



Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

Project Ref No	23-021
Project Title	Promoting biodiversity in sustainable oil-palm landscapes for West African smallholders
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Ghana
Lead Organisation	University of Leeds, UK
Partner(s)	Nature Conservation Research Centre, Ghana University of York, UK Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana Solidaridad West Africa Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil
Project Leader	Keith Hamer
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	HYR1
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	http://www.fbs.leeds.ac.uk/staff/Hamer_K/
Funder (DFID/Defra)	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).

We have made good progress and are on schedule:

1. Two graduate Darwin Research Fellows (DRFs; Michael Adu Sasu and Linda Ofosuene) have been selected and recruited to the project.
2. Each DRF has completed a thorough literature review and project outline, contributing to their Masters by Research dissertations.
3. We have held one-day workshops with two smallholder communities around Assin Fosu in the Central region of Ghana, including site visits to establish and characterise treatment levels for the Best Agricultural Practice experiment.
4. Following a thorough ethical review and fieldwork risk assessment, we have designed a smallholder questionnaire form and accompanying smallholder information leaflet, and are using these to complete smallholder surveys in each of our two focal communities. These should be completed by the end of December 2016, with biodiversity surveys in smallholdings and at identified sites within natural forest due to start in January 2017.

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.

Following changes to Tier 4 UK Study Visa regulations, it is no longer possible for overseas students to register for part-time study in the UK. Hence our two DRFs will now register for Masters of Research by full-time study. They will register in October 2017, which means that their fees will all be paid in 2017-18, rather than half in 2016-17 and half in 2017-18. To reflect this, the budget (lead organization costs, DRFs' MRes degree costs) will need to decrease by £16,800 in 2016-17 and increase by the same amount in 2017-18. Similarly, it is not possible for the DRFs to obtain study visas to visit the UK until they are registered for study, and so their first visit to the UK will now take place in October 2017 rather than October 2016, entailing a decrease in the budget (lead organization costs, international travel) of £2100 in 2016-17 and an increase by the same amount in 2017-18.

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: ~~Yes~~/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/~~No~~

Received confirmation of change acceptance ~~Yes~~/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: £18,900

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?

None

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. 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**