

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2013)

Project Ref No	19-004
Project Title	Building Capacity of the Next Generation of Liberian Conservation Professionals
Country(ies)	Liberia
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
Collaborator(s)	University of Liberia, Forestry Development Authority, Forestry Training Institute and Zoological Society of London, University of Cambridge
Project Leader	Dr Chloe Hodgkinson
Report date	April to September 2013
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	www.liberianfaunaflora.org

Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project

Output 1. Activities for Q1 and Q2:

1.2 Devise and develop 6 academic modules and embed into curriculums of UL and FTI

- Seven modules created for FTI has now been integrated into the curriculum of the Forest Ranger programme in a combined Community Forestry and Conservation course titled 'Community level Forest Conservation'.

1.3 Train a minimum of 6 lecturers in module implementation

- 13 lecturers received training during a three-day workshop on 'Effective Communication' in 17 – 19 April 2013.
- During a two-day workshop from 19 - 20 September 2013, 11 lecturers received training in Conservation Biology: Ecological Sampling for Conservation'

Output 2. Activities for Q1 and Q2

2.1. Steering Committee formed and operational

- Two steering committee meetings were held during this period on 07 June and 02 October 2013

2.3 Construct and equip research centre and campsite

- Research Centre now completed and fully operational - renamed Sapo Conservation Centre (SCC).
- Opening ceremony was held on 08 June 2013.
- A caretaker and gardener have been recruited.

2.4 Conduct field courses in field research methods and conservation issues

- First field course on 'Introduction to Ecological Surveys' was hosted at SCC from 01 - 06 June 2013 and six lecturers from the University of Liberia, Forestry Training Institute and Nimba County Community College and four FDA staff were trained. Topics included Ecological sampling, field craft, navigation, equipment use and care, first aid and project planning.

Output 3. Activities for Q1 and Q2

3.4 Continuation and growth of SNP bio-monitoring programme

- SNP Park biologist and 3 FDA Park wardens based in SNP participated in the Field course 'Introduction to Ecological Surveys'.
- Additional funding has been received in support of the SNP bio-monitoring programme from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Output 4. Activities for Q1 and Q2

3.5. Host national and international researchers to conduct applied research work

- Publicity materials – posters and postcards for the research centre have now been produced.
- Distribution of publicity materials to international academic institutions has commenced and emails have been sent through mailing lists to several institutions with invitations for PhD students to conduct research at SNP.
- MOU now signed between SCC and the A. P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI) Nigeria and one Liberian.
- A teaching assistant at the University of Liberia Forestry department has now commenced training at APLORI on the Conservation Biology MSc Scholarship programme. The candidate is expected to support the teaching of the Biodiversity Conservation course on return.

3.6. Establishment of small library of books, papers and reports relevant to the study and conservation of Liberian biodiversity

- A small library is now established with over 30 books and several journals. This is currently being kept in Monrovia given current project focus on improving capacity of Monrovia based lecturers.

3.7. Train a minimum of 10 community members in basic guiding skills

10 locals from communities around SNP have been trained on 'The role of a field assistant' which included topics on field craft, navigation, camping and use of equipment such as GPS and compass.

4.1. Produce monthly and annual reports for SCC

- Quarterly and semi-annual reports produced

4.2 News features and radio broadcasts released nationally

- Two press releases (one by FFI and another by FDA) were featured on newspaper this year on the 'Effective communication workshop and opening of the Sapo Conservation Centre. A news story on the opening ceremony was also published in the Liberian Economic journal, a quarterly magazine. A similar news story on the opening ceremony was also posted on the FFI International website.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months.

As a result of the hijack of the project vehicle, project activities which require traveling for example to the research centre and partner institutions such as FTI in Sinoe and Bomi Counties respectively, have required hiring of commercial vehicles, hence increasing the cost of local travels. This however has not affected the budget or timetable.

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

Discussed with LTS: no/yes, in January 2013 (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 (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

If yes, and you wish to request a carry forward 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 carry forward request:

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No