

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	14-043
Project Title	Mpingo Conservation Project – Community Forestry in Kilwa, Tanzania
Country(ies)	Tanzania
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International
Collaborator(s)	Mpingo Conservation Project
Report date	27/10/06
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	www.mpingoconservation.org

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).

The project has achieved two significant milestones in the last six months. The first Village Forest Management Plan was approved by the council, and is now ready to begin formal implementation. We are hoping to facilitate a small early harvest of *Pterocarpus* to demonstrate in practice to the community that the anticipated benefits from timber licence fees are real and attainable. Secondly, we have completed an assessment of the current demand (i.e. before any significant marketing campaign) amongst British and Irish instrument manufacturers for certified mpingo. A summary report was presented to Tanzanian sawmills, two of which expressed interest in supplying this new niche market.

Unfortunately in the last six months the government PFM programme in Kilwa District has been badly corrupted, meaning many targets have been missed, see question 2 below. Of the main work planned, only half of the PFRA in Kisangi (TA2) has been done. Establishment of monitoring plots has also been hindered by delays in recruiting a new Research & Communications Officer (those in community forests are in any case part of the PFRA).

Other milestones, however, have been hit, or are on target to be met by the end of the financial year; the village education pack has been refined and expanded to other villages, and the para-taxonomy has been completed. Additionally the project has deepened its support for local CBOs in partnership with the national Community Forest Conservation Network; CBO members were trained in advocacy and lobbying techniques, and a journalists' visit inspired an unprecedented effort at forest boundary clearance and other forestry public works. The MCP has also developed a strong relationship with Sokoine University (who have a large forestry department), and hope to begin sponsoring students' field research from Jan 2007.

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.

Since the previous District Executive Director (DED) left in May, the government PFM programme has been subverted by a problematic assistant forest officer and a corrupt senior official. The District Forest Officer (DFO) has been cut out of the loop (he was removed from the signatories to the PFM account), and a large portion of the government funds misspent. Since the MCP's work is built on top of the government PFM programme this has severely constrained a core part of the project. Financial details are a particularly sensitive area with the district council, and so the MCP is in a delicate position when attempting to combat this.

However there is reason to believe that the corner has been turned, and the worst problems may shortly come to an end. A new DED has finally been appointed, along with a new District Commissioner, while the senior official will retire next March. The MCP successfully fought off an attempt to discredit its work (led by the same pair who have subverted the PFM programme), and in doing so won powerful new allies amongst the councillors. Rural communities told the councillors in no uncertain terms the high regard in which they hold the MCP, and the fairly

dismal view they in contrast hold of district officials. The MCP is now working behind the scenes to help councillors to uncover the looting of the PFM funds. Danida are also due shortly to conduct an audit of the funds they provided to support the PFM programme in Kilwa District.

It is doubtful that the delays to the PFM programme can be made up during this financial year, and it is probable that, even if things pick up, not all project targets will be met by the end of year 3 (also the end of this current Darwin funding). However the MCP is in a good position to fast forward the PFM programme as and when it should have sufficient budget control, which should be the case from July 2007, when all district councils will have to spend 25% of their PFM funds through external service providers. The MCP will be in a prime position to win these contracts in Kilwa and neighbouring districts. It is also clear that the MCP enjoys the trust and strong support of rural communities, the most important partners in developing PFM.

As these delays are wholly within the government PFM programme, no impact is expected on expenditure on Darwin funds which remains on track. Staff time which was expected to have been spent on government funded PFM activities has instead been spent doing useful work supporting boundary clearance around community forests and helping local CBOs. Our new Research & Communications Officer is expected to join the team in mid November.

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

No

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?

The requirement to submit complete project accounts within 10 days of the end of the last financial year was a considerable challenge given that quarterly claims are normally due one month after the end of the quarter concerned. A reversion to a 30 April deadline for annual accounts would be much appreciated.

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.

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 by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**