



## Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020)

<b>Project reference</b>	24-006
<b>Project title</b>	Enhancing forest biodiversity and community resilience to Tajikistan's changing climate
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Tajikistan
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Fauna & Flora International
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Kulob Botanical Garden, Zam Zam, Muminabad Forestry Management Unit (responsible for Childukhtaron <b>(CH)</b> Reserve), Dashtijum <b>(DJ)</b> Forestry Management Unit
<b>Project leader</b>	David Gill
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)</b>	1st April 2020 – 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2020. Half Year Report, Year 4
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://www.fauna-flora.org/projects/conserving-threatened-fruit-nut-forests-tajikistan">https://www.fauna-flora.org/projects/conserving-threatened-fruit-nut-forests-tajikistan</a>

### 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

#### Output 1: Increased knowledge and understanding of forest habitats

In **Y1-Y3**, we completed several field surveys and community workshops that led to completion of a Participatory Management Plan (PMP) (for Dashtijum (DJ) only), four species status reports and action plans and a Household survey report.

In **Y4**, we focussed on disseminating these completed reports among the local communities and Forest Service Units at both project sites and to the Agency for the Forestry. These reports will help the forest product users to better understand threats to the forest habitat and the various strategies available to manage and monitor the use of forest resources, and conservation of priority species.

During **Y4**, in September, FFI, Kulob Botanical Garden (KBG), FSU staff and Zam Zam jointly completed an expedition to collect additional GPS data in DJ and Childukhtaron (CH) reserves, and monitor results of earlier fencing and planting. Data will help FSUs to measure success of tree planting and fenced monitoring plots across both reserves.

Monitoring forms established by FFI as part of a Joint Forest Management approach (a national policy that promotes devolution of forest management responsibility to local 'lease-holders') in Year 3 are being used in the field by leaseholders; and all data will be collated by FFI and the FSUs in December to measure any changes to the states of their plots after one year.

Completion of a PMP for CH was planned for March 2020 but then postponed to November 2020 due to COVID-19 as the travel of our international consultant Mr. Kamel Chorfi was cancelled. The consultant will provide online training to FFI and KBG staff on facilitation methods, and they will conduct the workshop, subject to a further review of health and safety.

#### Output 2: Improving income from fruit and nuts

Since the start of the project, FFI along with its local partner Zam Zam established saving and producer groups to contribute to the wellbeing of local communities, following

recommendations of a Participatory Market System Development (PMSD) plan completed in **Y1**. In **Y1-Y3**, at both project sites 6 producer groups and 8 saving groups were active. In **Y4**, the same 8 saving groups are active, but the numbers of the members increased from 184 to 200 people and the same 160 members are active in Producer groups. Data on income and the saved funds for **Y4** will be collected in December as harvesting is ongoing in both sites. This year, due to unexpected snowfall and a drop in the temperature during the flowering season of most of the fruits, the harvest level of some fruits is expected to be low, especially in Childukhtaron reserve. This is the second year running where poor weather has impacted harvest.

Although the impacts of COVID-19 have necessitated a significant reduction in activities with local communities, Zam Zam have found alternative and creative ways to continue support provided through **Y1-Y3**. As social events and gatherings were cancelled, Zam Zam recorded the trainings for producer and saving groups on DVD disks and along with handouts, distribute these among the saving and producer groups members. One practical training for the members of the producer groups is planned in November, involving traveling to the North of Tajikistan, Istaravshan city, to meet with representatives of a fruit drying company. To improve our understanding of the impact of the PMSD approach on community wellbeing and the overall impact of the project, a Participatory Impact Assessment is planned by the end of **Y4**, during February and March, 2021.

In order to support the local communities during this unprecedented time FFI, through its emergency funding, provided financial support to buy additional small canning and fruit processing equipment for the members of producer groups, helping people to reduce the need to use shared equipment. Other measures to promote the safety and protection of group members from COVID-19 included provision of antiseptic products, gloves and facemasks to 360 community members at DJ and CH.

### **Output 3: Forest management and promoting resilience**

Supporting forest restoration: At the beginning of **Y4**, agreements signed with the FSUs of both project sites for planting fruit and non-fruit seeds and saplings in the forests and nurseries. As per the agreement, starting from December 2020, 37200 saplings/seeds (9 species) will be planted in CH Reserve and 55000 saplings/seeds (13 species) in DJ Reserve (co-funded with the Global Trees Campaign (GTC)) to support the restoration and diversification of the forest. In addition, in **Y4** FFI secured co-funding from Lift Economy to increase tree-planting further by an additional 83,321 saplings (18 species) in DJ and CH reserves. In total, by the end of **Y4**, 175,521 saplings will be planted in the forests of DJ and CH reserves. This adds to planting of more than 400,000 trees completed **Y1-3**.

During **Y1-Y3**, 19 plot-holders were supported to fence plots to protect their land from grazing and enable greater regeneration. In **Y4**, our community mobilisers identified 28 more households with threatened tree species in their gardens and plots and who demonstrated interest in protecting them. With funding from GTC these households were provided with fencing materials.

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

No notable problems were experienced, apart from delays related to Covid-19, described below.

**2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there**

**may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

Due to the spread of COVID-19 and a following curfew, some of the projects activities - especially those related to local community participation and social gatherings - were postponed or adapted.

Despite all the restrictions, our partner Zam Zam together with FFI Tajikistan came to the solution that instead of providing trainings to the saving and producer groups, the learning materials and modules were recorded on DVD disks and printed handouts were distributed to the members of the groups so they can learn individually. The distribution process took place in the villages located at both project sites, and precautions were taken to follow the safety regulations and maintain a social distance between the participants.

Another delay in regard to our planned activity for Y4, due to COVID-19, was the planned Participatory Management Plan for CH reserve, postponed as the international consultant could not travel to Tajikistan. He will provide online training and support to local trainers to complete this workshop in his place.

**2c. 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/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

**4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

None.

**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 DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to [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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**