

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2013)

Project Ref No	19-010
Project Title	Developing Long-term Stakeholder Capacity for Elephant Conservation in Mali
Country(ies)	Mali
Lead Organisation	The Wilderness Foundation UK
Collaborator(s)	The National Directorate for Water and Forests (DNEF) under the Ministry of the Environment; Local community groups and individuals; Malian Association for the Conservation of Wildlife and the Environment (AMCFE)
Project Leader	Dr Susan Canney
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	HYR2
Project website	www.wild.org/where-we-work/the-desert-elephants-of-mali/

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).

During the last six months the project has been implementing activities that were impossible while the area was occupied by the jihadis. These activities include:

- Reopening the office. This involves retrieving the office contents that were removed piecemeal by several different people and hidden in their homes, to avoid drawing the attention of jihadi groups who would ransack the offices of any organisation with links to the government or the west.
- Taking the GPS co-ordinates marking the perimeters of pastoral reserves and the location of project initiatives so these could be mapped.
- Holding meetings with the community and the returning government administration and technical services, to ensure their understanding, input and agreement with the text of local and inter-communal legal conventions concerning community natural resource management, elephant protection and habitat restoration that were agreed during the period of occupation by armed groups. Government administration and technical services were not present at this time and so unable to contribute to the process. These texts can now be finalized.
- Holding meetings with the community to reinforce existing systems of resource management and elephant protection.

An assessment was done of the damage to project infrastructure by the fleeing jihadis. This mainly concerned the boreholes at the Banzena re-location area (see next section)

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 sabotage by fleeing jihadis of expensive water borehole infrastructure for the relocated communities from Lake Banzena was potentially a great setback, however we have secured approximately \$54,000 from the World Bank to replace the stolen generators and repair the

broken pumps. We do not know when this money will be made available.

Post-conflict the project has had to respond to new threats that have opened up for the elephants. The conflict has opened up old rivalries and left communities divided. The project has undertaken a study of the local population prompted by the question, "why did some people leave to become refugees/displaced people and some people stay? What were the motivations for fleeing or staying? What are the implications for post-conflict aid and reconstruction?" The aim is to understand the social impact of the conflict to guide the design of post-conflict activities and ensure that these correctly target the situation.

It is clear that reconciliation is an essential pre-requisite not only for the creation of resource management systems that protect elephants and their habitats, but also to learn from the experience of past droughts and conflicts in the 1980s and 1990s and ensure that any aid and reconstruction activities are correctly targeted, do not exacerbate social tensions, and do not create environmental degradation in the future that undermines local livelihoods, as has happened before. At the same time natural resource management and protection activities are a means to reunite communities, and provide employment for young men. We are, therefore, holding meetings of reconciliation to rebuild community cohesion as an essential prerequisite to establishing community natural resource management systems.

In partnership with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation and the Ministry of the Environment, we convened a 3-day 11 ministry workshop for top-levels of national, regional, and local government together with community representatives, two previous prime ministers, and members of the national reconciliation commission, to discuss these issues and develop an action plan. The chief conclusions were that:

- Reconciliation within and between communities is a pre-requisite for aid and reconstruction activities,
- All efforts should aim for the reconstruction of communities as they were pre-conflict
- Local communities must be involved in the design of post-conflict aid and reconstruction to ensure that these activities are correctly targeted and achieve the desired results.

The report is about to be posted on the website (the Darwin Initiative is acknowledged on the front page), and will be shared with Mali's financial and technical partners before convening a workshop to reflect on how to incorporate these considerations into aid and reconstruction activities in a co-ordinated way. These are the beginnings of a process that will then be taken to the regions and the communities themselves see <http://www.wild.org/blog/post-war-mali/>.

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: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

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?

We would like to use Darwin money in our reconciliation initiative but are unsure as to whether this needs a formal Change Request as although we have had to adapt our programme of stakeholder engagement to deal with the events of the past 18months, we are still working towards the same goals using meetings, workshops and trainings as our main tools, but including reconciliation as an important pre-requisite.

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**