

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2017)

Project Ref No:	23-011
Project Title	Transforming marine resource management in the Republic of Congo
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Republic of Congo
Lead Organisation	University of Exeter (UoE)
Partner(s)	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Association de Conservation de la Biodiversité (Rénatura) Ministère de l'Economie Forestière et du Développement Durable et de l'Environnement (MEFDDE) Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche (MAEP)
Project Leader	Professor Brendan Godley
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	HYR2
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	@wcs_congo

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).

Activities during the reporting period (April – September 2017) have primarily focused on: (1) completing phase 1 and 2 of the national strategy document that is designed to support marine spatial planning efforts; (2) increasing enforcement effort and capacity through maritime patrols and analysis of industrial fisheries data; and (3) increasing engagement and awareness of project activities with key stakeholders and government agencies. The following section provides a breakdown of the key activities completed under each project output to date:

Output 1: Marine Spatial Planning

During April 2017 the Wildlife Conservation Society (**WCS**), **Rénatura** and University of Exeter (**UoE**) hosted a 2-day stakeholder workshop in Pointe Noire (7th – 8th April 2017) with 60 stakeholders representing 12 organisations and 6 sectors (**Figure 1**). This workshop was opened by Madame la'Ministre Rosalie Matondo of the Ministère de l'economie forestiere et du developpement durable et de l'Environnement (**MEFDDE**), Mark Gately Director General of **WCS** Congo Program, and the Préfet (state representative) for Kouilou; the department encompassing the coastal area. The aim of this workshop was to identify a common set of goals and objectives based on existing and anticipated challenges and threats in the marine area. Based on this workshop a total of ~10 goals (i.e. high-level statements of desired outcomes) were identified that could be broadly classified into 4 categories: (1) biodiversity conservation; (2) sustainable resource use; (3) local livelihoods; and (4) conflict reduction.



Figure 1. Congo Marine stakeholder workshop. Pointe Noire, Republic of Congo (April 2017). Photograph Credits: Eva Chauvet, Rénatura Congo.

As of June 2017 phase one and two of the national strategy document entitled ‘*Strategic advice to support marine spatial planning in the Republic of Congo*’ has been completed. This document is organised into three sections. Section one provides background to the purpose of this document, who should use it, and how to obtain access to the information presented within. This section also defines the MSP process, why it is needed, the benefits of adopting such an approach and its expected outputs, and provides background context to the current situation in the Republic of Congo; and finally, outlines the Republic of Congo’s desired goals and objectives derived from stakeholder workshops. Section two describes the current spatial, social and economic data available to support MSP in the Republic of Congo, including the current extent of maritime boundaries and the physical environment, the present status and distribution of species and habitats and ecological processes, as well as providing the most comprehensive description of human activities within the Republic of Congo’s marine area to date. The third phase is currently the focus of ongoing efforts and will demonstrate how the data in section two can be combined to develop a range of management scenarios that reflect the Republic of Congo’s desired political goals and objectives. To this end project partners will be developing a number of marine spatial planning scenarios (through October – November) based on goals identified during the 2-day stakeholder workshop in April. These scenarios will then be subject to a ‘participatory evaluation and feedback workshop’ with key government representatives. This activity is tentatively schedule for the end of November (date to be confirmed).

N.B. Project partners currently have a revised paper under review that describes the importance of using Automatic Identification System (AIS) data to fill gaps in ocean observation data for maritime shipping to support more effective marine spatial planning efforts in Congo.

Output 2: Enforcement Capacity

Given the increased willingness by Ministère de l’Agriculture, de l’Elevage et de la Pêche (**MAEP**) to undertake maritime patrols to reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing the project submitted a change request in FY1 to provide more funds to **Rénatura** to support such work (see DI 23-011 Annual Report 1 – 2016/2017). This was supported by additional funding from **WCS** which has led to an increase in the number of patrols at sea. This increased financial support has enabled **MAEP** to conduct 12 patrols since April 2017, during which 21 vessels were stopped to monitor compliance with fisheries law, resulting in the identification of 5 vessels in non-compliance. Most notably this has included evidence of transshipping (**Figure 2**); whilst such activity has been suggested to occur, this case represents the first ‘documented’ evidence that this activity is present in Congo. A review of enforcement activities in September 2017 highlighted a number of areas for improvement which will be the focus of ongoing activities in FY2. These include: (1) standardised reporting of patrols; (2) mapping of enforcement patrol effort; (3) knowledge exchange with patrol teams operating in neighbouring Gabon; and (4) increasing engagement with the **marine marchande** (who are

responsible for regulation of vessel navigation and maritime transport).



Figure 2. IUU fishing vessel involved in transshipping (as indicated by undeclared, packaged fish products in the hold) apprehended 25th July 2017. Photograph Credits: Rénatura Congo

Output 3: Fisheries Analyses

Through regular engagement with **MAEP** in Brazzaville the project is providing ongoing technical and analytical support and support to the Direction Departmental **MAEP** in Pointe Noire (regional office). Previously this included access to historical vessel monitoring system (VMS) data from 2012 to identify potential IUU hotspots to support patrols. However, as of July 2017 project partners have been provided with login details for current VMS system managed by PRONET which details vessel movements for the years 2016 and 2017. Visual inspection of data suggests that patterns of illegal behaviour have decreased in 2017 following more regular patrols compared to 2016 where very few patrols were undertaken (**Figure 3**). However, these data will be analysed in more detail over the coming months to help identify current IUU fishing hotspots, and more importantly identify whether patterns of IUU fishing behaviour have changed over time.

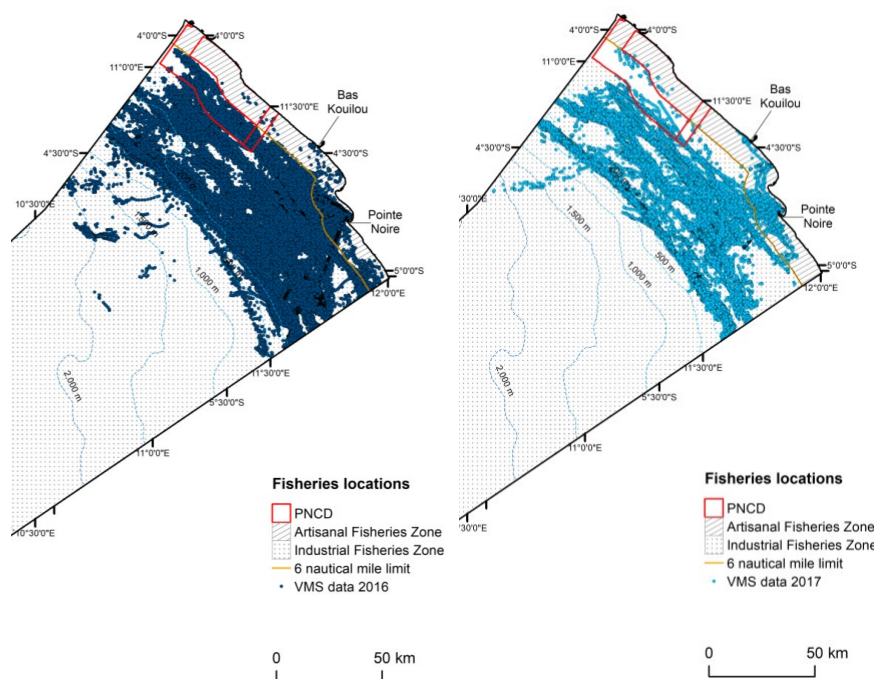


Figure 3. Industrial fishing vessel locations for years 2016 (left panel) and 2017 (right panel). Note fewer vessel locations are recorded within the boundary of Parc National Conkouati-Douli (red outline) or within the artisanal fisheries zone (hashed area). Data provided by **MAEP** and downloaded from **PRONET**.

Output 4: Awareness raising and engagement

A key activity in FY2 has been maintaining regular correspondence, meetings and engagement with stakeholders from the Ministère de l'économie forestière et du développement durable et

de l'Environnement (**MEFDDE**) and the Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche (**MAEP**). This has resulted in requests to support government activities, provide technical support and input on vessel monitoring systems, and disseminating outputs of enforcement patrols at the highest levels of government. Most notably this has included a presentation on IUU fishing (using data gathered as part of the project) with: (1) key representatives of **MAEP** in Brazzaville; (2) Monsieur Henri Djombo (**Minister of State** for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fishing) a leading figure within government; and (3) **EU Ambassador** Saskia De Lang, Tom Ashwanden (Head of Cooperation) and Camille Pubill (Project Manager Rural Development) to help increase awareness of IUU fishing in Congo within Government and its impacts on food security and local livelihoods (**Figure 4**). Engagement with the EU resulted in a request to produce a summary report that detailed current status and potential opportunities to improve fisheries governance in Congo; which is to be discussed at a forthcoming meeting with member states about possible EU support.



Figure 4. Meetings with the: fisheries department of Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche (MAEP) in Brazzaville (left panel); Monsieur Henri Djombo Minister of State l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche (center panel), and EU delegation Saskia De Lang, Tom Ashwanden and Camille Pubill (right panel).

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.

There have been two notable changes in the last 6 months. First, **WCS** management role within Parc National Conkouati-Douli national park is likely to change – with possible outcome that the park management will return to Ministère de l'economie forestiere et du developpement durable et de l'Environnement (**MEFDDE**). This will not affect the projects activities within the park as any research within the park is permitted under our existing research permit from the Ministère de la Recherche Scientifique et l'Innovation Technologique (MRSIT) that is valid until October 2019. Second, the previous Director Departmental (Monsieur. Antoine Missamou) of **MAEP** in Pointe Noire was replaced with Monsieur. Gaston Ngassiki in May 2017. Whilst there was initial concerns that establishing a relationship would take time the new Director has been very supportive - which has had a positive impact on the number of enforcement patrols.

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	n/a

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: £0.00

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?

We would like to note that **WCS** hired Emilie Fairet in April 2017 as WCS Program Coordinator (replacing Amy Pokempner who has moved onto a new role). Emilie has extensive experience in project management having worked in the Central Africa region for over 10 years and will coordinate **WCS's** Darwin Initiative project activities. Finally, to ensure that the project has a long-term identity and legacy all project activities and outputs will be conducted and disseminated under the umbrella of 'Congo Marine' – that represents all partners involved in the project. Subsequent documents, reports and maps etc. will clearly state that Congo Marine was supported by funding from Darwin Initiative through the Department for International Development (DFID).



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. Additionally, if you were funded under R23 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate 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. 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**