



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

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| <b>Project Ref No</b>                                | 23-022   |
| <b>Project Title</b>                                 | Developing long-term stakeholder capacity for elephant conservation in Mali  |
| <b>Country(ies)/Territory(ies)</b>                   | Mali, Burkina Faso   |
| <b>Lead Organisation</b>                             | The WILD Foundation  |
| <b>Partner(s)</b>                                    | The Mali Government: Ministry of the Environment, with its Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts (DNEF) as the principle contact; other Ministries as appropriate.<br><br>The US Embassy to Mali<br><br>The British Embassy to Mali<br><br>The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) |
| <b>Project Leader</b>                                | Dr Susan Canney  |
| <b>Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)</b>           | October 31 <sup>st</sup> 2016, HYR1  |
| <b>Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc</b> | <a href="http://www.wild.org/mali-elephants/">http://www.wild.org/mali-elephants/</a>  |
| <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).

There has been a delay in implementing outputs 1 and 4 for the reasons listed in section 2a below.

**Output 1. Revision of existing “Partial Elephant Reserve” text and boundaries re-drawn to cover the whole of the elephant range with Lake Banzena as a core protection zone.**

*Activity 1.1. Local community validation meetings. Ongoing* - Initial meetings completed.

*Activity 1.2. Text finalised. Ongoing* - Likely to be delayed until Q4 of Year 1 or Q1 of Year 2.

The revision of the legal text and boundaries of the partial reserve is underway and it is hoped that the recent changes in leadership in the Ministry of the Environment and the DNEF will enable the process to be completed by the end of year 2 (change request attached to this report).

**Output 2: Training provided to improve capacity in habitat protection, natural resource management and benefit sharing.**

*Activities 2.1&2.2. Workshops for least performing & Banzena communities (scheduled for Q4).*

*Activity 2.3. Workshops for foresters in working with the communities. Ongoing.*

Since April a core unit of 15 DNEF rangers have completed 42 days of advanced anti-poaching training led by Rory Young of Chengeta Wildlife. Throughout all training activities an emphasis has been placed upon the importance of working with local communities sensitively and effectively to support CBNRM and anti-poaching activities and to mitigate human-elephant conflict. Future training will include additional community liaison visits during anti-poaching

patrols.

**Output 3: Women's associations created to manage and nurture non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in four test zones, thereby developing a model for sustainable revenue-generation from forest resources.**

*Activity 3.1. Preliminary meetings held with interested women from four test-zones; associations formed; and donkey and carts purchased. Completed.*

*Activity 3.2. Meetings and training workshops for the women. Ongoing.*

All activities for this output are on schedule and the level of community interest in implementing additional income generating activities has exceeded expectations. The resurgence of inter-clan rivalry in the north of the elephant range (associated with the pre-cantonment process) has meant that working with the women is proving to be a very effective way of supporting communities in implementing sustainable natural resource management, and promoting synergy between their income generation activities and those of the young men engaged as "eco-guardians". As a result this initiative has been facilitated in more communities than foreseen, focusing on the areas where the elephants are most vulnerable to poaching (which also tend to coincide with the least secure areas).

**Output 4: Habitat, elephant and biodiversity loss and degradation are halted and reversed at four test sites.**

Although a monitoring program has been developed, the monitoring activities have not yet been launched due to the factors explained in 2a.

*Activity 4.1. Livestock and people surveys at Lake Banzena. Delayed.*

*Activity 4.2. Tree-cutting and rodent surveys in four test-zones. Delayed.* Rodent track surveys will be replaced by invertebrate sticky trap surveys.

*Activity 4.3. Maintenance of database recording elephant killings (MIKE data). Ongoing.*

In the first half of 2016, and particularly during this reporting period (April – September), there has been a reduction in the rate of elephant poaching. Nine elephants were killed by poachers between April and September. This can be compared to the same period in 2015 when 41 elephants were killed by poachers. This success is due to a continued commitment to elephant protection activities by the local communities that is fostered by the activities of this grant; coupled with MEP engagement of the local military to undertake anti-poaching patrols, acting on information from MEP community eco-guardians (formerly known as brigades).

**Output 5: Research outputs developed and shared with target audiences.**

*Activity 5.1. Briefing reports to government and partners. Completed, ongoing.*

A meeting with the new Minister of the Environment, her advisors and chief executives together with in-country project partners (MINUSMA, Malian military, Embassies) proved to be very positive with a strong commitment from the Malian government towards supporting the MEP's approach to anti-poaching that is based on the anti-poaching rangers supporting the community in elephant protection, paving the way for a more effective multi-agency elephant conservation strategy.

The MEP produces frequent briefings, alerts and updates about the situation in the Gourma for the government and project partners (Embassies, MINUSMA).

*Activity 5.2. Newsletter, blog updates, articles, talks and conference presentations. Completed, ongoing.*

Three blog posts/newsletter items have been published on the project's website during this reporting period (<http://www.wild.org/category/blog/mali-elephants-blog/>) and presentations were delivered at the Saharo-Saharan interest group's annual meeting; the Soapbox Science event in Oxford high street; the Elephant Network; the WILD Foundation Board meeting; the "Quinzaine de l'Environnement" conference in Bamako

Articles have been written for the *Africa R3 magazine: the planners guide to risk, resilience & reconstruction*

Numerous alerts and updates about the situation in the Gourma for protect partners

(Embassies, MINUSMA)

**Activity 5.3. Journal papers. In preparation.**

A manual for community-based elephant conservation and anti-poaching strategies is currently being written for publication.

**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.**

- There has been an increase in armed attacks against Malian military, government, UN, NGO and civilian personnel and equipment in 2016. The MEP field team remains fully operational, a testament to their commitment and skill, and closely monitors the situation on the ground.
- The lack of leadership at the top of DNEF has been an enormous problem and hamstrung not only the progress of the re-drafting of the reserve text but also the deployment of the ranger force. DNEF is a para-military directorate and everything has to pass by the Director. The total absence of any action or engagement from the Director has made moving forward extremely difficult and required much more effort for activities that are ultimately the responsibility of government, such as legislation and anti-poaching response. However the evaluation report of the ranger training enabled an intense learning process for the government and, together with the replacement of the Minister, led to the replacement of the Director of DNEF at the end of September, and initiated a process of constituting the structures required. The recruitment of a previous Director as the project's government liaison officer has been invaluable in navigating these waters.
- The delayed release of funds for this grant and the new Darwin Initiative grant unfortunately coincided with substantial delays by many months in the release of funds from 3 of the project's other major funding partners (all UN agencies): the UN Trust Fund (MINUSMA); UNEP's African Elephant Fund and UNEP's CITES-MIKE. This unfortunate coincidence caused huge problems, as project activities risked losing momentum (and therefore requiring even more funds to re-establish) and the confidence/trust of the local people.

**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

Formal change request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

**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?**

Please no more delays in the disbursement of funds if at all possible!

As the grant is administered from the United States the weakening pound may impact negatively on the funds available for project activities in Mali and will be closely monitored in the coming months.

**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**