



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

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)	HYR3
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 to end September).

In April we reported on the conflagration of factors that had resulted in extreme scarcity of pasture and water this year, forcing humans, livestock and elephants into closer proximity and a convergence of people and livestock on Banzena. These were summarized as:

- Fleeing jihadis had sabotaged the boreholes in the relocation area. forcing the relocated villagers to return to Banzena
- The rains of 2013 were poor reducing the amounts of water and pasture available
- The dam/bridge at Gossi was still broken, draining the Gossi corridor and its chain of lakes stretching almost 100km. This meant that pastoralists from the river that were used to using this area for pasture were no longer able to and were seeking pasture elsewhere
- People are reluctant to linger in areas frequented by the bandits for fear of livestock theft.

The convergence of people and livestock at Lake Banzena had to be addressed quickly to avoid the lake drying prematurely. The project raised substantial funds from a variety of sources including a substantial contribution from the Mali government to repair the boreholes. The project worked with the local communities and those from the river zone to re-establish the community resource management systems and conventions that have been agreed in law and re-establish the protection of Lake Banzena from human activity. The Malian government followed up these actions by a series of visits to Banzena by all levels of government (including the Minister, his special advisor, Director-Adjoint of Eaux et Forets, governors of Timbuktu and Mopti, regional government representatives) to impress on the local population and transhumant herders from distant locations, the importance of the pioneering system of resource management and elephant protection, and demonstrate that it was fully supported by the government. The result was that Lake Banzena did not dry prematurely, community

resource management systems were re-established, and special committees established and trained in borehole protection and solar pump maintenance. These included the wider Banzena area, the Karwassa to the west and the communities of the river zone to the north and west of the elephant range.

As a result of a series of meetings in Washington and Mali, attending the AFRICOM conference in Accra in June, and co-ordinating a partnership with the Ministries of Defence and of the Environment, the US Embassy (co-ordinated by Africa Command) pledged to repair the dam/bridge at Gossi. The project co-ordinated the community awareness and consultation meetings required for a community impact assessment of the repair of the Gossi dam and work is beginning shortly. The partnership between the project and the Ministry of Defence resulted in an extraordinarily effective response to elephant poaching as described in the section below.

Some local feedback:

“Despite the difficulties of pasture this year, only the project fire-breaks have saved livestock and the elephants.”

Local herder

“The pastures which are protected against fire are also areas for refuge and the reproduction of wildlife (like the hares, tortoises, bustards, guinea fowl, and remnant gazelles). If their protection continues it will serve to nurture these remnant populations in the Gourma.”

Local herder

We continue to work to contain the security situation through the establishment of forester-community systems of elephant and resource protection throughout the elephant range. Community brigades provide the information that armed back-up can act on. This is working extremely well and is ready for the installation of a secured, state-of-the-art radio communications systems that will enable the transmission of information about the whereabouts of remnant bandits (for which we are still raising money).

Reconciliation is a key part of both resource management as this requires, united communities. It is also important for arms recuperation and increased security, while these feed back into encouraging the healing of social divisions. The project incorporates a stage of reconciliation into all its CBNRM activities. This means the process takes longer and additional funds are being raised, but progress is being made, as demonstrated by the community response to a second tragedy described in the next section.

In summary, the Darwin Initiative project is on target to achieve more than anticipated, as the wider project has needed to expand its extent and sphere of activities faster than originally envisaged to meet the urgent need posed by the conflict. Resource management systems have been initiated throughout the elephant range. Brigades and vigilance networks are present throughout the range.

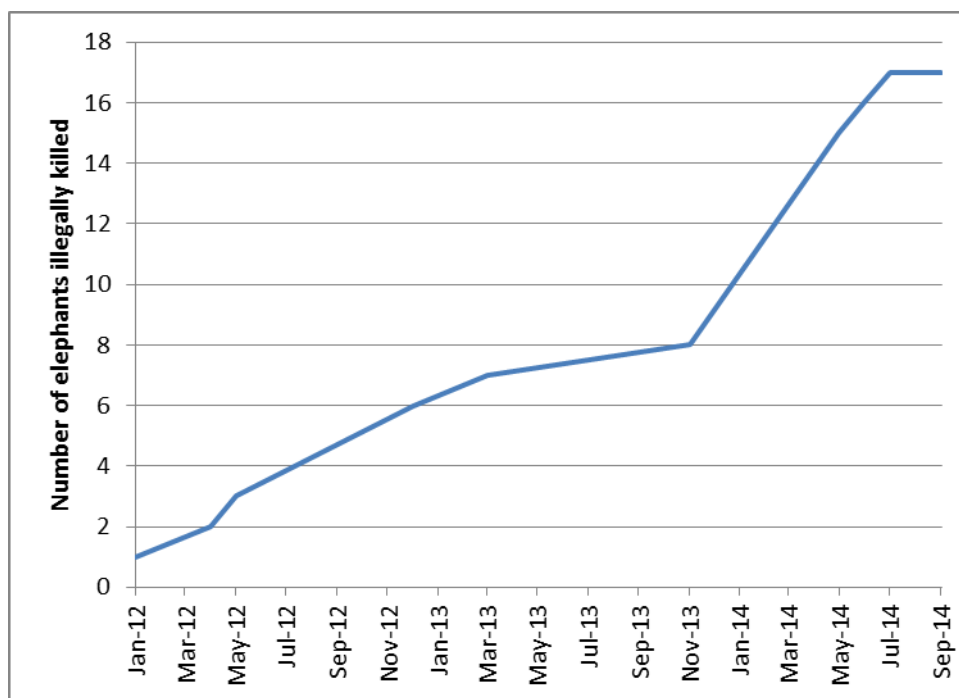
In response to the questions in the annual review: yes, the establishment of community management plans are an integral part of the establishment of CBNRM structures and procedures and these form part of both local and inter-communal conventions which enter into Malian law under decentralisation legislation.

Regarding the sustainability of the project: one of the major benefits as far as the local population is concerned is that they have control over the resources as a result of this project. Ultimately the aim is for the communities to be self sufficient in implementing these CBNRM systems. This requires that the project stands by them long enough for them to witness the

benefits and for the systems to become habitual. The project is committed to do this. It is also helping to establish community enterprises such as hay production for market and ostrich farming/reintroduction based on a successful initiative in the south of Mali. Test sites are being currently being established in areas with strong functioning CBNRM systems.

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 graph below plots the number of elephant poachings against time, and shows a sudden increase in the first 4.5 months of this year. The project has formed a partnership with the Ministry of Defence, and when he was informed about this recent increase the Chief of Defence sent a ground and air mission to work closely with project brigades on the ground in May with the ground and air campaign guided by information from brigades. This led to the arrest of 4 poachers, the identification of the instigator and the trafficker (who fled to Libya with his family when he heard of the arrests). There have been no further killings since the intervention by the army, however the threat continues.



To meet this threat the project has secured \$276,690 from the Buffet fund channelled through Lee White of Gabon National Parks to establish an additional 10 forester posts throughout the elephant range. These are in the process of construction and foresters trained and equipped with motorbikes, GPS units, infra-red cameras etc. The training includes working closely with local communities as well as training in anti-poaching operations in Senegal and Nazinga, Burkina Faso. This money has also covered the creation of brigades in the east of the elephant range, the last area as yet untouched by project activities.

We have also secured \$60,000 from IUCN Convention on Migratory Species to establish cross border co-operation and co-ordination between community-forester patrols in Burkina Faso and Mali. This is vital as the south of the elephant range along the international Border is remote.

The second unexpected development was that, tragically Moussa Aly, the dynamic and popular leader of our brigades at Banzena was assassinated in his sleep by a rival to be elected Mayor of Bambara Maoude. The news sent shock-waves through the Gourma and prompted the Chief of Boni to ask the project to help him convene a community wide meeting on reconciliation and ways that the community can come together to combat the insecurity. The project covered a third of the cost and the rest came from community contributions. Over 1,500 attended with the aim of discussing the need for reconciliation and what communities could do to combat the insecurity. It also provided an opportunity for informants to be able to give information anonymously as to the whereabouts of bandits and arms caches, and this resulted in 20 arrests with a further 16 identified (these had fled immediately following the meeting for fear of arrest), as well as the discovery of several large arms caches.

On the 25th October the project is organising another community-wide meeting on reconciliation and the recuperation of arms. The remaining sons of Mohammed Ag Bilal (the powerful chief of Tinabou) were some of the worst bandits during the conflict, and are going to stand up before the community to publicly confess and ask for a pardon. This is an enormous gesture and they hope to be accepted back into the community in return for acts of reparation. Because of their status as leaders of bandits, the project and a local community group who mediated this initiative hope that this will provide a model for other young bandits, thereby preventing their permanent alienation and risk of radicalisation.

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	n/a

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

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

n/a

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 can be discussed in this report but **should also be 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 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**