

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

Project reference	24-029
Project title	Enabling Baka attain food security, improved health and sustain biodiversity
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cameroon
Lead organisation	Manchester Metropolitan University
Partner(s)	Zerca y Lejos (ZyL), CIFOR
Project Leader	Prof. John E. Fa
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	HYR1
Project website/blog/social media etc.	In preparation

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).

Although the official start of the project was 1 September 2017 (acceptance letter received 19 May 2017), we held initial preparatory meetings between 9-11 August in Madrid, Spain, between our country partner (ZyL) and the Project Leader. The purpose of these meetings was to arrange the Project Leader's visit to the field site in Cameroon in early September, and to initiate discussions on the work to be undertaken during the first year of the project. Following the meetings in Spain, the Project Leader travelled to Manchester at the end of August, to introduce the project to members of the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) team and to discuss plans for the initiation of the project.

The Project leader travelled to the field site in Cameroon during 11 – 29 Sept. 2017. In the following sections we detail progress during the period 1 Sept. – 31 Oct. 2017 against the baseline timetable and outputs submitted in our project proposal:

1) **Selection of study villages.** After discussions with the field team in Djoum and some preliminary visits to a selection of sites, we have now determined which 10 villages we will be targeting in our study. Villages were selected on the basis of their long-term relationship with ZyL. The organisation has more than 15 years' experience in providing primary schooling and health support as well as working with three of these on agricultural production activities. All villages are located towards the Mintom region. We have already georeferenced all houses in each of the villages and there are 237 buildings used by 197 families.

2) **Field data gathering preparations.** All questionnaires to be used in the project were completed during the Project Leader's time in the field and have now been translated and ready to be applied in November 2017. These questionnaires focus on determining: 1) Household wealth and livelihoods; 2) Use of animal resources, namely via interviews with hunters and fishers; and 3) Self-reporting framework for hunters and fishers in each village. Face to face questionnaires will be applied by our local faunal expert, Mr. Robert Okele, a Cameroonian national employed by the Darwin project. Alongside these, we will be employing and training a local informant/assistant from each village to monitor hunting and fishing offtake in each settlement. These assistants will be supervised by Mr. Okele. We are very pleased to have

Robert work within the Darwin team. Mr. Okele has over 10 years' experience working in wildlife, having being employed by various international research teams in the region and also worked as an Ecoguard in Cameroon for some years. Village reporters are individuals that work with ZyL, and are persons we feel are trustworthy. During early October Mr. Okele has censused all households present in each village, so we can determine the optimal sample size for our planned livelihood surveys. Out of these households, we will select those to be targeted for our nutritional studies. Questionnaires for the latter study will be prepared before the end of the year, in conjunction with our Nutritional expert in MMU and our Health Officer.

3) **Networking.** We have had meetings with the various international organisations (ZSL, Forest Peoples) working in the Dja region and around. We met with:

Forest Peoples Programme

Ms. Catherine Clarke Project Officer Cameroon.

Ms. Anouska Perram Lawyer, Legal and Humans Rights Programme.

Zoological Society of London

Dr. David Olson Cameroon Programme Director.

Dr. Andrew Fowler TRIDOM Landscape Manager.

Mr. Simeon Abe Eyebe Community Coordinator, Cameroon.

Fanny Marcelle Djomkam Community Conservation Officer.

Meetings have been very positive and we have the opportunity to work with these organisations in the field, exchange experiences and discuss ways of collaborating in the near future. A first step in our collaboration has been to exchange information on which projects each organisation is leading, where these projects are located, and what activities are being undertaken. Information on each programme's activities is currently being collated.

We have also had a more extensive meeting with Mr. Donald Mbohli (the in-country coordinator for the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp (RZSA), and involved in the other Darwin project in Cameroon (# 24-005). Together with Mr. Mbohli, we have arranged for our in-country coordinator, Mr. Guillermo Ros Brull to visit their sites in the Dja to discuss the agricultural projects (namely cacao planting) planned in the RZSA Darwin project and to exchange experiences on the agricultural work undertaken by ZyL in our target sites. Dr. Nikki Tagg the RZSA's project leader, will be visiting Cameroon from the 26th October 2017. Our project's in-country coordinator will be contacting Dr. Tagg to arrange to meet and discuss collaboration between our two projects.

Further meetings in Yaoundé are planned with CIFOR-Cameroon and with other potential collaborators such as the University of Yaoundé. We will be discussing the project with MINFOF in November 2017.

An initial contact has been made with Dr. Zacharie Tchoundjeu of the World Agroforestry Centre in Cameroon to discuss the possibility of developing agroforestry techniques alongside the agricultural work already undertaken by the Darwin project.

4) **Presentation of project.** Because ZyL has already a team of local collaborators in each of our target villages, we have been able to informally introduce the Darwin project and gather initial responses. We are happy to report that there has been a generally good acceptance of the planned work but a more formal presentation of the project is in the ZyL offices in Djoum at the end of October 2017. We have invited all community leaders from the 10 target villages, as well as other organisations working in the region (i.e. Forests People, ZSL and PGS-Antwerp Zoo), as well as government dignitaries. In that meeting we will present the aims of the project as well project activities and timeline. We will provide food and refreshments. Officially announcing the

project is a fundamental step to encourage buy-in from the communities and for them to understand the purpose of our work.

5) **Enabling linkages.** In our project, we seek better ways of quantifying the linkages between the use of food resources (domestic and wild) and the health (and food security) of the communities we are targeting. Data on the health of the inhabitants of each village are available from ZyL for the period 2014-2017. These data are now being analysed. We also plan to have a team of 20 doctors and dentists from affiliated teaching hospitals in Spain to perform the following studies: 1) anthropometry; 2) anaemia rates; 3) dental health (also an indicator of nutritional status); 4) disease incidence (with particular emphasis on malaria) as well as 5) historical health surveys (mortality and disease in the past few years). The team will be visiting all 30 villages in the study area, including our 10 target villages.

6) **Hunting range analyses, preparations.** We will be asking for the collaboration of hunters in each of the study villages so we can delimit the hunting ranges for each of the study settlements. This will be done by providing participating hunters with a wrist-held GPS (Garmin Foretrex 401 OUTDOOR Wrist). Data gathering will start towards the end of October 2017. We will purchase the equipment (n = 10) and send these with the ZyL project coordinator (Mr. Olmo Mateo González, who will be travelling to Cameroon on the 10 October. This expenditure had not been contemplated before the submission of our proposal but has been identified during the Project Leader's visit to Cameroon. We have asked Darwin to shift funds we had allocated to the last year of the project to be spent on field equipment and field work at the start of the project.

7) **Camera trapping, preparations.** We will be working with the MMU fauna team at the end of October to establish the most appropriate layout for the camera trapping grids. The aims of the camera trapping in this project is to verify the status of the hunted species within the hunting ranges of each of the study settlements. Although it would be ideal to undertake camera trapping in non-hunted areas, given the project's main aim it is more useful to concentrate efforts in assessing the condition of the faunal elements accessible to the communities. We will be able to obtain animal densities from a number of protected areas in the north-western Congo Basin (namely Cameroon, CAR and Gabon) from ZSL. Dr. David Olson, has already provided me with animal densities for 43 protected areas that we could compare with our study sites.

8) **Appointment of Health Officer.** We have now appointed a Health Officer, Ms. Eva Avila Martin who will start working in the field in mid-January 2018. Eva has begun preparing and training to undertake the nutritional analyses planned for the project. She will be working closely with Dr. Laura O'Connor at MMU, and we have enlisted the help of Prof. Barrie Margetts from the University of Southampton to support our nutritional and public health work.

9) **Agricultural activities.** Since September 2016, ZyL, and now as part of the Darwin project, will work to encourage and support Baka communities in the study area (three of them selected in Darwin Project) to diversify livelihood activities. These activities primarily revolve around increasing family agriculture, but will also encourage other income-generating pursuits e.g. beekeeping, use of non-timber forest products and traditional chicken breeding. The program has employed a full-time agricultural specialist, a Cameroonian, Mr. Francois Fouda Yissi, who will oversee each family's agricultural calendars as well as facilitate access to markets, foster local cooperatives, and develop participation in local governance.

The first agricultural campaign, involving 34 families, was carried out in March 2017 (there are two agricultural campaigns per year, March and September). During this time, ZyL has worked with those families (particularly women) participating in the program by affording them technical advice and providing materials (seeds and agricultural materials) and at the same time as encouraging collaboration. In the second agricultural campaign carried out in September this year, smallholder farmers have used their own seeds (produce of the March campaign), and which were stored in warehouses built for this purpose. Additionally, ZyL is supporting two small groups of individuals to develop beekeeping (5 people in two groups, with 2 hives each).

During September 2017, the local ZyL team has spent time assessing the outcomes of the agricultural campaigns, by determining production in each field and group discussions with the farmers involved to assess their satisfaction with the products resulting from their activities (particularly the quality of the peanut and maize crops collected). At the same time, these participatory workshops have allowed us to identify any problems encountered and propose solutions.

All fields in all target villages are currently being mapped to identify the potential these have to produce sufficient produce in comparison to the fields under the ZyL campaigns. By determining the size, distance from the villages and whether fields are found in non-village areas (e.g. forest concessions) we will be able to advice on best practices. We are also identifying farmers interested in cacao production in each village to investigate the potential of introducing agroforestry systems.

Alongside the contemplated field work, during this year we will be working to promote the legal establishment of farming cooperatives to enable the participating farmers to formally link with other cooperatives and local institutions as by doing this gain better access to markets.

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.

In general, there have not been notable problems in the phase of the project. The only difficulty we have had has been in the purchasing of the vehicle. This is because we had the amount allocated for the purchase was erroneously divided between the two initial quarters. We have requested Darwin to remit the full amount as soon as possible so we can proceed with our field activities.

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.

NA

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**