



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

Project reference	26-003
Project title	Securing the long-term future of Kenya's largest freshwater wetland
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Kenya
Lead organisation	Nature Kenya (The East Africa Natural History Society – EANHS)
Partner(s)	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), The Inter-ministerial Technical Committee for the sustainable management of Kenya Deltas (IMTC), County Government of Siaya, County Government of Busia, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Yala Ecosystem Site Support Group (YESSG), Yala Planning Advisory Committee (YPAC), Lower Nyandera Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) and Muweri WRUA
Project leader	Serah Munguti
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	30/10/2020 HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	www.naturekenya.org

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: The 8,404-ha Community Conservation Area (CCA) within the Yala Delta is protected effectively and in perpetuity through formal gazettment and development of a management plan and associated governance bodies and regulations (Indicators 1.1,1.2, 1.3, 1.4)

The County Governments of Siaya and Busia, national government agencies and 62 villages have continued to fully support the setting up of an 8,404ha Indigenous and Community Conservation Area (ICCA). The draft ICCA management plan was revised (Annex 1) with input from the county governments Siaya and Busia (Annex 2). The revised draft ICCA management plan was harmonized with the ICCA business case informed by feasibility studies of using ecosystem services to generate income for ICCA management (Annex 3). Stakeholder meetings to validate the reports are planned. GIS maps for the ICCA were produced including maps of degraded areas to measure restoration efforts in Year 2 (Annex 4). 47ha of degraded wetland were restored through direct planting of papyrus (Annex 5); 41,772 indigenous tree seedlings were planted to restore the lower River Yala riparian zone (Annex 6) and 37,880 exotic tree seedlings were planted in own farm woodlots. Management guidelines were developed and are under application to promote natural regeneration of papyrus in 100ha of degraded areas within Yala swamp and 100ha of riverine vegetation within the River Yala riparian zone (Annex 7).

Yala Ecosystem Site Support Group (YESSG), Yala Planning Advisory Committee (YPAC), Nature Kenya staff, Chiefs, County Ward & Village Administrators, held meetings in 8 villages

to create awareness on Yala swamp ICCA and the land use plan (LUP) with 253(151M, 102F) people reached (Annex 8). The ICCA model is steadily gaining community support with a total of 33 Village Natural Resource and Land Use Committees (VNRLUC) formed. Between 29th May 2020 - 4th October 2020 a total of 18 one-hour LUP/ICCA live broadcast awareness talks were conducted on vernacular radio station Bulala FM, in Budalang'i, Busia County (Annex 9). The radio listeners among local communities responded extremely well through calling in/sending messages to ask for advice, seek clarification and give suggestions on enhancing community involvement in ICCA management after each session (Annex 10).

Stakeholder consultations and awareness is on-going to prepare a justification for formal protection of the ICCA and will form part of training for the ICCA management committee. Draft Terms of Reference for VNRLUCs were developed to form part of the local resource use guidelines for the ICCA (Annex 11). A roadmap for development of guidelines on water and papyrus access is in draft (Annex 12).

Output 2: The key 'user groups' in the delta are enabled to jointly manage the CCA through the provision of training and on-going support (Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5,2.6, 2.7)

With continued capacity-building, YESSG cluster groups are on course in safeguarding Yala Swamp ecosystem services with notable results.

On 21st May 2020 YESSG submitted a Memorandum to the County Assembly of Siaya in the matter of consideration of the Programme Based Budget 2020/2021 (Annex 13). On 28th May 2020, YESSG secured partnership with a local vernacular radio station (Bulala FM, Busia County) to create environmental awareness with special focus on sensitization on Yala SEA/LUP, ICCAs, VNRLUCs (Annex 14). On 22nd June 2020, 3 YESSG members (trained tour guides) were invited by the Siaya County Department of Tourism, Culture, Sports & Arts in a stakeholders meeting to deliberate on the status of the tourism industry during the post COVID-19 (Annex 15). On 5th July 2020, YESSG wrote to National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to stop a proposed commercial sand mining venture by Kylin Works Limited along River Yala (Annex 16). The private company had started excavation works without following due processes, posing a threat to biodiversity & livelihoods. The YESSG further engaged local media to highlight the issue and formed a WhatsApp group to sensitize the local community on the potential threats of the proposed project to biodiversity & livelihoods without putting in place appropriate mitigation measures. As a result, NEMA and the County Government of Siaya stopped the project.

YESSG carried out monthly bird walks, common bird monitoring, waterfowl counts, detailed monitoring and submitted data to the National Museums of Kenya (Annexes 17, 18, 19). This data will be used to produce the Annual Key Biodiversity Areas Status and Trends report.

358 (189M, 169F) YESSG members were trained as trainers of trainers (ToT) in organizational capacity assessment (OCA) (Annex 20), chicken keeping (Annex 21), basics in formulation of fish feeds (Annex 22), use of monitoring tools to track livelihoods interventions (Annex 23), leadership, governance, policy and advocacy (Annex 24), biodiversity monitoring (Annex 25), basics in tour guiding & bird identification (Annex 26), papyrus product development (Annex 27), climate smart agriculture and conservation farming. The ToTs were assigned duties to build the capacity of Yala Swamp user groups in governance and ICCA management (see page 79 of Annex 24). Crop farmers, livestock keepers, fishermen, wildlife guides and other user groups who constitute YESSG form the ICCA governance structure in partnership with county and national government agencies. Using monitoring tools ToTs have been systematically collecting data on beneficiaries harvest under climate smart agriculture and conservation agriculture and submitting weekly reports to Nature Kenya field staff for collation and onward reporting and tracking (Annexes 28 and 29).

During training in leadership, governance, policy and advocacy between 16th-18th September 2020, YESSG discussed a draft advocacy strategy, identified key advocacy issues and developed action plans for engaging in county planning and decision making processes (Annex 30).

YESSG developed guidelines for community contributions towards sustainable financing of the ICCA management actions, from proceeds of livelihoods activities funded through the project (Annex 31). Through a benefit sharing strategy, 10% of all proceeds from livelihood enterprises goes to a conservation kitty to support simple but critical conservation actions including ICCA management, biodiversity monitoring, awareness and advocacy. Within the reporting period beneficiaries of livelihoods activities remitted to the conservation kitty. YESSG contributed Ksh. from the conservation kitty towards supporting advocacy activities (see budget in Annex 32)

The draft ICCA business case was finalized and harmonized with the ICCA management plan (see pages 83 of management plan and pages 7-8 of the draft business case). This is based on feasibility studies on using ecosystem services to generate income for ICCA management. It provides guidelines on sustainable financing plan with income from community enterprises, county government's budget lines and support from the private sector (see Annex 2). The ICCA business case will be presented to stakeholders to agree on the best approach to realise income.

Output 3: The Land Use Plan (LUP) for the entire delta is adopted as official policy by the governments of Busia and Siaya counties, and capacity is established within these governments to implement the plan effectively (Indicators 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5)

Briefing meetings with the County Executives and Members of County Assembly (MCAs) from the two counties are planned (Annex 33, 34). The activity has been hampered by government imposed COVID-19 containment measures that banned meetings. The MCAs have reiterated support for LUP and SEA and in Busia have wanted to hold meetings amidst COVID-19 restrictions to adopt the land use plan. We thought it wise to wait for government relaxation of restrictions and also to synchronize meetings with Siaya county. In Siaya MCAs were supportive BUT after COVID-19 containment measures were lifted, the county assembly members have been hit by a series of COVID-19 infections and asked us to wait before formal meetings that bring together many MCAs can be held. Modalities of establishing a cross-county Yala Sustainable Development Board will form part of the agenda for discussion during the planned meetings. The IMTC team will support clerks of lands committees in Siaya and Busia to prepare motions on the adoption of the LUP for tabling in the respective assemblies. Updated ICCA GIS maps were produced on land use and land cover, vulnerable areas, and human settlement in the ICCA (Annex 35-37). Ground truthing was done by YESSG.

Desktop policy analysis was conducted to inform the preparation of a roadmap for the development of a land and water register for the delta (Annex 38). Initial consultations were held with Water Resources Authority (WRA) on the land and water register (Annex 39). WRA is supportive.

Output 4: The poorest and most vulnerable people living in and around the Yala Delta are empowered to further enhance their livelihoods in ways that support the long-term conservation of the delta's natural resources (Indicators 4.2a, 4.3a, 4.4a, 4.5a, 4.6a, 4.7a, 4.8)

Feasibility studies report on establishment of a wholesale market hub for delta products and business plans were revised. Based on on-going engagement with YESSG we provided write ups/input for inclusion into the two reports (Annex 40). We are waiting for revised documents from the business consultant. The reports will be presented to stakeholders for validation. The stakeholders will agree on establishment of the market hub, bulking centres, market outlets, branding, value addition, external buyers and governance of the market hub among other things.

To roll out training of beneficiaries of Climate Smart Agriculture and Conservation farming (CSA/CA), the project established partnerships at the national level, with farmers the Climate Change Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives (CCU-MOALFC) (Annexes 42-43). Through this partnership, CCU-MOALFC prepared guidelines and training manuals on CSA/CA (Annexes 44 & 45). CCU-MOALFC in collaboration with county executives for agriculture used these tools to carry out one week hands-on training of 19 (16M 3F) County Agricultural Extension Officers (Annex 46). Each trained extension officer was required and supported to apply the acquired knowledge by training 10 beneficiary farmers on field practices in CSA/CA as Trainers of Trainers (ToT). On 5th-21st October 2020 trained

agricultural extension officers carried out hands on training of 90 (34M 56F) ToT farmers on CSA/CA (Annex 47). The ToT farmers will be supported to train 10 farmers each and as a result all the 250 project beneficiaries on CSA will be trained. 200 (131M, 69F) crop farming households made up of 1,000 (470M, 530F) people produced 4,907kg of high value vegetables & cereals under conservation agriculture. A total of 1,019kg of the produce was consumed within households and 3,888kg sold in market centres and local hotels and restaurants in Siaya. 50 (25M, 25F) crop farming households made up of 250 (118M, 132F) people produced a total of 6478kg high value horticultural crops including kales, capsicum, coriander & indigenous vegetables using climate smart agriculture techniques. A total of 1,614kg of the produce was consumed within households and 4,864kg sold in market centres and local hotels and restaurants in Siaya (Annex 48).

150 (100M, 50F) households made up of 750 (353M, 397F) people were supported to restock 17 fish ponds (Annex 49). 12 ponds were stocked with tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) and 5 ponds stocked with catfish (*Clarias gariepinus*). 10 (all male) fish farmers received hands on training from the County Fisheries Department & Belvis Hatchery on basics in formulation of fish feeds. The hands on demonstration training covered identification of commonly used locally available & quality ingredients for formulating fish feed, mixing ratios, pelletizing (production of floating pellets), proper storage of ingredients and feeds, and record keeping. 5 ponds have already yielded 1,322 kilos of fish. 66 kilos were eaten by beneficiary households while 1,256 kilos were sold to local hotels and fish mongers at Usenge fish market (see Annex 48).

100 (53M, 47F) households made up of 500 people (235M, 265F) were supported to set up three apiaries with a total of 100 beehives. Within the reporting period, 15 beehives yielded 54.8 litres of honey. 24 litres were consumed by beneficiary households while the remaining 30.8 litres were sold within Siaya and Busia counties (See Annex 50).

Within the reporting period, a total of 150 chicken (two & a half months old) were distributed to 8 beneficiary farmers to improve local breeds (See Annex 48). Procurement of the next batch of 400 chicken is on course as per an agreed Chicken business Production Strategy (Annex51). The beneficiary farmers intend to bulk and sale chicken at 4 months to an identified wholesale supplier in Yala town (North Gem Project).

11(7M, 4F) weavers were trained as ToTs in smooth edge finishing, cushion fixing, glass fitting. (see Annex 27). Within the reporting period, benefiting households sold 442 assorted high value papyrus and palm frond products at a market centre-Mubwayo, in Busia, and Nature Kenya offices in Siaya and Nairobi. Weavers have been supported to set up a papyrus products bulking center and market outlet in Siaya Town at the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Office. Construction of the unit is complete pending KFS approvals.

38 (27M, 11F) wildlife guides were trained in basics of tour guiding and bird identification by professional guides from Nature Kenya (see Annex 26). 5 out of the 30 guides earned a combined income from guiding 30 tourists visiting the Yala Swamp and lower River Yala.

Monitoring tools to collect data on quantities on crop farming, chicken keeping, beekeeping, fish farming, feeds production, papyrus product development and tour guiding were developed (Annexes 52-59). 53 (28M 25F) YESSG members were trained in the use of the IGA monitoring tools. The ToT monitors use the tools to track progress in production, consumption, sales, remittance to conservation kitty etc and share reports on weekly & monthly basis. The tools also capture information on challenges encountered for follow up and appropriate remedial actions (see Annex 28).

Output 5: Application of lessons learned from the project at other large wetland sites in Kenya and beyond is encouraged through communication actions reaching all key stakeholders (Indicators 5.1,5.2, 5.4, 5.5)

The Project Implementation Committee (PIC) was formed comprising 34 members from local communities (YESSG, Water Resource Users Associations (WRUA) and Beach Management Units (BMU)); County Executives from Siaya & Busia; National government agencies including the Ministry of Interior & Coordination of National Government; Research/Institutions of higher learning; the Private sector and civil society organizations. On 8th October 2020, the PIC held the inaugural meeting (Annex 60). During the meeting, Terms of Reference for the PIC were adopted. Project outcome and outputs were presented to the PIC members (Annex 61). The

Year 2 project work plan was provisionally adopted subject to incorporation of comments by PIC members by 31st October 2020.

2 articles about the project have been published in the Nature Kenya monthly newsletter (annexes 62 and 63) <http://naturekenya.org/2020/04/29/bulking-centre-set-to-revolutionise-papyrus-product-business-in-yala/>), 2 articles were published in the Darwin Newsletter (annexes 64 and 65). Two articles were published in Kenya Birding Magazine which is annually disseminated in the UK Bird Fair but was disseminated online this year due to COVID-19 travel restrictions (annex 66).

Between 5th-6th June 2020, YESSG members conducted birding in 8 villages (i.e. Ndhaha, Kilo, Rawalo, Misori, Urima, Bulemia, Siginga) to mark the World Environment Day event. A total of 33 people (27 men, 6 women) participated. A team of YESSG, YPAC, and Nature Kenya staff used a local vernacular radio channel, Bulala FM, in Budalang'i, Busia County to broadcast key messages to mark global events such as the World Environment Day (7th June 2020), World Migratory Bird Day (9th May 2020), and World Nature Day (26th July 2020).

In August 2020, YESSG, YPAC, and Nature Kenya staff were featured on national KTN News TV rallying support for the Yala swamp SEA/LUP and ICCA model (see the link provided <https://youtu.be/Wr77SAONe84>)

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.

Excessive floods including areas that have never experienced floods and the back flow of L. Victoria eroded gains made in livelihood investments especially in fish farming, crop farming & beekeeping (submerged ponds, crop farms & hives).

YESSG partnership with Bulala FM in awareness creation has generated publicity of the Yala SEA/LUP, ICCA model among community members who are now eager for the adoption of the LUP and implementation of the ICCA model

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.

Delivery of site actions that required meetings was a major challenge. However, Nature Kenya developed a protocol to provide guidelines for holding meetings while protecting staff, beneficiaries and partners from COVID-19. The protocol includes use of meeting venues with hand washing facilities, sanitizing and fumigation of all contact services, provision of hand sanitizers, initially (July-August) limiting meetings to 15 people and limiting meeting time to 1 hour. Others are provision of masks which must be worn throughout the duration of the meeting and social distancing (Annex 67). Applying the protocol County Extension Officers trained 92 (43M, 49F) chicken farmers, fish farmers and community monitors in data collection for livelihood enterprises. From August - September the Kenya government has further relaxed restrictions associated with curbing the spread of COVID-19. It is now possible to hold larger and longer meetings BUT Nature Kenya continues to apply all the other measures on a precautionary basis.

The community conservation champions-YESSG maximized habitat restoration activities with support from Nature Kenya. This is because we deliver habitat restoration through a model where YESSG plant trees and papyrus at the village level. Between March and July 2020 alone, farmers established own farm woodlots with 30,430 exotic tree seedlings; planted over 34,972 indigenous tree seedlings within the River Yala riparian zone and rehabilitated 41ha of degraded areas within Yala Swamp through papyrus planting. This contributed to achievement of over 80% of planting targets for the year

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?

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.

In the feedback to AR1 the project was asked to provide brief details of measures the project is taking in relation to health and safety of project staff and beneficiaries in relation to COVID-19. See comment in Section 14 of this report. This is attached as Annex 67.

The project was also advised to discuss with Darwin Review of the logframe in light of the comments received at funding. In response we discussed with LTS and on 17th June 2020 submitted a change request on the logframe indicators (Annex 68). We received feedback on further changes which we are in the final stages of finalizing to submit to LTS by 30th November 2020.

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**