

Darwin Initiative Main Project Annual Report

Important note: To be completed with reference to the Reporting Guidance Notes for Project Leaders:

it is expected that this report will be no more than 10 pages in length, excluding annexes

Submission Deadline: 30 April

Darwin Project Information

Project Reference	22-011
Project Title	Conserving biodiversity by improving farming practices and livelihoods in Hoima
Host Country	Uganda
Contract Holder Institution	Wildlife Conservation Society
Partner institutions	Chimpanzee Trust; Jane Goodall Institute
Darwin Grant Value	£301,111
Funder (DFID/Defra)	Defra
Start/end dates of project	1 st April 2015 – 31st March 2018
Reporting period	April 2015 – Mar 2016; Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Miguel Leal
Project website/blog/Twitter	wcsuganda.org; new webpage under development
Report author(s) and date	Miguel Leal, Moses Nyago & Simon Nampindo– 30 April 2016

1. Project Rationale

The largest remaining forests on private land in Uganda lie in the northern Albertine Rift, a region which stretches from the Murchison Falls National Park in the north to the Semliki Wildlife Reserve in the south, collectively named Murchison-Semliki Landscape. It is a priority conservation landscape for primates, mammals, birds, plants, reptiles, amphibians and fisheries. Unfortunately, the landscape is experiencing very high rates of deforestation, i.e. 8,000 hectares of forests lost per year at landscape level and 2,000 hectares per year in the district of Hoima. Studies conducted by WCS and partners, identified the causes and drivers of deforestation in the landscape. Among these are: 1) traditional slash and burn farming practices which through increasing human population pressure results in a high demand for arable land, 2) charcoal production and consumption and 3) timber harvesting. The protected forests (e.g. Bugoma and Budongo) and riverine forests on private land are inhabited by numerous Albertine Rift endemic species and chimpanzees. If not addressed, habitat loss and forest degradation would ultimately lead to the local extinction of the chimpanzees and other endemic species in the landscape.

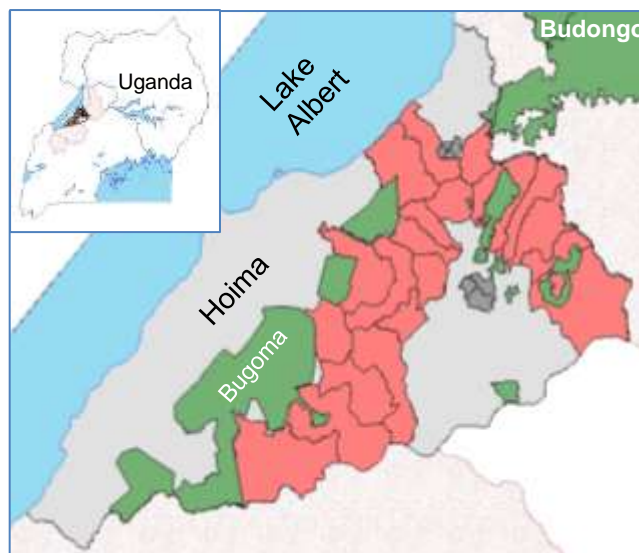


Figure 1. Location of project site. In red are the 13 project parishes in the district of Hoima, and green is the protected forests overlapped by the Private Forest Owners Associations

Poor farmers in the landscape lack knowledge, capacity and capital to improve or change their agriculture-dependent livelihoods. In addition, they are unaware that if they continue clearing the forests, they will eventually lose all other ecosystem benefits and become even more vulnerable to the impact of climate change. In response, the Murchison-Semliki REDD+ project was initiated to respond to this eminent crisis. The REDD+ project covers the districts of Hoima, Masindi, Kibaale and Kyenjojo (Figure 1). This is where the largest area of Uganda's last remaining natural forests on private land occurs. The "Conserving biodiversity by improving farming practices and livelihoods in Hoima" project which contributes to the larger REDD+ project in the Landscape has the following outputs: 1) Project benefits in return for forest and wetland conservation clearly understood and agreed upon by the Private Forest Owners and formalized through a conservation contract, 2) Rural financial services established in all the 13 parishes providing capital for sustainable forest friendly and agricultural enterprises, 3) PFO households linked to profitable markets and agribusinesses that buy their farming surplus, resulting in increased income, 4) Agricultural intensification and improved yield achieved through conservation farming, reducing farmers' need to clear new forests and wetlands. The project activities under each of the outputs are implemented in the district of Hoima where there are 13 Private Forest Owners Association (PFOAs). The forests in these 13 PFOAs form important wildlife habitat corridors linking the large Bugoma and Budongo Protected Forests, and several smaller Protected Forests.

2. Project Partnerships

WCS is leading the Murchison-Semliki REDD+ project and the REDD+ activities under this grant. The Chimpanzee Trust (CT) and the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) are core members of the Northern Albertine Rift Conservation Group (NARCG) and we have been collaborating since 2010. As the NARCG we agreed to jointly implement the REDD+ project and work with the farmers who own forests on their private land. WCS, CT and JGI are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the project and formalizing the commitment of the PFOs to conserve forest and wetland (Output 1) and developing a sustainable market mechanism for the PFOs agricultural produce (Output 3). CLUSA was the partner responsible for delivering the conservation farming training (Output 4). CLUSA, however, changed its focus and is no longer a partner on this Darwin Project (more details are provided under section 11 paragraph 2). As such, WCS hired two part-time CLUSA technical field officers as consultants

to train PFOs in conservation farming. On the other hand, Village Enterprise (VE) responsible for the aspect of rural financial services (Output 2) has joined the NARCG, but VE will remain a consultant on this project.

3. Project Progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

In this section, we present a brief report on the timing, schedule, duration, practice and alterations of the project activities planned under the four Outputs. Details on project activities are provided in Appendix 1. The general implementation approach has been to target six Private Forest Owner Associations at parish level in year 1 (2015/16) and 7 in year two (2016/17) covering some 1000 PFO households.

Under Output 1 - formalizing the conservation commitment from PFOs: We had planned to have activities (1.1 and 1.2) completed and have a conservation contract available early in the project ready to get signed (1.3) by the PFOs of the first six parishes in 2016 and the rest of the PFOs in 2017. During project implementation, we noted that PFOs had to first experience the project benefits promised from the rural financial services (Output 2) and conservation farming (Output 4) before they could make such a commitment. Therefore, signing the contracts (1.3) will take place on a rolling basis through the end of the project. In addition, we have formalized the long term commitment from NARCG to the Private Forest Owner Associations (PFOAs) in a conservation pledge to boost confidence and catalyse signing of the conservation contracts. Meanwhile JGI is monitoring the PFOs' forest through the existing network of community based forest monitors or Forest Monitors to ensure they comply under the large REDD+ project (1.4). WCS postponed carrying out the biodiversity baseline (1.5) until the autumn rains of 2016 due to the on-going El Nino event to ensure collecting comparable for normal years.

Under Output 2 – providing rural financial services: Instead of training CT and JGI field-based staff, we trained 30 Forest Monitors recruited by CT and JGI and selected 13 for implementation (2.1). We decided to train the Forest Monitors because they were less expensive; they are well known to the PFOs and less likely to change jobs. The first six parishes received the first two training modules in business savings in year one and they are in the process of receiving the remaining six training modules (2.2 and 2.3). After completed the mobilisation and sensitization through meetings about the Business Saving Groups (2.2), Forest Monitors started training the other seven remaining parishes (2.3). Forest Monitors have also started mentoring the first six parishes and we have asked Village Enterprise for backstopping concerning three underperforming Business Saving Groups (2.4).

Under Output 3 – developing and formalizing market linkages and mechanisms: We are continuously looking for potential agribusiness partners (3.1), most recently we identified Bwendero Farm in Hoima and had a preliminary meeting with them to understand their production and marketing support to small holder farmers in the Hoima. Other agribusiness partners we have identified the Joseph Initiatives Ltd, Farmers and Co a Dutch a whole trader (**Business card**, M.O.V. [Output 3 – indicator 3.1b](#)). We have not yet formalized the relationship between potential agribusiness partners (3.2) and PFOs (3.4) through a production contact (3.5), but these are on-going activities over the project lifetime.

Under Output 4 – training in conservation farming: The two Conservation Farming consultants trained 26 Forest Monitors in Conservation Farming (CF); two for each parish (4.1). The Forest Monitors are currently training PFOs and they have established 59 (Maize) and 21 (Beans) demonstration plots (4.2), a farmer field day was organized (4.3) and data on harvests after the spring rains last year were collected (4.4).

3.2 Progress towards project outputs

Output 1:	Project benefits for conservation understood and formalized through conservation contracts			
	Baseline	Change recorded by 2016	Source of evidence	Comments (if necessary)
<u>Indicator 1.1</u> 90% of the households (HHs) signed conservation contracts by the end of year 2 (2017)	0% of the HHs	0% of the HHs		Project proposes to change “conservation contracts” to “conservation pledges”
The project suffered some delays because PFOs needed more time to understand the implications (benefits and risks) of the conservation contract. The fear of land grabbing is strong in the region and project benefits must be evident at household level from demonstration plots before PFOs will sign the contracts. Therefore, we decided to handle the process in a phased manner, starting with a conservation pledge Conservation pledge (M.O.V. Output 1-indicator 1.1.) and completing with the contract.				
<u>Indicator 1.2</u> 80% of the HH comply with contract by the end of year 3 (2018)	0% of the HHs	0% of the HHs		Project proposes to change “comply with ” to “signed conservation pledge”
<i>Idem</i> under Indicator 1.1.				
<u>Indicator 1.3</u> 80% of the HH stopped cutting trees on their land by the end of year 3 (2018)	0% of the HHs	0% of the HHs		For clarification, some HHs may not want to sign but are willing to comply
<i>Idem</i> under Indicator 1.1.				
Output 2:	Rural financial services established in all 13 parishes and operational			
	Baseline	Change recorded by 2016	Source of evidence	Comments (if necessary)
<u>Indicator 2.1</u> All 13 parishes have BSGs by the end of year 2 (2017)	0 parishes	6 parishes have BSGs	Table 2 on page 3 in Field report (M.O.V. Output 2 – indicator. 2.1a)	
Village Enterprise has set up 14 BSGs in six parishes and trained PFOs in the first two of the 8 of modules between April and June. In January they trained 30 Forest Monitors in setting up BSGs across the remaining parishes. VE training report (M.O.V. Output 2 – indicator. 2.1b) provides information about the training. Currently, the Forest Monitors are in the process of setting up BSGs.				
<u>Indicator 2.2</u> 100 GBP of working capital per BSG by the end of year 3 (2018)	0 GBP	100GBP< of working capital in the 11 BSGs	Table 2 on page 3 in Field report (M.O.V. Output 2 – indicator. 2.1a)	Project proposes to change “100 GBP” to “300 GBP”
The 11 existing BSGs have started saving and loaning money among group members. In 7 of the 11 active BSGs, more than 100 GBP has already been saved as working capital. Four BSGs were hesitant to share these details for now. Three BSGs were not performing well and we are examining where the issue lies to improve its performance.				
<u>Indicator 2.3</u> 90% of HH in 13 parishes have joined a BSG	0% of the HHs	46% of the HHs	Table 2 on page 3 in Field report March 2016 (M.O.V. Output 2 – indicator. 2.1a)	Project proposes to change “joined a BSG” to “actively saving”

In six of the parishes, Business Savings Groups (BSG) have been set up. All Private Forest Owners in each parish have joined a BSG. This is 46% of the HHs. Based on the three outlier BSGs, we observed that HHs can join but may not be active. Therefore, we propose to change this indicator to “actively saving” which is a stronger indicator.

Output 3:	PFO households linked to profitable markets and agribusinesses that buy their farming surplus, resulting in increased income			
	Baseline	Change recorded by 2016	Source of evidence	Comments (if necessary)
<u>Indicator 3.1</u> 900 PFO-HHs have signed the production contract with agribusiness at the end of year 2 (2017);	0 HHs	0 HHs		
WCS is maintaining contacts with existing potential traders such as the Bwendero Farm (M.O.V. Out 3 – indicator 3.1 a), Joseph Initiative Ltd (http://www.josephinitiativeltd.com), Farmers and Co (http://www.farmersandco.com ; business card M.O.V. Out 3 – indicator 3.1b) and Yield Uganda (http://www.yielduganda.com). WCS is exploring new opportunities such as with the Greenbioenergy Ltd (http://www.greenbioenergy.org) who buy post-harvest waste from farmers to make briquettes. So far not enough PFOs have adopted conservation farming and hence we have to wait until PFOs can supply in large enough quantities which make commercial sense for traders to start buying from them and formalize their relationship through production contract.				
<u>Indicator 3.2</u> 900 PFO-HHs have increased their income from sales to agribusiness by the end of year 3 (2018);	0 HHs	0 HHs		
<i>Idem</i> under Indicator 3.1.				
<u>Indicator 3.3</u> A minimum increase of 50% sold surplus created through conservation farming at the end of year 3 compared to their previous harvest volume before practising conservation farming.	0% increase	0% increase		
<i>Idem</i> under Indicator 3.1.				
Output 4:	Agricultural intensification and improved yield achieved through conservation farming, reducing farmers’ need to clear new forests and wetlands			
	Baseline	Change recorded by 2016	Source of evidence	Comments (if necessary)
<u>Indicator 4.1</u> 6 CT and 7 JGI staff, each from one parish have been trained by CLUSA in conservation farming and demonstration techniques by the end of year 1 (2016);	0 CT and JGI staff members have been trained	26 Forest Monitors recruited by CT and JGI have been trained; two for each parish	Table on page 15 in report from CF consultants (M.O.V. Output 4 – indicator 4.1)	

As mentioned under 2 Project Partnerships CLUSA exited the project which was resolved by contracting two former CLUSA staff members who directly trained the Forest Monitors (M.O.V. Output 4 – indicators 4.1). We decided to train Forest Monitors as they are from the communities, clearly understand the local dynamics and they are less likely to leave their parishes.				
<u>Indicator 4.2</u> 900 of the PFO-HHs have adopted conservation farming by the end of year 2 (2017);	0 HHs	80 PFO-HHs have hosted a demonstration plot	For the first 20 lead farmers see table 1 on page 1 and 2 in the follow up report from CF consultants (M.O.V. Output 4 –indicator 4.2) ; for the other 59 lead farmers see Appendix 1 in Field Report March 2016 (M.O.V. Output 2 – indicator 2.1.a)	adoption by the 80 HHs is only partial
Training PFOs in conservation farming is implemented through group lectures and practical work, followed up with setting up demonstration plots by lead farmers. Interested farmers willing to adopt conservation farming are supervised by the trained Forest Monitors. 21 demonstration plots have been set up in the spring rains (March – July, 2015) and 59 plots are currently being set up in these spring rains (March - July, 2016) (M.O.V. Output 4 – indicator 4.1). The project considers adoption only when HHs have adopted conservation farming on all their land. This is not yet the case with the 80 HHs.				
<u>Indicator 4.3</u> 90% of the existing agricultural fields of PFO-HH are under conservation farming land use management at the end of year 3 (2018).	0% of the existing agricultural fields	7% but only for the 80 lead farmers with a demonstration plots	<i>Idem</i> under Indicator 4.2.	
To date, only demonstration plots have been set up and each demonstration is usually half an acre. On average, PFOs have seven acres, hence a demonstration plot represent 7% land under conservation farming for the 80 HHs.				
<u>Indicator 4.4</u> 500 Non-PFO-HHs adopt conservation farming by the end of year 3 (2018)	0 NON-PFO HHs	0 NON-PFO HHs		The project will actively start targeting them
The project did not plan on targeting specifically Non-PFO HHs for the conservation farming but hoped that they would learn indirectly from their PFO neighbours. However, WCS and project partners see an increasing threat from neighbouring farmers seeking to rent forest for agriculture from the PFOs. We suspect that this is also one of the reasons why signing the conservation contract is not advancing. Therefore, the project will also offer training in CF to non-PFOs HHs in return for planting native tree species on their land.				

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome:	The threat of critical forest and wetland habitat destruction is mitigated by training Hoima district farmers in conservation farming and providing them access to more profitable markets			
	Baseline	Change by 2016	Source of evidence	Comments (if necessary)
<u>Indicator 0.1</u> A 75% reduction in deforestation rates over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline	0% reduction in deforestation			

Project implementation has not yet reached a level where WCS and partners can measure a change of the indicator through remote sensing. Incentives in return for forest conservation are still at an early stage, e.g. improved agriculture is still in a demonstration phase and although some Business Saving Groups are actively saving most of them have only been formed recently. However, JGI is monitoring the PFOs through alerts from the Global Forest Watch platform (www.globalforestwatch.org) and following up these alerts through the Forest Monitors.				
<u>Indicator 0.2</u> A 50% increase in income for the participating farmers over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline	0% increase income	1.5% increase income	Rows 5 and 21 under the column “success stories” in table 2 in the follow up report from the CF consultants (M.O.V. Output 4 – indicator 4.1).	Anecdotal
From the 21 demonstration plots we know that all lead farmers were astonished by the amount of maize yield on their demonstration plot. The income from selling the surplus was used to e.g. pay school fees and improve their houses (column “success stories” in table 2 in M.O.V. Output 4 – indicator 4.1 .)				
<u>Indicator 0.3</u> Number of households no longer experiencing food scarcity more than twice a year over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline	Most HHs experiencing food insecurity		<i>Idem</i> under Indicator 0.2	
<i>Idem</i> under Indicator 0.2				
<u>Indicator 0.4</u> Number of chimpanzee nest counts and grey crown cranes sightings showing stabilized populations over three years compared to the decreasing trend shown in estimates from 2000 and 2010	Declining number of chimpanzees and grey crown cranes			
WCS postponed carrying out the biodiversity baseline until the autumn rains of 2016 due to the on-going El Nino event to ensure we collect comparable data for normal years. See also under Assumption 0.1 under 3.4 for further evidence.				

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Outcome: The threat of critical forest and wetland habitat destruction is mitigated by training Hoima district farmers in conservation farming and providing them access to more profitable markets

Assumption 0.1: *Extreme weather events and subsequent disasters will not emerge and occur during the project lifetime (this will limit the success of creating a surplus from the newly adopted conservation farming techniques)*

Comments: 2015/2016 is an El Nino year. We assume that the El Nino will not affect the autumn rains in 2016. The impact of the El Nino has been limited compared to other regions (<http://www.unocha.org/el-nino-east-africa>) but is causing some challenges for the agricultural aspects of the project. Farmers in Hoima were confronted with a delayed start and shift of the autumn rains which were also more intense and volatile than normal; similarly for the spring rains for 2016.

Assumption 0.2: *Farmers understand the benefits of the project and sign the conservation contract*

Comments: Despite the long relationship WCS and partners have had with the Private Forest Owners, and the multiple benefits they received over the years, there is still hesitation to make long term

commitment to maintain their land under forest conservation. They first want to experience the benefits promised by the project. In this first year of the project, we only established demonstrations in selected households. At the end of next year, we hope to have scaled up beyond and farmers are convinced by the benefits and willing to sign the conservation pledge and ensure compliance.

Assumption 0.3: *Agribusinesses continues to show interest in signing production contracts and paying farmers a premium price for their harvested crops*

Comments: No change.

Assumption 0.4: *Based on the experimental Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) study carried out by CT within the project area, 80% of PFO households will stop deforestation within two years of the study.*

Comments: No change.

Assumption 0.5: *Similar to results seen by CLUSA in other areas, the switch from traditional farming technique to conservation farming techniques will result in a 50% increase in yields*

Comments: So far, we have seen a 71% increase in demonstration plots, but this represents a small sample size of only 21 demonstration plots.

Outputs

Assumption 1: *Farmers are willing to comply with the conservation contract*

Comments: See Assumption 0.2

Assumption 2: *Minimum increase of surplus of 50% through conservation farming*

Comments: See Assumption 0.5

Assumption 3: *Availability of pioneer farmers willing to become a lead farmer and set up demonstration plots*

Comments: No change.

Assumption 4: *Farmers willing to join the microfinancing institutes*

Comments: No change.

3.5 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty alleviation

The project is still in its early stages and unable to quantify its impact, but we completed a Basic Necessity Survey (BNS) baseline study. The BNS method is used to quantify the bottom line of households, i.e. things and services households cannot do without and how this bottom line shifts with project implementation. The baseline data is currently getting analysed and the report will be completed at the end of April 2016. Similarly, WCS had planned a biodiversity survey, but because of the El Niño year, the survey was postponed because the data and results would be incomparable to those conducted in 2010 during a “normal” year. The WCS biodiversity monitoring expert advised to postpone the biodiversity survey until later this year 2016 when the situation has returned to normal.

4. Contribution to SDGs

The project is still at an early stage and more time is required before its contributions become evident. By improving farming and facilitating the formation of Business Saving Groups, the project aims to contribute directly at household level to SDG 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 5 (gender equality) and to SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) as the PFOs grow from low to middle income HHs over time, and indirectly contributing to SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). With time, we will actively encourage HHs to spend their income in education, health and livelihoods improvements which indirectly contribute to SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy). At a regional level, the project aims ultimately to contribute to SDG 13 (climate action) through promoting conservation farming as a climate smart agricultural practice in return for forest and wetland conservation contributing to SDG 15 (life on land) and indirectly to SDG 14 (life below water) as better land use management reduces siltation and improves fish stocks in Lake Albert. The project is contributing to SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) as it is following a climate smart landscape approach and an ecosystem based adaptation strategy transforming the agricultural sector to a low emission sector supplying nearby urban centres such as Hoima with sustainably produced food contributing to SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and to SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) as the risk of disasters and conflict over resources will become reduced. As this

project is implemented as a replicable and scalable model for sustainable development funded by the UK government and implemented by US based and local NGOs from traditionally apposed (conservation vs. agriculture) or unrelated (conservation vs. finance) sectors this project is also contributing to SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).

5. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

This project is addressing the underlying drivers of unsustainable natural resource use causing the loss of biodiversity in the Murchison-Semliki Landscape, which directly contributes to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The project will raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity across local government and rural society at district level and stimulate policy reform (Aichi Targets 1-4) on how to reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use based on lessons learned from the project (Targets 5,7). We will show that improving the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity (Targets 11, 12) will reduce their vulnerability to climate change. In addition, the project, through its REDD+ activities, is creating the opportunity for rural communities to receive payments from ecosystem services, enhancing the benefits to all from biodiversity (Targets 14, 15). Through the process of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), the project will implement participatory planning, incorporate indigenous knowledge, and include management and capacity building incentives to protect the forest estate (Targets 19 and 20).

6. Project support to poverty alleviation

The project is using the Sustainability Livelihoods Framework to capture the multidimensionality of poverty. The framework distinguishes three aspects: capacity, equity and sustainability. Capacity is the ability of households to transform their basic living conditions through the equitable availability of assets, resources and opportunities (equity) while avoiding a negative environmental and social impact (sustainability). We have carried out a Basic Necessity Survey to enable measuring and monitoring of the bottom line of households and how it is changing. Currently, the project is in an early demonstration phase and evidence is more anecdotal than systematic. But from anecdotal information from the 21 lead farmer PFOs we know that the activities are contributing towards poverty alleviation. Clear example are Yostansi Warwo who was able to pay school fees and feed the family and Michael Kahawa who was able to buy iron sheets with the money from selling his high harvest (Rows 5 and 21 in the column “success stories” in **table 2** in the **follow up report** (M.O.V. [Output 4 – indicator 4.1](#)).

7. Project support to Gender equity issues

The project aims to improve the situation of the women and ensuring that they participate in the training in conservation farming and Business Saving Groups. We are tracking women’s participation and we make adjustments whenever we see that women are dropping out or not participating enough. For instance, only four farmers out of the 21 lead farmers were women (Table 1 in the **follow up report**, M.O.V. [Output 4 – indicator 4.2](#)). This is culturally determined, but also dictated by the land rights, which are vested in men. Nonetheless, we realized that gender inequity is an issue and that this needs to be addressed if we want the wives to benefit from the project. Therefore, WCS is assessing whether with funding from the Waterloo Foundation it can roll out the gender household approach developed by the Hans R. Neumann Stiftung (www.hrnstiftung.org/ gender) which successfully improved couple inequity of households growing coffee in western Uganda. We however believe the approach is also applicable for the PFO HHs.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

The project is collecting data on the indicators mentioned in the M & E plan. However, we realized that in certain cases we need to collect more data on the same activities to help us better understand the activities, issues and successes to be able to properly evaluate the higher level indicators. For instance, for indicator 4.2, the project needs to monitor the number of households adopting conservation farming. However, conservation farming has seven core

principles which can be adopted. Therefore, we want to measure and monitor which principles are better adopted than others and how we can increase the adoption of all seven principles. Similarly, for example, for the Business Saving Groups indicator 2.2, the project needs to collect data on working capital per BSGs. However, some of the BSGs have already reached the 100 GBP in the first year, which wasn't anticipated. Therefore, we need more secondary indicators to be able to properly evaluate the success of the BSG. Consequently, the project is developing secondary indicators for some of the primary indicators mentioned in the M&E plan.

9. Lessons learnt

Activities related to the conservation and production contract did not advance as much as we had planned. Planning these activities early in the project cycle was not realistic as the project benefits first had to be demonstrated in order for PFOs to acknowledge the benefits and sign the conservation contract. Similarly, the production contracts with businesses have not been signed. Many business companies we approached were interested even before the Darwin Project, but they cannot trade before commercial volumes of good quality are attained. Finally, we realized that the growing volume of data on 1000 PFOs could pose a problem in handling and querying over the project life. Therefore, the project plans on hiring a consultant to develop a data base to manage and query the data to generate important reports.

10. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

N/A

11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

CLUSA had a change in leadership and funding sources and they decided that providing training in conservation farming was no longer one of their core activities in Uganda. WCS responded by directly contracting two conservation farming field officers from CLUSA to implement a Train-the-Trainers approach. These two officers trained 26 Forest Monitors in conservation farming. WCS is ahead on project activities under Output 4 and within budget by contracting directly the two officers.

12. Sustainability and legacy

WCS is continuously pursuing new funding opportunities to climate proof the landscape, and looking for market mechanisms as an exit strategy. Part of this pursuit is transforming the landscape into a deforestation free production zone and setting up a "business ecosystem which is driven by social and green business values. Ultimately, these market transactions will ensure the financial sustainability of the Murchison-Semliki REDD+ project without having to rely on REDD+ revenue alone or at all.

13. Darwin Identity

The grant from the Darwin Initiative has been hailed to the national REDD+ secretariat, and two World Bank missions who visited the project site as the opportunity to scale up the REDD+ project across the District of Hoima. This project has helped to leverage financial and technical support from the government of Uganda, our partners and there is hope that other development partners will support the initiatives. The logo was used in all documents and presentations about the project. The logo of Darwin is always published in conjunction with the UKAID logo and WCS always mentions "with Darwin Initiative funding from the UK government" during its presentations. The Darwin Initiative funding is recognised as a distinct project within the larger Murchison-Semliki REDD+ project. The Darwin Initiative is recognized by the national REDD+ secretariat and the National Environmental Management Agency which also host the CBD focal point. The project does not have a Twitter/ Instagram/ Flickr/ Blog/ YouTube etc. account. But WCS is currently redesigning the project webpage so it stands out more clearly in the WCS Uganda country programme and receives more hits through search engines.

14. Project Expenditure

Table 1 Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016)

Project spend (indicative) since last annual report	2015/16 Grant (£)	2015/16 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)			-6.1	
Consultancy costs	0	0	0.0	
Overhead Costs			0.0	
Travel and subsistence			2.7	
Operating Costs			4.4	
Capital items (see below)			44.5	
Others (see below)			3.7	
TOTAL			49.3	

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year 2015-2016

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2015 - March 2016	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Impact</p> <p>Biodiversity is conserved, and livelihoods and food security are improved in rural communities by implementing a scalable and easily replicable model that focuses on sustainable conservation farming approaches.</p>		<p>The project is still in its early stages and unable to quantify its impact</p>	
<p>Outcome</p> <p>The threat of critical forest and wetland habitat destruction is mitigated by training Hoima district farmers in conservation farming and providing them access to more profitable markets.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 75% reduction in deforestation rates over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline 2. A 50% increase in income for the participating farmers over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline 3. Number of households no longer experiencing food scarcity more than twice a year over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline 4. Number of households no longer experiencing food scarcity more than twice a year over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline 	<p>Project implementation has not yet reached a level where WCS and partners can measure a change of the indicator through remote sensing. Incentives in return for forest conservation are still at an early stage, e.g. improved agriculture is still in a demonstration phase and although some Business Saving Groups are actively saving most of them have only been formed recently.</p>	<p>Carry out the biodiversity baseline; Scaling up conservation farming beyond demonstration phase;</p>
<p>Output 1.</p> <p>Project benefits in return for forest and wetland conservation clearly understood and agreed upon by the Private Forest Owners and formalized through a conservation contract</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 90% of Private Forest Owner – Households (PFO-HHs) in the 13 focal parishes, about 980 households, have signed a conservation contract by the end of year 2; 2. By the end of year 3, 80% of PFO-HHs who have signed the conservation contract remain in compliance by not cutting trees or encroaching onto wetlands 3. 80% of the PFO-HHs stopped cutting trees on their land by the end of year 3. 	<p>We had planned to have activities (1.1 and 1.2) completed and have a conservation contract available early in the project ready to get signed (1.3) by the PFOs of the first six parishes in 2016 and the rest of the PFOs in 2017. During project implementation, we noted that PFOs had to first experience the project benefits derived from the rural financial services (Output 2) and conservation farming (Output 4) before they could make such a commitment. Therefore, signing the contracts (1.3) will take place on a rolling basis through the end of the project. In addition, we have formalized NARCG long term commitment to the Private Forest Owner Associations (PFOAs) in a conservation pledge to boost confidence and catalyse signing of the conservation contracts. Meanwhile JGI is monitoring their forest through the existing network of community based forest monitors or Forest Monitors to ensure their compliance (1.4). WCS postponed carrying out the biodiversity baseline (1.5) until the</p>	

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2015 - March 2016	Actions required/planned for next period
		autumn rains of 2016 due to the on-going El Nino event to ensure collecting comparable for normal years.	
Activity 1.1. WCS, CT and JGI review existing conservation contracts and develop a contract model appropriate to the context of the project		Completed for the conservation pledge at Private Forest Association level (conservation pledge – M.O.V. Output 1 - indicator 1.1.); The conservation contract is still underdevelopment as discussion with PFOs continue.	
Activity 1.2. WCS, CT and JGI organise two meetings with PFOs grouped at parish level to introduce and explain the conservation contract and incorporate their input and feedback until an agreed final version has been reached		Initial meetings have been carried out introducing and discussing on how to formalize the commitment with a two-step process as the way forward. More meetings are planned for the conservation pledge and contract over 2016.	
Activity 1.3. WCS, CT and JGI conduct meetings to sign contract between farmers and the NARCG partners		Signing the Pledge is planned for 2016 and the contract from 2017 through 2018 and beyond the Darwin Project life time as WCS and partners are committed to the REDD+ project for the next 25 years.	
Activity 1.4. WCS, CT and JGI organise annual verification mission to measure and monitor farmers' compliance		Under the REDD+ project WCS and partners are continuously monitoring the forest of the PFOs though the network of Forest Monitors	
Activity 1.5. WCS carries out a biodiversity base and endline survey to measure species occurrences and updates its existing land use maps.		The biodiversity survey is planned for the third quarter of 2016 to avoid an El Nino effect in the data and complications of comparing data from normal years.	
Output 2. Rural financial services established in all the 13 parishes providing capital for sustainable forest friendly and agricultural enterprises	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All 13 parishes have microfinancing institutes set up by the end of year 2; 2. 100 GBP of working capital sits in each microfinancing institution by the end of year 3. 3. 90% of PFO-HHs in the 13 parishes have joined the newly-introduced microfinancing institutions by the end of year 3 	We trained 30 Forest Monitors recruited by CT and JGI and selected 13 for implementation (2.1). We decided to train the Forest Monitors because it was cheaper, they are well known to the PFOs and less likely to change jobs. The first six parishes received the first two training modules in business savings in year one and they are in the process of receiving the remaining six training modules (2.2 and 2.3). After completed the mobilisation and sensitization through meetings about the Business Saving Groups (2.2), Forest Monitors started training the other seven remaining parishes (2.3). Forest Monitors have also started mentoring the first six parishes and we have asked Village Enterprise for backstopping concerning three underperforming Business Saving Groups (2.4).	
Activity 2.1. Village Enterprise trains CT and JGI field-based staff in setting up micro-financing		The training was completed, but instead of CT and JGI staff members, 30 Community Based Forest Monitors were trained (VE training report – M.O.V.	

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2015 - March 2016	Actions required/planned for next period
institutes and trains them in record keeping and business skills;		Output 2 – indicator 2.1.b)	
Activity 2.2. Trained CT and JGI staff organise a meeting and explain to PFOs about the benefits of micro-financing institutes and to whom they provide access to capital;		The idea of micro-financing institutions or Business Saving Groups was introduced to all 13 parishes, first through by convening the Private Forest Owner Associations executive committees follow by a group meeting.	
Activity 2.3. Trained CT and JGI staff organises training for PFOs and trains them in principle of microcredits, governance and business skills;		This activity is on-going and so far all PFOs have been trained and most Business Saving Groups have been formed.	
Activity 2.4. Trained CT and JGI staff supervise the management and operation of the micro-financing institutes and measure and monitor capital flows with backstopping from Village Enterprise;		This activity is planned for year 2016 and 2017 through 2018 for back stopping services.	
Output 3. PFO households linked to profitable markets and agribusinesses that buy their farming surplus, resulting in increased income	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 900 PFO-HHs have signed the production contract with agribusiness at the end of year 2; 2. 900 PFO-HHs have increased their income from sales to agribusiness by the end of year 3; 3. A minimum increase of 50% sold surplus created through conservation farming at the end of year 3 compared to their previous harvest volume before practising conservation farming. 	We are continuously looking for potential agribusiness partners (3.1), most recently we identified Bwendero Farm in Hoima and had a preliminary meeting to understand their production and marketing support to small holder farmers in the project area. However, we learned about concerns from the local community about Bwendero Farm negative impact of the environmental from distilling ethanol. Other agribusiness partners we have identified and yet to formally have interactions with are Joseph Initiatives Limited, Farmers and Co a Dutch a whole trader (evidence business card). So far, we have not yet formalized the relationship between potential agribusiness partners (3.2) and PFOs (3.4) signing a production contact (3.5), but these are on-going activities during the project lifetime.	
Activity 3.1. WCS identifies potential agribusiness partners in the region and other opportunities in Kampala;		This activity is on-going as WCS and partners are continuously looking for social and green trading partners.	
Activity 3.2. WCS starts negotiating production contracts with participating agribusiness partners;		This activity is planned for 2016, and 2017 through 2018, once conservation farming has scaled up companies are more willing to commit.	
Activity 3.3. WCS holds a meeting with CT and JGI to discuss the initial production contract and incorporates their input and feedback;		This activity is planned for 2016, and 2017 through 2018	

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2015 - March 2016	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Activity 3.4. WCS, CT and JGI organize a meeting with the PFOs in each parish to present and discusses their input and gather feedback;</p>		<p>This activity is planned for 2016, and 2017 through 2018</p>	
<p>Activity 3.5. WCS organizes a meeting with agribusiness partners and finalizes production contract;</p>		<p>This activity is planned for 2016, and 2017 through 2018</p>	
<p>Activity 3.6. WCS, CT and JGI organizes a meeting between PFOs and agribusiness partners to sign the contract</p>		<p>This activity is planned for 2016, and 2017 through 2018</p>	
<p>Output 4. Agricultural intensification and improved yield achieved through conservation farming, reducing farmers' need to clear new forests and wetlands</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6 CT and 7 JGI staff each per parish have been trained by CLUSA in conservation farming techniques and demonstration by the end of year 1; 2. 900 of the PFO-HHs have adopted conservation farming by the end of year 2; 3. 90% of the existing agricultural fields of PFO-HH are under conservation farming land use management at the end of year 3; 4. 500 Non-PFO-HHs adopt conservation farming by the end of year 3. 	<p>The two Conservation Farming consultants trained 26 Forest Monitors in Conservation Farming (CF) two for each parish (4.1). The Forest Monitors are currently training PFOs and they have established 59 (Maize) and 21 (Beans) demonstration plots (4.2), a farmer field day was organized (4.3) and data on harvests after the spring rains last year were collected (4.4).</p>	
<p>Activity 4.1. CLUSA trains 13 field-based staff from CT and JGI in conservation farming and assigns each staff member to a parish;</p>		<p>The training was completed, but instead of 13 CT and JGI staff members, 26 Forest Monitors were trained, two per parish (CF training report, M.O.V. Output 4 – indicator 4.1.)</p>	
<p>Activity 4.2. CT and JGI trained staff train the PFO-HHs in conservation farming in their parish;</p>		<p>This activity is on-going as the Spring rains cover the moths from mid-March through June during which period farmers are supervised by the Forest Monitors.</p>	
<p>Activity 4.3. Meetings are held in each parish to share experiences and potential issues with conservation farming among PFO-HHs; meetings are also</p>		<p>WCS decided to organize a farmer's field day event where beside PFOs also interested neighbours and districts officials were invited which was a big success (Briefing report to Tullow, M.O.V. Output 4 – activity 4.3.)</p>	

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2015 - March 2016	Actions required/planned for next period
open for non-PFO-HHs;			
Activity 4.4. CT and JGI trained staff collect data on yields from PFO-HHs.		Collecting yield data from HHs is a continuous activity and done after which season. Collected data for 2015 was completed (table on page 9 and 10 in CLUSA report for activities carried out in part with funding from <i>the Waterloo Foundation</i> , M.O.V. Output 4 – activity 4.4.).	

Annex 2 Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Biodiversity is conserved, and livelihoods and food security are improved in rural communities by implementing a scalable and easily replicable model that focuses on sustainable conservation farming approaches.			
Outcome: The threat of critical forest and wetland habitat destruction is mitigated by training Hoima district farmers in conservation farming and providing them access to more profitable markets.	0a. A 75% reduction in deforestation rates over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline; 0b. A 50% increase in income for the participating farmers over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline; 0c. Number of households no longer experiencing food scarcity more than twice a year over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline; 0d. Number of households no longer experiencing food scarcity more than twice a year over 3 years compared to the 2010 baseline.	0a. Land use change maps for the 13 parishes showing agricultural fields, forests, and wetlands based on remote sensing data 0b. A case study measuring the effect of the interventions improving the livelihoods of the households based on a socio-economic survey 0c. Farmer surveys measuring the increase in yields 0d. Parish survey reports based on data field collected for chimpanzees and grey crowned cranes	0a. Extreme weather events and subsequent disasters will not emerge and occur during the project lifetime (this will limit the success of creating a surplus from the newly adopted conservation farming techniques); 0b. Farmers understand the benefits of the project and sign the conservation contract; 0c. Agribusinesses continues to show interest in signing production contracts and paying farmers a premium price for their harvested crops; 0d. Based on the experimental Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) study carried out by CT within the project area, 80% of PFO households will stop deforestation within two years of the study; 0e. Similar to results seen by CLUSA in other areas, the switch from

			traditional farming technique to conservation farming techniques will result in a 50% increase in yields;
Outputs: 1. Project benefits in return for forest and wetland conservation clearly understood and agreed upon by the Private Forest Owners and formalized through a conservation contract	1a. 90% of Private Forest Owner – Households (PFO-HHs) in the 13 focal parishes, about 980 households, have signed a conservation contract by the end of year 2; 1b. By the end of year 3, 80% of PFO-HHs who have signed the conservation contract remain in compliance by not cutting trees or encroaching onto wetlands; 1c. 80% of the PFO-HHs stopped cutting trees on their land by the end of year 3.	1a. Semi-annual reports on the performance of the conservation contracts in terms of compliance	1a. Farmers are willing to comply with the conservation contract;
2. Rural financial services established in all the 13 parishes providing capital for sustainable forest friendly and agricultural enterprises	2a. All 13 parishes have microfinancing institutes set up by the end of year 2; 2b. 100 GBP of working capital sits in each microfinancing institution by the end of year 3 2c. 90% of PFO-HHs in the 13 parishes have joined the newly-introduced microfinancing institutions by the end of year 3.	2a. Semi-annual reports on the performance of the microfinancing institutions in terms of capital flows	2a. Farmers willing to join the microfinancing institutes;
3. PFO households linked to profitable markets and agribusinesses that buy their farming surplus, resulting in increased income	3a. 900 PFO-HHs have signed the production contract with agribusiness at the end of year 2; 3b. 900 PFO-HHs have increased their income from sales to agribusiness by the end of year 3; 3c. A minimum increase of 50% sold surplus created through conservation farming at the end of year 3 compared to their previous harvest volume before practising conservation farming.	3a. Semi-annual reports on the agribusiness performance in terms of amount of produce traded and payments	

<p>4. Agricultural intensification and improved yield achieved through conservation farming, reducing farmers' need to clear new forests and wetlands</p>	<p>4a. 6 CT and 7 JGI staff each per parish have been trained by CLUSA in conservation farming techniques and demonstration by the end of year 1; 4b. 900 of the PFO-HHs have adopted conservation farming by the end of year 2; 4c. 90% of the existing agricultural fields of PFO-HH are under conservation farming land use management at the end of year 3; 4d. 500 Non-PFO-HHs adopt conservation farming by the end of year 3.</p>	<p>4a. Semi-annual reports on the adoption and performance of conservation farming by the farmers</p>	<p>4a. Availability of pioneer farmers willing to become a lead farmer and set up demonstration plots.</p>
<p>Activities</p> <p>Activity 1.1. WCS, CT and JGI review existing conservation contracts and develop a contract model appropriate to the context of the project; Activity 1.2. WCS, CT and JGI organise two meetings with PFOs grouped at parish level to introduce and explain the conservation contract and incorporate their input and feedback until an agreed final version has been reached; Activity 1.3. WCS, CT and JGI conduct meetings to sign contract between farmers and the NARCG partners; Activity 1.4. WCS, CT and JGI organise annual verification mission to measure and monitor farmers' compliance; Activity 1.5. WCS carries out a biodiversity base and endline survey to measure species occurrences and updates its existing land use maps.</p> <p>Activity 2.1. Village Enterprise trains CT and JGI field-based staff in setting up micro-financing institutes and trains them in record keeping and business skills; Activity 2.2. Trained CT and JGI staff organise a meeting and explain to PFOs about the benefits of micro-financing institutes and to whom they provide access to capital; Activity 2.3. Trained CT and JGI staff organises training for PFOs and trains them in principle of microcredits, governance and business skills; Activity 2.4. Trained CT and JGI staff supervise the management and operation of the micro-financing institutes and measure and monitor capital flows with backstopping from Village Enterprise;</p> <p>Activity 3.1. WCS identifies potential agribusiness partners in the region and other opportunities in Kampala; Activity 3.2. WCS starts negotiating production contracts with participating agribusiness partners; Activity 3.3. WCS holds a meeting with CT and JGI to discuss the initial production contract and incorporates their input and feedback; Activity 3.4. WCS, CT and JGI organize a meeting with the PFOs in each parish to present and discusses their input and gather feedback; Activity 3.5. WCS organizes a meeting with agribusiness partners and finalizes production contract; Activity 3.6. WCS, CT and JGI organizes a meeting between PFOs and agribusiness partners to sign the contract;</p> <p>Activity 4.1. CLUSA trains 13 field-based staff from CT and JGI in conservation farming and assigns each staff member to a parish; Activity 4.2. CT and JGI trained staff train the PFO-HHs in conservation farming in their parish; Activity 4.3. Meetings are held in each parish to share experiences and potential issues with conservation farming among PFO-HHs; meetings are also open for non-PFO-HHs; Activity 4.4. CT and JGI trained staff collect data on yields from PFO-HHs</p>			

Annex 3 Standard Measures

Table 1 Project Standard Output Measures

Code No.	Description	Gender of people (if relevant)	Nationality of people (if relevant)	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
6A	30 local community members	8F/22M	Ugandan	30				
6B	3 weeks (2 weeks in conservation farming; 1 week in Business Saving Groups)							

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (authors , year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g.weblink or publisher if not available online)
REDD+ activities in the district of Hoima, piloting conservation farming, rural financial services and beekeeping as forest conservation initiatives*	Donor report to Tullow Oil	Leal, M. E. 2016	Male	Dutch	WCS Uganda, Kampala	http://wcsuganda.org/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?EntryId=31427&PortalId=1411&DownloadMethod=attachment