

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	CAMEROON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME II (CEESP II)
Country	CAMEROON
Organisation	Living Earth Foundation (LEF)
Project Ref. No.	162/10/014
Report date	<i>30 September 2003</i>

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

During this period great efforts were made, at various levels, to solve the problems that delayed project implementation over the previous year. These problems are well analysed in the Mid-Term Review and Annual Report. From April to July 2003 the blockage at the Ministry of National Education (MINEDUC) appeared to be insuperable. Since the problem had a diplomatic dimension, the EC Delegation took the lead in trying to solve it, but made little progress.

On the basis of advice received from the EC in May, LEF prepared a reorientation of the project proposals towards the elements to be implemented with rural communities and the Ministries of Agriculture and Environment & Forests (MINAGRI and MINEF) rather than with MINEDUC. In July, however (partly as a result of an intervention by LEF London), the Government of Cameroon (GOC) became concerned at the implications of a failure to implement the project, and MINEDUC indicated its willingness to move forward. The EC pressed LEF to take the opportunity to revise the 'Devis Programme' (DP or costed work plan) for the year, but the DP was finally submitted for signature with only minor revisions. The project is now officially to be implemented from 1st September 2003, although the Technical Assistance (TA) contract has been operational since October 2002.

While overcoming these hurdles, LEF continued to maintain good relations with the three Ministries involved in the project, through their respective focal points, with further discussions over the proposed Memoranda of Understanding.

Project staff had all been recruited earlier in the year. LEF remained in regular contact with the selected candidates, but due to the long delay some of them were not immediately available to start work by September. Several are civil servants who have to be released by their Ministries before taking up their posts. The aim is to have the team on board during October 2003, although the EC insists that they obtain their release letters before starting work. An appraisal of the Project Adviser was carried out, and his one-year contract is to be renewed.

LEF submitted activity reports to the local partners, and requested the EC and GOC to authorise payments under the TA contract. Payments for the period October 2002 to March 2003 (mainly relating to the Project Adviser post) were finally made. In September LEF applied for the first advance of funds under the DP. At the same time, LEF prepared tender documents for purchase of one car and six computers, and arranged to rent one LEF vehicle to the project, in line with revised DP.

The Adviser completed a report on the Desk Review of CEESP Phase I in May, and made preparations for staff induction and the annual work plan. He also organised exhibitions of LEF's Environmental Education (EE) materials at Buea and Yaounde. Interest in the materials

remains high: both MINEDUC and MINEF have requested to use them as a starting point for development of new EE materials.

The LEF Africa Programme Manager visited the project in September and held meetings with the EC in an effort to streamline implementation.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments, that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

The main cause of delay since 2002 was the blockage at MINEDUC (discussed in the Mid-Term Review). By September that problem had been solved. However, the EC Delegation now argues that although the project budget remains largely intact, activities should be planned with a one-year perspective, since it is not certain that an extension will be granted. The EC protocol is valid only up to January 2005 and the EC argues that extension would be difficult and only justifiable if the project can demonstrate high impact tangible results during the first year. We are awaiting a formal explanation of this view.

The problems encountered to date have had a substantial effect on the budget and scheduling of activities. LEF has made every effort to inform the Department of the changing situation through individual contact and through the mid-term evaluation process. Formal deferral of the remaining budget to the 2004/05 financial year was received in April 2003.

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures.

No.

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