



**Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2018)**

Project reference	24-001
Project title:	Improving forest governance for Cross River gorillas and Nigerian farmers
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Nigeria
Lead organisation	Wildlife Conservation Society
Partner(s)	1) Conservation Association of Mbe Mountains; 2) Cross River State Ministry of Climate Change and Forestry; 3) Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN); 4) Boki Local Government Area
Project leader	Inaoyom Imong
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	April – September 2018: HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	Website: https://nigeria.wcs.org/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/CRgorilla/ Twitter: https://twitter.com/WCS_Nigeria

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).

Output 1. Local farmers have been trained to increase efficiency of existing cocoa farms

During this reporting period, the project trained 35 cocoa farmers in Mbe in sustainable practices such as replanting of old unproductive farms with improved varieties of cocoa rather than clearing new forest each year to establish new farms. The farmers were also trained in other farm management techniques including land preparation, spacing, organic manuring, and reduced pesticide use. All the farmers trained were provided with improved cocoa seedlings sourced from the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) for replanting of their old, unproductive farms. Beneficiaries signed “conservation contracts” and agreed to use the seedlings provided to replant old farms and not new farms established by clearing new forest. By signing the conservation contracts, they farmers also agreed to adhere to other sustainable practices in cocoa production to reduce negative impacts on the forest. All recipients have replanted portions of their old farms with the improved seedlings provided by the project.

Output 2. Local women’s groups and young men trained in improved bush mango collection, processing, storage and marketing

In addition to training, the project is supporting Mbe women to form cooperatives in order to improve their access to large markets outside. During this reporting period, the project supported organizational capacity assessment (OCA) of women’s groups in seven communities around the Mbe Mountains that are involved in bush mango collection and marketing. The assessment was carried out to help the groups evaluate critical elements necessary for effective management, and to plan capacity-building activities to strengthen the groups.

The OCA is an interactive self-assessment process offers members of the group the opportunity to reflect on their status against recognized best practices. The assessment was done under the following five domains:

- a) Governance: vision/mission/aims and objectives, Organizational structure, democratic functional executives, legal status;
- b) Administration: written constitution/bye laws, fixed asset /inventory control;
- c) Membership management; membership list, membership benefits, gender consideration;
- d) Organizational management: group work plan, group business plan, source of group income, benefit sharing mechanism, provision of business support to members, minutes of meeting;
- e) Financial management: financial record, group/individual savings, financial audit.

The assessment revealed that all the groups were newly established, and lacked all the critical elements necessary for effective management. The project will support capacity building training to strengthen the groups and ensure their effectiveness.

Output 3. Protection of the Mbe Mountains is enhanced and community land tenure secured through legal recognition of 127km² as a “Community Managed Wildlife Sanctuary”.

This quarter, WCS facilitated two meetings with CAMM communities to help resolve a protracted disagreement within CAMM, and successfully persuaded the two aggrieved communities to rejoin CAMM. This is an important positive development as the support of all nine surrounding communities is critical for the long-term conservation of the Mbe Mountains and the disagreement slowed down progress on certain critical activities including the gazettement process. With all the communities working together again, we will work towards finalizing letters of support confirming donation of their land within the conservation area to CAMM for biodiversity conservation. This will significantly strengthen CAMM’s application to the Cross River State government for official endorsement of the Mbe Mountains as a community wildlife sanctuary.

Output 4. The effectiveness of law enforcement interventions of WCS and local communities is improved for Mbe Mountains ecosystem.

The project supported 33 SMART-based patrols of the Mbe Mountains during this reporting period. Information from previous patrols was used to plan subsequent patrols. The patrols covered a total distance of 1,588 km and lasted for 1,317 person-days. We continued to monitor patrol effort (distance walked and the number of patrol days completed), as well as hunting pressure (measured as the frequency of wire snares, hunting camps, and empty shotgun shells discarded by hunters) using SMART. Four hunters were apprehended by eco-guards and reported to CAMM for sanctions. CAMM imposes fines on offenders to deter illegal activities in the Mbe Mountains. Patrols this period also destroyed a total of 1,188 wire snares and 4 hunting camps (Table 1). Results of the patrols were shared with CAMM and other stakeholders through monthly and quarterly reports. WCS will continue to support CAMM eco-guards to carry out law enforcement patrols in the Mbe Mountains to reduce levels of hunting and other illegal activities.

Table 1. Hunting signs recorded for the period April 1 to September 30, 2018.

Sign	# of observations	Encounter rate/km
Gunshots heard	11	0.007
Set wire snares	1183	0.745
Unset wire snares	5	0.003
Empty cartridges	162	0.102
Hunting camps	2	0.001

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 project did not encounter any notable problems or unexpected developments over the last 6 months.

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: NA

Formal change request submitted: NA

Received confirmation of change acceptance NA

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?

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 R24 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**