

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

Project Ref No	23-020
Project Title	Sustaining biodiversity, livelihoods and culture in PNG's montane forests
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Papua New Guinea
Lead Organisation	Wildlife Conservation Society
Partner(s)	Oxfam, IRRM, KGwan, NARI
Project Leader	<i>Stacy Jupiter</i>
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	<i>www.wcspng.org</i>
Funder (DFID/Defra)	<i>Defra</i>

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).

Below are listed the activities scheduled to take place in Quarter 1 & 2 as outlined in the grant timeline:

Objective 1: *The introduction and uptake of improved gardening practices in three communities and an increase in the duration and life of garden areas*

Activity 1.1 Increase the number of new gardening techniques that are taken up by communities in the project area

Activity 1.2 Ensure activities are established in >300 households using new gardening techniques by March 2018

Activity 1.3 Promote new techniques to ensure the duration of active garden areas is increased by 30% by March

Progress: Signed sub-grant agreements have been put in place with the community-based organizations Individual Reform & Restoration Movement (IRRM), an organization whose mission is to improve the living conditions of communities using locally available natural resources like land for agriculture activities, and KGWan, a village-based collective comprised of three clans (the Kunaiku, Gereglkane and Wandike) that ensures the sustainable harvesting of timber being used in building homes and community buildings in the area. Both organizations will implement the following activities:

- 1) Provide village extension officers to undergo WCS training in techniques to increase yield, diversity and duration of household garden areas. These village extension officers will in turn train households across the wider community.
- 2) Develop multiplication plots with guidance from WCS and National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI) agricultural officers to help propagate new plant varieties.

Furthermore, Oxfam have arranged with IRRM and KGWan for village agricultural extension officers, operating under an existing Oxfam grant, to assist in the agricultural component of the current project at no additional cost.

Objective 2. *Introduction of new market crops for income generation, and introduction of pest and drought resistant varieties for subsistence use within all three communities*

Activity 2.1 Increase the number of marketable crops in gardens in project areas by 50%
Activity 2.2 With the support of NARI, introduce least 2 new pest and/or drought tolerant crop varieties

Progress: WCS has engaged with staff from NARI to develop a sub-grant that defines how our organizations will work together to implement the above activity.

Objective 3. *Nursery practices for native tree species tested and established in two communities and active planting of areas with native species by the project end*

Activity 3.1 Develop propagation methods for at least four native tree species in nurseries

Activity 3.2 Plant native tree species in place of exotic species in over 100 ha of land by project end and incorporate planting method into land use plans

Progress: Signed sub-grant agreements have been put in place with IRRM and KGWan to implement the following, with WCS assistance:

- 1) Undertake the collection of native seed for plant and tree species of high community value for propagation in both community nurseries and the WCS experimental nursery;
- 2) Propagate native species in community nurseries; and
- 3) Distribute and plant native seedlings into community or household woodlots.

Additionally, WCS has signed an MOU with Man on Earth Ltd for use of their nursery for WCS to trial native species propagation techniques under controlled conditions. An internal WCS report has been written with regard to possible species to investigate (Arihafa 2016). *Nothofagus* and *Casuarina* species have thus far been identified by IRRM and WCS as priorities for propagation.

Arihafa A (2016) Notes on native timber species and their potential for silviculture in community forestry initiatives in the Bismark Range, Papua New Guinea. Wildlife Conservation Society, Goroka, PNG.

Objective 4. *Sustainable use of existing forest stands within remaining areas of native forests and planted areas of exotic trees*

Activity 4.1 Reduced number of native trees harvested compared to number of exotic trees harvested from already existing forest stands

Activity 4.2 Secure more than 500 hectares under sustainable forestry practices as compared to baseline by March 2019

Progress: WCS has written R code which allows analysis of deforestation and afforestation rates within the project area of interest via the Global Forest Change database. Baseline rates that have been established for annual losses and gains between 2001 and 2014 will be used to assess changes that might be attributed to project implementation. Total forest loss between 2001 and 2014 in the project area was 40.6 ha, where forest loss is defined as canopy cover over 5 meters in height and of at least 80 percent cover at a 30 x 30 m resolution. The vast majority of forest loss came from the Namta community (32.6 ha).

Objective 5. *Capturing and passing on traditional ecological knowledge on forests and threatened species*

Activity 5.1 School curricula capturing local ecological knowledge in 3 primary schools in the project area by September 2017

Activity 5.2 Increase in number of school children that learn about their local culture and traditional ecological knowledge by March 2019

Activity 5.3 Documentation of tok ples names and traditional knowledge of culturally and ecologically important fauna and flora by March 2018

Progress: No progress on Objective 5 activities during this reporting period. These activities are slated to take place in the 3rd and 4th quarters.

Objective 6. *Minimizing impacts on hunted species by preserving local costumes and reviving traditional tambu (no hunting) areas.*

Activity 6.1 Uptake of improved preservation methods for fur and feathers in traditional

costumes (termed bilas in tok pisin) by 3 active cultural troupes by March 2019
Activity 6.2 Increase in area or number of tambu sites created or re-established in the project area by March 2019
Activity 6.3 Conduct baseline and end surveys for key biodiversity indicator species, and establish monitoring procedures for birds of paradise

Progress: 200 protection kits (with Tok Pisin instructions) currently being manufactured for dispersal to cultural groups within the area of interest to preserve local costumes. Methodology has been devised for detecting changes in population status of key indicator species based on: tracking cards (for cursorial animals), 5 minute bird counts (for birds of paradise) and camera trapping arrays (for tree kangaroos) – implementation will begin in 4th quarter.

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.

A number of personnel changes resulted in some unforeseen delays on project activities. Both WCS and Oxfam country director positions were vacated during the first 6 months of the grant. This resulted in delays in acquiring the necessary authority to develop, sign MOUs and enter into sub-grant agreements with IRRM, KGWan and Oxfam. These matters have since been rectified and the various agreements have been finalised. An offer has been made to a new WCS PNG Country Program Director who will start work on November 14, 2016. In the interim, Stacy Jupiter (WCS Melanesia Regional Director) is filling in as project lead, though has only recently come off maternity leave therefore we are submitting the change request form with this report. Additionally, the WCS's main botanist, Arison Arihafa, left his position during the 2nd quarter after 8 years of service. A national recruitment process was undertaken; a new forestry officer has provisionally accepted and should take up the position in November 2016. The ratification of the MOUs and sub-grants with the community based organisations (IRRM and KGWan) will see field activities begin in the 3rd quarter. The delays encountered thus far are considered temporary and our expectation is that by the end of the 3rd quarter the project will be back to the original timetable.

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:	Yes (Change of country lead)
Formal change request submitted:	Yes (Change of country lead)
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. 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?

None at present.

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**