

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

Project reference 24-006

Project title Enhancing forest biodiversity and community resilience to Tajikistan's changing climate

Country(ies)/territory(ies) Tajikistan

Lead organisation Fauna & Flora International

Partner(s) Kulob Botanical Garden, Zan va Zamin, Zam Zam, Muminabad Forestry Management Unit, Dashtijum Forestry Management Unit

Project leader Vicky Wilkins

Report date and number (e.g., HYR3) HYR1

Project website/blog/social media etc. To be established

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).

Much of the first phase of the project has been spent establishing project relationships with partners and setting up sub grant agreements and contracts. These have all now been established and many of the partner activities are now underway, for more information see below.

We had the first steering group meeting in August and this saw the project partners coming together to discuss project content, timetable and the first stage of development, as well as exchanging ideas for success. It was decided to have a rolling chair and it was planned to have the next steering group in January.

Both of the community mobilisers have been recruited in the two reserves, we decided that the role in each reserve should be a mobiliser working with an assistant as this means that they can more easily cover the reserve and also the assistants are women to ensure a gender balance (as the best candidates were both men).

Output 1: Increased knowledge and understanding of forest habitats

An interview has been designed together with Zam Zam to explore the communities understanding of the reserves and to provide more information on fruit harvesting and their use of local markets. This questionnaire is currently being piloted.

Kulob Botanical Gardens has started to establish baseline botanical surveys at both project sites and has completed surveys of four threatened tree species, including: *Pyrus korshinskyi*, *Pyrus tadjikistanica*, *Amygdalus bucharica* and *Malus sieversii*. This information will be used to form the basis of the species action plans as well as informing, habitat restoration work to augment species populations. Survey results are currently being analysed and written up.

Output 2: Improving income from fruit and nuts

We undertook a market selection exercise working with Zam Zam which looked at all the forest products that are currently harvested in both reserves, and dried fruit was confirmed as the product which the project could most effectively influence to improve quality and value in both reserves. We also have started to plan the participatory market work with Zam Zam, scheduling in timing for workshops and identifying locations etc.

Two electric fruit drying machines have been purchased and these are in temporary storage while we find suitable location in each reserve for these driers to be kept as well as a way of managing access for community members. We will organise training on their use once we have them installed within the reserves. In addition 8 local drying cabinets are being created that can be distributed more widely in the reserves, to help improve the fruit drying process.

Output 3: Forest management and promoting resilience

A contract with each of the Forest Service Unit has been established and individuals in each Unit have been identified to act as 'links' to the project. Each Unit has also fenced two areas to start to establish nurseries, one in each reserve.

Two 'Harvest Festivals' are being run on in each of the reserves at the end of October, these have been organised by the mobilisers, to celebrate the fruits, nuts and other products that the forest provides to the communities and raising awareness of forest health. These festivals will see competitions of produce, music and a competition around stories of the forest and its wildlife.

In addition Kulob Botanical Gardens has been running events to educate the communities on the importance of the forest and how people can help improve the condition of the forest.

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 Project Leader has changed as it was deemed more appropriate for the Central Asia Programme Manager – Vicky Wilkins to lead the project; this was requested through a change request and confirmed. This has had no effect on the budget and timetable.

A new project partner was added to support and deliver the Participatory Market Development work as project partner Zan va Zamin was no longer able to undertake the work this year due to other project commitments. So Zam Zam another similar NGO with the correct skills and abilities was identified and then requested to become part of the project through a change request and again this was confirmed, and it will have no effect on budget and timetable.

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: £

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.

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

No nothing to raise

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**