



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

Project Ref No	23-026
Project Title	Domestication of the Mulanje Cedar for improved livelihoods
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Malawi
Lead Organisation	Botanic Gardens Conservation International
Partner(s)	Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust, Forest Research Institute of Malawi
Project Leader	<i>Dr Paul P. Smith</i>
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	Website: http://globaltrees.org/projects/save-our-cedar-malawis-national-tree/ Twitter: #SaveOurCedar
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).

1.1. Inaugural Project Workshop held with all stakeholders present. Project plan communicated, refined and all necessary mechanisms for acquiring permits and Prior Informed Consent defined and implemented.

The Inaugural Project Workshop was held on 8th June 2016 in Mulanje District. Stakeholders present during the launch included all traditional leaders (Chiefs) who border the mountain from Phalombe and Mulanje Districts; District Commissioners (Phalombe and Mulanje); A representative of the National Herbarium & Botanic Gardens of Malawi; Board Chairman of Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust; a representative of the Director of Forestry; a representative from BGCI, District Forestry staff, MMCT staff, a representative from academia and different media houses. The project staff introduced the project and its objectives, the importance of the project; the implementing agencies (BGCI, MMCT, and FRIM); the project implementing period and the ultimate beneficiaries. All stakeholders welcomed the project and promised to support the implementing institutions in order to realise the project objectives.

The project inaugural ceremony reached its climax with the planting of cedar trees at the Mulanje District Commissioners' Office where each stakeholder representative was requested to plant a cedar tree. This was done in order to demonstrate to the general public that the cedar can be planted and can grow into a big tree.

A project logo was designed and all participants were given T shirts with the logo and slogan "Save Our Cedar" as well as a leaflet in Chichewa (the local language) outlining the aims of the project. A news story about the project initiation was published on the BGCI website: <http://bgci.org/news-and-events/news/1341/> and the project launch was also featured on the following media channels within Malawi – the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation radio and TV, Nation Newspaper, Times Group (Newspaper, Radio & TV), ZBS radio and Mzati Community Radio.

Timeframe and activities.

1.1. Project Steering Committee established, including all existing stakeholders (national and local authorities, communities, NGOs, academics etc.).

The Project Steering Committee was established two days before the Project launch and had its initial meeting in afternoon of the project launch (8th June, 2016). The committee membership included the following:

- Dr Paul Smith (Botanic Gardens Conservation International – BGCI, Project PI)
- Kirsty Shaw (Botanical Garden Conservation International – BGCI)
- Dr Richard Jinks (Forest Research – UK, Technical Adviser)
- Dr Tembo Chanyenga (Director of Forestry Research Institute of Malawi - FRIM)
- Mr Carl Bruessow (Executive Director, Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust - MMCT)
- Dr Zacharia Magombo (General Manager, National Herbarium & Botanic Gardens of Malawi - NHBG)
- Mr Suzgo Gondwe (Environmental District Officer)
- Senior Chief Chikumbu (Representative of Traditional Leaders)
- Mr. Wilbert Chitaukali (Chairman of MMCT Scientific Committee)
- Mr Lemos Mlaviwa (District Forestry Officer - Mulanje)
- Mr Henry Chinthuli (Representing Biodiversity Conservation, Research & Monitoring Programme Officer BCRM).
- Mr David Nangoma (African Parks Limited)

During the first meeting, the role of the steering committee was outlined and all nominated members agreed to act as advisors to the project as well as provide support to ensure deliverables are kept on target and help to address any problems that occur over the project timeframe. Indicators were agreed for monitoring project progress, which will be used in future meetings.

1.1. MMCT to appoint Biodiversity Conservation Officer to manage project:

Agreement had been reached between MMCT Trustees and an academic at Chancellor College for a defined period secondment to enable a recruitment and mentoring process of a promising candidate for the job over a three-year period. Due to unforeseen staff constraints, the University informed the individual in October that such an arrangement would cause a problem in their institution. Discussions are underway to ascertain how another candidate can be selected and recruited at short-notice.

1.1. Detailed briefs written for external consultants:

BGCI appointed Dan Luscombe from Bedgebury National Pinetum, Forestry Commission UK, as the Nursery Consultant for the project. A subcontract and detailed brief was written and agreed to. Activities will include development of trials to record performance rates of Mulanje Cedar seedlings in community nurseries, delivery of training to nursery managers and development of propagation protocols for the Mulanje Cedar.

BGCI has also appointed GIS consultants (Justin Moat and Alison Moat) and written a subcontract and accompanying project brief. The GIS consultants will gather and map data from previous Mulanje Cedar monitoring plots on the mountain, and this data will be used to guide the baseline ecological survey that will be carried out on Mulanje Mountain in January 2017.

1.1. Monitoring and evaluation methodology defined and implemented:

The monitoring and evaluation methodology was outlined during the Project Steering Committee meeting on 8th June 2016. Indicators of success have been attached to each project activity and progress against each activity will be discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting which will take place in quarter 3 of the project (November 2016 – January 2017, date TBC). Any delays or risks to project implementation will be identified and the Steering Committee will identify methods to resolve or avoid them.

1.3. Cedar trial plots designed and planted (using existing seedling stocks) in 10 edaphically and climatically diverse sites across Malawi by end of year 1:

The Cedar trial plots have been designed and the experimental plan has been produced with the assistance of Dr Richard Jinks from Forest Research (U.K.).

The trial will be established on 8 sites as follows:

- Chambe on Mulanje Mountain
- Lichenya on Mulanje Mountain
- Chigumula in Blantyre
- Makoka In Zomba
- Zomba Plateau
- Mapale on Dedza Mountain
- Luwawa on Viphya Plantation
- Chikangawa on Viphya Plantation

The trial design details are as follows: 3 provenances will be tested using a Randomised Complete Block Design at each site; 5 blocks will be planted on each site i.e. 3 provenances x 5 blocks = 15 plots per site

and plot size = 7 x 7 tree plots.

Site preparations are underway on all the 8 selected sites; Over 6,500 Mulanje cedar seedlings have been raised at Forestry Research Institute of Malawi (FRIM) ready for planting in the next few months.

2.1. Nursery trials designed and implemented by international experts within first 6 months of the project, investigating optimal media, watering regimes, light, temperature, etc:

Dan Luscombe from Bedgebury Pinetum (U.K.) has been contracted to establish cedar trails and train local nursery personnel on site at Mt Mulanje in November 2016.

3.1. Ten nurseries established and fully equipped with shade netting, grow bags and other consumables by the end of year 1:

10 nursery sites have been selected and established as follows:

- Makolera Nursery is located in Group Village Head (GVH) Makolera T/A Mkhumba (Phalombe District). It has 15 members but is dominated by women (93%).
- Lomoliwa Nursery is located in Village Head Lomoliwa, T/A Mkhumba (Phalombe District). It has 15 members, and only two are men.
- Kadewere (Fort Lister) nursery is located in Kadewere Village T/A Mkhumba (Phalombe District) It has 15 members and women make up 67% of the group.
- Gwilima Nursery is located in Gwilima Village in T/A Nkhulambe (Phalombe District). The membership is 60% women
- Nakhonyo Nursery is located in Nakhonyo Village in T/A Mkanda (Mulanje District)
- Kazembe Nursery is located in Kazembe Village in T/A Mkanda (Mulanje District)
- Chole Nursery is located in Chole Village T/A Mkanda (Mulanje District)
- Ndaonetsa Nursery is located in Gambeya Village in Senior Chief Mabuka (Mulanje District)
- Msikita Nursery is located in Msikita Village in T/A Njema (Mulanje District)
- Nessa Nursery is located in Nessa Village, Seniro Chief Mabuka, (Mulanje District)

Procurement of nursery materials is underway. All the nurseries have been fenced and procurement of nursery materials such as polythene tubes, hand-tools, wheelbarrows is underway.

3.2. Ten experienced nursery staff recruited to establish nurseries and act as mentors. These staff will be drawn from existing MMCT nurseries, prioritising women and people with a proven track record:

Selection is under way ahead of the scheduled nursery training activities.

3.7. Baseline socio-economic survey of recruited staff (disaggregated by gender) carried out by socio-economic researcher, assessing household income levels, income sources, use of natural resources and attitudes to cedar and natural resource conservation and management. Survey repeated in years 2 and 3:

A Consultant from Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) was hired by MMCT to carry out a Socio - Economic Baseline Study for the *Domestication of the Mulanje Cedar for Improved Livelihoods* project in order to inform its implementation.

MMCT drew up the terms-of-reference and contract for the Consultant, and these were shared with the project partners for their input before engaging the consultant. The study tools were screened and shared amongst project partners before pre- testing to ensure they address issues highlighted in the terms-of-reference. After thorough exchange of comments, a day briefing of research assistants took place at MMCT prior to pre-testing, and a briefing was done a day before the actual study commenced. MMCT provided all logistical support and mobilised villages and groups to be interviewed.

The study ran from 3rd to 9th October; reaching out to 150 respondents (who are primarily cedar nursery caretakers) chiefs, district officials and some project partners such as FRIM and the District Forestry Office. Thereafter, the Consultant sent a reporting format that has been commented on, and the draft study report is expected in the first week of November 2016.

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.

No problems have been noted.

David Nangoma, one of the named applicants on the proposal, has left MMCT to pursue career opportunities elsewhere. However, it is not believed that this will significantly impact on the delivery of this project because his expertise related to the Mulanje cedar is more than adequately covered by other staff at MMCT and in FRIM.

Utilising matched funding from the Franklina Foundation, 8 (as opposed to 10) trial sites for the Mulanje cedar have been identified by FRIM with assistance from Forest Research UK. The trial methodology developed by Richard Jinks of Forest Research UK took into account a range of criteria such as climatic conditions, soil type and security, and only 8 of the intended 10 sites met all of the relevant criteria. The 8 site trials will more than adequately answer the abiotic tolerance questions the trial is designed to address, so this will not affect the project outcomes.

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	Not applicable

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.

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**