

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref No	18-014
Project Title	Ecosystem-wide forest conservation in DRC using okapi as a flagship
Country(ies)	Democratic Republic of Congo
UK Organisation	Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
Collaborator(s)	<i>Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature</i> (ICCN), GIC, Cardiff University, WCS, FFI, Wasmoeth Foundation, FZS, Lukuru Foundation, Imperial College London / ZSL Institute of Zoology, et al.
Project Leader	<i>Hannah Thomas / Noelle Kumpel</i>
Report date	1 November 2011
Report No.	HYR 1
Project website	www.zsl.org/virunga

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).

YR2	Activity	Q1	Q2	Progress Update and Notes
1.3	Standardised baseline surveys, carried out for approximately three months each in at least five sites	X	X	A standardized survey in the Okapi Faunal Reserve was completed last year, but due to significant security, legal and matched funding issues, we have not been able to implement further surveys. (See section 2 for details.)
1.4	Preliminary recce surveys carried out where possible in additional sites	X	X	Preliminary scoping missions of two regions, Ituri and TL2 (In collaboration with the Lukuru Wildlife Trust), were carried out during July, August and September 2011. A further exploration /scoping mission in the Ituri west region is planned for Y2 Q4, as is preliminary data collection in the Mt Hoyo Reserve. In addition historical data on okapi distribution was collected from the from the Lwrio Research centre, Bukavu in July.
1.5	Baseline socio-economic surveys carried out by community assistants in at least 4 communities each of Mbau, Watalinga and Mt Hoyo areas	X	X	Matched funding for this component is pending. See section 2 for details
1.7	PhD student participates in initial survey methodology meeting, and accompanies field teams to collect faecal samples, training up ZSL and GIC staff members to ensure standard process is followed	X		PhD student, Dave Stanton visited the TL2 region in Y2 Q2, collecting dung samples and provided training for Lukuru field teams to collect additional samples from the Rubi-Tele Reserve and ZSL field staff from Ituri central. Dung samples were successfully collected in all regions and skin samples were provided by villagers and local authorities. Samples from confiscated skins were also provided by Maiko ICCN site management. Permits for export were acquired and all samples exported in September Analysis is underway in Cardiff. January 2012 will see further collections by ZSL/ICCN staff in Virunga, Mt Hoyo and in the Ituri

				West regions.
2.1	ICCN rangers, monitoring officers and community-based field staff trained in bio-monitoring theory and methods at WCS training centre in RFO, through classroom-based lessons and field training in Epulu area	X		Funding for this component is now secured from the USFW wildlife service and will now take place in Y2 -Q4 and Y3 Q1. Please see section 2 for further details.
2.2	ICCN monitoring officers and community-based team leaders trained in data management, analysis and reporting	X		Funding for this component is pending. See Section 2 for details.
2.4	M'buti trackers trained in CyberTracker icon-based data collection (for forest surveys)	X		Funding for this component is pending. See Section 2 for details.
2.5	Community assistants selected and trained in CyberTracker and participatory socio-economic data collection via structured and semi-structured interviews and focus groups		X	Funding for this component is pending. See Section 2 for details.
3.1	Patrol posts constructed at Lamiya in the Watalinga region of Virunga NP in year 1 and Mt.Hoyo year 2.	X	X	Funding for this component is pending. See section 2 for details
3.3	Monthly patrols by ICCN rangers up Semliki river in Watalinga forest of Virunga NP	X	X	Funding for Y2 Virunga patrol support will be paid in January 2012 in accordance with ICCN Virunga requests.
3.6	Initial focus groups held in at least 4 communities each of Mbau, Watalinga and Mt Hoyo areas to discuss issues of sustainable natural resource use, options for alternative livelihoods and raise awareness of okapi and forest conservation.	X	X	A multi-stakeholder meeting, attended and co facilitated by ZSL was hosted by MONUSCO (UN Peacekeeping Mission to DRC) and UN Habitat in May in the Mt Hoyo region to help mitigate conflict between ICCN and local communities. Progress was made in resolving several major points of conflict.
3.7	Participatory mapping with communities of key resources, land use and boundaries of community forest area		X	Preliminary contacts have been made with local communities and plans made with ICCN to commence participatory boundary identification of Mt Hoyo reserve in Y3 Q1 (January 2012)
3.8	Regular radio broadcasts and newspaper articles on okapi/forest conservation across DRC and Virunga-Hoyo region.			Appropriate opportunities will be discussed for producing joint partner publications and press-releases following the finalisation and publication of the WCS Okapi Faunal Reserve survey report in January 2012
3.11	Assistance in fundraising and access to in-country or expatriate technical support for community projects			ZSL field coordinator provided technical support for the Community based Usala Nature Reserve to successfully acquire a small grant (\$4000) from the International Primatological Society and IUCN Primate specialist group. The grant is primarily focussed on preliminary surveys and monitoring of Hamlyn's owl faced guenon but will also enable Usala teams to collect additional data on okapi

				presence, threats and dung samples for the genetic analysis. The project is expected to start in January 2012.
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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 has encountered a number of significant problems during Y2 Q1 and Q2. Matched funding committed by the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF) has still not been received and is now overdue by 18 months. Although the grant has been approved by the CBFF, unexpected and repeatedly changing bureaucratic requirements from within the African Development Bank (AfDB) have continually delayed the disbursement process. It still remains unclear when disbursement of these funds will occur. Therefore, planned activities in the Mt Hoyo and Virunga sites that were supported by CBFF funds have not been possible to implement. Moreover it has also been necessary to use more Darwin funds than planned on basic running costs that would otherwise have been covered by CBFF funds. Second, the security in the entire region of eastern DRC has been in flux since the middle of 2010 but increasingly insecure from July to October 2011 as DRC prepares for democratic elections in December 2011. This has caused significant problems for ICCN Virunga, Mt Hoyo, Okapi Faunal Reserve and Maiko site management who are currently focused on stabilization rather than surveys and monitoring activities. Due to the instability over the election period and in accordance with UN and UK Home Office advice, as well as guidance from ICCN, our partner NGOs, we have suspended all field activities during November and December 2011 to ensure the safety of DRC based staff.

In addition to problems with insecurity, ICCN Virunga site management is currently undergoing major restructuring (through a European Union funded reform project) that has resulted in massive staff turnover and the commencement of recruitment and training of a new ranger force. ZSL and ICCN had both expected that the Virunga region would be accessible and new ICCN rangers in situ by mid 2011, however delays in the recruitment of the ranger force indicate that rangers will not be in place until February 2012 at the earliest. A further unexpected yet significant delay we have encountered is the finalisation of the legal contract with ICCN required to commence our field activities within PA's (such as ranger training and data calibration studies in the Okapi Faunal Reserve, surveys in Maiko etc.). Contract negotiations began in July 2010 however the reforms within the ICCN management structure and contract signing process have resulted in a much longer bureaucratic process than expected for ZSL and other partners in DRC. However we have been able to complete two large scoping missions in key regions for okapi (with a total survey distance of approximately 5000 km) and successfully collect and export dung samples through close collaboration and coordination with our partners. With the contract now finalised and election period due to close we anticipate improved regional security will allow us to commence several important activities during Y2 Q4 and enable us to progress considerably over the next six months. Our DRC team has years of experience working in this region and has planned for flexibility and is able to develop alternative timelines as needed. However an ongoing problem is the aforementioned delay of the CBFF funds. While we are continuing to seek and secure additional funds to cover budget shortfalls we envisage that it may be necessary to discuss the issues outlined above with LTS International in the new year if CBFF funds are delayed further. This will enable us to mutually decide on a course of action, (i.e. budget and activity modifications) to maximize the

conservation outcomes of the project in consideration of the problems we have encountered during Y1 and Y2.

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

No, not at present

Discussed with LTS: No ¶ yes, in..... (month/yr)

Formal change request submitted: No ¶ yes, in..... (month/yr)

Received confirmation of change acceptance: No ¶ yes, in..... (month/yr)

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carry forward request: £

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

No issues to raise at present.

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 . 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**