



## Darwin Initiative Main Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2015)

<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)</b>	Cameroon
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Zoological Society of London
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) Cameroon, Watershed Task Group (WTG), Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS), Cameroon-Ecology
<b>Project Leader</b>	Chris Ransom
<b>Report date and number (eg HYR3)</b>	31st October 2015, HYR2
<b>Project website</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> .

### **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 that are representative of lake users and encompass all 11 villages surrounding Lake Ossa are formally established and supported to develop and implement co-management plans with MINFOF for Lac Ossa that includes sanctuary zones for priority species (manatees, freshwater turtles) and sustainable fishing zones.*

A report on fishermen's perceptions of manatees has been completed by the local NGO AMMCO to contribute to the project's baseline data (Activity 1.2). Initially planned for Year 1, training and implementation of baseline surveys for fisheries (Activity 1.3) was postponed to Q1 and Q2 of Year 2 due to the inability of partner organisations to complete this work. An MSc student with previous experience and technical knowledge in fisheries has therefore been recruited to carry out this work. CPUE data collection is ongoing alongside the production of an inventory of fish species in Lake Ossa and the identification of fishing areas for the surveyed season. Six Community Management Committees have now been re-established across all 11 communities, with 197 fishers participating in the process (Activity 1.4). The project continues to provide assistance to the newly established zoning committees, including repeating member elections for one of the committees, and supporting their legalization throughout Q1 and Q2. Environmental workshops and training events (Activity 1.5) have continued: a workshop on sustainable fishery management with members of MINFOF and local NGOs was held in August 2015, and six participatory problem identification and participatory mapping discussions were held in six communities with 152 participants in June 2015 (also referred to in Output 4). The participatory development of management plans and mapping of lake management areas (Activity 1.6.) has been ongoing throughout Q2 with 16 community consultation meetings being held with fisher groups to discuss a code of conduct for the fishery and the establishment of no-take zones that take into account observations of manatees and aquatic turtles. Since July 2015, the project has supported regular patrols by the Conservation Service in the lake, with 9 patrols organized up to the 30<sup>th</sup> September. In April, the project organized a training event on piloting of boats with out-board engines, and sponsored the participation of the conservator and one eco-guard in a GIS training event in Yaoundé (Activity 1.7).

Output 2. *VSLAs established and integrated into Community Management Committees, increasing the financial security of poor men and women living around Lake Ossa and acting as a platform for community engagement in the management and conservation of the lake.*

In the current reporting period, the number of VSLAs established has increased from the initial 3 groups in 3 communities to 8 groups in 6 communities. VSLAs are increasingly involved in project activities. Activity 2.3 effectively started in Q4 of Year 1 and is still ongoing, with the three initial VSLA's comprising

a total of 68 people. In September 2015, the VSLA groups had accumulated a grand total of £ 1930 in savings since March, with £ 1430 of loans being given. VSLA replication (Activity 2.5) was scheduled for Q3, but has been advanced to Q2 due to demand and the success of the model. Eighty seven people are now participating in 5 new VSLAs. Two of these VSLAs are related to the zoning committees and will organize lake clean-ups, and 3 of them are made up of farmers interested in conservation agriculture and participating in reforestation activities. Fifty two VSLA members from 3 VSLAs participated in 2 lake ecology training activities (Activity 2.4) which were part of workshops carried out to disseminate and discuss the Net-Works business model in June 2015. The 3 new VSLAs engaged in conservation agriculture participated in lakeshore conservation discussion events in September 2015 (see also activity 4.1). Wellbeing baseline indicators (Activity 2.2) were obtained through 8 focus groups in 4 representative communities with men and women in May 2015. However, baseline data collection through the administration of questionnaires was postponed in order to integrate relevant lessons learnt from ongoing monitoring work conducted in the Philippines by ZSL.

*Output 3. Three business models assessed, taking lessons from initial pilots, and training provided for potential new sustainable enterprises to diversify the livelihoods of local communities in a) community-based native tree nurseries, b) Net-Works and c) wildlife tourism (migratory birds, manatees and freshwater turtles – building on the existing local government priorities for ecotourism development).*

An enterprise opportunities and capabilities assessment (Activity 3.1) was developed for tree nurseries in partnership with local NGO's ASD and APADER who have expertise in this area. . APADER have since led on the development of business models for tree nurseries (Activity 3.2) with participants on the tree nursery training courses. A business model for Net-Works was developed between April and May 2015 following a support visit from the ZSL Net-Works project manager from London. Development and implementation of training modules for tree nurseries were delivered through VSLAs (in conjunction with activity 5.1 and activity 1.6) in Q4 of Year 1 during a training event and has continued with monthly support visits from APADER. To date, the pilot phase of community tree nurseries (Activity 3.4.) has resulted in 3 commercial community enterprises able to produce a consistent volume of trees and 6 additional small-scale nurseries with a smaller production capacity. In total these nurseries currently have 4180 seedlings for reforestation and 1248 seedlings for agroforestry. Following the drafting of a business plan, the participatory establishment of community-management mechanisms (Activity 3.5) for Net-Works was carried out in June 2015 through 2 participatory training events with members of the 3 first established VSLAs. Following this event, net collection through lake clean-ups was started (Activity 3.6) with a holiday clean-up campaign in July 2015 and 270 Kg of discarded nets collected. To date, net collection is ongoing in Beach and Mevia with a total of 502.5 kg stocked for shipment. Finally, the export plan for collected nets was initiated (Activity 3.8) with information being gathered from export agents in Douala, and export costs being determined, although we don't plan to be ready for export until the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2016.

*Output 4. A multi-stakeholder management committee established by year 1 that includes agro-industry (palm oil companies), Community Management Committees, MINFOF and NGOs to agree the boundaries of the reserve and develop and implement a Reserve Management Plan; and 30ha of the Reserve's lake shore is restored in priority areas of lake shore habitat to reduce siltation/runoff through the development of community-based native tree nurseries and replanting of native species.*

Following discussions between the project team and The Director of Fauna and Protected Areas in the Ministry of Forestry, a formal letter from the Minister of Forestry approving the process to gazette the Reserve and requesting the support of ZSL in this process was received in early October 2015 (Activity 4.3) which will enable us to take forward this process. Lake ecology education with community groups was also a part of problem identification and participatory mapping workshops organized in 6 villages in June 2015 (Activity 4.1, in conjunction with activity 1.6, already referred to in Output 1). During participatory mapping exercises communities identified major threats for the fishery and land based activities and identified degraded areas for reforestation (Activity 4.4). Following this activity, a ground-truthing of land degradation issues in the riparian forest was carried out. Lake problem identification was later used as a basis for the community discussion of the code-of-conduct for fishers. Following these activities and initial interest from members of the community, the project established agroforestry farmer's groups through the VSLAs in the villages where encroachment from smallholder farmers is higher, to lead the community tree planting exercises that are planned for April 2016 and disseminate land intensive and non-destructive agricultural techniques compatible with the regeneration of riparian forest areas. 2 model farms demonstrating land intensive conservation agricultural techniques as an alternative to destructive slash and burn were established in the village of Holland in September 2015, and 3 community meetings took place in September 2015. Conversations are also ongoing with SAFACAM to reduce encroaching from SAFACAM workers in the reserve and the delimitation of the boundaries between the reserve and plantation estates as a part of the company's RSPO certification process (Activity 4.5.). A MoU detailing these expectations is currently under review and we hope to finalise it in Q3.

*Output 5. Community-based lake clean-ups of abandoned fishing gears is undertaken regularly with local communities generating income from the sale of old fishing nets collected during the lake clean-up for recycling into carpet tiles as part of ZSL and Interface's proven Net-Works project.*

Ecological outreach continued to be delivered through VSLAs and zoning committees (activity 5.1, already referred to in 3.3). Training modules have continued to be delivered in Q1 and Q2 of Year 2 through initial 3 VSLAs and during the establishment of the 5 additional VSLAs (Activity 5.2.). The participatory mapping and baseline inventory of abandoned fishing gears in Lake Ossa was belatedly carried out and completed in Q2 (Activity 5.3.). Removal of discarded fishing nets has continued to be encouraged through Net-Works sales (Activity 5.4, already discussed in 3.6). The establishment of recycling facilities commenced at the end of Q2 with the identification of a warehouse in Dizangue (Activity 5.5). The development of mechanisms for recycling or sustainable disposal of non-net waste (Activity 5.7) are pending but look unlikely to be possible because the main waste identified is bamboo which has little recycling potential.

**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.**

A constraint on the project has been the delay of partner NGOs WTG and CWCS in the completion of their Year 1 assignments. Both are small organizations with little structure and presence in the field. Both have required additional support from ZSL and the Conservation Service in the completion of the activities they were responsible for. In order to solve this, and to present to communities and stakeholders a cohesive image of the project, most activities in year 2 are being implemented jointly by the local NGOs with the logistic and technical support of ZSL and the Conservation Service. CWCS's role has had to be modified as it has become apparent that they do not have the required technical capacity in agroecology and agroforestry to ensure the follow up of tree nurseries so we have relied on the NGO APADER to provide those inputs. This approach has resulted in project activities being completed in a more timely manner and as a result the project is currently back on track with most of the planned work.

**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 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?**

Following a recent internal review of the project and discussion with project partners we have identified the need to revise one of the project outputs and make some adjustments to the project budget. A formal change request will follow shortly.

**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: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**