



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

<b>Project Ref No</b>	23-015
<b>Project Title</b>	Guinea pigs as guinea pigs, reducing bushmeat hunting while improving communities wellbeing
<b>Country(ies)/Territory(ies)</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society
<b>Partner(s)</b>	ICCN and UECCO
<b>Project Leader</b>	Michelle Wieland
<b>Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)</b>	October 31, 2016 (HYR1)
<b>Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc</b>	-
<b>Funder (DFID/Defra)</b>	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).**

During the first 6 months, a monitoring/evaluation plan was completed and social surveys developed to use for the monitoring of various activities. This included WCS's Basic Necessities Survey that was adapted to run off the smart phone application Kobo toolbox (Open Data Kit platform), which will be used to collect data.

A meeting was held with all project partners and key personnel (WCS, ICCN and UECCO) to formally launch the project, which included selecting specific villages where the project will be conducted (Kajeje, Kasheke, Fendula, Chifunzi and Bitale). These villages have existing park/community structures (Community Conservation Committees), and some community conservation activities, which will allow the Darwin project to begin quickly.

Kajeje was selected as the first village in which to start activities. The project was presented to communities through the Community Conservation Committee (CCC) structure and was received very positively. Baseline surveys were conducted by WCS and UECCO and 16 men and 14 women were selected from marginalized households to be beneficiaries for micro-credit and cavy (guinea pig) husbandry training. Of these beneficiaries, all men were known hunters in the community and 8 women were those that were involved in wood extraction and charcoal production within the park. After the selection, UECCO conducted the first formal training in improved husbandry techniques and helped beneficiaries develop a livestock business plan including how they will use the micro-credit they are to receive. CCC leaders (not beneficiaries) will also be attending the training for micro-credit as they will be key in the monitoring and reception of the credit that is reimbursed.

A communication strategy was also developed and the first round of materials produced include t-shirts for participants, project sign boards and banners to use during project training sessions.

In the coming weeks, micro-credit will be provided to Kajeje beneficiaries and monitoring and technical assistance will continue for the rest of the year. Meanwhile WCS, UECCO and ICCN will replicate these initiatives in the other villages, starting with Kasheke next.



Figure 1. First technical training session for improved cavy husbandry in Kajeje village just outside Kahuzi-Biega National Park.

Ranger patrols supported by the Darwin Initiative (with USAID match funding) have been ongoing since the outset of the project. SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) is continuing to be used to evaluate patrol effort. During the next semester, ICCN will be raising awareness in participant villages on environmental laws and the importance of more sustainable alternatives to bushmeat. With matching USAID funds, WCS and the environmental education NGO INCEF will be conducting a month-long training (in November 2016) for ICCN and community members on developing their own environmental education films with the aim of showing the films to the community in their local language which reflect local environmental issues and contexts. It is planned that these films will be shown by ICCN in "Darwin Initiative villages".

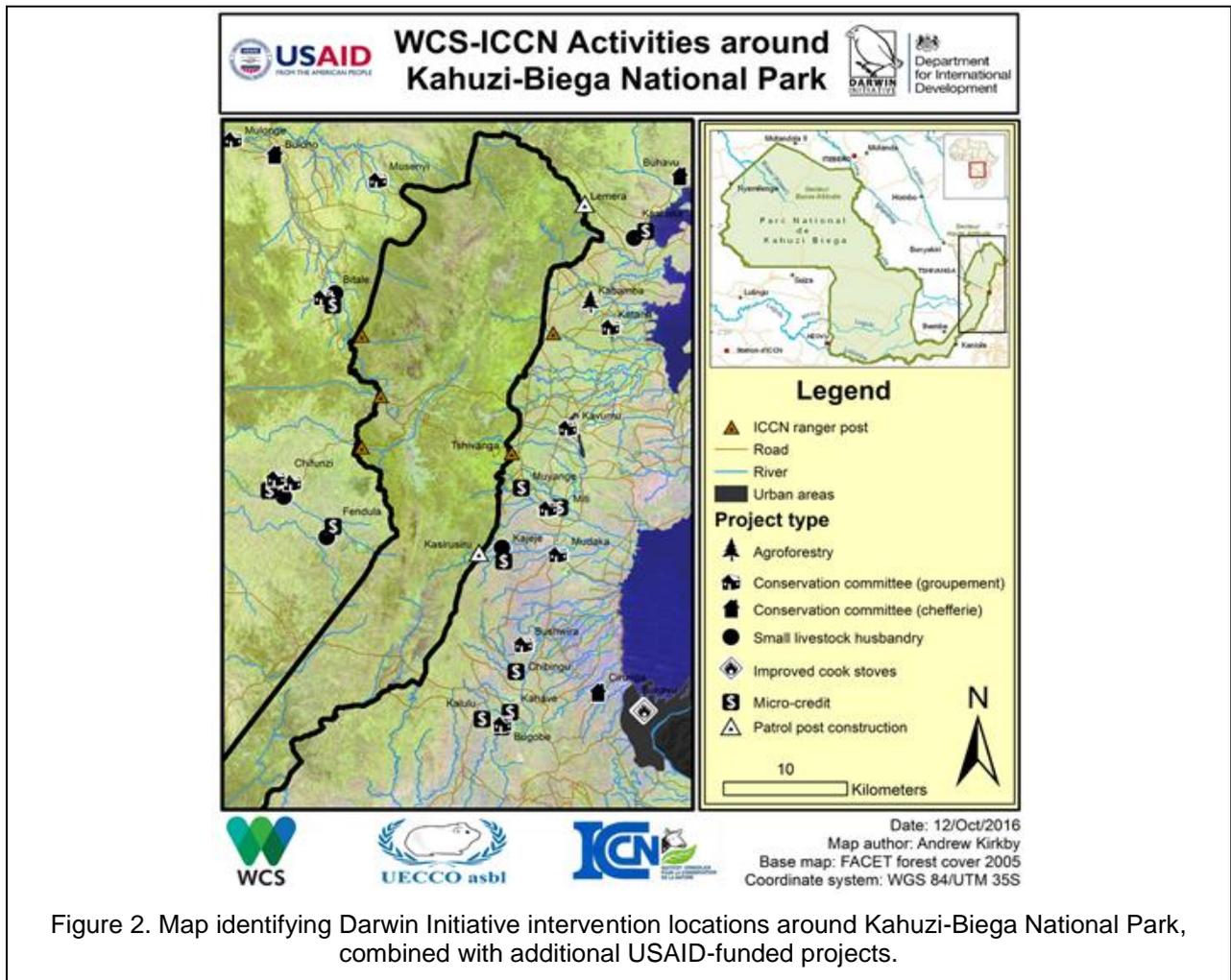


Figure 2. Map identifying Darwin Initiative intervention locations around Kahuzi-Biega National Park, combined with additional USAID-funded projects.

**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.**

In the first village of Kajeje it was found that although many households already had some cavy livestock, their houses were so small that they would not be able to accommodate the planned improved cavy husbandry techniques which included giving cavies their own specific space with separated compartments to control breeding. This was partly due to the fact that beneficiaries include some of the poorer households, meaning that they are less likely to have space. After discussing the problem with WCS, UECCO, and the community beneficiaries it was decided that breeding cavies outside of the house would be too risky due to high incidences of theft. The best solution would be to build a small 'livestock enclosure' using local materials near their home which would cost a total of 100 USD. The increase in costs of building a separate structure would mean that the initial 100 USD micro-credit that communities were going to receive would be insufficient, therefore for the case of Kajeje it was decided to increase the micro-credit amount from 100 USD to 150 USD with USAID match funding to make the project still feasible. The timing to construct the enclosure will not impact the project's timescale.

**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 -

**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?**

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](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: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**