

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

Project Ref No	22-007
Project Title	Establishing Sustainable Management of the Lake Sofia Catchment, Madagascar
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Madagascar
Lead Organisation	Wildfowl & Wetland Trust (WWT)
Partner(s)	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Asity Madagascar, Organisation de Soutien pour le Developpement Rural a Madagascar (OSDRM)
Project Leader	Robert Shore
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	31 st Oct 2016. HYR2
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	N/A
Funder (DFID/Defra)	DFID

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

The Management Transfer Agreement has been agreed for the three Fokotany (villages) directly surrounding Lake Sofia (Sofia Mandroso, Fikambana Fitantanana Matsabory Sofia, and Sandatra Sofia). During community consultations, conducted by the regional government, it was clear that the villages have a lot of trust in the project partners due to development support and the rapid improvement in the size of fish being caught in the lake after the net exchange programme (see Output 2). Rules and regulations have been set by the communities and maps have been finalised; all being presented at community meetings in each village. Elections have taken place for key positions in the VOIs. Members from any other villages can join any one of the three lake VOIs. Training on new rules, regulations and management is scheduled for October and November.

It was planned to develop the lake management transfer alongside a similar scheme for the forest in the upstream catchment, but this has been delayed due to findings from the initial consultations. Some local people have started to grow vanilla in the understory of the forest and are suspicious of our project, thinking that this will be prohibited under the management transfer. More sensitisation is required to explain that communities will themselves set the rules for natural resource management and the new scheme can create increased opportunities. Once the lake management transfer has been formalised and agreed, we will organise site visits and experience exchange programmes. We are confident this activity will still be achieved on schedule.

Output 2

A vaccination review is underway to improve communication around our vaccination programme. A number of people in one village believed that the vaccinations would cure ill animals, so we must address this before we continue as this could lead to a more significant

problem at a later point.

The fisheries catch monitoring programme is ongoing and approval has been given for the site of the fish landing platform. The materials have been purchased but this activity was slightly delayed to ensure that the landing platform would not be near a no-take zone (as determined by the new management transfer agreement). Although the data has not yet been analysed, there is a strong belief amongst community members that the net exchange programme in Year 1 resulted in a significant increase in the size of fish being caught. The fishers, market sellers, and consumers have all been displaying gratitude for this to field staff. Although we are keen to downplay this until data is analysed and two year's worth of increased catch has been recorded, it has greatly enhanced community trust in the project's ability to make difference to livelihoods and as such has meant that the community have exceeded our recommended no-take fishing area within the management transfer agreement.

A feasibility assessment for alternative crops has been completed and report being produced. The consultant has recommended Arabica coffee for the area but sales channels have not yet been investigated.

Rice harvesting in the pilot sites in July yielded between 4.2 T/ha to 7.8 T/ha compared to a traditional yield of 1.5 to 2T/ha. The farmers have started the collective storage scheme which operates similarly to the community-based savings groups, and supports farmers with any potential shortage they may face during the lean season between harvests. Then the groups decided for an individual contribution of 17 kg of paddy per household and they have stored 476 kg to date in Antilongo and Andranovaky.

Output 3

An environmental education programme has been delivered in primary schools in the three lake-side villages. Prior to each five session course, community meetings were held to introduce the work to parents and teacher training sessions were given so that the teachers could assist with the facilitation of the courses. The level of teacher environmental awareness is very low and more support was needed than anticipated, but the teachers were very eager to learn more and the children enjoyed the interactive learning experience through games and visits to the wetland. An M&E framework is in place to assess the effectiveness of the course over the short and medium term. Continued support and reinforcement will be given from our field team.

Posters have been presented at awareness sessions in 6 villages to highlight the ecosystem services provided by wetlands and the links between wetland and human health. These are ongoing and will be delivered multiple times at each village. Material has been bought for community information points.

Locations for the reforestation work are now clearly marked within the new management transfer agreement.

Output 4

The working group has been sent a skeleton version of the draft document in July. A study tour to visit Lake Kinkony and its associated wetland habitats took place from 24th – 30th September. The Ramsar Focal Point Volatiana Rahanitriniaina and the newly appointed Director of Protected Areas Rantonirina Rakotoaridera attended the trip, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Fish Resources and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (from the Irrigation and Watershed Management Project), Office of the Regional Director of Ecology, Environment and Forests (DREEF) for the Boeny Region, The Peregrine Fund, Durrell, Asity and WWT. The itinerary for the study tour included visits to Lake Kinkony, a satellite lake, a flooded raffia forest with an integrated rice irrigation system and the mangroves around the Mahavavy Delta. Management activities at the sites included the creation of fish ponds, the use of fish cages, habitat restoration, biodiversity monitoring, ecotourism and rice farming irrigation systems. Participants met with three local community associations to learn about the challenges they experience and discuss their approaches to management. Meetings between the participants and representatives from the District Office for the Ministry of Agriculture and

Livestock, District Office for the Ministry of Fish Resources and Fisheries and the Management Platform for the area provided additional perspectives on the challenges of managing wetland habitats. Extensive notes were taken during the site visits, discussions and meetings. These will be used to produce a case study on Lake Kinkony which will be included in the National Wetland Management Guidance. Study tours to Alaotra and Torotorofotsy are planned for October.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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.

The level of environmental knowledge amongst teachers in government schools was even lower than expected. We are going to have to give increased support and training and adapt the material for teacher training sessions at other schools. This is not expected to have budgetary implications.

The international buyer of pink rice has broken a contract with SOCOTA, the group that has been training and supporting the project. This has put the future of that element of the programme in doubt, but the farmers that were involved in this small pilot scheme are being offered alternative support if a new buyer cannot be secured.

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:	No
Formal change request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	N/A

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., 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. 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 please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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

An under-spend was recorded in Year One of the project. This was due to a delay in the development of the management transfer agreement and the decision to temporarily rent an office until we were able to secure a more suitable plot of land for development. The project intends to submit a change request to carry forward this under-spend, as the budget is still

required for these same activities. As the management transfer agreement is now scheduled for completion this year, and we have secured a new plot of land, we will submit the change request within the next two months. It is likely that the building of the new office will only be possible in Y3 due to the long rainy season that makes the site inaccessible to trucks for most of the period between Nov and April.

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 e.g., Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**