



## Darwin Initiative Main Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2015)

**Project Ref: No 22-015**

**Project Title: Sustainable management of an Ethiopian rangeland for biodiversity and pastoralists**

**Country(ies): Ethiopia**

**Lead Organisation: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**

**Collaborator(s): Ethiopian Wildlife Natural History Society, SOS Sahel Ethiopia, BirdLife International, University of Coventry and Manchester Metropolitan University**

**Project Leader: Dr Paul Donald**

**Report date and number: HYR1 26/10/2015**

**Project website/Twitter/Blog/Instagram:**

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/community/ourwork/b/biodiversity/archive/2015/06/15/closing-the-hunger-gap-establishing-grassland-reserves-in-ethiopia.aspx>

<http://www.cebmmu.co.uk/research/darwin-initiative-sustaining-pastoralist-livelihoods-in-ethiopia-and-saving-the-liben-lark-from-extinction>

**Funder: 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).**

Overall progress has been very good for the project, with significant achievements made by the field team, we are on schedule as planned at the 6 months stage. There are however, critical challenges that are causing concern for delivery on output 2 by end of Year 1 as outlined here.

Output 1 is near complete and on schedule: **Participatory Rangeland Management process facilitates development of an institutional framework for managing community grassland reserves ('kallos')**

- The baseline survey data on milk production and the current household hunger gap has been completed on schedule, to enable the project's impact to be measured against key indicators.
- A Participatory rangeland resource assessment has been completed, which identified key rangeland resources such as watering sites, cattle movement tracks, liben lark locations, and areas for grassland enclosures (kallos).
- Kallo Management Committees are identified, with Kallo Management by-laws finalised at large community stakeholder meetings, and terms of reference for group operation agreed.

Output 2: **Grassland restoration increases dry season food security for pastoralists equitably and restores grassland quality and Liben Lark habitat**

We are on target currently, although in-country partners have highlighted several concerns on being able to complete the total area of kallos (1,000ha) within the first year of the project, the reason for this is outlined below in section 2a.

- Teams for building kallos were identified and plans for kallo development defined
- 200 ha of kallos are now established, with a further 100 ha of kallos being finished in the next few weeks.
- 150 ha of scrub has been cleared, providing increased grassland area and material for

fencing for the kallos.

Output 3 progress in on schedule: **Pastoralist communities have the capacity to develop livelihoods without reducing grassland area**

- 3 Community-Based Organisations have been identified, their membership and management agreed with 66 pastoralists
- Initial capacity assessments undertaken and training requirements identified
- Meetings held to identify livelihood opportunities and discuss Savings and Credit Cooperatives model

Output 4 not initiated yet as per project timeline, which is for implementation in Yr 2+3 of project. **Project partners maintain and build on the outcome of the project and promote Participatory Rangeland Management to conserve biodiversity across Ethiopia's rangelands in the long-term.**

Output 5 is on target and for ongoing delivery. **Project management, monitoring and evaluation structures and processes ensure that the project objectives are achieved on schedule and within budget.**

- Partnership agreements in place, along with project plan outlining roles and responsibilities.
- Baseline survey completed.
- 3 Project Steering Committee Meetings held to review project progress and develop project plans.

**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.**

Key challenges, as outlined above, are related to output 2, the indicators for Yr 1 being:

Indicator 1	By end of Yr1, scrub cleared from 500 ha adjacent to areas occupied by Liben Larks, increasing the size of the open Liben Plain by 7%
Indicator 2	By end of Yr1, fences made using cut scrub (underplanted with non-invasive euphorbia to create permanent living fences) demarcate community kallos covering around 1000 ha, located to capture >50% of the core area occupied by Liben Larks

Whilst we are currently on target for implementing output 2 at the 6 month stage, in-country partners have flagged that implementing 1,000 ha of kallo within Yr 1 of the project is going to be challenging due to emerging factors coming to light. The key reasons for this are:

1. The Zonal Government are discussing plans for resettlement of the pastoralists on the plain in order to designate the site as a grassland reserve. This is of serious concern, clearly from a humanitarian perspective, but also due to the impact this would have on the rangeland, which is dependent on pastoralist management, and it is complex for what it would mean for the project.
2. Increasing pressure and interest from wealthy individuals in investing in cultivation on the plains, has driven some grassland conversion, reducing the area of the plains.

Both these factors are causing significant concern for local people, and meaning local people are understandably cautious and sensitive about adapting rangeland management approaches towards Kallos and away from open grazing due to fears over land grabs. The project team have been working very hard to undertake extensive awareness raising meetings and workshops to ensure the rationale and basis for the Darwin project is understood. This has led to communities being more aware of the project aims but this sensitivity is ongoing and will cause delays in delivery as communities are hesitant to support large new kallos being established this means the 1,000 ha target will be harder to reach by the end of Year 1 of project.

As a result of the this the project team will be doing the following:

- Working to understand the interrelation of these factors, as they are clearly conflicting

- Working hard to engage with the Zonal Government to promote the site as a people, culture and biodiversity site, protecting pastoralist livelihoods as well as the environment. This would be very beneficial for the site and support the aims of the project if this approach were to be taken forward.
- Maintain pressure on Government to prevent grassland conversion. Government are currently discussing forcing the abandonment of illegal cultivation in a core part of the lark.
- Maintain investment in community engagement meetings and workshops and awareness raising
- Will monitor the situation and submit a change request to LTS International by mid-December if this situation does not appear to be resolvable. This change request will outline several options:
  - Grassland restoration of the abandoned cultivation
  - Roll-out kallos in locations buffering the plain
  - Roll-out kallos in Yr 2
  - Re-allocate any associated underspend into supporting CBO capacity and livelihood development

**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 No

**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 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?**

n/a

**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](mailto: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: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**