, Assam Power Corporation etc.	Scheduled in Y3	
Output indicator 5.4. By Q4-Y3, decision makers who develop mitigation strategies (such as Ministry of Forest & Environment, Project Elephant) are informed about successful strategies for HEC, informing India's National HWC Mitigation	Scheduled in Y3	

Strategy and Action Plan, and its Guidelines for HEC Mitigation targeting		
Output indicator 5.5. By Q3- Y2, knowledge and best practice on HEC mitigation through livelihood interventions and installation of seasonal solar-fence in different geographies is shared and put into practice by project personnel	The project teams were able to travel to the 19th International Elephant Conservation and Research Symposium, held in Chiang Mai (Thailand) from 14-17 November 2023. They presented the project and also interacted with other experts working on elephant conservation across the globe.	We will continue to scope for opportunities to share knowledge and best practice on HEC mitigation in different geographies.

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: Human elephant coexistence (HEC) enabled at landscape level in Northeast India by safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of people and elephants, resulting in improved welfare of communities and biodiversity protection.			
Outcome: Effective application of IUCN Guidelines-based HEC mitigation model in 6 HEC-prone districts in Assam/Meghalaya, resulting in increased incomes for 600 households and improved protection for Asian elephants/other rare species.	**0.1 Community engagement and empowerment:** By end Y3, 600 households experience a 75% reduction in human deaths/serious injury. *Baseline: 24 HEC incidents occurred in the villages of eastern Assam in the form of crop and property damages and one human death.* **0.2 Protecting livelihoods and assets**: By end Y3, 600 households experience a 40% reduction in property damage (i.e., to major structures - granary, house, shop - that is crucial to people's lives and livelihoods) and a 30% reduction in crop loss. *Baseline: 24 HEC incidents occurred in the villages of eastern Assam in form of crop and property damages and one human death.* **0.3 Livelihoods promotion:** By end Y3, 600 households experience 30% increase in household annual income.	0.1 & 0.2 o Official records of the Forest Department providing number of human fatalities, injuries and data on property loss. o Conflict assessment report based on IUCN guideline template, photos, and survey verification by project team. 0.3 o Project reports with analysis of socio-economic data gathered via surveys & questionnaires of income changes prior to and as a result of the project. 0.4 o Official records of the Forest Department and verification by project team from survey data collected at project start & end.	Raising local awareness about elephants, their ecology & needs, and the causes of HEC, while also improving livelihoods and reducing the severity of HEC, will result in fewer elephant deaths. Raising household incomes and requiring project participants to sign a pledge to protect wildlife / nature (e.g. not kill rare species or engage in illegal logging) will help improve biodiversity at landscape level and protect other threatened species e.g. rhino, buffalo, hog deer, leopard, primates. Evidence of the successful implementation of this approach, shared with and by key stakeholders, will facilitate replication of this model in other HEC hotspots in Northeast India All the stakeholders, including relevant government departments, will support project activities to help reduce HEC.

	Baseline: Average Annual Income per household = 35,000 INR (Aaranyak data from west Assam) **0.4 Biodiversity protection**: By end Y3, 40% fewer elephant killings in target areas and 20% increase in sighting/signs of key species. *Baseline: 16+ elephants died between 2018-2021 in the target districts of Assam; hunting levels of key species TBC.*		Relationships among the partners and all key stakeholders remain constructive throughout.
Output 1 **Profiling the problem and building evidence:** Specific data gathered and analysed for the 6 target districts, including on the human population and local biodiversity, focusing primarily on elephants, HEC, and other rare species	1.1 By Q3-Y1, 20 target villages experiencing high levels of HEC, are actively engaged in the project. *Baseline: 0* 1.2 By Q4-Y1, 20 target villages profiled, with findings informing planning, implementation and evaluation of project interventions. *Baseline: 0* 1.3 By Q4-Y2, information compiled on the spatial and temporal movements of elephants and other key species. *Baseline: 0*	1.1 List of villages, GPS locations, relevant official records, village agreements to engage in project. 1.2 Reports from surveys, patterns/impacts of HEC, socio-economic profiles of target communities inc. livelihood activities, income levels, sources of protein, HEC records of Forest Dept, Yr2 workplans for target areas. 1.3 GIS maps of current land use, seasonal movement patterns of elephants & other key species.	Local communities and relevant households cooperate on collecting the information needed and engage with the project aims. Covid restrictions will not seriously impact project activities.
Output 2 **Promoting security for people and elephants by raising awareness:** Knowledge and	2.1 By Q2-Y1, one champion (n=20) recruited for each target village and trained to record data, help undertake outreach activities and	2.1 o Names, photos, attendance records; training reports	Stakeholders are supportive of the project initiatives and volunteer to collaborate with staff and field workers.

understanding of elephants, HEC and strategies to improve safety/security is increased for at least 50% of households in 20 villages across 6 districts (n=2600 households)	serve as primary contact for village HEC activities. *Baseline: 0* 2.2 By Q4-Y1, education materials (print, audio, video) produced in local languages and used for HEC outreach to 100,000 people in 20 target communities. *Baseline: 0* 2.3 By end Q2-Y3, at least 1200 households have adopted HEC mitigation measures promoted by the project to reduce impacts on people and elephants. *Baseline: 0* 2.4 By Q3-Y3, 50% of 2600 households (n=1,300) in 20 villages have increased knowledge and understanding of elephants/their needs, other key species, and are committed to their safety. *Baseline: TBC Y1*	o Field reports, photos, and monitoring by the project team 2.2 o Copies of education materials; all posted on Aaranyak website. o Project social media pages created/kept updated, print and broadcast media reports shared on social media pages. 2.3 & 2.4 o Pre/post outreach evaluation of the same people to assess changes in knowledge gained. o Reports of changes in attitudes and behaviour of households o Reports from the M&E teams (both project and external)	The selected local champions engage in project activities as per their agreed role.
Output 3 **Protecting livelihoods and assets:** A system of seasonal crop protection is established in 20 target villages, involving the installation of temporary fencing and the formation of local Rapid Response Units (RRU)	3.1 By Q4-Y1, 60 people (3 per village) trained as trainers to install, monitor and maintain safe and effective seasonal solar-power fences. *Baseline: 0* 3.2 By Q4-Y2, 80km of seasonal solar-powered fencing and 7kms of biofences (3 rows of lemon plants)	3.1 o Record of training sessions with names, photos, best practice manual, record of fences installed in Yr2 by trained fencers. o Record of village fence committees established and operational.	HEC continues to be a problem and target communities remain keen to use the HEC mitigation methods proposed and agreed. Target community farmers remain keen to participate in erecting and maintaining solar-powered fences as per the agreed protocols, and to help train others.

	installed and materials required for crop & village protection (powerful torches and/or solar lights) being used by vulnerable households. *Baseline: 0* 3.3 By Q1-Y2, 10 RRU teams formed, trained and operating an HEC alert-network using the best practice approach to facilitate safe passage for elephants. *Baseline: 0*	3.2 o Maps with GPS coordinates of fenced sites, photos of installed fences, audio-visual feedback from farmers. o Record of torches/ solar lights provided with records, reporting outcome, when used. 3.3 o Named photos of RRU team members, records of HEC alerts sent, RRU incident reports o Best practice manual for RRU teams	Target community members are willing to form and implement RRU teams as per the agreed protocols to promote safety and reduce HEC.
Output 4 **Promoting supplementary livelihoods:** Income generation support through training opportunities and access to finance facilitated for 600 households in 20 target villages.	4.1 By Q3-Y2, 600 individuals (80% women) complete at least 1 skills-based training. *Baseline: 0* 4.2 By Q3-Y2, 100 households supported to adopt tried-&-tested alternative cash crop cultivation (e.g., turmeric, *Hololoma aromatica*, citronella, citrus plants, common flax/sesame) *Baseline: 0* 4.3 By Q2-Y3, 70% increase in applications to government for compensation, loan schemes and other benefits by target community members.	4.1: Training reports, list of participants, photos, participant feedback, pre/post training survey and end of project survey 4.2 o Field reports/photos of alternative crops planted; maps with GPS location of the cultivated areas o Increased income generation verified through *bona fide* documented proof. 4.3: Official documents for any financial assistance applied for or	Local communities will participate and accept the skill development training options and practice the supplementary livelihood options. Beneficiaries supported through this project will agree to sign a conservation pledge not to kill any key species or cause deliberate harm to biodiversity (e.g. through illegal logging).

	Baseline: TBD Y1	provided to target community members by Government depts or finance institutions.	
Output 5 **Sharing knowledge and building capacity:** Skills, learning and best practices derived from this project, and from other national and international HEC projects, are shared locally, regionally and internationally to inform and capacity-build project partners and other human-wildlife coexistence (HECx) facilitators in India and elsewhere.	5.1 By Q4-Yr3, 3 meetings held (one at end of each year) with each target community (total=60) to share project findings, lessons learned and results. *Baseline = 0*. 5.2 By Q3-Y3, analysis of HEC and HEC mitigation strategies in project area, with case studies and learning collected during the project, effective for enabling coexistence shared and published. *Baseline: 0* 5.3 By Q4-Y3, lessons learned from this project shared through online/offline (n=10) workshops with partner organisations, HECx, practitioners and decision makers. including representatives of Government agencies who have a role to play in mitigating HEC such as Forest Department, Civil Administration, Assam Power Corporation etc *Baseline: 0* 5.4 By Q4-Y3, decision makers who develop mitigation strategies (such as Ministry of Forest &	5.1: Report with photos of each community feedback meeting 5.2 & 5.3 o Hardcopies and softcopies of the articles/reports available in publications &/or on Aaranyak website o Record/photos of sharing events 5.3 & 5.4 Record of presentations given at relevant national (e.g. India HEC mitigation and HECx workshops) and international (e.g.AsESG/other) meetings. 5.5 Reports on project exchange from personnel in India and Myanmar	Useful lessons emerging from this project will be of interest to/adopted by other conservation practitioners and HEC-affected communities.

	Environment, Project Elephant) are informed about successful strategies for HEC, informing India's National HWC Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan, and its Guidelines for HEC Mitigation targeting *Baseline: 0* 5.5 By Q3- Y2, knowledge and best practice on HEC mitigation through livelihood interventions and installation of seasonal solar-fence in different geographies is shared and put into practice by project personnel B*aseline: 0*		

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: Profiling the problem and building evidence

1.1 Conduct an inception meeting in each district (n=6) for the project implementing team and government stakeholders (Forest Dept and District officials) to discuss/agree a project plan, identify 20 target villages, sources of existing information on the chosen sites, and plan to collect additional necessary information.

1.2 Conduct an outreach and mobilisation meeting in each of the selected villages (n=20) to explain the project and gain 'buy-in'. The meetings will include village heads, Panchayat members, village development committees, youth club members, women Self Help Groups (SHGs), teachers, farmers etc. We will aim to reach at least 20% of the population of each village. By involving various representatives within the communities, we will ensure the entire population of the village is reached. These meetings will also be used to identify and recruit village volunteers (10 per village) to help carry out the profiling surveys.

1.3 Conduct a 'Rapid Rural Appraisal', a socio-economic survey, in each village as part of the outreach and mobilisation meetings. The information gathered will be used to develop community profiles (including, number of women-headed household, daily-wage earners, farmers with their own land, landless farmers etc.), establishing the baselines and providing an understanding of the dependence of each community on natural resources shared by both people and elephants, as well as their culture and history. This will be followed by Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) among the surveyed household to verify the information provided to us.

1.4 Conduct Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) questionnaire-based surveys to verify data socio-economic data gathered and data on HEC pattern, damage and loss to farmers, existing practices of HEC mitigation, and its effectiveness. Based on the RRA information gathered, the project team will select representatives of different demographics (women-headed households, daily wage earners, landed farmers, landless farmers etc.) and conduct surveys through project team members and volunteers. The women-headed houses will be given priority.

1.5 Establish a system to monitor elephant movement/behaviour through sightings/signs reported by villagers (to be verified by Aaranyak and the village 'champion' see 2.1 below) and fence guards/monitors. Project team members and volunteers will gather information from local communities on elephant movement in the vicinity, follow the tracks and signs of the elephants to gain an understanding on the routes that elephants use to move for at least year. Data gathered will include elephants/key species from sightings/signs around villages, HEC patterns, human deaths/severe injuries from HEC, damage to property and crop loss with estimates of cost; existing practices of HEC mitigation, and their effectiveness.

1.6 Analyse the data gathered, prepare GIS maps, write reports, and disseminate the results to concerned stakeholders (including to village meetings).

Output 2: Promoting security for people and elephants by raising awareness

2.1 Recruit a 'champion' for each village (n=20) to help coordinate, organise surveys, gather data, and liaise with those affected by HEC. Champions will largely be selected from the volunteers who support the socio-economic surveys and will be chosen based on their interest in the work, literacy, dedication to the cause and communication skills.

2.2 Meetings led by the Project Team with relevant specialists to develop an education strategy, module, timetable, and materials to raise awareness.

2.3 Develop printed/audio/visual IEC (Information, Education, Communication) materials in Assamese and Garo plus other local languages as needed, these will be disseminated through trainings and events in local communities, as well as on social media. We aim to reach 100,000 people across a variety of channels.

2.4 Train village champions to help deliver the outreach programme to raise awareness about elephants, avoiding HEC, and conservation.

2.5 Conduct awareness events in each target village (via village organisations). At least six events will be conducted per village (n=120) over an 18 month period (Q1, Y2 – Q2, Y3. The events will involve adults and youth, but with separate events for women to ensure they also learn how to avoid HEC and receive a basic first aid training in case of hurt. We aim to reach at least 70% of the village population (n=1,800 households) over the six events.

2.6 Working with the village champions, establish a system to monitor whether targeted households adopt best practices to minimise/avoid HEC. The project team, in collaboration with local champions, will monitor the targeted households through direct observation (for example, whether the households are still using illegal electric fences, harming elephants using spears while chasing away) and secondary information gathering (for example, complaints from Village Heads, members of Village Defence parties)

2.7 In consultation with the project M&E specialist, establish a system to monitor the impact of awareness-raising activities, conducting assessments to reveal their effectiveness so that the approach, or activities, can be modified if necessary.

2.8 Hold a workshop for media personnel to generate awareness about elephants and HEC to facilitate positive reporting on conflict issues, and to help modify the aggressive methods often used by the government anti-depredation squads which can cause elephants to become aggressive. Aaranyak has an established platform "Media for Conservation" and will use this network to ensure participation of the media personnel. The project team will work with the local correspondents from our project area and conduct workshops in each district.

2.9 Conduct a series of Q&A radio shows (at least five) with local radio stations to raise awareness about elephants, and develop a short film, on HEC mitigation and the role people play.

Output 3: Protecting livelihoods and assets

3.1 Hold one community dialogue in each target village (n=20) to share best practices to mitigate and reduce crop-raiding and damage to property (including grain stores). During each community dialogue at least 70% of the HEC affected households will be represented, as well as different committees such as the village defence committee, village development committee, village panchayat members, and village heads.

3.2 Under the village committee, establish a village fence committee (VFC) comprising at least 20 members to take responsibility for managing and maintaining the solar fences. The VFC's primary role will be the proper maintenance of the fence, actively taking part in installation/ de-installation / re-installation of the

seasonal fences The committees will be responsible for collecting money from each household protected by the fence during the project period for maintenance of the fences post-project.

3.3 In year 3, VFC will be supported to set up a revolving fund with seed funding of approximately GBP300 from the project to sustain the fences post the project period and install new fences.

3.4 Form Rapid Response Units (RRU), one per village (n=20) comprising 10 members, training them in non-aggressive methods of deterrence and involving them in alerting villagers to the presence of nearby elephants through app technology.

3.5 Provide training, assisted by trained RRU members, for government anti-depredation squads on basic elephant ecology and behaviour, causes of HEC, and involve them in monitoring elephants and HEC so as to improve their own practices and performance and help reduce conflict.

3.6 Produce a best practice manual for members of the RRUs and government anti-depredation squads.

3.7 Provide the RRUs/ADS with field gear, and villagers with torches, solar street lights (if appropriate) and first aid kits to help them facilitate safe passage for elephants and to monitor HEC.

3.8 Produce a manual in Assamese and Garo on how to install, manage and maintain a solar-powered fence so that it is effective at protecting crops but also safe for people, livestock and wildlife. To be used by fencing trainers, fence owners, fence committee members.

3.9 Install up to 80kms of non-lethal, solar-powered, seasonal fences and 7kms of biofences (3 rows of lemon plants) based on site need and the movement of elephants.

3.10 Working with the village champion, farmers and fence committee, establish a system to collect and collate data on the effectiveness of the solar fences, reporting the results and making them available.

Output 4: Promoting supplementary livelihoods

4.1 Assess markets, value chains, micro-finance opportunities and viable supplementary livelihood options for HEC-affected people in target villages. The project team will conduct qualitative and quantitative assessments to identify the viable livelihood options for villages, taking into consideration the communities' culture and lifestyle, as well as resources and market viability. The qualitative data will be collected through questionnaires, interviews and observations. Quantitative data will include information like local product prices.

4.2 Conduct consultation workshops, at least two in each village (n=40), to select beneficiaries from 600 households to be supported with supplementary livelihood opportunities.

4.3 Conduct capacity-building training programmes on the supplementary livelihood options for the registered beneficiaries. The focus and duration of the training will depend on the viable livelihood options identified and selected by the beneficiaries. Based on the different supplementary livelihood options (for example, pig farming, pisciculture etc.) selected, we will arrange capacity building training. Households, rather than individuals, will be selected for support to counter drop-outs. Any individual from each of 600 selected households aged 18 or above can participate and engage in the livelihood opportunities.

4.4 Support the trained beneficiaries by providing the materials and tools needed to implement their livelihood option, as well as hand-holding support. Specific materials will depend on the livelihoods selected; for example, if we are supporting a household with pig farming, the project will provide them with at least two piglets and veterinary treatments, as well as support to access markets. The beneficiary will provide the food and shelter.

4.5 Provide help to the beneficiaries to establish a system to process, add value and market the products they develop through this project.

4.6 Link the livelihood beneficiaries with appropriate government schemes facilitated by Aaranyak, the village champion and literate members of the village committee.

4.7 Conduct annual evaluation and impact assessments to measure project progress and performance against outputs and outcomes.

4.8 Document case studies and other qualitative data, including quotes, videos and photographs, including feedback from project staff as part of regular review sessions, to inform project delivery/adaptation and share as part of knowledge and capacity building activities to profile the project, raise awareness, and improve best practice.

Output 5: Sharing knowledge and building capacity

5.1 The project team will join a village meeting to share findings from project activities with local communities. Meetings will be joined in every village at the end of each project year (n=60).

5.2 Preparation and publication of five reports/journal articles, sharing the learning and findings from the project. Reports/articles will be shared on partners' websites and disseminated through partners' social media and networks. In particular, the British Asian Trust will share with our thousands of partners and supporters across the South Asian diaspora, philanthropy, private sector, government and civil society in the UK and South Asia.

5.3 Hold workshops/seminars to share project findings and lessons learned with practitioners in order to institutionalise them and ensure sustainability. 10 online/offline workshops/seminars will share learning with different or combined stakeholder groups (including civil society practitioners, funders, and policy makers) and three workshops will be held to specifically inform India's National HWC Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan, and its Guidelines for HEC Mitigation.

5.4 Conduct an exchange study-trip programme of the project personnel to and from British Asian Trust's HEC intervention in Myanmar (Darwin 27-012) to learn and share knowledge on successful implementation of holistic HEC projects involving livelihood interventions and seasonal solar fencing.

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-A04	Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.	People	Gender	0	3,182 people		3,182 people	1300 households
DI-A05	Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project.	People	Training typology (biodiversity)		202		202	60
DI-B09	Number of individuals / households reporting a decrease in unsustainable practices as a result of project activities.	People/Households	None	0	600		600	1200
DI-B10	Number of individuals / households reporting an adoption of livelihood improvement practices as a result of project activities	People/Households	Gender	0	466		466	100
DI-D04	Stabilised/ improved species population (relative abundance/ distribution) within the project area.	% Increase; Area (ha or km2)	Flora/Fauna.Fungi	0	0 elephants killed in 20 project villages			40% reduction in elephant killings and 20% increase in sightings/ signs of key species
DI-D15	Net change in incidences of human wildlife conflict.	Number	Conflict typology	0	TBC			600

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-D16	Number of households reporting improved livelihoods.	Households	As measured through household surveys, livelihood metric (income, education, health etc.).	0	466		466	600

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, best practice manual, blog post, online videos, podcasts, 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)
An Appetite for Coexistence: 4 Alternative Crops to Manage Human-Elephant Conflict	Blog post	Caroline Abraham, 2024	Female	Indian	British Asian Trust, London	https://www.britishasiantrust.org/latest-updates/blogs/an-appetite-for-coexistence-four-alternative-crops-to-manage-human-elephant-conflict/
The IKEA effect: Why community management is the key to longevity in	Blog post	Caroline Abraham, 2024	Female	Indian	British Asian Trust, London	https://www.britishasiantrust.org/latest-updates/blogs/the-ikea-effect-why-community-

Title	Type (e.g. journals, best practice manual, blog post, online videos, podcasts, 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)
coexistence solutions						management-is-the-key-to-longevity-in-coexistence-solutions/
Five Innovative Ways Tech is Boosting Conservation	Blog post	Caroline Abraham, 2024	Female	Indian	British Asian Trust, London	https://www.britishasiantrust.org/latest-updates/blogs/five-innovative-ways-tech-is-boosting-conservation/
Conservation via Accessible Art	Blog post	Caroline Abraham, 2024	Female	Indian	British Asian Trust, London	https://www.britishasiantrust.org/latest-updates/blogs/conservation-via-accessible-art/

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

1) Annexure 4 - HEC Incidents
2) Annexure 5 - HEC Mitigation IEC (Assamese)
3) Annexure 6 - HEC Mitigation IEC (Garo)
4) Annexure 7 - Details of *Gajah Kotha*
5) Annexure 8 - Details of Outreach events
6) Annexure 9 - Details of dedicated programme for women
7) Annexure 10 - Social Media Analytics
8) Annexure 11 - Monitoring by Village Champions
9) Annexure 12 - Details of Media Workshop
10) Annexure 13 - Details of Radio Programme
11) Annexure 14 - Solar Fence Training Module
12) Annexure 15 - Details of the RRU operations
13) Annexure 16 - Maps on elephant presence
14) Annexure 17 - Solar Fence Installation Manual (Assamese) - Large file (available on request)
15) Annexure 18 - Livelihoods data
16) Annexure 19 - Record of wild animals in and around project villages
17) Annexure 20 - Attendance sheet for awareness events - Large file (available on request)
18) Annexure 21 - Map of outreach events
19) Annexure 22 - Media coverage of project

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?	x
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	x
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	x
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see Section 16)?	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	x
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	x
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	