

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
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Project Title	Strengthening Community Capacity to Undertake Black-tailed Godwit and its Habitat Conservation in Cheleleka Wetland, Wondo Genet, Ethiopia
Application ID	39064-2
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1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Providing awareness creation and capacity-building training to a different level				As per the plan, 60 individuals from the community have participated in the training. To take more responsibility for wetland conservation we have been providing capacity building and awareness creation training for 65 participants composed of Woreda experts, Kebele Administration, and local community representatives at Intaye Town, Wondo district, West Arsi Zone Oromia-Ethiopia.
Strengthen environment and nature conservation clubs, establish additional clubs, and support them with training and materials				To create future environmentalists and nature conservationists, we have established additional four environment and nature conservation clubs and supply materials for them.
To monitor the Black-tailed Godwits population and breeding conditions in the Cheleleka wetland				Population of black-tailed godwits, livestock, and other threats monitoring is conducted as per the plan and information are produced for future conservation actions.
Conducting soil and water conservation activities to improve the groundwater table of the wetland and protect the wetland from sedimentation and siltation				We have provided and distributed 10,000 indigenous and exotic tree seedlings in collaboration with two Woredas administrations and freely distributed them to schools and the local community to restore the degraded land around their schools in the watershed.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

The project has achieved outcomes that contribute to the sustainable conservation of the cranes and their habitats. Among the outcomes, the three most important are:

- a).** Improvement in black-tailed godwits population and breeding conditions, observed at the project site in 2022 and 2023: In 2023, because of the conservation

efforts made (e.g., through awareness creation, and breeding site protection) substantial improvement is observed in black-tailed godwits. This is one of the indicators of our conservation efforts to reduce disturbance at the site. From this, we learn a lesson to realise successful breeding in future seasons by creating a protective environment for breeding pairs by reducing human interferences from the wetland areas.

b). School and Local community capacity building and awareness creation works: the project has successfully delivered capacity building training and practical activities on nature conservation, particularly wetland resources conservation, for nature conservation club students, mentors, and school communities. The students involved in this field activity reported that the programme has helped them to exercise what they have theoretically learnt in the classroom. They have called this activity a "laboratory in our backyard" but overlooked it. Finally, both the students and mentors actively involved in the fieldwork are inspired and continue to exercise it. This mobilisation and awareness creation activity will continue in the next phases until the schools and school community play their great in wetland conservation practices.

c). More than 10,000 indigenous and exotic tree seedlings (fruit and conservation purposes) were distributed to nine schools freely and planted in their school compounds to restore degraded lands in and around their school compounds in the wetland catchment. It is clear in the last 3-4 years, that the Government of Ethiopia has given great attention to "green legacy" and planting different purpose tree seedlings across the country through the campaign by mobilising the entire population. Thus, this project has strongly supported one of the national green legacy agendas of the countries and will continue in the next phase of the project activities.

d). Continuing from the phase one project we established an additional four environment or nature conservation clubs at four elementary schools with this project. This is very important to promote the relevance of nature conservation for future environmentalists and conservationists. This activity will also be continuing for other educational institutions in the next phase of the project to create future Environmentalists and nature conservationists.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

In one school conservation club (environment and nature) school garden establishment in the school compound is not completed as per the schedule, because the school community has engaged in similar activities to accommodate the rising number of pupils in the next academic year. To overcome this challenge in consultation with the local administration, school conservation club leaders, and school community, we have purchased all the proposed materials for the establishment and handover to the school, and the school garden establishment will be done in the 2024 academic year.

Financial inflation leads to increased costs of goods and services. The exchange rate between GBP and Ethiopian Birr evolves unfavourably thus reducing the available budget for implementation. This means the national currency (Ethiopian Birr) and fluctuation are one of the main challenges to implementing the project, which means the value of money to purchase items is very low and some of the costs related to fuel, lodging and food, vehicle rental, labour, data collector, and workshop facilitators were very high. Besides, the northern conflict in the country has also continued and affected the overall social and economic activities of the country; this is also one cause of the money fluctuation in the country. Hence had an impact on delaying the analysis, report write-up, and proceeding in preparing for the publications.

Rising fuel cost: Like most developing countries that do not produce their petroleum, Ethiopia has been hit hard by the unrelenting oil price rise during the past several months in particular. It is highly vulnerable to price shocks and supply problems in the world oil market. This is also affecting the project activities to move from one place to another for project work. To solve this problem, we have tried to purchase the required materials like tree seedlings around the communities and provide capacity-building activities at the school level rather than collecting and moving other meeting halls/ places.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

- The local community (students, farmers, teachers and experts) actively participated in project implementation and benefited from the project in the form of knowledge and skill gains, and material gain. The project has provided more than 10,000 tree seedlings school environmental /nature club and school communities freely, students (conservation club members) to participate in the assessment of wetland bird ecological studies and their conservation practices. Also, local community members involved in black-tailed godwit site protection and questionnaire interviews benefited from payment for their work.
- The local community members were actively involved in the project implementation through a school environmental /nature club, tree planting seedling production, and management.
- The local community members who participated in training directly benefited from gaining scientific knowledge on local suitable, environment-friendly (wetland ecosystem) and economically profitable livelihood activities. Not only the local communities but local, district, and zonal level experts also participated in the project activities and benefited from the capacity-building and awareness-creation training and workshops.
- Environment and nature conservation clubs in nine schools benefited from material donations for environmental protection and sanitation materials from the conservation club office in the school compounds.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Definitely yes, due to lack of money, we only address a very limited number of people and experts in the awareness creation and capacity building training. So, there is a plan to continue and create more awareness and capacity building activities. We have a plan to create and expand environmental and nature clubs in the surrounding educational institutions, this will help us to create better awareness for youth and children at the early stage/level and help to create future environmentalists and nature conservationists.

The project team have a plan to continue providing/supplying selected tree seedlings for schools and school local communities to restore degraded areas in the watershed. This will support and facilitate soil and water conservation activities and help to reduce the sedimentation effect of the wetland. Additionally, the project team plans to assess the major social, economic, ecological, and any governance or administration issues that will be included in the wetland management and conservation plan.

In general, we have planned to continue working to address the important black-tailed godwit and wetland conservation concerns to ensure sustainable conservation of the species through working on conservation needs identified during this project period together with relevant stakeholders and the community. Therefore, I have a plan to apply for Booster Grants to work on the identified conservation needs.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

We have shared the project results with various international, regional and national stakeholders working on cranes and wetlands. For example, the results are shared.

- All of the progress reports were uploaded on the RSG website.
- The article generated through support of the grant is submitted for publication.
- Project results are shared with other organizations working on conservation (such as Ethiopia Biodiversity Institute (EBI), Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA), and Hawassa University community through presenting the results at conferences and workshops.
- Local stakeholders on meeting, conference, and sharing reports,
- A manuscript submitted to a peer-reviewed journal will be published and available to the international community.
- The findings of the study supported by the Rufford Foundation were presented on Global Reach 2024.

7. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

During the project period, we have conducted training, conferences and consultation with the local community, and conducted research, and field observations. From these efforts, we have learned lessons and identified activities for the next steps. The activities suggested for the next steps are:

- Identify hotspot sites in the catchment of wetlands (used for black-tailed godwit and its habitats) frequently affected by flooding and sedimentation that damages black-tailed godwit and interrupts the breeding progress.
- Continue to conduct soil and water conservation activities around the wetland to reduce the sedimentation effect of the wetland and provide scientific support in degraded area rehabilitation practices in erosion hotspot areas of the wetland catchment.
- Work together with local media.
- In collaboration with local communities and other stakeholders, we will continue to establish the school environmental/nature club and supply selected tree seedlings for local communities to restore the degraded areas in the watershed.
- Provision of capacity building and awareness creation training to students, teachers, experts, and local communities to improve community knowledge and perception of environmental issues.
- Understand the local situations and identify the major issues that help to develop locally applicable wetland management plans, regional and national guide/manual to share with the extension workers and development practitioners, and regional and national policymakers.
- To undertake the plans mentioned above # 5, we will work with a different international and local organisation working in conservation.

8. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, the Rufford Foundation logo was used in awareness creation material, and banners, leaflets, t-shirts, and PowerPoint presentations. In addition, the foundation is duly acknowledged in a scientific manuscript submitted for publication, and public meetings.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

M. B. Molla has been involved in every activity of the project and led the team.

Z. W/Gebreal has been involved in fieldwork and providing awareness creation training.

W. Gorems has been involved in most field activities and facilitation.

T. Asfaw has been involved in most field activities and facilitation.

B. Emru has participated in environmental education training.

In addition, the project involved experts from Hawassa University, Ethiopia Wildlife Conservation Authority, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute, and Shashemene Botanical Garden among others.

10. Any other comments?

Rufford Foundation financial support has played a critical role in the achievement of our project objectives. It is impossible to achieve the above-mentioned activities without their support; hence, I am very grateful for this support. Finally, we would like to thank you in advance for the foundation's future support.





Tree seedling distribution and planning stages.



Threatened Black-tailed Godwit Bird.



Threatened Black-tailed Godwit Birds in the study areas.



Training Workshop held at HU-WGCFNRs.



Planted tree seedlings.