

# Darwin Initiative

## Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

**PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports but will contact you individually should any questions arise**

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	14013
<b>Project Title</b>	Community Management of NTFPs in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area, Nepal
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Nepal
<b>UK Organisation</b>	WWF UK
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	WWF Nepal Program
<b>Report date</b>	January 2006
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	1
<b>Project website</b>	

**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 initiation had been planned with a project inception workshop in August 2005 to be followed by capacity building and research activities in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) in October 2005. However project initiation was delayed until October 2005 due to the overall unfavourable security situation in the country, especially in the project site, which forestalled travel to the field by national researchers. After a unilateral ceasefire was declared by the Maoist insurgents in September 2005, the security situation in the field improved considerably and activities were started in the field in October 2005.

A) The following activities have taken place between October and December 2005.

*1. Participation of KCA community institutions and NGO at a national NTFP trade fair (Linked sensitization training for collectors, traders/other stakeholders)*

Given that one of the key areas of focus of the project is to promote sustainable commercialization of key species for improving local livelihoods in KCA, as part of the capacity building and sensitization training in enterprise development, four local representatives from Kangchenjunga Conservation Area participated in a “National Trade Show and Seminar on Herbs, Herbal Products and Spices” held in Nepalgunj on November 12-14, 2005. The trade show brought together producers, collectors, exporters and policy makers in one forum for profitable and equitable commercialization of NTFPs. The participation of the representatives from KCA is expected to enable the development of sustainable market linkages for NTFPs in KCA. Marketing linkages need to be developed and market information made available locally. Community-based NTFP nurseries and enterprises should also be developed in KCA. Furthermore, the group highlighted the importance of community biodiversity registration of endemic plants for conservation and benefit sharing.

*2. Participatory planning and field inception workshop in the field*

A participatory planning and field inception workshop was conducted on December 13, 2005 in Taplejung, the district headquarters, with 42 participants representing key stakeholders from Kangchenjunga Conservation Area, such as the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Council and its affiliated institutions, including the User Committees, Mothers’ Groups, User Groups, project staff, district level line agencies such as the Cottage and Small Industry Development Board, Federation

for Nepalese Chambers of Commerce, and local journalists. The objectives and expected outputs of the project funded by Darwin Initiative were highlighted and feedback was received on further planning for implementation during the insecure field operating environment.

A preliminary prioritization of the key traded species was conducted for designing more in-depth research, monitoring and management prescriptions. Eighteen commercially viable NTFPs identified by the participants were narrowed down to the seven most important ones. Thereafter, the distribution pattern of the seven important NTFPs was mapped through a participatory approach. The participants then ranked the seven identified NTFPs according to their economic, social and geographical importance. The species with a potential for commercialization were identified for each area of the four sectors of KCA. This provides a basis for further planning and developing the community-based NTFP enterprises.

### *3. Presentation of commercially important NTFPs of KCA at the Society of Conservation Biology-Asia Section Meeting, Kathmandu*

A presentation was made by WWF Nepal Program staff on the commercially important NTFPs of Kangchenjunga Conservation Area at the First Asia Section Meeting of the Society of Conservation Biology. The talk was based on previous research conducted in KCA by WWF Nepal Program which provides a basis for developing community-based management of NTFPs.

B) The following activities are planned up to March 2006:

#### *1. Participatory research for ecological monitoring, NTFP inventory and sensitization training*

Young researchers have been recruited by WWF Nepal Program to develop the community-based monitoring system of NTFPs. They will be working with the local communities in identifying the sites for establishing plots for long term monitoring and developing community indicators for monitoring. NTFP inventories will be conducted for developing action plans. Along with enterprise development specialists, feasibility of community-based NTFP enterprises will be assessed. Sensitization training for local harvesters, traders and other members of the community will be conducted.

#### *2. Feasibility for enterprise development and related training*

Enterprise development specialists will be working with the local communities in identifying and prioritizing community-based NTFP enterprises. Related to this activity, they will also be providing enterprise development training to the community institutions during January- March 2006.

#### *3. National inception workshop and site level meetings*

A national level project inception workshop will be held in early February 2006 with experts and relevant local and national NGOs, government departments, representatives of KCA institutions and project staff. The workshop will highlight the key objectives and expected outputs of the project, share preliminary field activities, and discuss ways to effectively implement the project. Site level meetings will be held in the field for further planning and implementation.

#### *4. Capacity building*

Exchange visits will be organized for community members to visit successful projects and learn from their experiences.

#### *5. Project publications and media articles*

Technical reports and media articles covering the first year of project implementation will be produced and disseminated to a wider audience.

#### *6. Planning and monitoring*

Based on the ongoing work in KCA, project staff will make field visits for reviewing and planning for the next fiscal year.

**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 Maoist insurgency that has been ongoing in Nepal has escalated in the rural districts affecting the smooth implementation of conservation and development initiatives, especially in remote areas such as Kangchenjunga Conservation Area. The initiation of project activities was delayed as researchers were unable to make field visits due to the difficult security situation. At the same time considerable efforts were devoted by field staff towards mobilizing the community institutions in KCA, district level human rights groups, local journalists and district level NGOs to create a favourable working environment in the field. Efforts were also made to develop a conflict-sensitive implementation modality. Although on January 2, 2006, the Maoists called off their four-month long unilateral ceasefire, WWF staff and their partners in the field are confident that field activities implemented directly by and for the communities will not be hampered. This is especially after numerous exercises done in the field to not only improve the working environment but also the implementation modalities.

The delay in initiating the project will not affect the overall progress of the project as most of the activities planned for this year are expected to be carried out as planned by March 2006. However, in terms of expenditure, it is expected that the remuneration of the researchers and enterprise development consultants will not have been disbursed by the end of March 2006. Similarly the budget planned for publications will be carried forward beyond March 2006.

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

A forecast of expenditure up to March 2006 will be forwarded to the Darwin Secretariat in February 2006.

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:** no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:** no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

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

Jennifer Headley, WWF UK Regional Coordinator for Himalayas/South Asia has now assumed management responsibility for this project from Susanne Schmitt, who is currently on maternity leave. Jennifer is based in Kathmandu, and shares an office with WWF Nepal Program. She can be contacted by email at [jennifer.headley@wwfnepal.org](mailto:jennifer.headley@wwfnepal.org).

**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 the Darwin Secretariat directly.**

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, [stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk](mailto:stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk). The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**