

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	14-013
Project Title	Community Management of NTFPs in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area
Country(ies)	Nepal
UK Organisation	WWF UK
Collaborator(s)	WWF Nepal Programme
Project Leader	Mark Wright (WWF-UK); Rudriksha Parajuli (WWF-Nepal)
Report date	October 2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HY3
Project website	N/A

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

REVISED Output 1: 22 Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) practice community-based management of NTFPs.

In the last annual report it was recognised that the original target - *Development of 26 NTFP action plans* was too ambitious to achieve within the project timeframe. This was reduced such that, by March 2008, eight NTFP action plans will be prepared. It should be noted that community based management of NTFPs is nominally practiced by all CFUGs because this is a mandatory provision in the Forest Operation Plan (FOP). In KCA, a total of 22 FOPs have been prepared and handed over to 22 Conservation Area Community Forest User Groups. These plans alone do not fully address sustainable management of NTFPs / medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs), hence the need for Action plans.

a. Capacity building in NTFP sustainable harvesting and management training

24 local people in Wolangchung Gola Village Development Committee (VDC) were provided with training on sustainable harvesting and management of NTFPs. An exposure visit for six local entrepreneurs was conducted to Dolakha, Daman and Kathmandu. This introduced the participants to community based projects on essential oil production and Nepali hand made paper production.

b. NTFP Inventory and Action Plan development

Preparatory work for developing NTFP action plans for Tiptala CFUG, Nigijam Phulbari, Namfuwa, Patale CFUGs and Kumbhakarna CFUG was carried out. Additionally, eight local people from Ghunsa and Tapethok VDC were trained on NTFPs inventory and ecological monitoring techniques. They will supervise NTFPs work in their respective VDCs. Four Conservation Community Forests were handed over to CFUGs. Local communities in KCA were also provided with financial and technical support for managing their NTFP/MAP nurseries.

c. Prioritization of species for inventory and enterprise development in Yamphudin VDC

Local communities in Yamphudin VDC have identified 18 locally-found NTFPs as high value NTFPs. These findings will be verified through research on species abundance and yield potential as a precursor for commercial promotion.

Output 2: Local livelihoods in KCA enhanced through sustainable utilization of NTFPs

a. Cooperative operation training

Twenty representative members of co-operatives were provided with a 5-days training on account and office management with the emphasis on managing a cooperative.

b. Value addition training

A follow-up training on Chirayito (*Swertia chirayita*) husbandry using a seedling nursery and transplantation method was conducted for those participants who received basic training last year. This system allows cultivation without the need for slash and burn and has been found, elsewhere in Nepal, to produce higher yields. In the case of Nepali hand made paper 12 people were trained on processing techniques for paper production using Lokta (*Daphne* sp.) and Argheli (*Edgeworthia gardneri*). The participants were also provided with basic tools and equipment. These trainees will produce paper in the forthcoming harvesting season. The paper can be locally sold but there is also a market in Kathmandu and in neighbouring districts which participants will supply. In addition, a private company (Kanpou) in Kathmandu has committed to purchasing 500 kg of semi-processed argheli bark in the first year.

c. Establishment of NTFPs based micro-enterprise

Another private company – Herbs Production and Processing Company Limited (HPPCL) - has given a verbal commitment to purchase the essential oil produced from Sunpati (*Rhododendron anthopogan*) and Dhupi (*Juniperus* sp.), with a buy-back guarantee. Earlier, a distillation unit was installed in Ghunsa for the oil extraction purpose. The laboratory test showed the oil produced meets the quality standard set by HPPCL. Two local people were trained on the operation and management of the distillation plant. Recognising the potential market for incense sticks in Tibet and in Kathmandu, four local youths were trained on making incense sticks from leaves of Bhairung Pati (*Rhododendron lowdensii*). The project also supported the installation of four improved dryers used for drying cardamom which will benefit 57 households. These dryers are expected to improve the quality and taste of locally harvested cardamom. The project continued its efforts to establish linkages and developing networking by linking NTFPs entrepreneurs of KCA with private companies.

d. Market/ price information systems to communities

In the first year of this project, KCAP supported the Taplejung Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) to establish the NTFP market price information system. Since then it has been continuously providing NTFP market price information on a weekly and daily basis to the communities of Yamphudin, Lelep and Tapethok VDCs. The TCCI collects information from markets in Nepal and India.

Output 3: Community based monitoring system of key NTFP species in place

a. Establish permanent plots for ecological monitoring of NTFP/MAPs

Twelve permanent plots were established in community forest areas in Wolanchung Gola VDC and Tapethok VDC. The project also supported the ecological monitoring of permanent plots of Chirayito, Kutki and Maikopila to determine population dynamics and thereby prescribe sustainable management practices. Since these plants are perennial, long-term monitoring (>2 years) is required to track growth. However as this project ends in June 2008, a preliminary report on population dynamics will be made based on two years worth of monitoring data.

Review, Documentation and Dissemination of lessons

The first draft of the book “*Guidelines for management and sustainability of use of key NTFP species*” was prepared. The book aims to improve the technical capacity of CFUG members, collectors and traders in the sustainable harvesting and management of plant-based NTFP species. These harvesting techniques follow the “International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP)”. In addition, the project supported the production of 500 copies of project newsletters, 1000 sets of notebooks, fliers, charts and display materials highlighting the NTFPs/MAPs programme in KCA, particularly the successful seabuckthorn juice enterprise.

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 affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The project did not encounter any notable problem during the past six months. However, the revised Indicators (responding to the changed Output 1) are attached for your reference.

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

NA

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. *Document attached.*

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**