

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2012)

Project Ref No	19-010
Project Title	Developing Long-term Stakeholder Capacity for Elephant Conservation in Mali
Country(ies)	Mali
UK Organisation	Wilderness Foundation UK
Collaborator(s)	Malian Government Directorate for Eaux et Forets (DNEF); local community groups and individuals
Project Leader	Dr Susan Canney
Report date	26 th October 2012
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR1
Project website	http://www.wild.org/where-we-work/the-desert-elephants-of-mali/

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).

Community meetings on the integration of Karwassa communities into the wider Banzena initiative for community NRM and the training of the Karwassa patrols in duties and monitoring -

These were completed successfully. Community meetings were held with the 14 campements and they enthusiastically received the information and created an effective management committee and patrolling brigades that function seamlessly with the others already established at Banzena north and Banzena south and east. Reserve pasture was designated and the brigades are patrolling conscientiously. The only thing left is for the foresters to check their performance regarding forestry regulations, and for the official documents to be drafted and signed, which will happen once the area is secured (see 2 below for explanation).

Training of the wider Banzena community management committees in resource management administration and record-keeping -

This has been completed successfully. These communities now have the capacity to charge outsiders (the prestige herds) for access to water and maintain correct and transparent records, so that revenue can be shared equitably. There are also oversight structures to avoid any potential for dishonesty.

Operation of the wider Banzena management committees & community-government patrols -

Despite the withdrawal of forester presence in the area (see 2 below) the community management committees and patrols are continuing their work spectacularly given the circumstances (see 2).

Lake Banzena is now free of human activity and settlement. Our patrols have been operating and informing transhumants that the Lake is to be kept free of human activity. At the beginning of the year half the population moved from Banzena to the relocation area as a result of the borehole provided through the USDAO, and the two boreholes provided by the State, although one developed a problem. To compensate we raised money to enlarge a waterhole in the relocation zone. This filled with rain and the other half of the population left Banzena in August-September. As a result of reduced human and livestock impact, Lake Banzena did not dry this year, despite the poor rainy season of 2011 and resultant low water levels. To quote one of the women,

"Since we moved here we no longer have stomach aches. The men can go back to Banzena if they want but we are staying here".

Thanks to the communications training given to community leaders by the project, they were able to prevent the project camels, used for patrolling, from being taken by the islamacist Ansar Dine rebels, by explaining that these were used to protect pasture and other natural resources. The rebel group deemed this a good thing and left the camels.

Through these community structures we have been able to respond to the new threat of elephant poaching. There have been three poaching incidents this year: one was at Banzena by a Maure who

killed a young male to eat in April (the local tribes don't eat elephants) and two instigated by an MNLA local commander based in Gossi in January and May for ivory. This information was obtained by our community brigades, who subsequently kept a watch on this individual up until the defeat of the MNLA. There have been no more killings since May.

At a big community meeting on the problem of poaching, leaders suggested that they transmit the following messages far and wide throughout their communities: (a) the elephants belong to the people of the Gourma and anyone killing elephants is attacking and stealing from the people (b) the elephant ivory is small, brittle, of poor quality and worthless (c) the elephants are worth more alive than dead. These leaders have significant influence over the MNLA as they are the elders and related to them.

Through the brigades and community leaders we have organized information cells throughout the elephant range. At the same time we have laid the foundations for extending the 'Banzena-system' throughout the elephant range, something that we had originally planned for later in the project, but it seemed a better idea to use the poaching situation to engage the communities now.

We have also raised additional money to deploy a rapid response anti-poaching unit to work closely with the community information cells. The community will be the eyes and ears, while the AP unit will be able to act. DNEF have reassigned their best foresters to this team and are covering salaries, arms and ammunition. We are raising money for the vehicle, training and equipment, and this team should be functioning by the end of the year, in time for the start of the military campaign to retake the north. The idea is to be able to crack down on any initial attempts to kill elephants, as if these succeed, the floodgates could open. We've also established co-operation with Eaux et Forêts in Burkina, and are including border officials in relevant parts of the training.

Demonstration visits to other projects e.g. the PADESO project in Sokolo by representatives of the Karwassa, Boni & Hombori communities - This was not done as transport in anything other than a motorbike risks hijacking. Instead the other communities of the Gourma have been learning from those at Banzena, however we will organize these visits as soon as it is possible.

Radio broadcasts to inform wider communities of the new resource management systems - These have been transmitted and according to an evaluation by DNEF, have been understood by those in the area. However it was recommended that these be repeated in 2013 to inform transhumants who did not move through the area in 2012. It also serves to reinforce the new system of resource management.

Socio-economic study of the communities in the key conflict areas of the south (Boni-Hombori) and production of a participatory plan of action - Our surveyors are in the field and the data gathering phase is due to be completed by the end of November.

Meetings held in each commune to identify the elephant migration route, key areas, rules of resource use, plus enforcement mechanisms. - We have achieved this with the local communities in the south, and will complete the process with the foresters and other civil servants as soon as the area is secured for their return.

Establishment & monitoring of at least 5 habitat regeneration initiatives - This has not been done for several reasons. Motorised transport is only possible by motorbike due to the threat of vehicle hijacking, and there is the threat of theft of the materials. In addition the circumstances were such that it was deemed more important to establish the information network plus community engagement as described in c). Habitat regeneration activities will take place once the area is secured.

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.

Due to the coup all government presence has been withdrawn from the area. Although the project area is not held by the rebels, they make occasional sorties. The project has continued with its activities as intended, although government foresters and other employees have not been able to participate. This will be remedied once the area is secured. It has also meant that project activities have been conducted by motorbike instead of vehicles due to the risk of hi-jack. The impact of these has been described in section 1 above.

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

Yes, these have been discussed but no changes have been made to the original agreement, because the issues amount to changing the order of project activities rather than any substantive change.

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 X

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?

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 LTS International directly.

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