

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2017)

Project reference	23_032
Project title	Local economic development through “pro-poor” gorilla tourism in Uganda
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Uganda
Lead organisation	IIED
Partner(s)	Responsible Tourism Partnership, Institute for Tropical Forest Conservation, International Gorilla Conservation Programme, Explore Worldwide, Exodus Travels, Great Lakes Safaris, Wild Places, Kwetu Africa, Responsible Travel
Project leader	Dilys Roe
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	October 2017; HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	http://www.iied.org/local-economic-development-through-gorilla-tourism

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).

The activities under Output 1 (Demand and supply for pro-poor tourism services) were completed in Year 1 (see annual report). This HY report therefore focusses on Outputs 2, 3 and 4

Output 2: Capacity development

The last 6 months have involved a strong focus on training. Given the limitations of the budget available and the dispersed nature of the individuals participating in our target enterprises we adopted a “train the trainers” approach for some of the products – particularly the crafts. A total of 20 women representing 4 different craft cooperatives have received intense training in basket and jewellery production from Sanaa Gateja, a professional artist, who is one of our Uganda private sector partners. These 20 women have subsequently rolled out the training to a further 95 women from the cooperatives. The new basket designs have been very well received by tourists with reports from the cooperatives of some friendly scuffles as they disappear quickly from the shelves! Additionally, a major order for 50 of the new design baskets has recently been placed by the developer of a new lodge in Ruhija.

Brian Mugisha, owner of the commercial honey export company Golden Bees has delivered training in improved bee keeping and honey production to 68 bee keepers (14 women and 54 men) many of whom are reformed poachers. Mr Mugisha has been so inspired by the project that he has established a new honey shop in Rubuguri (Southern Sector) which also includes a “Crafts Corners” where the new baskets are being displayed.

Training has also been delivered to 6 wood carvers (all men) and to 52 bird and cultural guides (6 women, 46 men). If this cadre of guides, 6 have shown particular promise and enthusiasm and have worked with Peter Nizette (Responsible Tourism Partnership) to scope out 3 new potential nature and cultural trails on the outside of the park. We will be working with tour operators over the next 6 months to encourage use of these trails.

The final batch of training (mainly horticultural) will be delivered from October to February. It will focus on fresh produce that lodges have said they would like to buy and ensure production is ready for the 2018 tourist season.

The training has been coordinated by Peter Nizette who has visited twice in the last 6 months. At the end of each visit, meetings have been held in Kampala with the tour operator partners to keep them informed about developments, keep them interested in the project and get feedback from them. Meetings have also been held at Bwindi with lodge managers in each of the tourism zones and a number have now committed to displaying crafts and are starting to purchase more local goods. As a way of monitoring the effect of the training on participant incomes we started collecting monthly sales data from each enterprise from July 2017.

Some of the enterprises that were listed in our first annual report as being amongst our target beneficiaries have not participated in the technical training. This has been for a variety of reasons. Some simply did not turn up for training sessions or lost interest. In other cases, the project team decided that the enterprise was unlikely to be able to offer a sufficiently attractive or viable product. Despite this the total number of beneficiaries trained has still exceeded the targets set in our proposal. In total we expect to have reached at least 350 individuals by the end of this year (against a target of 200). A revised list of enterprises and estimated numbers of potential beneficiaries is available on request and will be included in our next annual report.

Output 3: “Gorilla-friendly” ecolabel

The development of the local language training materials for the Gorilla Friendly label took additional time to complete in order to ensure that the illustrations were significant and could easily be interpreted even for illiterate or semi-literate beneficiaries. The draft was presented to stakeholders for their comment/feedback and the final version is now completed and is awaiting sign-off. The training in the criteria for the Gorilla Friendly standard will be rolled out over the next six months to the individuals and enterprises who have undergone technical training under Output 2.

Output 4: Marketing and promotion

We had originally envisaged that we would trial the new tourism products in one tourist zone, engage tour operators, and then roll out to other tourist zones. Our approach has however changed in order to maximise efficiency of spend of the available resources and also to reflect reality on the ground. Specifically, the training has been delivered by type of enterprise (eg crafts, honey, guides etc) rather than by geographic location and so individuals from all the tourist zones have been involved in training at the same time. Furthermore, we had anticipated that tour operators would be delivering training but this proved to be erroneous thinking on our part and our approach has been, instead, to engage technical specialists to deliver the training while keeping the tour operators engaged through regular feedback meetings. We have also been providing updates to the travel industry via the Responsible Tourism Partnership and have had some positive feedback from tour operators. For example, Naomi Jackson, Senior Operations Manager at Explore Worldwide passed us the following comment from one client: *“Myself and a couple of others in the group chose to spend an afternoon learning to weave with the lovely women at the Ride 4 a Woman charity in Bwindi. I would highly recommend this. It was a very relaxing afternoon spent chatting to, and learning about the locals.”* We will be running a session on the project at the World Travel Market in November and will use this opportunity to further engage the tour operators.

We are also identifying unanticipated opportunities that we did not include in our proposal. For example, we have had interest in the new improved baskets from commercial exporters including, for example, The Basket Room (<https://www.thebasketroom.com/>). To make the most of such opportunities we have designed a project label to apply to all the new products developed as a result of the training as a marketing tool to distinguish them from the “regular” products that have not been part of the capacity improvement process.

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 main unexpected developments are outlined above – the key one being the change in approach from using four operators to deliver training and rolling out from zone to zone. We don't see this affecting the overall impact of the project (and indeed we have been able to reach more individuals with our training programme designed in this way than we had anticipated) or the timetable. The changes will, however, have some impact on the organisation of our budget (although the total remains the same) and do affect the approach to Output 4, which will require us to revisit the logframe and adjust the indicators accordingly. The delay in developing the training materials for the Gorilla Friendly standard, coupled with this change in approach, means that the Gorilla Friendly training will be delivered separately from (and after) the technical training. The GF training is grounded in conservation and good governance values and will require specialized trainers who understand conservation-based enterprises.

Moreover, the training in GF standards will reinforce on the sustainability of the quality of products. The audit process on which the label is based, will reinforce and ensure that the certified products will cause no harm, and directly contribute to the conservation of the mountain gorillas and their habitat into the future.

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 - we are about to submit a change request for some minor budget changes but would appreciate LTS advice on whether the changes to the activities under Output 4 should also be incorporated into the change request.

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/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?

Not at the stage, thank you

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. Additionally, if you were funded under R23 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate 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**