



## Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	21-017
<b>Project Title</b>	Community-based conservation for livelihood development in Lake Ossa Manatee Reserve
<b>Country(ies)/Territory(ies)</b>	Cameroon
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Zoological Society of London
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) Cameroon, Watershed Task Group (WTG), Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS).
<b>Project Leader</b>	<i>Chris Ransom</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)</b>	31 October 2016, 2016 HYR3
<b>Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc</b>	<a href="http://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/africa/lake-ossa-wildlife-reserve-cameroon">http://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/africa/lake-ossa-wildlife-reserve-cameroon</a> ; <a href="http://net-works.com/locations/cameroon/">http://net-works.com/locations/cameroon/</a> ; @sormenog1
<b>Funder (DFID/Defra)</b>	DFID

**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).**

**Output 1. Community Management Committees established and supported to develop and implement co-management plans for Lac Ossa.**

The local NGO AMMCO and ZSL Edge Fellow completed the biological baseline (Activity 1.2.) of manatees in Q2 Yr3. The report, based on observation data from 6 point-scans, indicates areas of relative abundance of manatees in Lake Ossa, including three no-take zones (Mevia, Mbo-Nanga and Mwembe). The highest frequency of observation was reported in the Mevia no-take zone. ZSL has also started regular collection of water quality parameters in no-take zones, with reports showing higher phosphate concentration near plantation and cropped areas. CPUE periodic data collection (Activity 1.3) continued in 4 landing sites recording data from 78 landings. ZSL has continued to provide support to community management committees (CMCs), not only ensuring that committees are re-established, but also that they are functional organisations committed to the responsible use of fishery resources (Activity 1.4.). The project supported new member elections in 2 CMCs (Plantation and Beach), the adoption of simplified reporting tools (meeting report templates), and the integration of the VSLA methodology as a mechanism for financial management of CMCs. ZSL supported CMCs to hold regular meetings with the Conservation Service, concerning the enforcement of management measures included in the code-of-fishing including seasonal openings in biodiversity corridors during rainy season, fisher identification and zone delimitation (Activity 1.7.). Sixteen regular meetings and 11 extraordinary meetings to solve specific problems took place during the present period, with 443 men and 128 women participating. Following the bamboo fishing removal campaign, CMCs agreed to establish areas reserved for bamboo fishing to avoid uncontrolled proliferation and conflict (Activity 1.6.).

In order to improve lake surveillance, rangers from the Conservation Service (Activity 1.5.) were trained in SMART and QGIS, and adopted a new surveillance protocol and reporting system. Since this training, held in July, 9 patrols have been organized by the Conservation Service,

resulting in the removal of 7 illegal nets from the lake and all bamboo fishing traps in the Sanaga-Ossa channel where this practice is prohibited under the new code of fishing practice. Preliminary consultation is ongoing to review and integrate the agreed fishery management measures, and best practices relating to basin management (Output 4) and ecotourism (Output 3) in a draft management plan for the reserve (Activity 1.8).

### **Output 2 -VSLAs established and integrated into community management committees**

Beyond the initial impact assessments developed in pilot communities (Activity 2.2.), we have extended and adapted data collection to households depending on agriculture in plantation villages involved in agroforestry and forestry activities (see Output 4) (45 surveys). The number of VSLAs in the three pilot communities (Activity 2.3.) grew from the original 3 groups to 9 groups, with membership expanding from 70 members (28 women, 42 men) to 186 (90 women, 96 men). Seven of these VSLAs have completed the 1<sup>st</sup> 9-months saving cycle, saving on average 45 416 FCFA per person. Eight new VSLAs have been created in five additional villages in lake Ossa and one additional group was created in the coastal village of Londji to support net collection. Six VSLAs are regularly followed up by community village agents (Activity 2.5). The 17 VSLA groups in lake Ossa have 397 members (232 women, 164 men) who have saved 16,076,400 FCFA (21,942 £) at the end of the present reporting period. Of these 17 groups, 5 VSLAs have been created only in the last six months resulting in 115 new members and additional savings of 9,546,100 FCFA (13,033 £). VSLAs have continued to serve as awareness raising platforms for forestry activities (Activity 2.4., Output 4) and regular discussion and capacity building in community management committees (Output 1). Socioeconomic impact assessment will be carried out in Q3 and Q4, one year after the collection of baseline data (Activity 2.6).

### **Output 3 - Three business models assessed and training provided for potential new sustainable enterprises to diversify the livelihoods of local communities**

**Tree nurseries:** After the pilot phase, 3 of the 6 tree nurseries supported by the project have continued to produce trees without project support. To maximize synergies with the reforestation project and following community consultation, we included other income diversification opportunities accessible to low income farmers working in the Lake Ossa basin, such as pineapple, ndole leaves and sugar cane. These crops are planted in anti-erosion bands in agroforestry systems around the reforested lakeshores (Activity 3.7, Output 4). 5 trainings in agroforestry and tree monitoring, involving 92 participants (68 women, 24 men) were organized through VSLAs (Outputs 2) to support reforestation efforts (Output 4).

**Net-Works:** In the last six months, 141 Kg of nets have been collected through 2 VSLAs in Lake Ossa with 38 fishers participating. In total, 2054 Kg have been collected (Activity 3.6.) through net purchases and clean-up activities, half of it from Lake Ossa and the other half from pilot collection in new coastal sites. While purchases have extended to all villages around Lake Ossa, net collection is only regular in Mevia and Beach, because of the larger number of fishers (Activity 3.10). ZSL is in contact with export agents for the first test shipment of nets to Europe (Activity 3.8.). The Net-Works business model is being reassessed (Activity 3.9.) to integrate its expansion to larger marine and estuarine fishing areas to enable higher quantities of nets to be collected and facilitate the success of the business model. Pilot collection activities are being carried out in the fishing villages of Yoyo and Londji through co-funding, with positive results. Additional funding has been secured to support the extension of the business model to the wider Doula-Edea landscape, which will ensure sustainability in Lake Ossa beyond project through economies of scale.

**Tourism:** An expert was recruited to develop a feasibility study and a proposal for tourism development in lake Ossa, with clear connections with conservation and community development (Activity 3.11). The study was conducted in close cooperation with the Council of Dizangué that is the administration responsible for tourism at the local level in Cameroon. The council already had plans for the construction of tourism facilities by the lake and the Sanaga river so this plan will help ensure appropriate planning of these facilities. The final document also included a proposal of best practice for tourism, including strict controls on motor engines in Lake Ossa and their total prohibition in the manatee-populated area of lake Mevia. The plan was finalized in consultation with members of the municipal council, local authorities, communities and private sector. As a direct result of the drafting of the plan, the council approved the restarting of activities of the local tourism office, which will coordinate tour-guiding

activities with local fishers. During the drafting process, we assisted the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife who received a concession request for the construction of an ecolodge in the reserve. ZSL assisted the ministry in the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding and in the definition of evaluation criteria to ensure best practices are followed, since Cameroon lacks a standard procedure to examine tourism concessions in protected areas.

**Output 4 A multi-stakeholder committee formed to define and agree boundaries of the reserve, with 30ha of the Reserve’s shore restored in priority areas**

A MoU has been signed between ZSL and SAFACAM to support the management of the lake basin in the frontier area with their plantation (Activity 4.2). ZSL coordinated a pilot planting activity of 4108 indigenous trees in 7.5 ha in the shores of the lake (50 to 100 meters from the higher watermark), and supported the development of agroforestry and anti-erosion techniques in 14 ha beyond that point (Activity 4.4.) to demonstrate a local approach to prevent erosion and potentially harmful pollutant runoff to the water. The planting involved 33 community members (22 women, 11 men) and was coordinated with the support of 3 VSLA groups from 2 villages. Post-planting activities (Activity 4.6.) include cleaning, replacement of dead trees (432 trees) and use of organic fertilizers and monitoring. Survival rate was 82% at the end of the reporting period. Lessons learnt from the tree-planting and associated agroforestry activities will be integrated in the development of high conservation value (HCV) management procedures for SAFACAM beyond the project, including clear delimitation of areas for conservation and community use around the SAFACAM plantation and the establishment of a minimal distance of closed canopy vegetation between agricultural activities and the lake. Additionally, ZSL and the Conservation Service initiated participatory mapping and discussion exercises with local communities around the lake to agree on reserve boundaries, community-use areas and respect of riparian areas (Activity 4.3).

**Output 5 A community-based lake clean-up of abandoned fishing gears is undertaken with local communities**

VSLAs and waste management trainings focusing in areas beyond Lake Ossa (Londji Beach) were developed through co-funding (Activity 5.2, Output 3). Bamboo fishing traps have been identified and mapped (Activity 5.3. see Output 1). Bailing activities were carried out, producing 51 40-Kg bales for loading and export (Activity 5.5.), and initial contacts for exporting are being developed (Activity 5.6, Output 3). A university student (Activity 5.7.) is also undertaking an MSc research on non-net plastic waste in the coastal area and lake Ossa. A prototype of a boat made with plastic bottles was developed for awareness creation purposes.

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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.**

Due to the decline in the value of GBP to Franc CFA we currently have less funds available for completion of project activities than initially anticipated. If the GBP rate does not improve we will likely need to reassess the budget for remaining activities and adapt the project plan for the remaining months of the project.

**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 currently expect to have any significant (e.g., 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.** 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 please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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

none

**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](mailto: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 e.g., Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**