

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

<b>Project Ref No:</b>	22-007
<b>Project Title</b>	Establishing Sustainable Management of the Lake Sofia Catchment
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Madagascar
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT)
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (DWCT), Organisation de Soutien pour le Développement Rural à Madagascar (OSDRM), Asity-Madagascar
<b>Project Leader</b>	Rob Shore
<b>Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)</b>	30/10/15 HYR1
<b>Project website/Twitter/Blog/Instagram etc</b>	<a href="http://www.wwt.org.uk/support/our-appeals/mission-madagascar/">http://www.wwt.org.uk/support/our-appeals/mission-madagascar/</a> <a href="http://www.wwt.org.uk/conservation/wwt-projects/saving-the-madagascar-pochard/">http://www.wwt.org.uk/conservation/wwt-projects/saving-the-madagascar-pochard/</a>
<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).**

In addition to the output-related activities, a large proportion of time in the reporting period was dedicated to project set-up activities. Project documentation and management/reporting procedures have been put in place and all (5) new field staff have been recruited by the NGO partners and provided with training. A temporary project office has been established by renting rooms above a shop in the largest town, Marotolana and essential equipment has been purchased for the staff and office.

Progress in relation to activities can be summarised as follows:

#### 1.1 Develop and agree initial 3-year management transfer agreements for Sofia Mandroso, Fikambana Fitantanana Matsaboro Sofia, and Sandatra Sofia

According to the project plan, the lapsed agreements that cover the three associations (VOIs) of the lakeside fokotany were to be renewed. However, in meetings with the VOIs and the regional government (DREEMF), it was agreed that the old agreement is no longer fit for purpose and new agreements are required. This is a more lengthy process than originally planned and project staff have been working with the DREEMF's office on a plan to complete these new agreements.

#### 1.4. Constitute membership of exec committees, advisory boards & gen assemblies of local associations

Although not scheduled to start in this reporting period, the executive members of the three VOIs have been renewed and restructured based on comments given during a review of the old agreements conducted by the DREEMF's office in 2014. Renewal of the membership lists and the legal registration process for the VOIs is ongoing.

#### 1.5 Hold annual workplan development and review meetings with general assemblies

This activity has been delayed as the process of developing new agreements (activity 1.1) is still ongoing.

#### 1.6 Hold community fora 3 times per year in each community to ensure wider accountability

Fora were held in all nine fokotany during August and September. As these were the first such gatherings held, the purpose was mainly to introduce the project to the communities. In addition, a larger meeting was held in Marotolana in June. The nine fokotany chiefs were invited along with elders and other representatives from each fokotany.

### 1.8. Provide technical support to local community to understand and support delivery of the management transfer agreements

Although not scheduled to start in this period, a training session for fishermen was organised on national legislation relating to fishing (e.g. permissible equipment, close seasons). 20 fishermen attended.

### 2.1. Vaccinate domestic birds against disease in the villages surrounding Lake Sofia.

#### 2.2. Train members of local communities in vaccination techniques.

Although not scheduled to start in this period, these activities were undertaken to give the vaccine time to act before the ‘disease season’ starts, usually from November onwards. Two permanent field staff and 16 community members from across the catchment were trained in vaccination techniques.

Approximately 6,000 poultry (ducks, geese and chickens) were vaccinated, which represents approx. 46% of the poultry present in these fokontany. Further vaccinations will follow and the programme will be expanded in future years.

### 2.7. Provide replacement fishing equipment in exchange for any fishing gear not permitted for use on Lake Sofia under existing or revised regulations.

Although not scheduled to start in this period, additional more detailed data has been collected on the equipment and practices of fishermen on the lake. 36 fishermen were surveyed.

### 2.8 Design and implement fisheries/fish catch monitoring programme

A member of the field team has been working with fishermen to start measuring the size of fish caught. This still needs to be developed into a more comprehensive monitoring programme.

### 2.9 Identify locations for pilot rice farming projects and sign agreements with participants (through local associations where already in place)

All nine fokontany were surveyed during August and September, and four were selected for pilot work: Lohanisofia, Andampy, Marotolana and Marofamara. Farmers’ associations have been set up in these fokontany and sites for environmentally sensitive rice cultivation pilots have been identified. In order to maximise impact and traction with farmers, we are planning to broaden the scope of activities in these locations beyond just rice (yet still meeting project targets relating to rice), with the emphasis on overall food security for the poorest in the communities, trade groups for more food secure farmers and alternative livelihoods (which links to activity 2.16). With this in mind, farmers’ livelihoods and needs were assessed and farmers’ groups set up are proposed to have a focus on particular activities accordingly.

### 2.11 Develop and implement monitoring programme (focussed on yield, water quality and external inputs) for pilot rice farming projects

This has been delayed due to the planned increased scope of activities being undertaken relating to agriculture (see activity 2.9). We need to ensure the scheme will gather the data needed for rice-related targets but also generate the evidence of broader change.

### 2.13 Train agricultural extension training team

#### 2.14 Deliver environmentally sensitive rice cultivation (including soil management techniques) training to all villages in the Lake Sofia catchment

Training and technical support has so far been focussed in the four fokontany selected as pilots. Villagers have been encouraged to adopt in-house production of environmentally-sensitive inputs for farming – including vermicomposting pits for fertiliser, ash storage and use and soil recovery – and have been given training in these techniques.

### 2.16 Conduct feasibility study for alternative livelihood options (wet Arabica coffee/sustainable vanilla)

As part of the livelihoods assessment described under activity 2.9, the feasibility of alternative livelihood options was considered. There was a strong desire amongst local communities, particularly Marofamara.

### 3.1 Develop environmental education programme and supporting materials (lesson plans, ID guides, basic sampling equipment, teaching guides) for use in schools

Limited progress as relevant staff not in post until September and school year has not yet started. Baseline data on environmental education in primary schools is being collected. The start of the new school term in October will allow more information to be collected and enable project staff to work with teachers and schools. Initial meetings were held with the regional director for education (DREN), based in Antsohihy, the chief of CirconscriptionSCOLAire (CISCO) in Bealanana and the headteacher of the main primary school in Marotolana to introduce the project.

### 3.6 Develop simple ecological monitoring framework, linking improvements in ecological health to human health/wellbeing

Slightly behind schedule due to the short period in which field staff were present on the site during this

reporting period. A framework will be finalised during Q3.

3.7 Identify network of local community monitoring focal points and sign agreements with participants  
 Underway but slightly delayed for same reasons as above.

3.13 Assess extent & quality of aquatic/marginal habitat and identify priority locations for restoration work  
 Slightly delayed. Mapping of the aquatic/marginal habitat will now take place in Q3.

3.15 Undertake habitat extent and condition monitoring using combination of remote sensing and groundtruthing techniques

Field equipment has been purchased and terms of reference for biodiversity monitoring written. Initial baseline surveys will take place during Q3; further habitat mapping, in particular of breeding birds in the marsh, will take place during the breeding season in Q4.

4.1 Constitute national working group to develop the guidance

Initial discussions on the development of national guidance were held with the government’s Ramsar focal point surrounding (and at) the Ramsar CoP in Uruguay in June and work is underway to constitute the national working group. A kick-off workshop has been scheduled for 5th November in Antananarivo which aims to agree on the guidance development process with a wider group of stakeholders beyond just the project partners and fully constitute the national working group. We are on the verge of securing match funding that will support all the other work not funded by this grant that will be necessary to develop the national guidance.

4.11 Produce quarterly updates and annual progress reports

Due to focus on project set-up, initial quarterly reporting not undertaken but all reporting systems now underway and operating effectively.

**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 permanent project office is planned to be established before the end of year 1 of the project. A request was made to the commune and a plot of land allocated. This land is located to the east of Marotolana village, uphill from the village, and is covered with Eucalyptus trees. These would need to be cleared before any building could take place, which would take several weeks and would leave insufficient time for building works before the heavy rains. Consequently, unless an alternative plot of land can be secured quickly, the permanent office may not be completed before the end of year 1.

The process to develop new management agreements for the three lakeside fokotany (activity 1.1) is a more lengthy process than originally planned and it is now likely that this will not be concluded in Year 1 of the project as the rainy season (starting in November/December) will prevent the detailed field work required.

**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 (as budgetary implications possible but not yet certain)

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?**

We are currently experiencing some difficulties in working with one of the fokotany (Andilantsara) in the catchment. It is not clear what the reasons for this apparent unwillingness to fully engage are (positive messages are received from senior members of the community at key meetings but this has not translated into practice locally). Project staff members are working to resolve this issue, but at present very little practical activity is taking place in this (small) fokotany as a result.

**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**