## **Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report**

(due 31 October 2010)

**Project Ref No** 17-014

**Project Title Development of a Cross-Sectoral Environmental Governance** 

**Platform for the Nimba Mountains** 

Country(ies) Liberia: Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire

**UK Organisation** Fauna & Flora International Collaborator(s) Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew

Conservation International, Centre for Environmental Leadership in

**Business (CELB)** 

Conservation International (CI) - Liberia

Arcelor Mittal, Liberia

The Forest Development Authority (FDA), Liberia Société des Mines de Fer de Guinée (SMFG), Guinea

Government of Guinea – Environmental Management Authority

for Nimba and Simandou

Centre de Gestion de l'Environnement des Monts Nimba et Simandou -

(CEGENS)

Union des Volontaires pour le Développement Intégré de Zontomppiézo.

Guinea UVODIZ

Aide Universelle pour le Développement de la Nouvelle Génération,

Guinea AUDNG

The Environmental Protection Agency, Liberia (EPA) Society for the Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL)

The National Environmental Agency, Cote d'Ivoire

OIPR, Cote D'Ivoire

**Project Leader** Pippa Howard

Report date 31 October 2010

Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

HYR2

**Project website** http://www.nimbadarwin.org/

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).

1.4, 2.1 Strategic partnerships have been established and strengthened between the project and other key practitioners in the area. In particular, effective working relationships have been established with the Manu River Union (MRU) and STEWARD (Sustainable Thriving Environments for West African Resource Development; a program supported by the US Forestry and Wildlife Service). The MRU is seen as key to the development of a Cross-Sectoral Environmental Governance Platform for the Nimba Mountains because it is an established international association (named for the Mano River which begins in the Guinea highlands and forms a border between Liberia and Sierra Leone). The Agreement dates from 1973 and was reactivated in 2004 following a hiatus due to conflicts and civil war in the region. The purpose of the union is to foster economic cooperation between Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. However it also has an environmental component and could provide a relatively permanent framework for strengthening of sub-regional environmental governance, in cases where the countries in the union share a significant environmental resource, as in the case of the Nimba Mountains. The goal is for the Darwin Project to be recognised as an implementing "vehicle" for the MRU's environmental workplan as it applies to Nimba.

During this reporting period the Darwin project pursued organisation and facilitation of a stakeholder workshop entitled 'Trans-boundary Harmonization for Biodiversity Conservation: Policy and Management', jointly with MRU and STEWARD. This workshop is scheduled to be held in Sanniquellie, Liberian Nimba in October 2010 and to include a field visit into Guinean Nimba. The workshop has the goal of formerly proposing a TCSEGP for Nimba, taking into account the relevant laws and requirements of the countries involved, and creating an MoU between the 3 governments agreeing to the creation of the TCSEGP. It differs from previous workshops convened by the project in its involvement of community representatives and stakeholders local to the Nimba region.

A further meeting is planned in January in Cote D'Ivoire to seek formal agreement and to commence the development of a Collaborative Management Strategy. This is intended to contribute towards revision of relevant World Heritage Site Management Plans (which are out of date) whilst also meeting the wider needs of the Darwin Project.

- 1.2 and 2.2 The Darwin project officer for Guinea and Cote D'ivoire, Gondo Gbanyangbe, undertook a series of successful field visits to Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire to meet with project partners and to open lines of communication (see project website for report). Successful meetings were held in Cote d'Ivoire with rebel groups which are active in the Nimba area and have a considerable influence over local politics and land use. Stakeholders in Ivorian government institutions and other stakeholders are now "on board" so that it should be possible to initiate the process of capacity building towards EIA and SEA and involve appropriate stakeholders in Liberia, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. During this period the stakeholder mapping exercise was therefore completed and the report made available on the project website. This reports details the results and recommendations for future engagement. Issues of boundary demarcation, challenges of achieving sustainable management with community involvement, and consensus about conservation management in a tight timeframe were all identified. Local capacity building efforts in Liberia, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire formed the basis for inviting relevant stakeholders to the workshop outlined above, to ensure wide representation of relevant institutions and also communities. The Darwin Project Officers in Liberia have built links with local authorities and communities based in Nimba to ensure their participation and raise their awareness of management challenges and objectives relating to biodiversity and the implications of biodiversity loss for provision of ecosystem services.
- 3.3 Strategic meetings have been held with companies interested in resource extraction from the Nimba Mountains, notably ArcelorMittal, BHP Billiton and SMFG. The project has registered its interest in independent review of the EIA's being undertaking by these mining corporations and assisting the regulatory authorities in the development of required capacity to undertake their own reviews. ArcelorMittal have agreed to continue to provide their EIA survey data as a contribution towards the development of the Nimba Atlas. The project continues to seek equivalent data from Cote D'Ivoire and Guinea.
- 4.1 The project contributed a review of EIA and other laws relevant to nature protection and biodiversity in Nimba to a wider review (at national level) carried out by the Mano River Union with support from the US Forestry Service. This review was scheduled to be tabled at the October workshop and will contribute towards harmonisation of protection mechanisms for biodiversity.
- 5.1 Linked to the stakeholder mapping exercise (1.1) and ongoing consultation process (1.2) work has been carried out with communities, CBOs and local NGOs to participate during the consultation this is being supported by business ESIA results and sharing of findings in the Nimba. Information will be added to the Nimba Atlas
- 6. The project's communications strategy has been further development and strengthened. The project website is now active and presents an overview of the project together with a variety of outputs that are downloadable (e.g. reports & maps). It is updated regularly and is a crucial element of the communication strategy between the project partners. The project contributed

to the Development Report published annually by the Humanitarian Centre in Cambridge. Contributions have also been made to newsletters which are relevant to the Nimba Region, including a recent one launched by STEWARD. Regular management meetings continue to be held in Monrovia, Liberia, convened by FFI in partnership with CI.

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 development of the Nimba Atlas is largely dependent on the mining corporations agreeing to the release their EIA survey and other relevant data. ArcelorMittal have continued to collaborate in this regard, but BHP Billiton and SMFG have remained unable to secure consent for release of data which they see as potentially commercially sensitive. This has resulted in an Atlas composed of data mainly from Liberia to date. In order for the Atlas to progress further data are required from Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire. Efforts will continue in these countries to secure data through other strategic partnerships if possible, for example through the auspices of CEGENS, but the success of this cannot be guaranteed. Delays in finalising the atlas are also affecting ability to proceed with the planned approach to strategic assessment. A further meeting is being planned in January 2011 to develop alternative approaches with key partners.

The political situation in Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire seems to be stabilising a littel since the last report and the project is effectively communicating with counterparts in these countries.

Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?			
Not to my knowledge.			
Discussed with LTS: no/yes, in (month/yr)			
Formal change request submitted: no/yes, in(month/yr)			
Received confirmation of change acceptance no/yes in(month/yr)			

budget for this year?				
Yes		No	$\boxtimes$	
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?

The role of Project Coordinator is now to be shared between Julian Bayliss and Jo Treweek due to the constraints of other commitments.

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 <u>planned</u> modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should <u>not</u> be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International directly.

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