Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2020)

Project reference	25-003
Project title	Conservation social networking, ecotourism and land-use planning in Maputaland
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Eswatini and Mozambique
Lead organisation	DICE, University of Kent
Partner(s)	All Out Africa, ANAC, KUWUKA JDA, SNTC, UEM, UNISWA
Project leader	Bob Smith
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	HYR3
Project website/blog/social media	https://izele.org/projects/278

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Output 1

Activity 1.4. Publicise Izele; support & monitor page creation.

We have continued to encourage and support page creation in Izele, both through the work of All Out Africa in Eswatini and KUWUKA JDA in Mozambique, and by a broader social media campaign that also included South Africa. This has expanded the network by 38 pages, consisting of 15 in Eswatini, 7 in Mozambique and 16 in South Africa. We now have a good coverage organisations and ecotourism ventures throughout Maputaland (Figure 1)
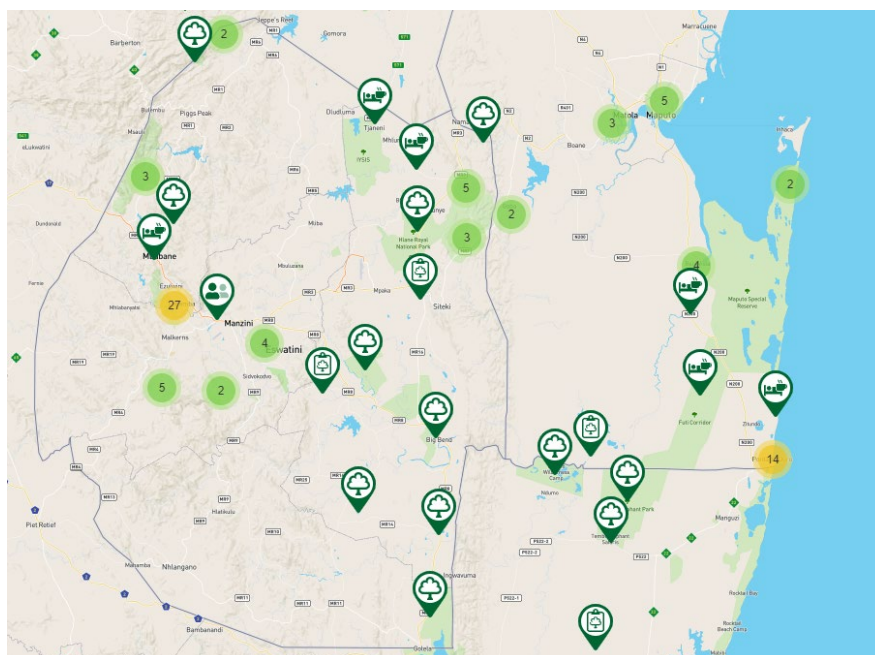

Figure 1: Izele screenshot showing the coverage of organisations included in the network.

Output 2

Activity 2.5. Publicise Izele ecotourism functions; support & monitor page creation

All Out Africa and KUWUKA JDA continued to provide support to the ecotourism ventures with Izele pages, helping create new pages for 9 ecotourism ventures in Eswatini and 5 ecotourism ventures in Mozambique.

Activity 2.6. Community mapping of preferred areas for ecotourism activities

We collected data on suitable areas for ecotourism activities on communal and other types of land, supplementing data from complementary projects that have designed the Lubombo Biosphere Reserve in Eswatini and the Transfrontier Conservation Area initiatives in Eswatini and Mozambique. This new data were collected through the work of two DICE MSc students. Nkosikhona Hlatshwayo interviewed community leaders as part his project that looked at the effectiveness of state, private and communal land in the Eswatini section of Maputaland for conserving the region's threatened species. Nuwanthika Dharmaratne modelled and mapped ecotourism suitability in the whole of Maputaland using spatial data and expert elicitation to identify and weight the different factors.

Activity 2.7. Add and refine COVID-19 reporting functionality

We added functionality to the Amenities Tab on Izele pages so ecotourism businesses can provide details on their safety procedures and which of their activities and amenities are on hold because of the coronavirus. The information about their available activities and amenities is then reflected on the maps that visitors can use to plan their holidays.
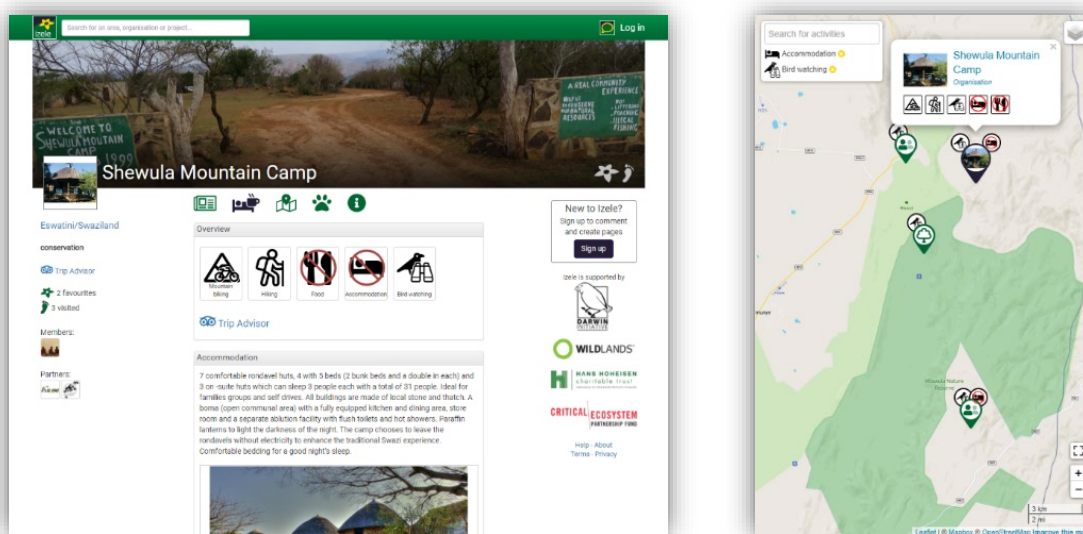

Figure 2: Screenshots showing how (Left) ecotourism businesses can provide information in Izele on which of their amenities and activities have been impacted by COVID-19, so (Right) tourists can see what is open when planning visits.

Output 3

3.1. Update GIS data in conservation planning system

We continued to add biodiversity data to the conservation planning system, working with Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife in South Africa to collate 1097 point locality records for 65 species from a range of taxonomic groups (4 Amphibia, 16 Arachnida,1 Branchiopoda, 4 Diplopoda, 2 Gastropoda, 28 Insecta and 10 Reptilia). These data will be used to produce

species distribution models for species where there is sufficient data; for the other species we will use the point data directly.

3.4. Conservation land-use zoning prioritisation

Hermenegildo Matimele has used the species data he has collected to identify Key Biodiversity Areas in Maputaland, based on the IUCN Standard launched in 2016. The KBAs he helped identify in Mozambique were part of a much larger project led by the Mozambican Government and the Wildlife Conservation Society, based on a large amount of expert input, and will be recognised in national law. He has identified KBAs in Eswatini and South Africa as part of his PhD research to test the impact of using different types of approaches and data.

Output 4

4.1. Produce Izele page training materials

We produced 10 short YouTube videos describing different aspects of creating an Izele page (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_IZzDab6-J8hSQfJEbyq8w). We also added and edited subtitles, which can then be automatically translated into Portuguese.

4.2. Postgraduate training with project on conservation land-use planning

Nkosikhona Hlatshwayo successfully completed his MSc in Conservation Biology in September. His project was on "Systematic conservation planning in the Lubombo Biosphere Reserve in the Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland)" and measured threat levels for threatened amphibian, bird, mammal and plant species in the Eswatini section of Maputaland, as well as the management effectiveness of the different types of conservation area found within his study region. For the taught component of his Masters he completed modules on Conservation and Community Development, Integrated Species Conservation and Management, Managing Protected Areas, Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Conservation, Population and Evolutionary Biology, Principles of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing, Research Methods for Social Science and Research Skills for Natural Sciences.

4.3. Train practitioners to use planning system & updated training materials

We produced a second YouTube video on using the CLUZ and Marxan systematic conservation planning software packages. This 20-minute video covers setting up the files and importing the data: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mh8TrDY2xPw. We also added and edited subtitles, which can then be automatically translated into Portuguese.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

We had delays in producing some of the biodiversity data and also needed to update the landcover data, which had knock-on impacts in terms of producing the final conservation planning system. However, we are confident that the system should be finalised by the end of December.

2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a large impact on Output 2, which sought to "Increased visitor numbers and tourist revenue for conservation area- and community-based ecotourism in Maputaland, as well as building future revenue through increased awareness, by adding ecotourism enterprises to the Maputaland online social network in Izele". Unfortunately, ecotourism has dropped dramatically because of the pandemic, so we made a change request to update our measurable indicators, activities and timetable. This change request was accepted and will involve the following:

- We plan to work with the same number of community-based ecotourism enterprises (7) but have now included several sites in Eswatini that are outside Maputaland, as several of the Maputaland enterprises are struggling because of the pandemic.
- We have specified that our dissemination meetings to be held next year may be online and will happen right at the end of the project.

2c. 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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

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

N/A

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 DO NOT send these in the same email.

Please send your **completed report by email** to 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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**