

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	30-012
Project title	A Community Approach to Waterbird Resource Management, Chia Lagoon
Country/ies	Malawi
Lead Partner	Birdlife International
Project partner(s)	Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST)
Darwin Initiative grant value	£471, 784
Start/end dates of project	June 2023 - March 2026
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2023 – Mar 2024) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	June 2023-March 2024 Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Alex [REDACTED]
Project website/blog/social media	https://wesm.mw/ ; https://twitter.com/BirdLifeAfrica/status/1783607382922121435 https://www.facebook.com/birdlifeafrica
Report author(s) and date	Alex [REDACTED], Chifundo [REDACTED], Blessings [REDACTED], Liz [REDACTED] 26 th April 2024

1. Project summary

The project is working with communities at Chia Lagoon in Malawi to better manage and restore this vital lagoon ecosystem, reverse declines in vulnerable and declining bird species and improve livelihoods. We are establishing community-based sustainable hunting groups to better manage waterbirds – a currently unregulated and unsustainable source of food. We are establishing bird sanctuaries, restoring habitats, and providing biodiversity data for monitoring and the site's assessment as a Key Biodiversity Area. Supplemental, sustainable livelihood opportunities will be supported.

Local communities rely on natural resources for subsistence, with 70% at or below the poverty line. Most families are involved in fishing, hunting or farming for subsistence and sale. The project will work with nine villages, Mtanga 2, Bwanakaya, Makuzi, Chiopela, Chongole, Chizongwe, Ngalauka, Chipala, Chikawe, but approaches can be scaled up. These villages have a total population estimate of 14,000 people. The Project site, Chia Lagoon, is located in Nkhotakota District of Malawi, Africa.

Dwindling fish resources due to overfishing and population growth is driving increases in waterfowl hunting to unsustainable levels. Local Beach Village Committee members indicate that alongside bird hunters, fishermen often catch birds to supplement food at home. The unregulated nature of bird hunting makes estimation of birds taken difficult. However, a comparison with surveys from the larger Lake Chilwa suggests around 30,000-50,000 birds per year. The project will establish a monitoring and management system to better understand bird hunting pressures. Agricultural expansion, invasive species, wood cutting and pollution compound threats to the site, negatively impacting food security, driving more unsustainable activities and undermining tourism benefits.

Invasive alien species (IAS) such as water hyacinth, prosopis and water cabbage reduce ecosystem value of the lagoon. The riparian area is also infested by alien eucalyptus that are known to be 'water-demanding'.

Chia Lagoon supports a rich variety of bird species although anecdotal reports suggest these are declining. The site has no protection or designation as, for example, a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), despite its importance for both waterbirds and threatened fish species. This makes it harder to finance and implement management measures. The project will conduct a KBA assessment, put in place monitoring protocols and make recommendations for the future.

Limited livelihood options, and lack of training and finance, drive unsustainable resource use. The area has an established tourism sector with fishing and birding trips although these suffer due to degradation of bird habitat. However, there is limited benefit sharing with local communities.

We will apply the approach used at Lake Chilwa (World Heritage site, South of Lake Malawi), where community structures were established which regulate bird hunting for the benefit of the wider community.

2. Project stakeholders/ partners

To implement the project, Birdlife International is working with national partners, the Wildlife and Environment Society of Malawi (WESM), MicroLoan Foundation (MLF) and Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) for the effective implementation of the project. The partners were identified at the project development stage so as to bring the relevant capacities to the project. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) consisting of WESM, BirdLife and MUST was set up and meets regularly (*See Annex 4.1*).

At district level, the project conducts quarterly meetings with district sectoral heads to discuss project progress, share lessons learnt, challenges and also plan for the following quarterly activities. Discussing project progress and activities at the district level helps to integrate the project work at that level. District government officers have consequently supported implementation of project activities in Nkhotakota

3. Project progress

Most of project activities were carried out as planned despite slight delays to the start of implementation. Consultative meetings at all levels from national, district as well as community were conducted. The project was fully supported at all levels because of its clear and unique objectives. The project was launched at national level on 12th October 2023 and at district and community level, on 3rd November 2023 and got extensive media coverage in print, radio and television as well as social media platforms.

Two key studies namely socio-economic (indi.3.1.1) and ecosystem assessment (2.4.1) were done to inform the project baseline for biodiversity conservation and livelihoods interventions. Findings will help not only the project in its implementation but also add to the district and national knowledge base for the Chia.

18 hunting clubs have been established of 10 people each. Hunting club representatives were part of an exchange visit to Lake Chilwa where they learnt from their colleagues who have vast experience of over 10 years in implementation of hunting management, bird census and record keeping and management. Local leaders also interacted with their fellow chiefs during the exchange visit. The hunters have been trained in hunting protocol formulations and business management. Furthermore, MicroLoan Foundation (MLF) has started reaching out to some community members including hunters in the area to appraise the proposed enterprises and how they could be supported with loans to boost the proposed businesses (See Annex 4.2 Meeting minutes WESM and MLF)

There is no change made to the logframe so far.

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1

1.1.1 Awareness raising and engagement activities to identify community members interested in participating in the waterbird management.

The project held 3 community meetings in traditional administrative jurisdictions, namely, Kalimanjira, Mwadzama and Nkhanga where all related community structures were invited and the project was presented, and they welcomed the project. The structures engaged included Area Development Committees (ADCs), Beach Village Committees (BVCs) representatives, Youth groups, Women groups, Village Natural Resources Management Committees (VNRMCs), Wildlife clubs and Bird hunters. A total of 18 women and 42 men were present at the ADC meeting held on 18th August. In addition, 2 other meetings were held targeting 18 newly established bird hunting clubs consisting of 10 members each.

1.1.2 Engagement of District and local government, existing village structures (Beach Associations), hunters and women in the setup of local Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs, following the Lake Chilwa model.

The project conducted awareness raising meetings at all district levels: firstly, the District Environmental Subsector Committee (DESC) where all relevant government offices and NGOs working in the environment sector provided their advice on the project. Some notable attendees included: Ripple Africa, African Parks, Fisheries, Forestry, Environmental Departments. Ripple Africa had recently completed a Darwin funded project focused on fish, so the project team were keen to engage them. The meetings took place in July, December and February with a total of 36 (15 women and 25 men) participants. The initial meetings were to introduce the project and the follow-up meetings were for joint planning and monitoring of project activities. Thereafter, the project was presented to District Executive Committee (DEC) which has the overall authority to approve projects in the district. The project was well received by DEC, approving it to go ahead with implementation. A total of 58 (15 women and 43 men) people participated in the district meetings. The meeting held in February was to share preliminary findings of the ecological study conducted by Malawi University of Science and Technology. The final report will be shared in the first quarter of the second project year. (See annex 4.3)

1.2.1 Exchange visits with Lake Chilwa Hunting Clubs are provided for inspiration and capacity development. Training and support for the establishment of the Chia Lagoon Sustainable Hunting Clubs, and an umbrella Association (if deemed appropriate), is provided.

The project supported an exchange visit to lake Chilwa on 23-25 November 2023 with a total of 30 participants. Twenty bird hunters, 3 traditional authorities, 3 district council representatives and 3 WESM staff participated in the exchange visit. The aim was to expose the 18 bird hunter clubs to the well experienced bird hunters from Lake Chirwa Bird hunting Association. About 21 bird hunters from Mposa, Nanyumbu, Mpoto and Masinde assisted in sharing their experience from the previous project. Among other topics and groups, Chia bird hunters were briefed on sanctuary management, bird counting and timing, bird monitoring and illegal bird harvesting. (See annex 4.4 Lake Chilwa exchange visit report)

1.3.1 Hunters, fishers and a selection of other household members and community leaders will be surveyed to assess the extent, nature and purpose of bird hunting at Chia Lagoon (how many birds, how many hunters, which species, what is a sustainable level of hunting)

The project through community meetings with Area Development Committees started identifying the bird hunters, fishers around Chia Lagoon and initiated the process of organising them into management units. 18 hunting clubs were established consisting of 10 members each, totalling to 180 bird hunters (79 women and 101 men). The hunting units are as follows; Chizongwe, Chopera, Chilipula, Chongole, Nkunya, Ntanga 2, Chikupweche, Ntanga 4, Chipala, Makuzi, Chimpini, Banakaya, Nchanamira, Shabani, Chiula, Kanyama, Ngalauka, Chiula

The project conducted a rapid assessment of women focused enterprises and bird hunting status, with the purpose of complimenting the socio-economic profile. A total of 150 (75 women and 75 men) community members from villages surrounding Chia Lagoon were interviewed. Key findings from this assessment revealed a shared aspiration among the majority of community members to initiate sustainable businesses, particularly in areas such as engine-powered irrigation farming, the trade of agricultural produce like rice, and and watermelons.

The majority of respondents acknowledged the detrimental impact of unregulated subsistence and commercial bird hunting, highlighting its role in the depletion of bird populations with a majority of respondents stating that during peak period, they kill over 200 small bird species and over 16 large bird species each hunting trip. (See annex 4.5)

1.4.1 Participatory process to agree what sustainable hunting means, define a code of conduct, hunting protocols and enforcement mechanisms of individual Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs and an overarching Sustainable Bird Hunting Association.

The project facilitated meetings with hunting clubs soon after the exchange visit to Lake Chilwa where they learnt how hunting protocols are developed and enforced by the bird association at Lake Chilwa. Currently the participatory process of developing hunting protocols/bylaws, a code of conduct is ongoing.

1.5.1 Chia Lagoon Bird Hunting Associations in operation, including monitoring of adherence to agreed bylaws

The engagements with hunting clubs and local leaders to establish Bird Hunting Associations have started and the clubs have started presenting nominations. The association will be formed by the constituent clubs. The project will facilitate a meeting to elect the hunting association committee within in 1st quarter of the second project year.

Output 2

2.1.1 Participatory process for identifying and mapping bird sanctuaries (for breeding birds, threatened species), agreeing protection measures, providing signage and any minor structures, as needed and implementing a communications plan.

Consultative meetings with beach village committee to understand the establishment of fish sanctuaries and how they are being managed by the community were conducted. Together with the hunting clubs, 15 potential bird sanctuaries were identified at Chia Lagoon of which some are also fish sanctuaries. These sanctuaries will jointly be managed by hunting clubs (HC) and BVCs. The HCs are working on proposed protection measures in consultation with BVCs for harmonized management; signage will be installed within the second year. See Annex 4.6 for location a bird sanctuary. The communication plan has been developed and it is being implemented.

2.2.1 Participatory process to plan restoration.

The project conducted 2 consultative meetings with district stakeholders who are working within the project catchment area to seek opportunities to create synergies and contribute to restoration activities. The stakeholders advised the project to focus its restoration activities in the riparian zones of 2 major rivers (Luwi and Lifuliza) that supplies water to Chia Lagoon as they are heavily degraded resulting in sedimentation of the lagoon. The project prioritized the sites and is working together with others e.g. Ripple Africa and UNDP funded climate smart project.

2.2.2 Work with community to undertake restoration actions (set up native tree and/or native bamboo nurseries, seedling purchase if required, planting and care, sustainable harvesting, invasives removal, monitoring)

Several consultative meetings were conducted with VNRMC, BVCs, HCs and school wildlife clubs (Gomati, Ndongwe, Chikwawe and Milimbo wildlife clubs) on tree and bamboo nursery establishment in their areas namely Chizongwe, Chopera, Chilipula, Chongole, Nkunya, Ntanga 2, Chikupweche, Ntanga 4, Chipala, Makuzi, Chimpini, Banakaya, Nchanamira, Shabani, Chiula, Kanyama, Ngalauka, Chiula villages. The process of site identification started and is to be completed in the first quarter of second year. Within the reporting period, the project purchased and distributed 6000 tree seedlings to areas where the 18 hunting clubs members were drawn. Planting of all the tree seedlings covered an estimated area of 8.1 hectares including along the banks of Luwi and Lifuliza rivers. (See annex 4.7 for Restoration photos)

2.3.1 Awareness raising publications/broadcasts, social media and events will be held focused on the community. To include community events celebrating e.g. Wetlands Day / International Day of Biodiversity

Information about the project and the awareness raising activities were published on different WESM and BirdLife media platforms (See annex 4.3). During the district meetings, an article was published in Nation Newspaper. The project was presented at a national biodiversity stakeholders meeting held on 12th October where the project was well received (See annex 4.11.) The project was launched on 3rd November 2023 at a well-attended event and further awareness about the project was raised. The event was well covered by local and national media houses including print, radio and television. Similar coverage was achieved during the celebration of World Wetlands Day which was held within the project area. This event held on 9th February 2024 was attended by key national departments such fisheries and the environment.

2.4.1 Baseline waterbird survey and ecosystem health assessment (Pressure, State, Response)

Through MUST's ecology experts, the project conducted a waterbird survey and ecosystem health assessment during the dry season (October) and wet season (March). The data collected on the biodiversity helps our understanding of the lagoon's intricate ecosystem and allows us to extrapolate the status of the ecological function of the lagoon. The baseline survey suggests signs of the loss of the ecological integrity of the lagoon. (See annex 4.8 Chia Ecological Study Report)

2.4.2 Ongoing Waterbird monitoring protocol will be designed and implemented. Training provided for community participation.

The waterbird protocols have been designed using the Lake Chilwa example. The communities from Chia learnt more on waterbird protocols during exchange visit to Lake Chilwa. The training will be conducted in the first quarter of second project year.

2.5.1 IBA/KBA assessment undertaken (include birds, fish (using existing data) and at least one other taxa – based on preliminary biodiversity surveys) and data shared on KBA database. Based on result of assessment proceed with designation and make recommendations for further action (e.g. management planning)

Data gathering was conducted on various taxa namely, birds, invertebrates (both aquatic and terrestrial), mammals, herpetofauna, and plants. Sampling sites were strategically picked to represent the diverse habitats in and around the lagoon and to allow sampling of different taxa. Sampling methods encompassed a taxa-based approach, to suit both floral and faunal groups. From the surveys, Lonides' worm snake was recorded for the first-time in this region. See annex 4.8.

Using the data collected the site will be subjected to a KBA assessment procedure and used to support management recommendations for the site.

A KBA National Coordination Group (NCG) Workshop for Malawi was convened on 25th –27th March 2024. The workshop involved training to enhance awareness and capacity regarding Global standards for the identification and monitoring of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). 18 people (10 women and 8 men) attended the workshop. IBA/KBA training was conducted with the support from KBA secretariat and workplan for the country was developed for assessment of other sites using resources from other sources. (See annex 4.9 KBA NCG training report)

Output 3

3.1.1 Baseline socioeconomic surveys will be designed by external consultant and implemented by the consultant or/if deemed preferable, by the WESM team, with support of the consultant. End surveys with beneficiaries will gather feedback, assess impact and future ambitions.

The project engaged a consultant to carry out socio-economic study in communities around Chia Lagoon. Of the households surveyed, 71%, were male- 29% were women-headed; 40% of the households depended on subsistence while 15% from commercial farming; at least 22% were engaged in some form of business.

The most popular enterprises are fishing, fish and watermelon trading, rice and tomato agribusiness. Fishing/fish trading is a major enterprise among the communities and therefore it is important to find way of enhancing it while ensuring that biodiversity conservation and sustainable fishing practices are upheld. However, considering that NRM-based enterprises should align with the objectives of environmental conservation, it is important to consider how beekeeping and other nature friendly livelihoods can be introduced/enhanced in the area, as proposed from the survey.

Key recommendations from the survey:

- Development of tourist attraction package where bird sanctuaries at Chia are part (e.g. at Khanga-develop Nature trails and bird watching sites was identified as a potential intervention)
- Establishment of beekeeping (especially where there are forests such as in Nkunya, Ntanga 2, Chikupweche, Ntanga 4, Chipala villages)
- Support for making and marketing of handicrafts at tourist lodges among others
- There should be deliberate and strategic partnership with relevant institutions to facilitate access to finance. (See annex 4.10 Socio economic study report)

3.1.2 Propose/discuss potential enterprises/look at feasibility (3 existing and 2 new - agriculture/agroforestry and processing; bee keeping; avitourism; that would be sustainable from an ecosystem, climate resilience and economic perspective).

The proposed enterprises from the socio-economic study were identified as follows: **Existing:** Fishing and fish trading, Rice growing, Watermelon growing, Avi-tourism; **New ones:** Beekeeping.

Enterprise prioritization took place, and the following enterprises were proposed for support by the project: Fish business, Irrigated rice farming, Bee keeping, Avi tourism /eco-tourism. Assessing support requirements for each economic activity will be conducted through a participatory process.

3.1.3 Provide training and practical support to establish/expand enterprises in communities where Hunting Clubs are established e.g. bee keeping, fruit / fish processing, boat trips, micro renewables, hospitality.

To enhance the capacity of bird hunters, the project organized a 2-day training focussing on business management, bird identification and recording. A total of 180 participants attended the training which took place from 28 to 29 March, 2024 at Nkhanga and Kalimanjira Traditional Authorities. With 79 women and 101 men from all hunting clubs representing 44% women. The training report is being prepared.

3.2.1 Establish micro lending initiative to support these and other enterprises. Recruit members, 90% women

During the reporting period, WESM started engaging Micro Loan Foundation (MLF) to plan the assessment of target group beneficiaries for the micro lending initiative. An initial meeting took place with national and field offices in order to gain insights about the villages already supported by MLF. It was agreed that separate meetings with individual villages be organised in the second year so that those interested would be trained and access the loans for their preferred/priority enterprises.

3.3.1 Avitourism is promoted through marketing and outreach to tourism businesses, bird guide training and installation of physical facilities.

The project facilitated the first bird guiding training where the 180 hunters (44% women, 137 men) were exposed on how to identify bird and record species. The training was held on 27-28 March 2024

Output 4

4.1.1 Meetings are held with stakeholders involved in Fish for Tomorrow and Chia Lagoon fisheries management and with Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve. And, where applicable, with wider Lake Malawi Integrated Water Management programmes. Use meetings to share project information and promote working relationships.

WESM organised two stakeholder meetings on 20 July 2023 and 5th February 2024 where the project objectives and activities were presented; 20 representatives (5 women and 15 men) from different NGOs and government departments attended the meeting and shared aspects for potential collaborations with the project around Chia. WESM also exchanged briefs about the project with organisations such as Ripple Africa who are promoting wetlands restoration activities through tree planting and conducting BVC trainings. The notable areas included riverbank restoration, invasive species control as well as livelihood activities. During these meetings, WESM discussed with the stakeholders on potential synergies and partnership on related activities being implemented within the areas. In addition, these stakeholders played a key role in organizing commemoration of world wetland day. See annex 4.12.

4.2.1 Dissemination of project information and emerging results at national level through articles/broadcasts, briefings and meetings

WESM promoted the project activities through media houses during most of project meetings. The project activities were broadcasted on radio such as Zodiak Radio, Nkhotakota Community Radio and the print media e.g. Nation Newspaper. See annex 4.3. The project organized a national stakeholder meeting where project updates were shared, and feedback received. This meeting took place on 12th October 2023 at Crossroad Hotel in Lilongwe (See annex 4.11).

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Indicator 1.1: 100 community members/hunters (20% women) are aware and interested in sustainably managing the waterbirds.

As a baseline, there were no organized groups on bird hunting at Chia. So far bird hunting groups with 180 members (18 groups with 10 members in each) from all the nine villages surrounding Chia have been formed. Awareness creation on the need to sustain the Chia ecosystem has been created and they are enthused to operate in an organized manner. They are keen to participate in the development of a code of conduct and protocols to guide their hunting operations.

Indicator 1.2. 75 club members are inspired and gain capacity in sustainable hunting practices and enforcement protocols including through exchange visit with Lake Chilwa communities

At the start of the project, there was no contact between Chia and Chilwa birds hunters. This project has supported 30 people including bird hunters and traditional leaders to visit Lake Chilwa to learn and exchange experiences about management of bird hunting activities. With the formation of the 18 bird hunting clubs of 180 members, capacity will be built to more community members and likely surpass the indicator target of 75. Further training of hunting groups will take place in Y2 to bring more understanding regarding the importance of applying best practices in bird hunting activities. At Chilwa, they learned about applying closed seasons to hunting, species to avoid and management of bird sanctuaries and compliance with groups protocols.

Indicator 1.3 The level of bird hunting is known (extent, which species, methods), guiding management and informing monitoring.

The project through community meetings with Area Development Committees started identifying the bird hunters and fishers around Chia Lagoon. 18 hunting clubs were established consisting of 10 members, each totalling 180 bird hunters. WESM conducted a rapid assessment, complementing the earlier social-economic survey. A total of 150 (75 women and 75 men) community members from villages surrounding Chia Lagoon were interviewed. A majority of respondents acknowledged the detrimental impact of unmanaged bird hunting on both subsistence and commercial levels, highlighting its role in the depletion of bird populations with

a majority of respondents stating that during peak period, they kill over 200 small bird species and over 16 big bird species each hunting trip.

Indicator 1.4 A code of conduct for the local Clubs and Chia Lagoon level Association is agreed upon and 10 Hunting Clubs are formally established (150 members)

The project facilitated meetings with hunting clubs soon after the exchange visit to Lake Chilwa where they learnt how hunting protocols are developed and enforced by the bird association in Lake Chilwa. At the start of the project there were no organised groups and hence no hunting rules. Currently clubs are developing the protocols. 18 hunting clubs were established consisting of 180 members including 40% being women.

Indicator 1.5 90% of Association members adhere to sustainable hunting bylaws / use best practices.

Completion of hunting protocols and implementation will take place in Y2. Monitoring compliance will therefore start in Y2.

Indicator 2.1 Nesting birds are better protected through the establishment of 5 bird sanctuaries.

At the start of the project, there were no bird sanctuaries. After consultation meetings with communities as well as fisheries authorities 15 Bird Sanctuaries have been mapped (See annex.4.6). Most of the bird sanctuaries are also fish sanctuaries and it will be strategic to institute joint management with fisheries stakeholders.

Indicator 2.2 9 areas of lagoon habitat are restored or under natural regeneration (approx. 75 ha) (through invasives removal in lagoon and 5km radius and through tree planting and natural regeneration due to alternative timber lots)

In consultation with local communities and forestry stakeholders, restoration sites were identified. The project procured and facilitated planting of 6000 tree seedlings: Cassia trees, *Albizia Lebbeck*, fruit trees such as guavas, mangos and oranges covering an area of about 8.1 hectares. The communities with existing village forests were encouraged to continue protecting them.

Indicator 2.3 Community members in the 9 villages and wider area, including schools and wildlife clubs, are more aware of the importance of lagoon ecosystem and how to manage it through engagement events, backed up by press, social media and radio communications. (Likely audience 2000 in total / 50% female).

At least 6000 people (60% women) from 3 traditional authority areas were reached with messages on importance of Chia Lagoon, (e.g.. at Project launch, wetland day event, radio, print media). These activities have increased the awareness of communities around Chia including on the importance of sustainable utilization of birds.

Indicator 2.4.2 Annually updated data is available on bird species using and breeding in and around the lagoon. (Including designated Bird Sanctuary areas). Data is shared with Global Biodiversity Information Facility, World Bird Database and IWC Annual Waterbird Census.

There was limited biodiversity data on Chia Lagoon as most of the previous studies focused on fish mostly. MUST conducted an ecological assessment on aquatic invertebrates, birds, reptiles, mammals, plants among others during both dry and wet seasons. WESM and MUST presented preliminary results to district stakeholders for comments. Once the final report is produced, its data will be fed into global biodiversity information facility amongst other platforms.

Indicator 2.5 Chia Lagoon is assessed against the Key Biodiversity Area criteria (birds, fish and at least one other taxa) (Trigger species to be defined based on preliminary surveys and in discussion with National KBA Coordination Group) Based on KBA assessment: Feasibility of pursuing protected area or OECM status) (e.g. Ramsar site/community based managed area) is assessed. Need for Chia Lagoon Management Plan is assessed. By end of project

There was limited capacity in the members of the KBA National Coordination Group for implementing the KBA programme at national level. A training for 18 NCG members was

conducted on 25-27 March 2024. An action plan was also developed including indicative period to conduct the assessments for different sites.

Indicator 3.1.1 The baseline socioeconomic situation of the Chia Lagoon is better understood. By end of Q3. Impact of project is evaluated. By end of project.

The results of socio-economic study were shared with, and recommendation received from district level stakeholders. The recommendations and feedback received will help the project team to focus on support for about 5 enterprises in partnership with Micro Loan Foundation enabling primarily women with small loans to support their preferred enterprises.

Indicator 3.1.2 Communities identify and prioritise 5 sustainable livelihood enterprises for support within the target villages (including avitourism) By end of year 1

From the socio-economic study, most of the community members indicated the following as main areas of interest: Fishing and fish trading, Rice growing, watermelons growing, avitourism and beekeeping. In addition, a rapid assessment was conducted to validate the recommendations and involve more women in the assessment process.

3.2.1 A microfinance facility is established for the target communities supported by Microloan Foundation by end of year 2.

WESM held planning meeting with the Micro Loan Foundation on 5 February 2024 with 7 participants (Annex 4.2). The meeting discussed project expectations on livelihood support in which MLF would be highly involved. In addition, MLF expressed interested to be introduced to the target communities so that their office may start engaging the view of disbursing loan facilities.

Indicator 4.1 The project is promoted, networks are built and wider experience is gained from meetings with stakeholders involved in e.g. Fish for Tomorrow and Chia Lagoon fisheries management, Ramsar focal points, Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve, and wider Lake Malawi Integrated Water Management programmes by end of Q2.

WESM has promoted the project to stakeholders including Ripple Africa, Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve through joint activity planning. The project supported the commemoration of World Wetland Day within Chia areas and all the key stakeholders were part of the task force planning the event. This helped to build sense of ownership of the project activities in the target district. See annex 4.12 minutes for world wetland day taskforce.

Indicator 4.2 National Dissemination. Project information and progress is shared with other Lake Malawi and Lake Chilwa water management and fisheries initiatives, and with local, district and national government stakeholders. By end of project.

WESM presented the progress to local communities during the commemoration of World Wetland Day event. The event engaged communities on their views on waterbird project. At district level, the project organized a meeting with district environmental sub-committee on 20th March 2024. During the meeting, MUST shared the preliminary findings from the ecological assessment study. The participants appreciated the findings and acknowledged that this will provide them with comprehensive biodiversity information for the district.

4.3 International Dissemination. Project information, progress and results from Lake Chilwa are disseminated for an international audience through at least 2 online stories, and participation in at least 1 international event. By end of project

A draft article has been developed and will be circulated once complete; the 15th Ramsar Conference of Parties meeting planned for 2025/Zimbabwe and a meeting of Africa BirdLife Partnership slated for 2024 Senegal/2024 respectively are earmarked for participation by project representatives. In both international meetings, the project information will be shared. Other opportunities for sharing project information continues to be explored.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome: Bird abundance and diversity increases, ecosystem recovers and the quality of life and sustainable livelihood opportunities improve for Chia communities

Indicator 0.1.1 Bird populations increase by 20-30% over baseline. Bird species diversity increases by 20% over baseline. By end of project.

Through the ecological assessment study the baseline has been established and shall be used to evaluate changes as project progresses.

Indicator 0.1.2 Biodiversity knowledge (birds and other taxa) of Chia Lagoon and surrounding area will be available to inform management decisions and capacity for national monitoring will increase. By end of project. 10 people trained/mentored in survey techniques. By end of year 2.

Progress is being made towards meeting the indicator; the collected biodiversity information will be packaged into knowledge products on birds and other taxa of Chia Lagoon and surrounding areas. This knowledge will be available to inform management decisions including on monitoring. One stakeholders meeting held where preliminary ecosystem assessment findings were shared with the communities.

Indicator 0.2 Approx. 25 hectares of waterbird habitat is better protected through community-based management. Approx. 75 Ha of lagoon and watershed are in a better ecological state through community-based restoration. By end of project.

During the reporting period, the project implemented restoration activities especially tree planting in degraded area around Chia including major riverbanks. So far 8.1 hectares of degraded habitat is under restoration through planting of trees in this reporting period. Further 15 bird sanctuaries have been identified and for which improved protection and management will be agreed upon.

Indicator 0.3.1 1,500 people (50% women) from 9 villages benefit directly from greater waterbird abundance and sustainable waterbird hunting management. Wider population (est. 14,000 people) benefit from ecosystem restoration. By end of project

The project has managed to identify 180 hunters of which 40% are women. They have already started being trained in different areas including business management concepts and controlled bird hunting. 30 communities also were part of the exchange visit to lake Chilwa where they learnt from their fellow local communities and hunters. More people will be looped in with support on enterprises including through lending schemes.

Indicator 0.3.2 Populations in adjacent lagoon villages benefit indirectly from a healthier ecosystem. By end of project

Villages close to the lagoon mainly depend on fishing and bird hunting and with the healthier ecosystem, it is expected to more people benefit from livelihood activities that will be flourishing due to restored ecosystem. The achievement of this indicator expected towards the end of the project.

Indicator 0.4 150 people benefit from enterprise training and support. (60% women)

150 people (90% women) in 9 villages benefit from finance and business training and loans from Microfinance supported livelihoods investments. (170 total, as many receive enterprise support and loans) (Indirectly benefitting a further 850 household members) Monthly incomes increase by 10%

Efforts to start micro lending initiative have been started by engaging Micro Loan Foundation to support identified enterprise in the target communities. Major activities that will help in meeting this indicator will be implemented in Y2 of the project implementation.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Outcome assumption 1: The Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs approach works as it did in Lake Chilwa and reduced hunting pressure and habitat restoration measures lead to bird population increases.

Comments: We believe this will hold true as the habitat and communities are similar. This was further confirmed when the communities from Chia visited Lake Chilwa communities as they operate in similar social, economic and environment factors (See annex 4.4).

Outcome assumption 2: Bird population annual fluctuations do not prevent measurement of impact

Comments: The project will take into account all factors that may affect the population fluctuation such as weather. The project baseline data was collected during dry and wet season in order to collect information that best represented the situation on the ground. This assumption (See annex 4.8) will, however, continue to hold true so long as there are no extreme climate conditions such as extreme drought or rains affecting the project site.

Outcome assumption 3: Management and restoration activities result in improvements of ecological status. Area covered by Hunting Clubs and Restoration will be agreed with the communities, so is an estimate.

Comments: We believe this will hold true, although benefits would be observed towards the end or after the end of the project. Also, the lack of recent, comprehensive bird data means that there is a risk that bird population and diversity targets are too ambitious or too conservative.

Outcome assumption 4: Enterprise training, practical support and financial assistance leads to livelihoods improvements that do not drive further degradation.

Comments: We expect this assumption to hold true due to shared understanding of this expectation. We however hope that since the prioritized enterprises were identified in consultation with the community members, with further support, they will be able to engage proactively and still practice care for biodiversity by following e.g. the hunting protocols developed for greater environmental protection. Supported livelihood activities will be reviewed once under implementation to ensure they promote and don't undermine sustainability.

Output Assumption 1: There is strong political will within local government to support the structures

Comments: We think this will hold true due to consultation with the District Fisheries, environment and Forestry Departments, who are fully supportive of the project including now the District Environmental Sub-sector Committee.

Output Assumption 2: There is strong and lasting engagement by hunters and the wider community.

Comments: We think this will hold true e.g. due to the successful exchange visit to Lake Chilwa and sharing of experience between bird hunters in Chia and Chilwa. So far, the Chia communities were inspired by the success at lake Chilwa. We think that an increase in bird abundance helps to demonstrate benefit of adherence to bylaws/best practices. See annex 4.4

Output assumption 3: Bird sanctuaries, hunting management and other conservation and restoration efforts result in increased bird populations.

Comments: We think this will hold true.

Output assumption 4: Restoration efforts are not destroyed by extreme drought or flooding

Comments: *The assumption holds true. The catchment areas of Chia are receiving exceptionally high levels of rainfall, and the lagoon has experienced rising water levels. We, however, continue to monitor the situation so that we can develop adaptive measures.*

Output assumption 5: Community members are convinced by communications activities and have the willingness and capacity to participate.

Comments: *Based on positive reactions thus far and experience in Lake Chilwa, we think this will happen*

Output assumption 6: Species monitoring confirms that the site should be designated as a Key Biodiversity Area.

Comments: *We think this will hold true from the ecological assessment conducted which revealed presence of rare species like the Lonides' worm snake.*

Output assumption 7: Improved livelihoods options will drive a reduction in unsustainable resource use.

Comments: *We think this will hold true when the link between sustainable management and the alternative livelihoods is made clear and enshrined in hunting protocols and participation agreements e.g. for the microfinance loans.*

Output assumption 8: The project term will be long enough to establish the Microloan facility in the local community, recruit beneficiaries and provide training and loans.

Comments: *We think this will hold true as Microloan Foundation is established in the region already and is engaging in community consultative meetings.*

Output assumption 9: Relevant stakeholders will be open to engagement and will embrace lessons learned.

Comments: *We think this will hold true, based on positive engagements so far achieved at both at community and district levels.*

Output assumption 10: There will be sufficient data available to support dissemination during the project.

Comments: *This assumption will hold true as the ecological assessment for Chia was conducted for the first time through this project*

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

The Long term project impact is: Waterbird populations of Chia Lagoon flourish and local people and biodiversity benefit from community-based management, improved ecosystem functioning and enhanced, sustainable economic opportunities

- The project interventions are expected to reduce the unsustainable hunting of waterbirds through awareness creation, the establishment of self-regulated Community Hunting Clubs following the protocols to be developed and informed by new knowledge about the extent of hunting, species and numbers being extracted and when adherence to the set protocols yield sustainable levels of hunting.
- Local people will benefit from a growing and well managed waterbird population that allows for hunting at a sustainable level. They will also benefit from nature friendly livelihood opportunities that reduce the pressure on bird hunting and restored degraded areas at Chia.

- Ecosystem benefits from this project will be further enhanced and trickled to the communities especially through positive engagement forged with already established Micro Loan Foundation and stakeholders at District level parallel and community-based fisheries management programmes such as per Fish for Tomorrow.
- If the ecological assessments lead to designation of Chia Lagoon as a Key Biodiversity Area, it will increase interest for further protection and/or conservation actions. The assessment will provide important information and recommendations for improved management of the lagoon.
- Capacity building through trainings and support for enterprises identified through community consultations will improve house level incomes. Basic business management skills acquired by community members will allow application in other production value chains beyond the scope of the project.

Short term impact: Bird abundance and diversity increases, ecosystem recovers, and the quality of life and sustainable livelihood opportunities improve for Chia communities: Bird abundance will increase by 30% and diversity by 20%. Biodiversity knowledge (birds, fish and other taxa) of Chia Lagoon and surrounding area will be available to inform management decisions.

- Ecological data/information is being generated through MUST to come up with a baseline inventory. The data will partly be used to identify potential 'trigger' species for the KBA designation or other categories for improved management. Fish data will be sought from existing sources.
- Biodiversity and people will benefit from 25 hectares of waterbird habitat being better protected through community-based management (10 Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs – comprising 20% women -representing 100 people) and by restoration of 9 sites of degraded watershed habitats (~75ha) plus establishment of bird sanctuaries.
- Hunters and their families from 9 villages will benefit directly from greater waterbird abundance and sustainable waterbird hunting management. The wider population (est.14,000 people) will benefit from ecosystem restoration.
- Food insecurity will reduce due to greater bird numbers (for sustainable waterbird hunting) and through diversification and investment in livelihoods, supported by training and a micro lending scheme. This will immediately benefit 170 people in 9 villages with greater incomes, benefitting ~850 family members.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

The project contributes to:

CBD (Kunming/Montreal, Global Biodiversity Framework), and the Malawi NBSAP 2015-2025:

- The NBSAP recognises the need to integrate biodiversity conservation into development and the need to raise awareness at public and government level. This project is directly contributing to these aims for Malawi.
- It also contributing to NBSAP Goal which is to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for the environment and human wellbeing especially intervening at unsustainable bird extraction at Chia. One of the WESM staff was admitted to the National Biodiversity Assessment Team.

More specifically the project is helping to:

- improve capacity and knowledge on biodiversity issues of Chia;
- Mainstream biodiversity management into sectoral and local plans at the district level and regional plans to make Nkhotakota a tourism hub;
- Reduce direct pressures on biodiversity e.g. bird hunting
- Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity e.g. establishment of bird sanctuaries

- enhance access and benefits sharing by organising and regulating bird harvesting activities at Chia
- Establishment of capacity for biodiversity monitoring
- harness traditional knowledge and practices by allowing the traditional leaders to be engaged in the project activities e.g. the Trip to Lake Chilwa
- Increase awareness of importance of biodiversity through publicity meetings and engaging the media
- Restoration work that has already begun with planting some 6000 tree seedlings.
- Sound management and harvesting of Chia lagoon resources in a sustainable manner

The project activities further contribute to Malawi’s vision 2063 especially the pillar 7 on Environmental Sustainability. The project has begun restoration of degraded ecosystems through natural regeneration and tree planting, project has generated additional information that can be used for a future National Wetlands Policy and designation of Chia as a Ramsar site. The project has engaged the Ramsar focal point, the director of Department of National Parks and Wildlife on wetland policy, sustainable waterbird hunting.

The project is working to support Malawi on implementation of the CMS/AEWA Resolution 6.4 on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Migratory Waterbirds and National Parks and Wildlife Act 2017. The Act outlines which species can be hunted within and outside protected areas and the requirements for licenses and penalties. The project will help to implement the hunting regulations in the Act, through a community approach.

5. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

The project aims to benefit 1,020 people, including 170 people in the nine Chia Lagoon villages covered by the Hunting Clubs and/or receiving enterprise support and access to microlending scheme. (Benefitting 850 family members) and, indirectly, 14,000 people in the villages. (Output 3.1.2) Communities identified and prioritised 5 sustainable livelihood enterprises for support within the target villages (including beekeeping, agriculture and avitourism)

The project will address poverty, a key driver of ecosystem degradation, by expanding and diversifying livelihoods through training, support and the application of a micro lending scheme – linked to sustainable management.

6. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board ¹ .	Project Steering Committee oversees and leads the overall direction of the project. PSC consists of 60% women (See Annex 4.1)
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 .	None of the project partners have a leadership team consisting of at least 50% women. However, BirdLife Board Level 39% Women. Global Leadership Team: 36% Women

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.

	<p>The project partner, MUST has a female as the lead for the work the organisation is spearheading.</p> <p>The project manager at WESM is a female.</p> <p>Micro Loan Foundation which is also closely working with the project has 20% of females in senior management and prioritizes working with women.</p>
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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	

The project from its design has considered GESI as an important factor for its success. In the project document, women are especially targeted for inclusion in the project activities and support for livelihood improvement activities. The project identified MLF (See annex 4.2) as an important partner especially with respect to developing avenues where women could increasingly access finances to develop their businesses. MLF primarily supports women with credit facilities to grow their businesses. To help address the unregulated bird hunting activity in Chia which is mainly practiced by men, women businesses will be supported to also supplement income for hunting families.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

The project has adequate tools and systems to track implementation and achievement of indicators. A monitoring and evaluation framework was developed following the project logical framework and is managed by monitoring and evaluation staff dedicated to the project. All the project indicators have been allocated various leads for tracking complete with the frequency and methodology of collecting data. The work plan and the budget also act as important tools to monitor and evaluate implementation.

Further, the project implementation team (see Annex 4.16 for notes) (BirdLife, WESM and MUST staff) meets monthly to monitor progress. The Project Steering Committee also provides another layer of monitoring progress. The committee has met once in the year where leads of various project themes provided updates on the elements they lead.

Project staff leading on various themes organise meetings from time to time to ensure progress is on tasks and activities and feedback.

The project leader from BirdLife visited project stakeholders and sites during a monitoring visit in During year 2, the project team will further review the theory of change and the project's M&E processes for tracking achievement of the Outputs and Outcomes. If there are weaknesses, then the project and/or indicators may be adapted.

8. Lessons learnt

Case 1: The project has so far received enormous community and government support. This has been attributed to the active involvement of the stakeholders at all levels from the project planning and implementation stages. Further, during project launch and other events, the project formulated organizing committees comprising of key stakeholders to plan together with project team, this approach instils a sense of ownership and enables project integration at various levels.

Case 2: The communities around Chia have for a long-time extracted birds and other lake resources without any form of regulation. The exchange visit to Lake Chilwa gave them a new opportunity to look at resource use differently. They learnt from their peers that communities supported by their traditional leaders can effectively protect and sustainably manage their resources. The Chia community got inspired to replicate lessons learnt from Lake Chilwa.

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

This is the first annual project report therefore there are no reviews of previous reporting. We have however, provided further feedback to comments made on the project after it was funded. See Annex 4.13.

10. Risk Management

There are no major new risks faced by the project, therefore, we will not make changes to the risk register (See Annex 4.14).

10. Sustainability and legacy

By training hunting clubs, and engaging BVCs, school wildlife clubs, we create potential links with other initiatives, hence promoting replication elsewhere in the country. The awareness created in the young will help them to positively embrace environmental matters into the future.

The new ecological knowledge being generated by the project and the management recommendation that will be formulated will help in the improved management of Chia for beyond the current project.

Awareness raising will continue to amplify the impact. The increased awareness on environmental matters within the communities will not only be applicable during but also beyond the project period. The community driven systems to manage and regulate waterbird harvesting backed by the national law and local traditional leaders will continue to operate during and beyond the project life-time.

The trainings on the enterprise management and development and support systems that the project will develop have the potential to gain strength and continue supporting the communities in the long term. With all sustainability considerations that the project is building working as intended Chia community has the potential to be a learning example for other places addressing similar challenges as those of the lagoon.

The project is in its year one of implementation and we have not detected anything that might cause us to change what was originally proposed.

11. Darwin Initiative identity

The project publicizes the Darwin Initiative and, where appropriate, the UKAid in numerous ways: UKAid and Darwin logos were included in all documents produced, including in all participants sheets, workshops programs and invitations, presentations, training courses material, as well as in the Terms of Reference launched to recruit consultants to conduct studies for the project.

The Darwin Initiative funding was recognised as a distinct project with a clear identity but also as one of the projects contributing to the improvement of the environmental wellbeing of Chia and its catchment.

The project produced pull up banners, posters all bearing logos of Darwin Initiative and UKAid.

All social media posts about the project activities included the link to Darwin Initiative / Biodiversity Challenge Funds Facebook and Instagram pages and were often reposted.

At local level, UK Government was extensively mentioned as the funder of the project in meetings; TV (see <https://web.facebook.com/mbctv.malawi/videos/1025042898816719/?mibextid=rS40aB7S9Ucbxw6v&rdc=1&rdr>) and radio interviews ensured that the UK funding for the project was published at the national level.

12. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	No
Have any concerns been reported in the past 12 months	No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes Ausward [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	No [If yes, please provide date and details of training] The subject of safeguarding was discussed in the October 2023 meeting and a training resource shared (See Annex 4.16).
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 29% [4] Planned: 43% [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.	
<p>The project has not received any issues of safeguarding from either staff or communities directly related to this project. There is a possibility that the community members are still getting familiar with the project or there are not any issues yet.</p>	
<p>Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify.</p> <p>In the future, the project is planning to continue raising awareness at community/beneficiary level on the importance of whistle blowing and grievances submission.</p> <p>The project will review safeguarding policies of key project partners to see if there are any major gaps or need for training, especially in light of guidance and policies on SEAH.</p>	
<p>Please describe any community sensitisation that has taken place over the past 12 months; include topics covered and number of participants.</p> <p>Community sensitisation have mainly been regarding environmental conservation and natural resource management. Awareness raising for the community of their rights and mechanisms to report any concerns or grievances will be conducted in year 2 – based on discussion at the next Steering Meeting. As part of the item on the Review of the Risk Register, which will be part of the regular agenda.</p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>No</p>	

13. Project expenditure

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

Project spend (indicative since last Annual Report)	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	157,776	157,776	0%	

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 (£)			Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Core grant
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

Since drafting the report, major flooding has occurred in the area. The project will explore the implications and any potential mitigations in year 2.

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).

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

Title: Empowering Communities for Waterbird Conservation at Chia Lagoon, Malawi

From 2023, BirdLife International in collaboration with its national partner Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) and Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), with grant from the UK Government's Darwin Initiative, are implementing a conservation project at Chia lagoon, part of the Lake Malawi system. The lagoon is an important area for biodiversity and supports more than 7,800 households, through fishing, agriculture and waterbird

harvesting. However, the lagoon is experiencing intense resource extraction pressure including unregulated waterbird harvesting which, along with habitat degradation, is impacting the biodiversity and ecosystem value of the site-

The project aims to organise the local community into structures to better manage the resources including waterbird harvesting at Chia, to reverse declines of vulnerable birds, establish bird sanctuaries, restore habitats, and provide biodiversity data for monitoring and site's assessment as a Key Biodiversity Area and for improved management. Improving people's livelihoods targets 1200 people residing in nine villages around the lagoon, 850 families through enterprise support and micro lending scheme in addition to a further 14,000 people indirectly.

Since the project's inception, WESM have mapped out 15 bird sanctuaries in partnership with Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), led planting of 6000 tree seedlings in ecosystem restoration efforts and organised community members into 18 bird hunting interest groups. A learning visit to Lake Chilwa where WESM successfully piloted the community management of bird harvesting management has been conducted. A study has also been conducted to identify enterprises that have potential to grow for support.

Community capacity is being built to establish self-regulating structures to manage Chia lagoon resources, especially bird hunting which has been practiced at the site for ages. A key highlight of this project was the recent mapping of bird sanctuaries conducted using state-of-the-art drone technology with leadership of MUST. With support of WESM's field team and collaborating with Fisheries department and community fisheries sub-committees, a dedicated team embarked on a mission to map out 15 bird sanctuaries within the Chia Lagoon.

The community is further being supported to develop protocols or by-laws by which the hunting will be implemented and how bird sanctuaries will be managed.

The project builds on and complements another Darwin Initiative Project, led by Ripple Africa, which supported community management of key fisheries activities.

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption, country and credit	Online accounts to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
Image	Annex 4.15	Community meeting to discuss sustainable natural resource use at Chia lagoon in Malawi	https://wesm.mw/ ; https://twitter.com/BirdLifeAfrica https://www.facebook.com/birdlifeafrica Africa - BirdLife International	Yes

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

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Impact</p> <p>Waterbird populations of Chia Lagoon flourish and local people and biodiversity benefit from community-based management, improved ecosystem functioning and enhanced, sustainable economic opportunities</p>		<p>The project is raising awareness and building capacities of communities around Chia to better protect the vital ecosystem while identifying and promoting livelihood activities.</p>	
<p>Outcome</p> <p><i>Bird abundance and diversity increases, ecosystem recovers and the quality of life and sustainable livelihood opportunities improve for Chia communities</i></p>	<p>0.1.1 Bird populations increase by 20-30% over baseline. Bird species diversity increases by 20% over baseline.</p> <p>By end of project.</p> <p>0.1.2 Biodiversity knowledge (birds and other taxa) of Chia Lagoon and surrounding area will be available to inform management decisions and capacity for national monitoring will increase.</p> <p>By end of project.</p> <p>10 people trained/mentored in survey techniques. By end of year 2.</p> <p>Approx. 25 hectares of waterbird habitat is better protected through community-based management.</p>	<p>0.1.1 Ecological assessments including for birds conducted to establish baseline, restoration initiative started, organisation of communities to better manage waterbirds initiated.</p> <p>0.1.2 Preliminary results of ecological assessment shared with stakeholders at District Environment Steering Committee (DESC) meetings, during community meetings and during the launch of the project.</p> <p>2 project officers, 5 community members, 2 government officers are being mentored on survey techniques by involving them in the surveys.</p> <p>Capacity building of community members conducted to achieve better management of water bird resources. Bird sanctuaries at Chia lagoon identified.</p>	<p>Drafting and sharing of the ecological assessment results with key stakeholders at national to village level. Copies will be deposited at district library and in online platforms. This will be done in the Year 2 and Quarter 2 (Y2Q2)</p> <p>The project will utilise skills of the trained people to train wider community members including the hunting group in waterbird monitoring and bird sanctuaries management</p> <p>Further trainings and meetings will be facilitated to deepen understanding of sustainable waterbird hunting; code of conduct for the hunters to be developed.</p>

	<p>Approx. 75 Ha of lagoon and watershed are in a better ecological state through community-based restoration. By end of project.</p> <p>0.3.1. 1,500 people (50% women) from 9 villages benefit directly from greater waterbird abundance and sustainable waterbird hunting management.</p> <p>Wider population (est. 14,000 people) benefit from ecosystem restoration. By end of project</p> <p>0.3.2. Populations in adjacent lagoon villages benefit indirectly from a healthier ecosystem. By end of project</p> <p>0.4. 150 people benefit from enterprise training and support. (60% women)</p> <p>150 people (90% women) in 9 villages benefit from finance and business training and loans from Microfinance supported livelihoods investments.</p> <p>(170 total, as many receive enterprise support and loans)</p> <p>(Indirectly benefitting a further 850 household members) Monthly incomes increase by 10%</p>	<p>8.1 hectares of the area surrounding the lagoon restored with tree planting within the current reporting period</p> <p>0.3.1. Awareness raising on the need to utilise Chia lagoon sustainably conducted reaching about 6000 (40% women) people; communities organised into 18 groups for regulated/controlled waterbird harvesting</p> <p>0.3.2. Restoration activities initiated and improved ecosystem management of the lagoon will benefit adjacent villages</p> <p>0.4. 180 people trained in enterprise development (44% women)</p> <p>The project in partnership with Micro Loan Foundation (MLF) is helping to identify enterprises to be developed.</p> <p>MLF works directly with women and will be trained on managing different enterprises.</p>	<p>Within first 2 quarters of the 2nd year, the project will facilitate the establishment of tree nurseries, initiate the invasive species removal by the hunters and communities.</p> <p>2nd year the project will reach to other communities adjacent to the targeted villages through radio</p> <p>Restoration activities to continue and more support to be provided to the communities within Year 2</p> <p>Further trainings to be conducted involving greater number of women.</p> <p>Enterprises identified to have potential for development to be supported in Year 2</p>
<p>Output 1.</p> <p>Chia Lagoon Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs and Bird Hunting Association are established and sustainably managing waterbird hunting.</p>	<p>1.1. 100 community members/hunters (20% women) are aware and interested in sustainably managing the waterbirds.</p>	<p>180 (44% women) hunters engaged through awareness raising and trainings to develop interest in sustainably managing waterbirds</p>	<p><u>Engagement will continue.</u></p>

	<p>1.2. 75 club members are inspired and gain capacity in sustainable hunting practices and enforcement protocols including through exchange visit with Lake Chilwa communities</p> <p>1.3 The level of bird hunting is known (extent, which species, methods), guiding management and informing monitoring.</p> <p>1.4 A code of conduct for the local Clubs and Chia Lagoon level Association is agreed upon and 10 Hunting Clubs are formally established (150 members)</p> <p>1.5. 90% of Association members adhere to sustainable hunting bylaws / use best practices.</p>	<p>1.2. 180 club members gain capacity through trainings and 20 of them participated in the exchange visit to Lake Chilwa to share lessons for inspiration about embracing controlled or organised hunting.</p> <p>1.3. Data on hunting collected through questionnaire administered in the community; preliminary list of hunted birds developed, and hunting methods identified.</p> <p>1.4 Code of conduct to be developed with established (180 members) hunting clubs; Association to be established is the in Y2Q2.</p> <p>1.5 To be implemented in Y2</p>	<p>Collate and analyse data and use to refine hunting protocols.</p> <p>Code of conduct to be developed and agreed with hunting clubs. Establish the Association of Hunting Clubs</p> <p>Monitor adherence to hunting by-laws.</p>
<p>Activity 1.1.1 Awareness raising and engagement activities to identify community members interested in participating in the waterbird management.</p>		<p>The project held 3 community meetings in each traditional authorities, namely, Kalimanjira, Mwadzama and Nkhanga The structures that were engaged includes (ADCs), (BVCs), Youth groups, Women groups, (VNRMcs), Wildlife clubs and Bird hunters. In addition, 2 other meetings were held targeting newly established 18 bird hunting clubs consists of 10 members each</p>	<p>Awareness raising is ongoing and will continue into Y2</p>

1.1.2 Engagement of District and local government, existing village structures (Beach Associations), hunters and women in the set up of local Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs, following the Lake Chilwa model.		Meetings held with district council and other administrative structures where the project was approved. Project further engaged organizations working around Chia lagoon for possible synergies.	The engagement of these key stakeholder will continue into Y2
1.2.1 Exchange visits with Lake Chilwa Hunting Clubs are provided for inspiration and capacity development. Training and support for the establishment of the Chia Lagoon Sustainable Hunting Clubs, and an umbrella Association (if deemed appropriate), is provided.		30 people visited Lake Chilwa hunting groups for an exchange visit including hunters, local leaders.	
1.3.1 Hunters, fishers and a selection of other household members and community leaders will be surveyed to assess the extent, nature and purpose of bird hunting at Chia Lagoon (how many birds, how many hunters, which species, what is a sustainable level of hunting)		About 150 people (80 women and 70 men) took part in the survey.	Another survey will be conducted to assess the impact of the interventions.
1.4.1 Participatory process to agree what sustainable hunting means, define a code of conduct, hunting protocols and enforcement mechanisms of individual Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs and an overarching Sustainable Bird Hunting Association.		The hunters have been engaged and protocols used at Lake Chilwa shared; drafting of the protocols and code of conduct has been initiated.	The project will organize meetings with hunters and relevant wildlife management authorities to develop and review the proposed protocols and code of conduct before the start of implementing them
1.5.1 Chia Lagoon Bird Hunting Associations in operation, including monitoring of adherence to agreed bylaws		Association to be established.	Meetings to be organised to formally facilitate the election of the association members
Output 2. Waterbird habitat in Chia Lagoon is better protected and restored	2.1 Nesting birds are better protected through the establishment of 5 bird sanctuaries. 2.2 9 areas of lagoon habitat are restored or under natural regeneration (approx. 75 ha) (through invasives removal in lagoon and 5km radius and through tree planting and natural	15 bird sanctuaries established and mapped with community involvement 8.1 hectares of land planted with trees within the reporting period	Bird sanctuaries finalised and monitored Restoration monitored

	<p>regeneration due to alternative timber lots)</p> <p>2.3 Community members in the 9 villages and wider area, including schools and wildlife clubs, are more aware of the importance of lagoon ecosystem and how to manage it through engagement events, backed up by press, social media and radio communications. (Likely audience 2000 in total / 50% female).</p> <p>2.4.1 Bird and habitat monitoring protocol is defined and 10 Malawian monitors are trained (including local people).</p> <p>Simple bird ID guide is designed and distributed for volunteer/community/visitor use. (500 copies and online) By middle of year 2.</p> <p>2.4.2 Annually updated data is available on bird species using and breeding in and around the lagoon. (Including designated Bird Sanctuary areas)</p> <p>Data is shared with Global Biodiversity Information Facility, World Bird Database and IWC Annual Waterbird Census.</p> <p>2.5 Chia Lagoon is assessed against the Key Biodiversity Area criteria (birds, fish and at least one other taxa)</p>	<p>The project carried out 2 public events in the communities to raise awareness on the importance of lagoon ecosystem and how best to managed it. Using local media including radio and TV, social media and national press, at least 6000 people were reached.</p> <p>Bird and habitat monitoring protocol is to be defined and monitors to be trained</p> <p>Bird ID guide book has been designed and will be produced and distributed in the Y2</p> <p>Data to be generated and shared in Y2</p>	<p>Awareness raising ongoing</p> <p>Bird ID guide book has been designed and will be produced and distributed in the Y2</p> <p>Assessments against KBA/Ramsar/OECM criteria to be conducted in Y2.</p>
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	<p>(Trigger species to be defined based on preliminary surveys and in discussion with National KBA Coordination Group)</p> <p>Based on KBA assessment: Feasibility of pursuing protected area or OECM status) (e.g. Ramsar site/community based managed area) is assessed. Need for Chia Lagoon Management Plan is assessed.</p> <p>By end of project</p>	<p>Ecological study conducted; assessments against KBA/Ramsar/OECM to be conducted in Y2.</p> <p>Training and sensitization conducted for KBA National Coordination Group; a national action plan for other sites developed</p>	<p>Any required advocacy / applications will follow, probably in year 3.</p>
2.1.1 Participatory process for identifying and mapping bird sanctuaries (for breeding birds, threatened species), agreeing protection measures, providing signage and any minor structures, as needed and implementing a communications plan.		15 bird sanctuaries identified in a participatory manner and mapped using MUST expertise; protection measures to be developed from Y2; signage has been produced. Communication plan has been developed.	Completion of the protection measures, installation of signage and other necessary structures will be done in Y2.
2.2.1 Participatory process to plan restoration.		20 sites around Chia Lagoon were identified for planting of trees	
2.2.2 Work with community to undertake restoration actions (set up native tree and/or native bamboo nurseries, seedling purchase if required, planting and care, sustainable harvesting, invasives removal, monitoring).		6000 tree seedlings procured, distributed and planted (Annex 4.7). Invasive species namely <i>Salvinia molesta</i> and <i>S. hastata</i> among others were identified for removal.	<p>Monitoring survival rate of planted trees to be initiated for replacement purposes. Intensify removal of invasive species.</p> <p>The project will facilitate the establishment of tree nurseries, initiate the invasive species removal by the hunters and communities and promote natural regeneration at the restoration areas starting in Y2</p>
2.3.1. Awareness raising publications/broadcasts, social media and events will be held focused on the community. To include community events celebrating e.g. Wetlands Day / International Day of Biodiversity		Various awareness raising meetings were organised including within traditional authorities, namely, Kalimanjira, Mwadzama and Nkhanga where all related community structures were invited	Awareness raising will continue into Y2 including participating in such events such World Environment

	and the project was presented, they welcomed the project. The structures that were engaged includes Area Development Committees (ADCs), Beach Village Committees (BVCs) representatives, Youth groups, Women groups, Village Natural Resources Management Committees (VNRMCs), Wildlife clubs and Bird hunters. A total of 18 women and 42 men who represented ADC at the meeting held on 18th August. More awareness raising was done while marking of World Wetlands Day which took place on 9 th February 2024.	Day, International Day of Biodiversity,
2.4.1 Baseline waterbird survey and ecosystem health assessment (Pressure, State, Response)	The survey conducted and draft report is in place (Annex 4.8)	To share with all the stakeholders the findings and recommendation
2.4.2 Ongoing Waterbird monitoring protocol will be designed and implemented. Training provided for community participation.	Waterbird monitoring Protocol is to be designed through the help of MUST	Training on monitoring will be provided in Y2Q1
2.4.3 User friendly Bird ID guides will be designed with pictures (in English and local languages) and distributed e.g. to WESM branches, Chia Lagoon Hunting Clubs/Beach Associations, Schools, Wildlife Clubs and tourism lodges. Share digital versions.	Bird ID guide has been designed	The Bird ID guide will be produced and distributed to schools, other WESM branches, tourism lodges etc from Y2
2.5.1 IBA/KBA assessment undertaken (include birds, fish (using existing data) and at least one other taxa – based on preliminary biodiversity surveys) and data shared on KBA database. Based on result of assessment proceed with designation and make recommendations for further action (e.g. management planning)	Data gathering was conducted on various taxa namely, birds, invertebrates (both aquatic and terrestrial), mammals, herpetofauna, and plants. A draft report is place. A KBA National Coordination Group (NCG) Workshop for Malawi was convened in March 2024.	Assessments against KBA/Ramsar/OECM to be conducted in Y2.
2.5.2 Feasibility for further protection assessed (either as a Ramsar site or Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measure (OECM, based on the CBNRM)	This is activity will begin from Y2	Assessments against KBA/Ramsar/OECM to be conducted in Y2.

<p>Output 3.</p> <p>Capacity of target communities around Chia Lagoon to pursue alternative, sustainable livelihoods is increased.</p>	<p>3.1.1 The baseline socioeconomic situation of the Chia Lagoon is better understood. By end of Q3. Impact of project is evaluated. By end of project.</p> <p>3.1.2 Communities identify and prioritise 5 sustainable livelihood enterprises for support within the target villages (including avitourism) By end of year 1</p> <p>3.1.3. 50 individuals (60% women) are trained and supported (separate to the Microloan Foundation support) to start or improve these enterprises by end of year 2</p> <p>3.1.4. 5 Supported livelihood enterprises (involving average 30 members each) will be operating around the lagoon by end of Project. (150 direct beneficiaries – including the 50 trained in 3.1.3) (60% women) (supporting 5-10 additional people)</p> <p>3.2.1. A microfinance facility is established for the target communities supported by Microloan Foundation by end of year 2.</p> <p>3.2.2. 150 individuals (90% women) access loans and receive training (7 sessions) in financial management and business, linked to different enterprises by end of project.</p>	<p>Baseline socioeconomic survey was conducted.</p> <p>Priority livelihood enterprises for support were identified as: Fish business, Irrigated rice farming, Bee keeping, Avi tourism /eco-tourism</p> <p>180 community members trained (79 women (44%) and 101 men (56%). The training was on hunting management and an introduction to basics of business management principles</p> <p>Supporting livelihood enterprises will begin from Y2</p> <p>Initial engagement meetings have been held in Y1 with Microloan Foundation to strategize on the roll out of support to enterprises including loaning. Microloan Foundation primarily supports women.</p> <p>During community meetings, social economic survey and hunters training, over 150 women have expressed interest to access the loans from Micro Loan Foundation for different enterprises.</p>	<p>Impact of the project to be evaluated towards the end once livelihoods improvement activities are actively supported.</p> <p>Assessing support requirements for each economic activity will be conducted through a participatory process from Y2 and promotion supported as needed.</p> <p>Training on specific enterprises will be provided to the promising communities members including women in Y2Q2.</p> <p>Support to enterprises to begin in Y2</p> <p>Support to enterprises and trainings to be to begin in Y2</p>
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	<p>3.3.1. Avitourism opportunities are promoted through materials and outreach to wildlife tourism enterprises by end of project.</p> <p>3.3.2 Better facilities for boat and bird watching is available through provision of basic infrastructure and supplies (i.e. shelter, boat maintenance & life jacket provisions) by end of project.</p> <p>3.3.3 The potential for expanded avitourism, benefitting the local community is better understood by end of project.</p>	<p>Initial meetings have started with existing tourism enterprises initially with African Parks in order to establish best way to approach this.</p> <p>During the bird sanctuary mapping exercise, it was observed that some existing avitourism infrastructure such as bird watching tower are in disrepair.</p>	<p>Meetings with tour operators will be facilitated by the project.</p> <p>The project will renovate a boat, procure life jacket and repair bird watching tower.</p> <p>To be started in the 3rd year</p>
<p>activities</p>	<p>3.1.1 Baseline socioeconomic surveys will be designed by external consultant and implemented by the consultant or/if deemed preferable, by the WESM team, with support of the consultant. End surveys with beneficiaries will gather feedback, assess impact and future ambitions.</p> <p>3.1.2 Propose/discuss potential enterprises/look at feasibility (3 existing and 2 new - agriculture/agroforestry and processing; bee keeping; avitourism; that would be sustainable from an ecosystem, climate resilience and economic perspective).</p>	<p>Baseline survey done and report prepared.</p> <p>Fish business, Irrigated rice farming, Bee keeping, Avi tourism /eco-tourism have been identified for potential support</p>	<p>A less intensive survey will be done at the end of the project to assess the impact of the project</p> <p>Comprehensive training and other support to be provided on each enterprise in Y2</p>

	3.1.3 Provide training and practical support to establish / expand enterprises in communities where Hunting Clubs are established e.g. bee keeping, fruit / fish processing, boat trips, micro renewables, hospitality.	180 hunting clubs members benefited from an initial 2 days training in business and bird hunting management techniques.	Training and other support to be provided in the 2 nd year
	3.1.4 Monitor and provide support, if needed, to enterprises.	To be implemented from Y2	To be implemented from Y2
	3.2.1 Establish micro lending initiative to support these and other enterprises. Recruit members, 90% women.	Only initial meetings have been held with Micro Loan Foundation	Micro lending to be initiated in Y2
	3.2.2 Micro lending mechanism is in operation, coupled with finance and business training for beneficiaries.	To be implemented from Y2	To be implemented from Y2
	3.3.1 Avitourism is promoted through marketing and outreach to tourism businesses, bird guide training and installation of physical facilities.	To be implemented from Y2	To be implemented from Y2

	3.3.2 Provide practical support or small investments in avitourism/wildlife tourism infrastructure (e.g. boat repairs, safety equipment, signage).	To be implemented from Y2	To be implemented from Y2
	3.3.3 Feasibility study of expanding avitourism and increasing benefits to local communities is conducted for Lake Malawi / Malawi.	To be implemented from Y2	To be implemented from Y2
<p>Output 4</p> <p>Ecosystem management and restoration is integrated into the wider water management and fisheries management structures</p>	<p>4.1</p> <p>The project is promoted, networks are built and wider experience is gained from meetings with stakeholders involved in e.g. Fish for Tomorrow and Chia Lagoon fisheries management, Ramsar focal points, Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve, and wider Lake Malawi Integrated Water Management programmes by end of Q2.</p> <p>4.2 National Dissemination.</p> <p>Project information and progress is shared with other Lake Malawi and Lake Chilwa water management and fisheries initiatives, and with local, district and national government stakeholders. By end of project.</p> <p>4.3 International Dissemination.</p> <p>Project information, progress and results from Lake Chilwa are disseminated for an international audience through at least 2 online</p>	<p>The project facilitated the stakeholders meeting at national, district and community level to promote synergies</p> <p>The project organised 1 national stakeholders meeting to share information about the project.</p> <p>Activity to be done in 2nd year</p>	<p>This will continue into Y2</p> <p>To organize more meetings in Y2 with stakeholders to share project progress and results</p> <p>Activity to be done in 2nd year</p>

	<p>stories, and participation in at least 1 international event.</p> <p>By end of project</p>		
Activities	<p>4.1.1 Meetings are held with stakeholders involved in Fish for Tomorrow and Chia Lagoon fisheries management and with Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve. And, where applicable, with wider Lake Malawi Integrated Water Management programmes. Use meetings to share project information and promote working relationships.</p>	<p>Meetings were held with stakeholders for joint planning and sharing of project information</p>	<p>Further meetings will be attended and/or organised to facilitate exchanges to enhance project results in Y2</p>
	<p>4.2.1 Dissemination of project information and emerging results at national level through articles/broadcasts, briefings and meetings</p> <p>4.3.2 Dissemination of project information and wider experience/lessons learned of CBNRM, especially for wetlands at international level through articles and participation in international event</p>	<p>The project has shared information through online media e.g. WESM website, national broadcasting house, social media, interviews and meetings. Also see https://www.manaonline.gov.mw/index.php/national-news/environment/item/725-wesm-launches-k312-million-project-in-nkhotakota</p> <p>https://mwncation.com/wesm-moves-to-restore-birds-in-nkhotakota/</p>	<p>Dissemination of project information will progress into Y2</p> <p>To be implemented from Y2 and Y3</p>

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
<p>Impact: Waterbird populations of Chia Lagoon flourish and local people and biodiversity benefit from community-based management, improved ecosystem functioning and enhanced, sustainable economic opportunities</p>			
<p>Outcome: Bird abundance and diversity increases, ecosystem recovers and the quality of life and sustainable livelihood opportunities improve for Chia communities</p>	<p>0.1.1 Bird populations increase by 20-30% over baseline. Bird species diversity increases by 20% over baseline.</p> <p>By end of project.</p> <p>0.1.2 Biodiversity knowledge (birds and other taxa) of Chia Lagoon and surrounding area will be available to inform management decisions and capacity for national monitoring will increase. By end of project.</p> <p>10 people trained/mentored in survey techniques. By end of year 2.</p> <p>0.2 Approx. 25 hectares of waterbird habitat is better protected through community-based management.</p> <p>Approx. 75 Ha of lagoon and watershed are in a better ecological state through community-based restoration. By end of project.</p>	<p>0.1.1 Bird population census at start and end of project (Annual Waterbird Census part of International Waterbird Census).</p> <p>0.1.2 Annual waterbird counts, submitted on BirdLasser; Surveys for other taxa, using iNaturalist.</p> <p>Important Bird Area (IBA)/Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) assessment for birds, fish and at least one other taxa and recommendations for further action for the site.</p> <p>List of trained in-country staff/volunteers/outline of training provided.</p> <p>0.2 Map of Chia Lagoon showing area under Hunting Association Management, and areas under restoration. Pressure, State, Response measure applied to assess change in state. To include extent of invasive alien species, photo evidence of restoration, application of satellite imagery to develop story map.</p> <p>0.3.1 List of villages fully engaged in project activities, with population information.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs approach works as it did in Lake Chilwa and reduced hunting pressure and habitat restoration measures lead to bird population increases.</p> <p><i>We believe this will hold true as the habitat and communities are similar.</i></p> <p>Bird population annual fluctuations do not prevent measurement of impact</p> <p><i>This is a possibility as populations may be impacted by e.g. weather, hiding longer term trends. Therefore, the population data should be analysed alongside the site condition report and non-bird taxa.</i></p> <p>Management and restoration activities result in improvements of ecological status. Area covered by Hunting Clubs and Restoration will be agreed with the communities, so is an estimate.</p> <p><i>We believe this will hold true, although benefits may not really be evidenced until after the project has concluded. Also, the lack of recent, comprehensive bird data means that there is a risk that bird population and diversity targets are too ambitious or too conservative.</i></p>

	<p>0.3.1 1,500 people (50% women) from 9 villages benefit directly from greater waterbird abundance and sustainable waterbird hunting management.</p> <p>Wider population (est. 14,000 people) benefit from ecosystem restoration. By end of project</p> <p>0.3.2 Populations in adjacent lagoon villages benefit indirectly from a healthier ecosystem. By end of project</p> <p>0.4 150 people benefit from enterprise training and support. (60% women)</p> <p>150 people (90% women) in 9 villages benefit from finance and business training and loans from Microfinance supported livelihoods investments.</p> <p>(170 total, as many receive enterprise support and loans)</p> <p>(Indirectly benefitting a further 850 household members)</p>	<p>List of active participants. Community survey of perceived impact.</p> <p>0.3.2. Map of Chia Lagoon showing area under Hunting Association Management, and restored areas. Indicate areas of indirect benefit.</p> <p>0.4 Detailed reports of the training provided, number of loans, purpose of loan, and financial management of the loan fund. Number and location of beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender). Recipient survey.</p>	<p>Enterprise training, practical support and financial assistance leads to livelihoods improvements that do not drive further degradation</p> <p><i>Based on experience, we think this will hold true. However, the project will consider the type of enterprises undertaken and their impact on reducing unsustainable resource use.</i></p> <p><i>Income increase is modest. However, this is likely to increase over time.</i></p>
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	Monthly incomes increase by 10%		
<p>Output 1</p> <p>Chia Lagoon Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs and Bird Hunting Association are established and sustainably managing waterbird hunting.</p>	<p>1.1 100 community members/hunters (20% women) are aware and interested in sustainably managing the waterbirds.</p> <p>1.2 75 club members are inspired and gain capacity in sustainable hunting practices and enforcement protocols including through exchange visit with Lake Chilwa communities</p> <p>1.3 The level of bird hunting is known (extent, which species, methods), guiding management and informing monitoring</p> <p>1.4 A code of conduct for the local Clubs and Chia Lagoon level Association is agreed upon and 10 Hunting Clubs are formally established (150 members)</p> <p>1.5 90% of Association members adhere to sustainable hunting bylaws / use best practices.</p>	<p>1.1 Reports of engagement activities including participation (with gender, village and occupation information and notes on community attitudes)</p> <p>1.2 Lake Chilwa exchange visit report.</p> <p>Training content, participation and effectiveness report.</p> <p>1.3 Bird hunting surveys and report.</p> <p>1.4 Published code of conduct for Association and Clubs, government authorisation and membership reports.</p> <p>1.5 Monitoring/enforcement methodology.</p> <p>Reports of monitoring actions and infringements.</p>	<p>There is strong political will within local government to support the structures</p> <p>We think this will hold true due to consultation with the District Fisheries Department, who are fully supportive.</p> <p>There is strong and lasting engagement by hunters and the wider community.</p> <p>We think this will hold true due to site visits and discussions with local people and experience from Lake Chilwa. We think that an increase in bird abundance helps to demonstrate benefit of adherence to bylaws/best practices</p>
<p>Output 2</p> <p>Waterbird habitat in Chia Lagoon is better protected and restored</p>	<p>2.1 Nesting birds are better protected through the establishment of 5 bird sanctuaries</p> <p>2.2 9 areas of lagoon habitat are restored or under natural regeneration (approx. 75 ha) (through invasives removal in lagoon and 5km radius and through tree planting and natural regeneration due to alternative timber lots)</p> <p>2.3 Community members in the 9 villages and wider area, including</p>	<p>2.1 Number and location of bird sanctuaries established (Detail of protection measures).</p> <p>2.2 Field reports with location information and restoration activities described and photographic record of invasives removal, tree planting and natural regeneration.</p> <p>2.3 Report of awareness actions including date, description, audience and, where possible, feedback.</p>	<p>Bird sanctuaries, hunting management and other conservation and restoration efforts result in increased bird populations.</p> <p>We think this will hold true but will need to monitor carefully and make adaptations, if needed.</p>

	<p>schools and wildlife clubs, are more aware of the importance of lagoon ecosystem and how to manage it through engagement events, backed up by press, social media and radio communications. (Likely audience 2000 in total / 50% female)</p> <p>2.4 Bird and habitat monitoring protocol is defined and 10 Malawian monitors are trained (including local people). Simple Bird ID guide is designed and distributed for volunteer/community/visitor use. (500 copies and online) by middle of year 2</p> <p>2.4 Annually updated data is available on bird species using and breeding in and around the lagoon. (Including designated Bird Sanctuary areas). Data is shared with Global Biodiversity Information Facility. World Bird Database and IWC Annual Waterbird Census</p> <p>2.5 Chia Lagoon is assessed against the Key Biodiversity Area criteria (birds, fish and at least one other taxa) (Trigger species to be defined based on preliminary surveys and in discussion with National KBA Coordination Group); Based on KBA Assessment; Feasibility of pursuing protected area or OECM status (e.g Ramsar site/community based managed area) is assessed. Need for Chia Lagoon Management Plan is assessment</p>	<p>2.4.1 Monitoring protocols. Training reports. List of trainees and monitors.</p> <p>2.4.2 Annual bird monitoring reports and distribution</p> <p>2.5 IBA/KBA Assessment (Boundaries defined, trigger species identified, monitoring done, KBA criteria applied, assess Pressure, State, Response score) Recommendations for further action</p>	<p>Restoration efforts are not destroyed by extreme drought or flooding</p> <p>We will factor in climate resilience in the choice of restoration approach</p> <p>Community members are convinced by communications activities and have the willingness and capacity to participate.</p> <p>Based on positive reactions thus far and experience in Lake Chilwa, we think this will happen.</p> <p>Species monitoring confirms that the site should be designated as a Key Biodiversity Area.</p> <p>We think this will hold true although degradation of the site may put this at risk.</p>
<p>Output 3 Capacity of target communities around Chia Lagoon to pursue alternative, sustainable livelihoods is increased</p>	<p>3.1.1 The baseline socioeconomic situation of the Chia Lagoon is better understood. By end of Q3. Impact of project is evaluated. By end of project.</p> <p>3.1.2 Communities identify and prioritise 5 sustainable livelihood</p>	<p>3.1.1 Baseline socioeconomic survey. End of project beneficiary surveys.</p>	<p>Improved livelihoods options will drive a reduction in unsustainable resource use.</p>

	<p>enterprises for support within the target villages (including avitourism) By end of year 1</p> <p>3.1.3 50 individuals (60% women) are trained and supported (separate to the Microloan Foundation support) to start or improve these enterprises by end of year 2</p> <p>3.1.4 5 Supported livelihood enterprises (involving average 30 members each) will be operating around the lagoon by end of Project. (150 direct beneficiaries – including the 50 trained in 3.1.3) (60% women) (supporting 5-10 additional people)</p> <p>3.2.1 A microfinance facility is established for the target communities supported by Microloan Foundation by end of year 2.</p> <p>3.2.2 150 individuals (90% women) access loans and receive training (7 sessions) in financial management and business, linked to different enterprises by end of project.</p> <p>3.3.1 Avitourism opportunities are promoted through materials and outreach to wildlife tourism enterprises by end of project.</p> <p>3.3.2 Better facilities for boat and bird watching is available through provision of basic infrastructure and supplies (i.e. shelter, boat maintenance & life jacket provisions) by end of project.</p> <p>3.3.3 The potential for expanded avitourism, benefitting the local community is better understood by end of project.</p>	<p>3.1.2 Community meeting reports (including participation records) and enterprise ideas outlined.</p> <p>3.1.3 Reports on training and support provided and enterprises supported (including beneficiary data).</p> <p>3.1.4 Evidence of enterprises functioning and beneficiary data.</p> <p>3.2.1 Micro Loans structure terms of reference and governance information</p> <p>3.2.2. Detailed reports of the number of loans, recipients, purpose, and financial management of the loan fund. Recipient survey. No of women and youth participating</p> <p>3.3.1 Birdwatching / avitourism materials and reports of marketing actions</p> <p>3.3.2 Photos of birdwatching infrastructure/facilities</p>	<p>We think this will hold true if the link between sustainable management and the alternative livelihoods is made clear and enshrined in hunting protocols and participation agreements e.g. for the microfinance loans.</p> <p>The project term will be long enough to establish the Microloan facility in the local community, recruit beneficiaries and provide training and loans.</p> <p>We think this will hold true as Microloan Foundation is established in the region already</p>
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<p>Output 4</p> <p>Ecosystem management and restoration is integrated into the wider water management and fisheries management structures</p>	<p>4.1 The project is promoted, networks are built and wider experience is gained from meetings with stakeholders involved in e.g. Fish for Tomorrow and Chia Lagoon fisheries management, Ramsar focal points, Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve, and wider Lake Malawi Integrated Water Management programmes by end of Q2.</p> <p>4.2 National Dissemination; Project information and progress is shared with other Lake Malawi and Lake Chilwa water management and fisheries initiatives, and with local, district and national government stakeholders. By end of project.</p> <p>4.3 International Dissemination; Project information, progress and results from Lake Chilwa are disseminated for an international audience through at least 2 online stories, and participation in at least 1 international event. By end of project</p>	<p>4.1 Meetings with government, NGO and other stakeholders</p> <p>4.2 Reports of national dissemination communications/events/meetings</p> <p>4.3 Reports of international dissemination communications/ events/meetings</p>	<p>4.1 Meetings with government, NGO and other stakeholders</p> <p>4.2 Reports of national dissemination communications/events/meetings</p> <p>4.3 Reports of international dissemination communications/ events/meetings</p>
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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 Activities

- 1.1.1 Awareness raising and engagement activities to identify community members interested in participating in the waterbird management.
- 1.1.2 Engagement of District and local government, existing village structures (Beach Associations), hunters and women in the set up of local Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs, following the Lake Chilwa model.
- 1.2.1 Exchange visits with Lake Chilwa Hunting Clubs are provided for inspiration and capacity development. Training and support for the establishment of the Chia Lagoon Sustainable Hunting Clubs, and an umbrella Association (if deemed appropriate), is provided.
- 1.3.1 Hunters, fishers and a selection of other household members and community leaders will be surveyed to assess the extent, nature and purpose of bird hunting at Chia Lagoon (how many birds, how many hunters, which species, what is a sustainable level of hunting)
- 1.4.1 Participatory process to agree what sustainable hunting means, define a code of conduct, hunting protocols and enforcement mechanisms of individual Sustainable Bird Hunting Clubs and an overarching Sustainable Bird Hunting Association.
- 1.5.1 Chia Lagoon Bird Hunting Associations in operation, including monitoring of adherence to agreed bylaws

Output 2 Activities

2.1.1 Participatory process for identifying and mapping bird sanctuaries (for breeding birds, threatened species), agreeing protection measures, providing signage and any minor structures, as needed and implementing a communications plan.

2.2.1 Participatory process to plan restoration.

2.2.2 Work with community to undertake restoration actions (set up native tree and/or native bamboo nurseries, seedling purchase if required, planting and care, sustainable harvesting, invasives removal, monitoring).

2.3.1. Awareness raising publications/broadcasts, social media and events will be held focused on the community. To include community events celebrating e.g. Wetlands Day / International Day of Biodiversity

2.4.1 Baseline waterbird survey and ecosystem health assessment (Pressure, State, Response)

2.4.2 Ongoing Waterbird monitoring protocol will be designed and implemented. Training provided for community participation.

2.4.3 User friendly Bird ID guides will be designed with pictures (in English and local languages) and distributed e.g. to WESM branches, Chia Lagoon Hunting Clubs/Beach Associations, Schools, Wildlife Clubs and tourism lodges. Share digital versions.

2.5.1 IBA/KBA assessment undertaken (include birds, fish (using existing data) and at least one other taxa – based on preliminary biodiversity surveys) and data shared on KBA database. Based on result of assessment proceed with designation and make recommendations for further action (e.g. management planning)

2.5.2 Feasibility for further protection assessed (either as a Ramsar site or Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measure (OECM, based on the CBNRM)

Output 3 Activities

3.1.1 Baseline socioeconomic surveys will be designed by external consultant and implemented by the consultant or/if deemed preferable, by the WESM team, with support of the consultant. End surveys with beneficiaries will gather feedback, assess impact and future ambitions.

3.1.2 Propose/discuss potential enterprises/look at feasibility (3 existing and 2 new - agriculture/agroforestry and processing; bee keeping; avitourism; that would be sustainable from an ecosystem, climate resilience and economic perspective).

3.1.3 Provide training and practical support to establish / expand enterprises in communities where Hunting Clubs are established e.g. bee keeping, fruit / fish processing, boat trips, micro renewables, hospitality.

3.1.4 Monitor and provide support, if needed, to enterprises.

3.2.1 Establish micro lending initiative to support these and other enterprises. Recruit members, 90% women.

3.2.2 Micro lending mechanism is in operation, coupled with finance and business training for beneficiaries.

3.3.1 Avitourism is promoted through marketing and outreach to tourism businesses, bird guide training and installation of physical facilities.

3.3.2 Provide practical support or small investments in avitourism/wildlife tourism infrastructure (e.g. boat repairs, safety equipment, signage).

3.3.3 Feasibility study of expanding avitourism and increasing benefits to local communities is conducted for Lake Malawi / Malawi.

Output 4 Activities

4.1.1 Meetings are held with stakeholders involved in Fish for Tomorrow and Chia Lagoon fisheries management and with Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve. And, where applicable, with wider Lake Malawi Integrated Water Management programmes. Use meetings to share project information and promote working relationships.

4.2.1 Dissemination of project information and emerging results at national level through articles/broadcasts, briefings and meetings

4.3.2 Dissemination of project information and wider experience/lessons learned of CBNRM, especially for wetlands at international level through articles and participation in international event

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
D1-A01	100 community members/hunters (20% women) are aware and interested in sustainably managing the waterbirds	Number of community members/hunters aware and interested in sustainably managing the waterbirds	People and proportions	Gender	180 Community Members (44% women)			180 Community Members	100 community members/hunters (20% women)
D1-A04	75 club members are inspired and gain capacity in sustainable hunting practices and enforcement protocols including through exchange visit with Lake Chilwa communities	Number of people inspired and applying new capacities in sustainable hunting practices and enforcement protocols after the exchange visit with Lake Chilwa communities.	People	Gender	0				75 members
D1-CO2	The level of bird hunting is known (extent, which species, methods), guiding management and informing monitoring	Records of the extent, species and hunting methods will be analysed and used to guide management and inform monitoring	Species hunted, Hunters methods	Taxa, gender	0				As per the study report
D1-B05	90% of Association members adhere to sustainable hunting bylaws / use best practices	Proportion of association members adhering to the developed code of conduct/hunting bylaws / use best practices.	People	Gender, hunters/stakeholders	0				90% of the Association members
D1-D01	9 areas of lagoon habitat are restored or under natural regeneration (approx. 75 ha) (through invasives removal in lagoon and 5km radius and through tree planting and natural regeneration due to alternative timber lots)	Hectares of lagoon habitat restored or under natural regeneration	Area/Ha	Area/Ha	0				75 hectares

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
D1-C05	Annually updated data is available on bird species using and breeding in and around the lagoon. (Including designated Bird Sanctuary areas). Data is shared with Global Biodiversity Information Facility. World Bird Database and IWC Annual Waterbird Census.	Number of times biodiversity data is availed to Global Biodiversity Information Facility. World Bird Database and IWC Annual Waterbird Census	Number of databases	Database type	0				Twice
D1-C04	The baseline socioeconomic situation of the Chia Lagoon is better understood. By end of Q3. Impact of project is evaluated. By end of project	New assessment of social economic situation conducted	Number	Baseline, end project	One Assessment			One Assessment	Two assessments
DI-A07	The project is promoted, networks are built and wider experience is gained from meetings with stakeholders involved in e.g. Fish for Tomorrow and Chia Lagoon fisheries management, Ramsar focal points, Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve, and wider Lake Malawi Integrated Water Management programmes by end of Q2.	Number of institutions, groups, organisations that the project has contacted or that are aware about the objectives of the project and type of linkages made	Institutions, organisations, groups	Organisation type and their functions 1) Ripple Africa (Fish For Tomorrow Project), 2) Fisheries Department 3) Forestry Dept, 4) Nkhotakota District Council (Environmental Affairs Dept), and; 5) Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve	5 Stakeholders/Organisations			5 Stakeholder/Organisations	5 Stakeholders/organisations

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-C15	International Dissemination; Project information, progress and results from Lake Chilwa are disseminated for an international audience through at least 2 online stories, and participation in at least 1 international event. By end of project	Number of media articles and meetings attended to disseminate project information	Meetings/articles	Type of dissemination (articles meeting)					Participation in 1 international event 2 online stories
D1-D16	Supported livelihood enterprises (involving average 30 members each) will be operating around the lagoon by end of Project. (150 direct beneficiaries – including the 50 trained in 3.1.3) (60% women) (supporting 5-10 additional people)	Number of People reporting improved livelihoods	People	Gender	0				150 individuals of which 60% of them are women

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)
None						

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

Annex 4.1 PSC meeting minutes

Annex 4.2 Meeting minutes WESM and MLF

Annex 4.3 Press cuttings

Annex 4.4 Lake Chilwa exchange visit report

Annex 4.5 Rapid assessment questionnaire

Annex 4.6 Map of the sanctuaries

Annex 4.7 Restoration photos

Annex 4.8 Chia Ecological Study Report

Annex 4.9 KBA NCG training report

Annex 4.10 Socio economic study report

Annex 4.11 Minutes of national stakeholders meeting

Annex 4.12 Minutes for World Wetland Day TASK Force Meeting

Annex 4.13_Feedback to Darwin on Reviewer Comments_Y1

Annex 4.14_2022-Biodiversity-Challenge-Funds-Risk-Framework-Chia Lagoon_April 2024

Annex 4.15 Community meeting to discuss sustainable natural resource use in Malawi

Annex 4.16 Notes of Project Implementation meeting held on 17th Oct 2023

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	Yes
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	No/Got guidance
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.	Yes
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	Yes
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see Section 16)?	Yes
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Yes
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Yes
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	