

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

30th September 2009

Project Ref. No.	17-007
Project Title	Building natural resource monitoring capacity in Ethiopia's key Afro-montane ecosystems
Country(ies)	Ethiopia
UK Organisation	The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute
Collaborator(s)	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority
Project Leader	Simon Thirgood / Justin Irvine
Report date	30 September 2009
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	http://www.macaulay.ac.uk/CAMP/

1. Outline of project progress (April – September 2009)

Progress through the project start up period has been steady and effective from a project management perspective and field activities are commencing. By the end of the reporting period permissions were in place, staff employed, major equipment procured and thus principal project milestones and indicators met.

Formal permission to conduct the project in Ethiopia has been obtained through agreements with partner organisations, principally the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority as the main Government partner and Frankfurt Zoological Society, the main operational partner. A project initiation meeting was held in April and a preliminary project steering committee (PSC) meeting held in August which national stakeholders, including local government, attended. A simple MoU was drafted.

Under Output 1, a workshop was held to help establish priorities for ecological monitoring. The prioritisation of ecological components of the ecosystem in each target area was discussed and a draft report is available. This will provide a guideline for the implementation of 'scientific' ecological monitoring, against which the results of community monitoring on natural resources can be compared as necessary.

Under Output 2, the ecological monitoring workshop also served to build the capacity of protected area and local government management authorities. Preliminary work to assess the structures of established natural resource user groups at target sites was carried out and to support the establishment of 2 new user groups in one target site.

The ecological monitoring workshop conducted under Output 1 has raised awareness and formed a basis for partners to facilitate the identification of appropriate community based monitoring approaches and indicators under Output 3. A review of the literature on community-based monitoring approaches has been conducted. In addition a household socio-economic, knowledge, attitudes and practices questionnaire was developed and baseline data collected in the Bale Mountains target sites. This will be used to design project interventions and set a baseline for project success. Questionnaires will be adapted for the other project sites in light of this pilot survey and lessons learnt from other projects.

Activities under Output 4 included a project initiation meeting and subsequent Project Steering Committee meeting and the development of a basic project webpage and draft MoU. Moreover, lessons learnt for community-based monitoring from the experience of other participatory natural resource management systems is being investigated. Three sites with existing

Participatory forest management systems were visited and as a result an in-depth questionnaire and analysis are being designed for other existing areas. In addition the project will co-host a national workshop in the next reporting period to examine the experiences and success of participatory natural resource/forest management and discuss new forest management regulations that are in draft. This will also serve to build the capacity of stakeholders.

Other baseline information for project monitoring has been collected by conducting a survey of management effectiveness in the Guassa and Abune Yoseph Community Conservation Areas.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months.

During a project workshop in late August, at the field site in the Guassa Community Conservation Area, a roof over an outside seating area collapsed during a freak storm and killed the project leader and injured a key project partner staff member. This has inevitably caused some delay both in the field due to the associated trauma for project staff in the field. The field workshops to assess current situation and develop a detailed activity plans in the 2 community conservation areas were cut short and postponed and a subsequent stakeholder coordination meeting also had to be postponed. It has also precipitated the need to change project leadership at the Macaulay Institute. However plans are being put in place to reorganise the project and are addressed in separate correspondence with the Darwin Secretariat.

From an operational perspective, several issues have arisen since the project was conceived. Most importantly, new legislation was put in place that has now prohibited the controlled use of natural resources (grass, wood, non-timber forest products etc) in designated 'National Parks' in Ethiopia. The project cannot currently work within Simien and the Bale Mountains National Parks. The 2 target sites that involve community-managed conservation areas are not affected directly by this legislation. To resolve this issue in the Bale Mountains, the project will work with community natural resource management groups are being set up immediately adjacent to the park in the north. However, in the Simien Mountains NP there is currently now no government or community strategy to address resource use or conduct monitoring by communities and thus no opportunity to work in that area. The project will therefore concentrate on the other 3 target areas in the meantime and this focus will in fact simplify logistics considerably.

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

Yes these management issues are being raised with the DS along with the submission of this report. We would also like to request some small changes to the project logframe.

A change in the budget allocation within the capital expenditure portion of the budget was requested and allowed by the DS, so that a new project vehicle could be purchased.

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

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

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