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

(due 31 October 2011)

Project Ref No	18-010
Project Title	Tools for the sustainable harvest or Maya Nut (Mesoamerica)
Country(ies)	México, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras
UK Organisation	The Natural History Museum, London
Collaborator(s)	Maya Nut Institute
Project Leader	Alex Monro
Report date	31/10/2011
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	2
Project website	

## 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).

1.1 Course content and structure planned in consultation with partners

Completed.

1.2 Course materials produced

Completed but requiring further adaptations.

#### 1.3 Trial course implemented, materials & contents tested/ improved if necessary

The first course was used as a test of the course materials. The result is that a number of modifications were made to adapt the materials to rural women. This was especially the case with respect to data collection (see point 4 below).

1.4 120 Mesoamericans from 20 village forest committees trained in field data gathering for calculation of sustainable Mayanut seed harvest levels and the biodiversity associated with Mayanut forests

Training is ongoing. To date 42 women from 5 communities have been trained.

1.5 30 Mesoamericans from 20 village forest committees trained in technical aspects of forest management: logical basis and basic interpretation of the gathered data as tools for sustainable Mayanut seed harvest levels

Training is ongoing. To date 42 women from 5 communities have been trained.

1.6 30 Mesoamericans from 10 village forest committees trained in marketing and accounting

Training is ongoing. To date 30 women from 10 communities have been trained.

1.7 Basic forest inventories of major faunal groups associated to absence/presence of Mayanut trees undertaken.

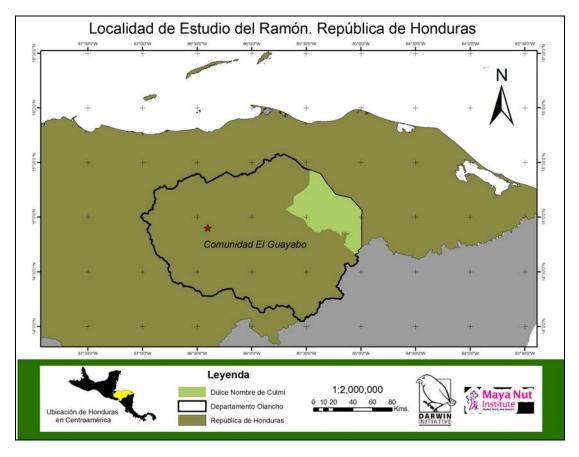
The original planned methodology for Sampling of the fauna associated with the Maya nut forests was not feasible. We are currently developing a survey tool to obtain this information

from hunters in participating communities. We will have the faunal association information by the next report cycle.

1.9 Field data compiled in each country and analyzed for calculation of sustainable Mayanut seed harvest levels by partners

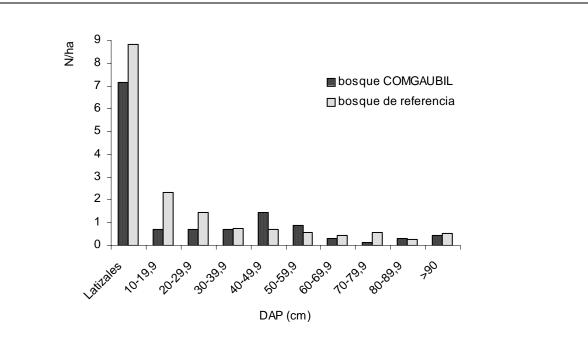
To date five sites have been surveyed:

#### El Guayabo, Honduras:



The methodology was developed in collaboration with the German development consultancy, PRORENA with women from the cooperative's Guayabo Man and the Biosphere Reserve of Rio Platano.

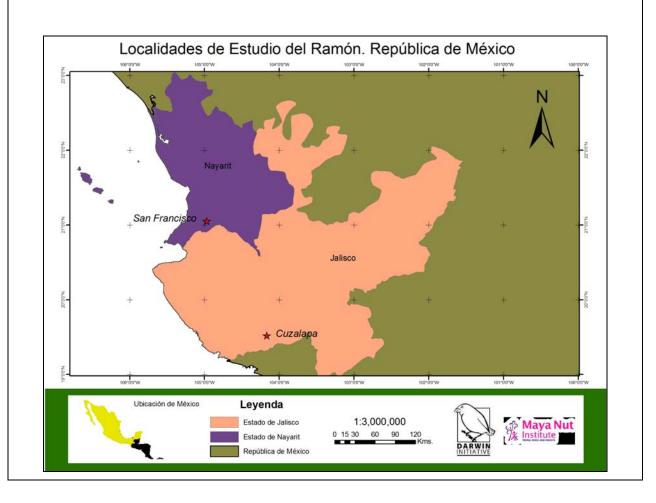
The COMGUABIL group has a management plan for timber harvesting and so had already compiled data on Maya Nut tree distribution and size classes. , therefore it was necessary to make an inventory, but we used the existing database. This database was constructed a comparative graph structure tree diameter maya nut in disturbed forest (with timber harvesting) and undisturbed forest (no extractive activity), and as a result we obtained the following chart which compares the actively logged forest (bosque COMGAUBIL) with a reference forest where no extraction takes place.

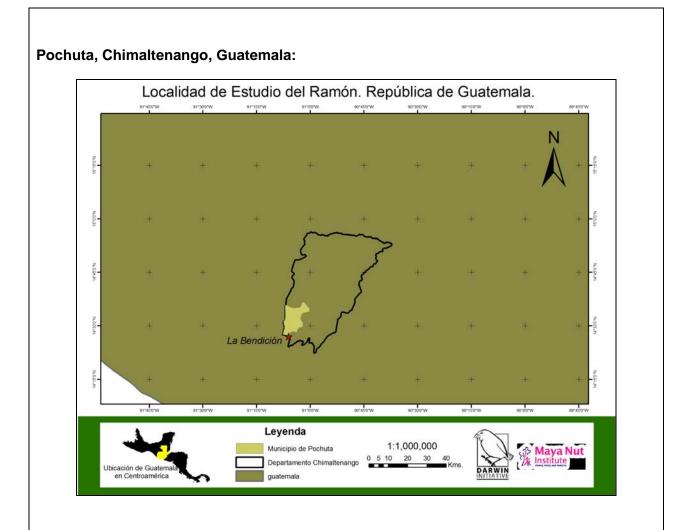


Abundance data by size-class for Maya Nut in the COMGUABIL cooperative of El Guayabo contrasted with a referente, non-logged referance forest.

#### Cuzalapa, Jalisco, y San Francisco, Nayarit, Mexico:

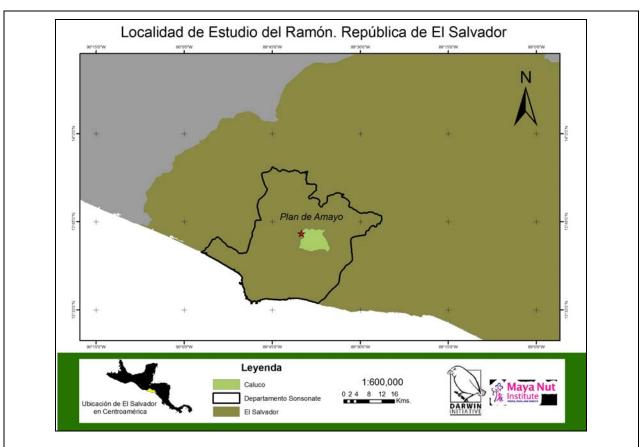
Both sites are still in process of collecting data. For these two groups the implementation of the methodology was challenging. this provides us with valuable input to further adapt and simplify the methodology.





The first training course was held with the Committee for the Development of Rural Women CODEMUR. The field data sampling was impossible for a variety of reasons and the field methodology not implemented. This group is comprised of 16 members of the agricultural estate of La Benedicion which includes Maya Nut trees in cultivated land, agroforest and natural forest. Traps were established to assess seed production. Unfortunately these were stolen or used by other community members, so only data on tree height and diameter was obtained.

#### Plan de Amayo, Sonsonate, El Salvador:



The implementation of the field methodology was carried out in August and September 2011 and participants are still compiling the data obtained in the field. For this reason we do not yet have this information.

In summary the methodology developed and training has not yielded the desired results or data. This data is important to assess the effectiveness of the project and to establish sustainable harvest guidelines. The problem lies with the methodology developed which is too complicated for rural women to apply. We will therefore need to develop a more simple methodology that women groups are more easily able to understand and apply. Currently we are developing a three-step methodology that women can collect more easily and which can be integrated by the project team. These methods have been designed so that they can be adjusted to meet the experiences and abilities of the communities concerned.

2.1 Draft position agreements for 20 local forest areas by year 2, revised by year 3

Not yet begun.

3.2 Undertake molecular analysis of Mayanut genetic diversity.

In July 2011 we interviewed for the post of laboratory technician / research assistant for this aspect of the project. We were very pleased to appoint Tonya Lander, a Post Doc at INRA Avignon in France. She was only able to begin in January 2011 and the project schedule and budget was adjusted accordingly (with DI agreement). We have already collected over <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of the molecular samples needed and the remainder will be obtained between November 2011 and April 2012. We have also managed to reach an agreement with the Ken Oyama of the Mexican research institute UNAM Ecologia whereby they share the molecular tools necessary for assessing population variation in Maya Nut (microsatellites). This aspect of the project seems, therefore to be on track.

4 Monitoring survey of harvest levels, income, biodiversity undertaken at project inception and end.

Based on the preliminary results and feedback from the producers on the methodology, we made considerable adjustments to the field methodology, simplifying it considerably and removing some of the more complicated data collection techniques. The validity of the new methodology has been approved by a leading expert in participatory methodology from the New York Botanic Garden, Dr. Charles Peters. We will be testing the new methodology in November, 2011 in Nicaragua and Honduras.

EX-SITU CONSERVATION: We have begun to develop protocols for the establishment of the ExSitu conservation plots in Honduras, Florida and Guatemala. We expect to distribute the first concessions from Nicaragua and México in November 2011.

# 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.

Because of poor Project coordination by Cecilia Sanchez (previous project coordinator) the application of the methodology in four of the five sites began late and was done inconsistently. Cecilia was replaced by Anaite Lopez in June (with DI approval). This, however directly affected data collection for 2011. There is therefore no accurate data for harvest levels for 2011.

Because we are pioneering the development of this methodology and are committed to working with rural women on this project, we are experiencing difficulties that we had not expected. Our orginal methodology for forest inventories was extrapolated from existing forest inventory methodology and that turned out to be much too complicated for the rural women to implement or understand. This has created a setback, while we return to the drawing table and to meet with producers to develop brand new methods which make sense to them and are methods they can easily understand and implement in the field.

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

NO

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)

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes 🗌 No

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?

Because of delays and inconsistencies with the development of the initial field methodology we do not have consistent information yet for all field sites. This however is in the process of being rectified and we have agreed to use a simplified methodology and to adapt the calculation of a number of parameters to meet local conditions. There were also some communication issues between different countries but these have been resolved by Anaité.

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</u> <u>of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report</u>