

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(Due 31 October 2012)

Project Ref No	19-019
Project Title	Integration of the Batwa cultural values in the management of the protected areas of Bwindi, Semliki and Mgahinga.
Country	Uganda
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
Collaborator(s)	Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC) United Organization for Batwa Develop in Uganda (UOBDU)
Project Leader	Dr. Arthur Mugisha
Report date	25 th October, 2012
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	www.fauna-flora.org
Progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project	
Project inception	
<p>The project was launched on 27th April, 2012 at an inception workshop in Kabale, the main town within the project areas. It was attended by a cross section of stakeholders including local government representatives, including the District Chairman, project partners, stakeholders with experience of working with Batwa communities, Batwa civil society organisations (CSOs) and representatives of the media. The launch was used as a platform to share the project objectives and planned activities with stakeholders and to enlist their support. The stakeholders shared their experiences and lessons learnt which enriched our understanding of Batwa needs and strengthened the planning process for project implementation. The report is attached as Appendix I.</p>	
<p>Discussions were held between the collaborating organisations, FFI, UWA, ITFC and UOBDU, to formalize their collaboration for the implementation of this project. The resulting memorandum of understanding between the partners is attached as Appendix II.</p>	
<p>During the inception workshop it was agreed that a Project Implementation Committee (PIC) should be formed comprising of representatives of the project partners to ensure coordinated planning and implementation of project activities. The first meeting of this committee was convened in June, 2012. UWA was elected to chair the committee, while FFI agreed to provide secretariat services. The Project objectives, plans, implementation mechanisms, progress made to date, anticipated challenges were all reviewed. The PIC agreed to incorporate stakeholders at the district levels as a way of sharing project progress with the local authorities.</p>	
<p>To ensure that the implementation of the project and the cultural values approach are well integrated within the management structure and framework of UWA, the project negotiated for the establishment of a dedicated Cultural Values and Conservation Project Desk Officer. This position is located in the Office of the Executive Director and the Director for Conservation Areas was appointed as the first Desk Officer. The Desk Officer will coordinate the implementation of the project and oversee initiatives to integrate cultural values in the planning</p>	

and management of protected areas.

The Desk Officer has greatly strengthened project activities at the protected area level. He convened a meeting of all protected areas managers where a cultural values approach is being implemented in June. This meeting emphasised the need to ensure that cultural values activities are properly integrated within the annual operational plans of the protected areas to ensure their effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Output 1. Batwa values and institutions are integrated into park governance structures, policies, plans, processes and day-to-day management actions.

The project undertook activities to raise awareness of Batwa cultural values among UWA staff and to identify and promote Batwa institutions to support the process of integrating Batwa values into the management of the parks. Baseline data were collected describing the cultural values of the Batwa, their relationship with park management, and their experience regarding benefits and costs from the parks. The data were collected through key informant interviews and group discussions with the Batwa, Batwa CSOs and with park management staff.

To identify Batwa cultural values associated with locations and resources lying within the parks, Batwa representatives guided teams of project and park staff to various sites and locations of cultural importance within and around the parks. The series of three dimensional (3D) maps of Bwindi and Mgahinga park areas, showing the cultural landscapes as defined by the Batwa that had earlier been produced by UOBDU with the support of the Forest Peoples Programme, were verified during these excursions. In-depth interviews with key informants and focus group discussions were undertaken to further verify the 3D cultural landscape maps. In Semliki National Park the Batwa led a team of project and UWA staff to conduct a reconnaissance of sites that were of culture significance while they lived in the forest.

In all the three project sites, this process aimed to assess the status of the sites and to corroborate the sites and values indicated on the 3D map with the actual locations on ground and to share the values of the Batwa with UWA staff. Ensuring the active participation of UWA staff was an essential part of the process.

Places of cultural value identified included caves, rivers, ponds, hot springs, fishing sites and forest trails. The Batwa also identified plant and animal species of cultural value. Perceptions of the Batwa on how their cultural practices can be incorporated into conservation of the park were also sought and given. Site characteristics such as GPS coordinates, dominant vegetation, animal signs and ease of access were recorded.

The project conducted field training with the UWA Planning Team and park management staff. The training coincided with UWA's management planning process for Bwindi and Mgahinga Conservation Areas. As a result, cultural values of the Batwa people are included in the draft general management plan and have been discussed at the national consultative workshop (see Appendix III). Training was also organized for UWA's junior staff and CBOs involved in the project with co-funding from the MacArthur Foundation. The August 2012 training was attended by participants from the three project sites as well as three sites where the CVCP is being implemented and aimed at equipping CBOs and UWA staff with knowledge of the cultural values approach and how it can be used to achieve conservation objectives. As part of the training, participants were able to visit Lake Mburo National Park that has successfully used the cultural values approach to engage the local community in conservation. A training report is attached as Appendix IV.

Output 2. Batwa, park staff and park governance institutions represent and communicate their interests, perspectives and values effectively to each other

Batwa representatives from each of the project sites were identified and nominated by their communities to represent Batwa interests within the project and in other forums.

A Mutwa representative attended the project inception meeting and expressed his appreciation for and expectations of the project. He noted that the Batwa language was fast becoming extinct and wished that its conservation could be addressed by the project as a means of reviving Batwa culture.

Batwa representatives have been nominated to represent their community interests within project, community and local council forums. These representatives have engaged with the project in preliminary discussions on small enterprises and training needs assessment.

Output 3. Batwa are actively engaged in park, tourism and community enterprises and initiatives drawing on their forest-related knowledge and values

Consultative meetings were held with Batwa representatives and stakeholders to analyse their socio-economic situation, identify challenges they face and possible small enterprise ventures that the project can support in a bid to improve Batwa livelihoods. Batwa community representatives expressed interest in starting saving and credit schemes as a way to kick start enterprise development in their communities. Lack of skills and capital were identified as key hindrances for Batwa involvement in enterprise development. Draft guidelines for the small grants facility were developed (see Appendix V). When approved, they will be used in administering the small grant scheme.

A training needs assessment was conducted with Batwa representatives and stakeholders to identify gaps in terms of skills and capacity, knowledge, attitudes and perceptions that can be addressed through training. A draft training plan has been developed following the assessment and is under discussion for implementation with stakeholders.

Output 4. Cultural values approach practitioners working in Uganda network to share experiences, help evolve good practice and contribute towards project evolution and implementation

A database of different cultural values stakeholders in Uganda is being compiled. We plan to convene a stakeholders' workshop to discuss broadening support and application of cultural values approaches in conservation and development. Recommendations from this workshop will be important in networking and developing good practices.

Output 5. Impacts of cultural values approaches to Batwa/park relations are monitored, evaluated and findings shared locally, nationally and internationally

The Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC) is taking a lead to develop a monitoring and evaluation tool that will be used to monitor and evaluate the project's impacts. As earlier reported, a baseline database on the Batwa is being generated.

In the meantime, as part of the project information sharing, an article was written for and published in the July 2012 edition of the Darwin Initiative Newsletter. The article highlighted what this project means to the Batwa based on a reconnaissance by Batwa elders with Project and Park's staff into Semliki National Park. Locally, a copy of the Newsletter was shared with project partners and other stakeholders.

A seminar was given to MSc students of environment and development studies within the Department of Anthropology at the University College London discussing the role of cultural values in improving the effectiveness of protected areas in Uganda.

2. Details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months.

A major challenge to project implementation so far has been the expectation by the project beneficiaries, the Batwa, to receive food gift baskets every time the project team interacts with them on project activities. The Batwa are extremely impoverished and suffer from food insecurity and hunger. As such, stakeholders have in the past used food gift baskets as a means to engage the Batwa to participate in projects implementation. Unfortunately this has created a negative trend among the Batwa communities, who use food gift baskets as a condition to engage in project activities. This raises the cost of implementation of project activities as well as introducing difficult and undesirable aspects to the relationship between project officers and Batwa participants. While this may not significantly affect the budget, it does affect the frequency and nature of interactions and the number of communities that can be incorporated in project activities.

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

No

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 (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

If yes, and you wish to request a carry forward 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: 0

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

Due to the increased market rates and cost of living in Uganda, budgets for staff salaries are not sufficient to have a coordinator at each of the three sites for the duration of the project. It was therefore agreed that the project will fully meet staff costs at one site, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, while costs of salaries will be shared at the other sites. At Mgahinga National Park, costs will be shared with UOBDU, while at Semliki National Park, UWA have seconded an Assistant Warden to oversee project activities. This arrangement has been effective in supporting project implementation to date.

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/work plan 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 e.g. Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**