



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	19-004
Project Title	Building Capacity of the Next Generation of Liberian Conservation Professionals
Country(ies)	Liberia
Lead Organisation	Fauna & Flora International
Collaborator(s)	University of Liberia (UL), Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Forestry Training Institute (FTI) and Zoological Society of London ZSL, Cambridge University (CU)
Project Leader	Dr Mary Molokwu (Liberia) / Dr Kathryn Shutt (UK)
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	April – September 2014 / HYR3
Project website	www.liberianfaunaflora.org

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

Output 1. Activities for Q1 and Q2:

1.3 Train a minimum of 6 lecturers in module implementation

- A 5-day training workshop on 'Fundraising and Proposal Development' was organized by FFI and the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) UK. Six lecturers from UL and FTI were trained along with ten forestry professionals from government institutions (FDA and EPA) and civil society.

1.5 Teach conservation modules to UL and FTI students

- Taught the first of 12 conservation modules 'Introduction to Conservation Biology' to over 60 students during a student's exchange programme organized by FTI and Nimba County Community College (NCCC) and held at FTI in Tubmanburg
- A seminar was held at the UL Forestry department Monrovia where a Liberian student supported under this programme and undergoing a MSc programme in Conservation Biology at the A. P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI) presented his thesis work (see details below). Over 40 students participated in the seminar

Output 2. Activities for Q1 and Q2

2.1. Steering Committee formed and operational

- Due to the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, the steering committee meetings scheduled for August was not held. Email correspondence has become the main means of communication between the project coordinator and the steering committee members

2.2. Production of CEERCL business plan

- A second mini-workshop was held in May 2014 to design a strategic and financial sustainability plan for SCC.

2.3 Construct and equip research centre and campsite

- Research Centre now fully operational and research activities have commenced.

2.4 Conduct field courses in field research methods and conservation issues

- A 5-week course in 'Statistical Methods in Ecology' was held from 11th June – 3rd July 2014, facilitated by a Post-doctoral research fellow from the University of Cape Town. 15 participants from FDA, UL, FTI were trained in statistics using the free R software.

Output 3. Activities for Q1 and Q2

3.3 Clear and map a trail system in the park for use by researchers, rangers and tourists

- The SNP bio-monitoring programme commenced in February 2014 and mapping of trails at SNP has commenced. The team completed in July 2014 as planned just before Ebola work/travel restrictions were imposed.

3.4 Continuation and growth of SNP bio-monitoring programme

- The biomonitoring team made up of 18 trained community people recorded 34 species (including 27 mammals, 6 large birds and one invertebrate) during the biomonitoring programme from Feb-June 2014.

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

- A UL graduate has now completed a Masters degree in Conservation Biology from APLORI. He carried out his research at the SNP and produced a thesis on 'Bird-habitat relationships and effects of anthropogenic activities in and around Sapo National Park'
- An intern also completed a conservation education project for schools around SNP

Output 4. Activities for Q1 and Q2

4.1. Produce monthly and annual reports for SCC

- An annual report was produced for FFI and the government of Liberia

4.2 News features and radio broadcasts released nationally

- A conservation group was formed by partners trained during the project. The group Conservation Leadership Network Liberia (CLNL) now has a Facebook page

2a. 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.

Due to the Ebola outbreak in Liberia that started in June 2014 and is still on-going a number of activities scheduled for the second half of 2014, particularly activities that required physical meetings, were postponed. Some of the activities planned for the 1st quarter of 2015 will also need to be adapted. Affected activities have been identified as:

- 1) A residential field course hosted at SCC and facilitated by ZSL and teaching of academic modules to UL and FTI students by the project coordinator
- 2) At least two steering committee meetings that will entail a technical review of the academic conservation modules developed. ZSL is expected to support the curriculum review during at least one visit to Liberia.

These activities are now not possible as planned as there governmental restrictions regarding hosting of public and private gatherings (holding residential trainings) and international travel into Liberia. As a result, it is very unlikely that ZSL and CU will be able to visit Liberia in the coming months. Additionally, as the Ebola situation worsened in July this year, FFI made the decision to evacuate expatriate staff – including the Project Coordinator, who has been leading the project remotely, without impact to date, from her home in Nigeria.

FFI will be shortly submitting a change request to LTS for adapted activities to be carried out, that will enable us achieve the original aim of the specified activities and with no impact to the budget. We do not currently foresee that the Ebola restrictions will impact any other project activities as planned but we are closely monitoring the situation and our project activity forecast and will inform LTI of any potential impacts and required actions if/when these arise.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

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

No

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 can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**