

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	17-014
<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Development of a Cross-Sectoral Environmental Governance Platform for the Nimba Mountains</b>
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Liberia; Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Fauna & Flora International
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew Conservation International, Centre for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB) Conservation International (CI) - Liberia Arcelor Mittal, Liberia The Forest Development Authority (FDA), Liberia Société des Mines de Fer de Guinée (SMFG), Guinea Government of Guinea – Environmental Management Authority for Nimba and Simandou Centre de Gestion de l'Environnement des Monts Nimba et Simandou – (CEGENS) Union des Volontaires pour le Développement Intégré de Zontompiézo, Guinea UVODIZ Aide Universelle pour le Développement de la Nouvelle Génération, Guinea AUDNG The Environmental Protection Agency, Liberia (EPA) Society for the Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL) The National Environmental Agency, Cote d'Ivoire OIPR, Cote D'Ivoire
<b>Project Leader</b>	<i>Pippa Howard</i>
<b>Report date</b>	<i>31 October 2010</i>
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	<i>HYR2</i>
<b>Project website</b>	<i><a href="http://www.nimbadarwin.org/">http://www.nimbadarwin.org/</a></i>

**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).**

1.4, 2.1 Strategic partnerships have been established and strengthened between the project and other key practitioners in the area. In particular, effective working relationships have been established with the Manu River Union (MRU) and STEWARD (Sustainable Thriving Environments for West African Resource Development; a program supported by the US Forestry and Wildlife Service). The MRU is seen as key to the development of a Cross-Sectoral Environmental Governance Platform for the Nimba Mountains because it is an established international association (named for the Mano River which begins in the Guinea highlands and forms a border between Liberia and Sierra Leone). The Agreement dates from 1973 and was reactivated in 2004 following a hiatus due to conflicts and civil war in the region. The purpose of the union is to foster economic cooperation between Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. However it also has an environmental component and could provide a relatively permanent framework for strengthening of sub-regional environmental governance, in cases where the countries in the union share a significant environmental resource, as in the case of the Nimba Mountains. The goal is for the Darwin Project to be recognised as an implementing "vehicle" for the MRU's environmental workplan as it applies to Nimba.

During this reporting period the Darwin project pursued organisation and facilitation of a stakeholder workshop entitled 'Trans-boundary Harmonization for Biodiversity Conservation: Policy and Management', jointly with MRU and STEWARD. This workshop is scheduled to be held in Sanniquellie, Liberian Nimba in October 2010 and to include a field visit into Guinean Nimba. The workshop has the goal of formally proposing a TCSEGP for Nimba, taking into account the relevant laws and requirements of the countries involved, and creating an MoU between the 3 governments agreeing to the creation of the TCSEGP. It differs from previous workshops convened by the project in its involvement of community representatives and stakeholders local to the Nimba region.

A further meeting is planned in January in Cote D'Ivoire to seek formal agreement and to commence the development of a Collaborative Management Strategy. This is intended to contribute towards revision of relevant World Heritage Site Management Plans (which are out of date) whilst also meeting the wider needs of the Darwin Project.

1.2 and 2.2 The Darwin project officer for Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire, Gondo Gbanyangbe, undertook a series of successful field visits to Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire to meet with project partners and to open lines of communication (see project website for report). Successful meetings were held in Cote d'Ivoire with rebel groups which are active in the Nimba area and have a considerable influence over local politics and land use. Stakeholders in Ivorian government institutions and other stakeholders are now "on board" so that it should be possible to initiate the process of capacity building towards EIA and SEA and involve appropriate stakeholders in Liberia, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. During this period the stakeholder mapping exercise was therefore completed and the report made available on the project website. This report details the results and recommendations for future engagement. Issues of boundary demarcation, challenges of achieving sustainable management with community involvement, and consensus about conservation management in a tight timeframe were all identified. Local capacity building efforts in Liberia, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire formed the basis for inviting relevant stakeholders to the workshop outlined above, to ensure wide representation of relevant institutions and also communities. The Darwin Project Officers in Liberia have built links with local authorities and communities based in Nimba to ensure their participation and raise their awareness of management challenges and objectives relating to biodiversity and the implications of biodiversity loss for provision of ecosystem services.

3.3 Strategic meetings have been held with companies interested in resource extraction from the Nimba Mountains, notably ArcelorMittal, BHP Billiton and SMFG. The project has registered its interest in independent review of the EIA's being undertaken by these mining corporations and assisting the regulatory authorities in the development of required capacity to undertake their own reviews. ArcelorMittal have agreed to continue to provide their EIA survey data as a contribution towards the development of the Nimba Atlas. The project continues to seek equivalent data from Cote D'Ivoire and Guinea.

4.1 The project contributed a review of EIA and other laws relevant to nature protection and biodiversity in Nimba to a wider review (at national level) carried out by the Mano River Union with support from the US Forestry Service. This review was scheduled to be tabled at the October workshop and will contribute towards harmonisation of protection mechanisms for biodiversity.

5.1 Linked to the stakeholder mapping exercise (1.1) and ongoing consultation process (1.2) work has been carried out with communities, CBOs and local NGOs to participate during the consultation – this is being supported by business ESIA results and sharing of findings in the Nimba. Information will be added to the Nimba Atlas

6. The project's communications strategy has been further developed and strengthened. The project website is now active and presents an overview of the project together with a variety of outputs that are downloadable (e.g. reports & maps). It is updated regularly and is a crucial element of the communication strategy between the project partners. The project contributed



**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 LTS International directly.**

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.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: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**