

**Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report
(due 31 October 2010)**

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| Project Ref No | EIDPO033 |
| Project Title | Integrating local communities and science: management of La Amistad (Costa Rica-Panama) |
| Country(ies) | Costa Rica, Panama |
| UK Organisation | Natural History Museum, London |
| Collaborator(s) | Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad de Costa Rica (INBio), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Bribri Community (Costa Rica), Bribri Community (Panama), Cabecar Community (Costa Rica), Kekoldi Community (Costa Rica), Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR), Autoridad Nacional del Ambiente de Panamá (ANAM), Sistemacional de áreas de conservación de Costa Rica (SINAC), Universidad Autónoma de Chiriquí (UNACHI) New collaborators: Asociación ANAI (not an acronym), Ministerio de Trabajo y seguridad social de Costa Rica (MTSS). |
| Project Leader | Alex Monro |
| Report date | 1 st may 2010 to 31 st october 2010 |
| Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4) | HYR1 |
| Project website | http://www.inbio.ac.cr/pila-darwin/paginas/post/post.html |

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

Project progress

New partners to the project.

ANAI: this is a local organisation that has played a significant role in the conservation of the La Amistad Biosphere reserve and are already known to ADITIBRI. In particular it has contributed to environmental impact assessments for the areas outside and inside of the Park that have been or are being developed as hydroelectric projects. Their speciality is in monitoring aquatic biodiversity, river ecosystem services and water quality. The project has reached an agreement with ANAI that they will train the indigenous participants of this project in these skills.

ANAI website: www.anaicr.org

Ministry of Employment and Social Security (Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, **MTSS**): as a result of negotiations undertaken by INBio, MTSS are providing economic support to the training course participants as an incentive to support the development of alternative sources of employment in the area (Talamanca).

Progress in carrying out project activities

Activity 1.1: Assessment of the main threats to PILA undertaken in consultation with local communities, park authorities, national governments and NGO's

Indicator 3: Local community awareness of the biodiversity value of PILA and its buffer zone assessed through workshops at the beginning and end of the project.

How threats are being identified

Threats are being identified through workshops with indigenous groups, indigenous group own assessments of risks, consultation with TNC, ANAM and SINAC together with field observations and the analysis of remote sensed data. To date we have undertaken consultations with indigenous communities, TNC, ANAM and SINAC. Consultation with indigenous groups began with the first post project workshop between INBio, TNC and the indigenous organizations ADITIBRI and ASOGUADABRI was conducted on November 26 and 27, 2009. Using images from 1986 2001 and 2007, we are analysing changes in vegetation cover of the Park's buffer zone. The aim is to identify localities where there has been significant change in cover and to corroborate this with current assessments on the ground.

Threats identified

Bribris and Cabecares jointly proposed a management plan for the indigenous territories in Talamanca which includes PILA and its Caribbean buffer zone. This proposal included a comprehensive list of threats: agricultural encroachment; the presence of non-indigenous people practicing unsustainable agriculture; the lack of coordination between development projects in the area; the constant pressure on the Park's natural resources by external and international agents; the lack of participation of local communities in the management of PILA; the lack of an integrated strategy for the protection of PILA; the deterioration of the standard of living of indigenous communities; and little coordination of binational actions for the protection and development of local communities and PILA. At the project workshop ADITIBRI and ASOGUADABRI identified hunting, deforestation for timber and mining as the main risks to PILA and its buffer zone. Mining has also been identified as a risk by TNC. ANAM identified hunting and deforestation together with the absence of sustainable economic development for agriculture as risks.

An innovative technique developed by INBio on a previous project and used in the training programme is the use of

participant generated descriptive maps of the main threats to natural resources in the indigenous territories bordering the park, and the location of these threats (Fig.1 below).

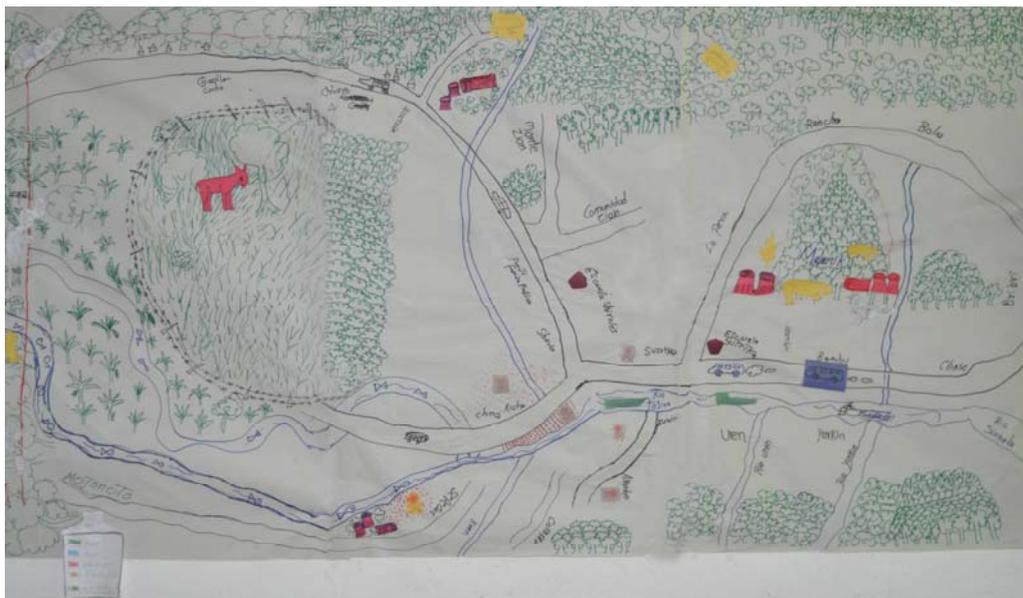


Fig. 1. descriptive map of the main threats to natural resources in the indigenous territories bordering the park, and the location of these threats

The generation of these maps provides an indication of the extent to which the indigenous peoples are conscious of the threats to their natural resources. We are planning to use some of these maps as part of an awareness raising exercise to indigenous communities not included in this project and to communities not located adjacent to the Park.

Activity 1.2: Assessment of the integrity of the buffer zone and border of PILA based on patrols and remote sensed satellite data

Indicator 1: Change to buffer zone vegetation cover and PILA border based on a comparison of a ground survey and remote sensing to the baseline produced by the main project

Methodology

Changes in land use will be measured using a synthesis of remote sensed data, grey-literature review for PILA and fieldwork. Activities are divided into three phases.

- Phase 1: the selection of the optimal remote sensed data.
- Phase 2: processing of remote sensed data to highlight pasture and deforested land cover.
- Phase 3: undertake supervised classification of remote sensed data integrating.

Phases 1 and 2 have been completed and we are proposing for phase 3 ground truthing patrols are undertaken to key localities in the Park's buffer zone. This is a change to the original proposal whereby the whole buffer zone would be patrolled but given the existence of remote sensed data from 2007 it makes sense to focus patrols on known areas of impact. Patrols will be jointly undertaken by INBio, ANAM, ADITIBRI and in some instances the NHM. Patrols will also be used to address not only this project's aims but also some objectives identified by ADITIBRI. Specifically to follow up on areas of impact identified from overflights by the community, including illegal mining activities and marijuana plantations. This will also support some of the aims of Costa Rica's Ministry of Public Security. Distinguishing these impact on the ground will help refine the interpretation of existing remote sensed data.

Activity 1.3: Establish an action plan to mitigate the threats identified through actions 1.1 and 1.2 and as part of the main project

Indicator 1: Change to buffer zone vegetation cover and PILA border based on a comparison of a ground survey and remote sensing to the baseline produced by the main project

In order to cater for further consultation with the local indigenous governments we will need to extend the deadline for this activity to December 2010. The Binational Commission for PILA has also requested that INBio provide technical advice to the Commission in the form of Nelson Zamora. Nelson is part of this project team and also Costa Rica's focal point for the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. This is strategically important with respect to the development of the action plan.

Activity 2.1: Training courses in providing guide services and participatory biodiversity inventories (leading to national accreditation).

Indicator 2: Training course provision will be assessed by the course coordinator and the participants themselves following each course, course quality will be ensured by the national accrediting authority.

The ten training courses (to date) have been very well received by the participating communities, the participants and the indigenous governments. Currently 22 of the 24 participants inscribed on the course in March 2010 remain on the course. These courses (Table 1) are supervised, evaluated and accredited by INBio, certificada para impartir la capacitación.

ADITIBRI and ADITICA are working to disseminate updates and information about the course and its objectives at a local level through meetings and community assemblies. One of the most important advances is that students are forming their own association of rural tourist guides with the support and recognition of their indigenous governments. This organisation is in the process of obtaining legal accreditation and has already developed a management structure and it will serve to represent tour guides in these territories. This is an important step towards the project's legacy strategy and has also facilitated the recognition of shared values and aims in relation to the value of biodiversity and the benefits of its conservation. As importantly it provides a way of preserving local culture and ethnic status amongst the clans that comprise these groups. Prior to the course many of the participants knew little about their traditional culture or ethnic status (see previous annual report).

Activity 3.1: Public awareness and dissemination activities to raise awareness within the local communities of the national, regional and global biodiversity value of PILA and their buffer zone

Indicator 3: Local community awareness of the biodiversity value of PILA and its buffer zone assessed through workshops at the beginning and end of the project.

With the help of the course participants we have identified elements and themes that are key to the conservation of the biodiversity of PILA and that can be used to inform public awareness in the local communities surrounding PILA and local schools. We have also developed and updated the web site to reflect the Post Project and its outputs.

Additional developments / outputs: One of the significant successes for the project team has been the high retention rate of the course participants. A great disincentive for the course is the fact that these communities have few economic resources and 3 or 4 days a week participating on a course can be a great challenge. The project team therefore contacted Costa Rica's Ministry of Employment and Social Security who agreed to pay course participants a monthly allowance of \$200. In this reporting period the Ministry of Employment have paid \$22,000 to the participants. On July 30 the Minister for Employment and Social Services visited the training course and met with the project team and participants.

Monitoring, evaluation and lessons

An important lesson learned has been the necessity to understand what are the mechanisms underpinning political action within and between the indigenous communities and what are the cultural factors which influence these.

Actions taken in response to previous reviews

- The web page has been updated with current Post Project outputs.
- We have strengthened channels of communication between project partners. In addition we have developed new project partners.
- As a consequence of delays in activities 1.3 and 3.1 we have updated the project chronogram to ensure that we are still able to meet our commitments for this year of the project.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Employment and Social Services we have developed a strategy for the retention of course participants.
- We are taking advantage of the strategic role of INBio in the Binational Commission to develop our plan for the mitigation of threats to PILA.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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 Nature Conservancy was forced to withdraw its participation and funds to the project as a result of a collapse in their funding and subsequent restructuring. This has been mitigated by funding from a contractor to the Ministry of Agriculture. As a result we have revised the course chronogram and should be able to finish the course within the current financial year.
- Our collaborative field work plan with ADITIBRI and ADITICA was disrupted by the broadcasting of an ill informed and badly intentioned documentary produced by students from the University of Costa Rica. The documentary claimed that the Post Project was dedicated to bio prospecting and the robbing of the communities of their intellectual property. Through INBio we made a robust complaint to the Rector of the University which was upheld an apology was issued. The broadcast did however create significant confusion within the indigenous communities and this confusion and ensuing discussion made it difficult for ADITIBRI and ADITICA to make any decisions or take any actions with us. This meant that we are implementing the field programme later than planned but had the 'benefit' of strengthening our collaboration with our partners as we were forced into a shared defensive position.

Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

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| Discussed with LTS: | no, in..... (month/yr) |
| Formal change request submitted: | no, in.....(month/yr) |
| Received confirmation of change acceptance | no/yes in.....(month/yr) |

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?
 No X

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.
 Estimated carryforward request: £

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

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 or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**