

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2013)

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| Project Ref No | Project ref. 18-014 |
| Project Title | Ecosystem-wide forest conservation in DRC using okapi as a flagship |
| Country(ies) | Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) |
| Lead Organisation | Zoological Society of London (ZSL) |
| Collaborator(s) | <i>Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature</i> (ICCN), Gilman International Conservation (GIC) / Okapi Conservation Project, Cardiff University, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Lukuru Foundation, FFI, FZS, ZSL Institute of Zoology, et al. |
| Project Leader | Noëlle Kümpel |
| Report date and number (eg HYR3) | 30 October 2013, HYR4 |
| Project website | www.zsl.org/okapi |

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) 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).

| | Activity | Progress updates and notes |
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| 1.8 | Field survey and genetic data from all sites analysed and mapped | This activity has been completed. All field survey data has been analysed and a map constructed showing survey coverage, okapi records, and likely okapi range. This map was used to inform the development of the conservation strategy. In addition, it forms the basis of an okapi conservation status review scientific paper currently in preparation. Genetic analyses by ZSL Institute of Zoology/Cardiff University PhD student David Stanton are also complete. He has analysed over 250 samples from across the okapi range. Preliminary results show that there are deep-lying genetic lineages within okapi, although these do not show any correlation with geography. Results also confirm the presence of okapi on the west side of the Lomami river, and show that dung misidentification may be a significant source of error in parts of the range. |
| 1.9 | Multi-stakeholder workshop held to discuss findings, management actions required and fundraising strategy | The workshop was held 22-25 May 2013, in Kisangani, DRC, with participation and support from key stakeholders across the entire okapi range. Hosted by the Governor of DRC's Orientale Province and organised by ZSL and the IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group together with our main partner, the <i>Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature</i> (ICCN), the workshop was very well-attended and well-received. Around 40 fieldworkers, government representatives and community chiefs from across the range attended the collaborative, participatory workshop, some journeying by river or road for up to three days each way, and it was publicised on national radio and TV, demonstrating the importance of this initiative for Congo's flagship species. The IUCN Red List status of the okapi was also reassessed at the workshop, highlighting that it is faring worse than previously thought, being threatened throughout its range by the presence of rebels, poachers and illegal miners. The official Red List update is expected before the end of the year. |
| 1.10 | Okapi conservation action plan written up and report disseminated. | The okapi conservation strategy agreed at the workshop has been written up. The first draft is being circulated amongst |

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| | | workshop participants. Their comments and suggestions will be incorporated into the second draft, which will be recirculated for final approval. The conservation strategy will then be printed and distributed to relevant stakeholders. Project leader Noelle Kumpel travelled to the biannual Giraffe Indaba held in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2013, to present the Darwin Initiative-funded project and the key points of the okapi conservation strategy in her role as co-chair of the IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group. |
| 3.4 | Biomonitoring data collection and analysis protocols (including database) and training modules for okapi and other wildlife developed, with initial input and subsequent oversight by technical steering group | One action agreed as part of the conservation strategy was the establishment of an open access database along the lines of the African elephant database to ensure conservation practitioners and policy-makers have access to the most up to date information and can make informed decisions when planning conservation work. This database is currently being developed by ZSL, and will be maintained by the IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group. Lengthy discussions regarding okapi monitoring protocols were held at the conservation strategy workshop and a paper is in preparation reviewing this topic (see below), which will be discussed further by the new IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group. |
| 3.8 | Regular (at least twice-yearly) radio broadcasts and newspaper articles on okapi/forest conservation across DRC | The okapi conservation workshop received coverage on local radio station ' <i>Radio Okapi</i> ' and in the Kisangani newspaper ' <i>Journale de la Gazette</i> '. In addition, ZSL's okapi project featured as a 4-page article in 'Wild About', a magazine distributed to all members and supporters of the Zoological Society of London and in the Darwin Initiative newsletter. In November 2013, ZSL will be hosting an okapi conservation evening in London to raise awareness of the plight of the okapi and publicise its new 'Endangered' status on the IUCN Red List, with a press release put out and journalists invited. Project leader Noelle Kumpel, PhD student David Stanton, and Jean Joseph Mapilanga, ICCN Director of Parks and Reserves, will give talks on the range-wide okapi project and conservation strategy, okapi conservation genetics and the realities of conservation on the ground in DRC respectively. |

2a. 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 brutal attack on the headquarters of the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in June 2012 effectively ended the fieldwork component of this project, as reported in our change request dated February 2013. The efforts of the project within the last 6 months have therefore been focused on preparing and holding the okapi conservation strategy development workshop and writing up the strategy itself, as described above. During discussions at the workshop it became clear that a number of key activities should now be carried out as the first steps in implementing certain elements of the okapi conservation strategy. A subsequent change request (since approved) was submitted in June 2013, requesting that savings made on the workshop budget be used to harness the momentum generated by the workshop and complete the following outputs over the next few months:

1. The completion, printing, publication and dissemination of the okapi conservation strategy. The process of writing up such strategies takes a number of months, with drafts needing to be circulated among stakeholders for comments and alterations before the final strategy can be published, and this is ongoing;
2. The development of the IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group website (www.giraffidsg.org). This is being hosted and technical support provided by ZSL, keeping costs to a minimum beyond staff time;
3. The establishment of an open access database of all okapi field survey data;
4. The submission of a scientific paper providing a summary of the okapi status review prepared by ZSL and including the additional information gathered at the workshop to Oryx or a similar peer-reviewed journal. This is important as very little of the information used to inform okapi conservation has yet been subjected to peer review, coming mostly in the form of donor and internal reports and therefore inaccessible to the public and scientific community;

5. The submission of a scientific paper comparing survey results and monitoring methods for okapi. This was discussed and relevant data gathered at the workshop and a core group of okapi field experts agreed this is an important paper in shaping future okapi monitoring methods and contributing insights into survey methodologies that will be relevant to other species as well;

6. Raising awareness of the new IUCN Red List status of the okapi and the need to support the okapi conservation strategy through the organisation and hosting of a public evening event at ZSL in London, alongside associated press and media outputs. A key member of the ICCN General Direction, the director of protected areas, will travel from DRC to give a presentation;

An originally unplanned but very positive output of the project has been the establishment of the new IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group in March 2013, co-chaired by project leader Noelle Kumpel and co-hosted by ZSL. A first meeting of the okapi chapter of the group was held at the workshop in May 2013 to discuss activities and strategy. The new group will work to support ICCN and partners to raise awareness and support for implementation of the okapi conservation strategy following the end of the DI project and thus ensure sustainability.

In addition, ZSL has submitted two new funding proposals to the SOS Fund and the Segré Foundation to support vital work on the ground to rebuild the capacity of the Okapi Wildlife Reserve following the June attacks (patrol support, infrastructure rehabilitation and purchase of vital equipment) as well as the ongoing work of the Specialist Group in raising awareness of the plight of the okapi. The Segré Foundation proposal was prepared following an unsolicited request from the donor, highlighting the value of this Darwin Initiative project and the increase in interest and support for okapi already being experienced as a result. Both applications are pending.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: Yes

Formal change request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

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

Yes No

3b. If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible through the formal Change Request process. However, it would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication now of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £

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

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 through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report 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**