

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

Project reference	23-015
Project title	Guinea pigs as guinea pigs, reducing bushmeat hunting while improving communities wellbeing
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Lead organisation	Wildlife Conservation Society
Partner(s)	ICCN and UECCO
Project leader	Michelle Wieland
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	October 31, 2017 (HYR2)
Project website/blog/social media etc.	

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).

Over the last 6 months (April-Sept 2017) the following results have been successfully achieved for the project:

Micro-credit results:

- Loan agreements were signed in Bitale and Kasheke.
- Microcredit and training in financial literacy and micro-entrepreneurship development were provided to project beneficiaries in Bitale (27 women, 3 men) and Kasheke (16 women, 14 men).
- Monitoring of credit reimbursement in Kajeje village ongoing.



Figure 1. Women undertaking a micro-credit training in the village of Kasheke neighbouring Kahuzi-Biega National Park.

Cavy production results:

- Training in guinea pig husbandry was provided to microcredit beneficiaries and guinea pig keepers who are not receiving microcredit, in Cifunzi (35 participants: 10 women, 25 men), Fendula (32 participants: 10 women, 22 men), Kasheke (30 participants: 17 women, 13 men) and Bitale (49 participants: 30 women, 19 men).



Figure 2. Two women beneficiaries from Bitale receiving their credit to support their guinea pig business after attending a training.

- In Kajeje, the most advanced project site, project beneficiaries had a total of 206 guinea pigs before receiving micro-credit and/or training in guinea pig husbandry in December 2016. By the end of September 2017 they had produced 811 animals in total, of which 319 were sold and 280 were consumed over these 9 months, which represents a nearly 400% increase in the number of guinea pigs available in this site.

Bushmeat

- Baseline household meat consumption surveys were completed in all sites (some sites had not been completed in year 1). Data analysis has revealed that an estimated 47% of households consume bushmeat (95% confidence interval: 29% - 66%). These surveys will be repeated at the end of the project to evaluate changes in bushmeat consumption levels in the project sites.

Law enforcement

- Environmental awareness workshops on conservation laws were held in Kajeje (130 participants: 47 women, 83 men) and Kasheke (120 participants: 65 women, 55 men).
- WCS has supported 1,258 ranger patrols covering 7,491 km in the Tshivanga sector of Kahuzi-Biega NP where the project is targeted. All patrols have been collecting data using the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) to document patrols and observations including wildlife and human activity signs. A total of 193 bushmeat snares have been removed.

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.

The security situation in one of the sites (Bitale) has not been favourable to conducting field activities and has delayed field team missions to the site. We hope the situation improves in the coming months to enable us to resume activities there.

Two of the project sites (Cifunzi and Fendula) have suffered more than others in recent years due to political unrest and hence have received more humanitarian aid compared to other sites. Field teams have found that villagers in both sites have developed an expectation of receiving free goods (as practiced in the humanitarian sector) and are not accustomed to initiatives that expect them to be proactive and take ownership of their project. Even though the project plan was presented and beneficiaries were selected, trained and understood what was expected of them, real appropriation has been lacking. WCS then discussed the issue with local leaders to discuss relocating the project to another village. This approach, very different to what they are used to, spurred them into a community decision to accept the preconditions (i.e. building a guinea pig structure) and borrowing money to purchase animals. Although this is a recent intervention, we believe this is an important lesson learned for future work in post-humanitarian areas.

Our local partner UECCO has suffered growing pains as an organization as they have taken on new staff to account for the increase in the scale of their work. UECCO has also struggled to secure match funding as they had guaranteed they would from additional consultancies, which has also affected their work. These issues have manifested themselves through budgeting and time allocation challenges, and limited the amount of time spent providing beneficiaries with technical support. The latter has caused lower than expected cavy production rates due to many beneficiaries not using optimal husbandry techniques. We have brought this issue to UECCO's

attention several times and they have promised that their work will improve before the end of the year.

Part of the goal with a Darwin grant is to build local capacity, whether it is with beneficiaries or with local partners. As such, WCS has helped UECCO write 2 grants this year and provided them with recommendation letters to help improve their situation. In addition to this, WCS strongly considering looking for support trainings to help with organizational management systems.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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

No

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**