

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref No	19-016
Project Title	Leveraging markets to conserve mangrove biodiversity and alleviate poverty in Madagascar
Country(ies)	Madagascar
UK Organisation	Blue Ventures Conservation
Collaborator(s)	
Project Leader	<i>Dr. Al Harris</i>
Report date	<i>31 October 2012</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR 1</i>
Project website	http://www.blueventures.org/conservation/bluecarbon

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).

Being that our project commenced on 1 July 2012, this summary reports only on activities planned or conducted in the first quarter of Year 1 (Q1, Y1).

- *Activity 1.1 Consultation and project development with communities to gain their free, prior and informed consent for the implementation of the forest carbon project.*

Consultation activities in Q1 focused on collecting information for a feasibility assessment of mangrove forest carbon projects at *Honko*, our pilot site for Madagascar's first mangrove forest carbon project. Blue Ventures is partnering with Honko, a Belgian NGO based in Ambondrolava, Toliara, to build on their existing reforestation and conservation efforts and act as technical coordinator for implementing a registered mangrove forest carbon project. Based on project scale (500 ha of potential mangrove) and the desires of the community to continue mangrove afforestation and reforestation activities, the favoured carbon standard for this site is currently the Plan Vivo Foundation, a UK-based charity which brokers the sale of carbon credits on the voluntary market.

Inception activities at Honko Madagascar have included weekly collaborative planning with to strategize community and government stakeholder consultation. Representatives of the Women's Associations and Committee (Vondron'olona Ifotony Bureau of Mamelolo Honko – Growing Mangroves in Malagasy) of five local villages were hosted at a half-day workshop designed to discuss concepts related to forest carbon project standards and carry out early participatory planning. Attendees of the meeting included 26 locals (comprising 7 women and 19 men), four representatives from our partner organisation, Honko Madagascar, and four representatives from Blue Ventures. Anecdotally the meeting was considered successful, with high-levels of participation in discussion and mapping exercises (see Activity 2.1) reported by meeting facilitators. An important outcome of this workshop/meeting is the meeting agenda signed by all attendees, who expressed early support for developing new project activities which met forest carbon project standards (voluntary, participatory projects requiring long-term agreements), and requested further information on Plan Vivo standards.

Blue Ventures also employed a new community liaison and mangrove conservation officer, Sylvia Paulote, who will play a large role in engaging communities in mangrove forest

carbon projects.

- *Activity 1.2 Detailed analyses of land tenure and use rights of the potential mangrove areas with both the government cadastral services and the local communities*

A key component of Q1 activities was to categorize materials in a meaningful and standardized fashion in preparation of a forest carbon project. This has resulted in a library of legal documents including local *Dina* (Malagasy traditional laws formalised through national authorities), a register of community technicians, meeting agendas and minutes from community consultation and a hard-drive cloud of documents regarding land tenure at the Honko site.

We also undertook an analysis of tenure options for mangroves, to identify the legal mechanisms available options available for technical coordinators of mangrove forest carbon projects in Madagascar. This included summarizing the legal status of mangroves under land law, forestry law, and other legislation. Five legal mechanisms to acquire some form of tenure over mangroves were identified, and our assessment have, so far, identified legal transfers of resource rights and land concessions as the most favourable modes for acquiring tenure. This meets with the very important requirement of forest carbon projects to validate credits only for producers (locals) with secure carbon rights. This effort aligns with an investigation, planned for Q3, into potential legal conflicts over resource rights to mangroves in Madagascar (required for Activity 5.3).

- *Activity 2.1 Establishment of community management plans, zonings and sustainable harvest quotas*

Activity 2.1 was started as a result of combining early-planning activities into the aforementioned workshop held with the Mamelolo Honko communities. Prior to the workshop, GIS-based base maps were developed for conducting participatory mapping of past, present, and future land use and land cover. Key outputs were twelve participatory zoning exercises, where community members indicated what forestry and alternative livelihood activities they would like to undertake in, and surrounding, the mangroves adjacent to their home villages. A digitized layout of one of these maps will be sent in a separate email.

- *Activity 4.1 Development of a measurement & monitoring plan which meets the requirements of the selected approved methodology for the generation of carbon offsets (this monitoring will include mangrove planting, timber harvesting & charcoal production).*

A carbon inventory has been developed, adapted, and written up for community based mangrove carbon stock monitoring. The methodology employed by Blue Ventures to measure carbon stocks in mangroves is detailed in Kauffman *et al.* 2010, and has been adapted for a community-based carbon monitoring methodology to exclude soil carbon measurements due to the expense and technical demands of laboratory analysis. To ensure quality of community-collected carbon measurements, we plan to accompany community carbon monitoring teams on carbon inventory missions, and handle any resulting laboratory analyses.

- *Activity 5.1 Government and authority advocacy*

Informing authorities of our intent to conduct socio-economic surveys aimed at building the foundations for forest carbon projects has been achieved through preparation of letters and conducting courtesy visits to local authorities including presidents of each village, commune mayors, the Director of the Ministry of Fisheries, and the Director of the Department of the Regional Ministry of Forests and Environment. These steps are the first towards the planned aim of informing all designated national authorities and local authorities of intended project activities, to both avoid future conflict with government interests and meet the requirements of a Plan Vivo forest carbon project.

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.

At Honko, planting, maintenance and nursery teams have existed since 2008. However, funding for these positions will run out at the end of October 2012. At this point we will need to investigate how to acquire the interest of local women to participate in further nursery maintenance and planting activities.

The original proposal and plans for leveraging sustainable financing for mangrove conservation were lacking in sufficient budgetary considerations regarding educational and outreach tools in relation to mangroves and carbon crediting. Therefore, we are working with the Plan Vivo foundation to develop handbooks and already have produced the materials for a mangrove handbook aimed at providing communities with information on the benefits of mangrove conservation and participatory planning. We have also submitted an application for a bursary with the Cambridge Student Conference on Conservation Science for Sylvia Paulote to work with Plan Vivo in Edinburgh, Scotland, on developing educational tools regarding forest carbon projects for communities.

Unexpected challenges to the project have included a shift in management at our collaborating partner organization, Honko. This has led to discrepancies in the transfer of information on past project activities. Additionally, the local tribunal has been on strike, and we have been unable to obtain the renewed Dina (local laws) at Honko. Our partner organization, Honko Madagascar, is following up with the tribunal regularly to obtain the renewed Dina as soon as possible.

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?

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 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**