



Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31st October 2020)

Project reference	24-018
Project title	Enhanced biodiversity, water security, and forest recovery in northern Guinea
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Guinea
Lead organisation	Wild Chimpanzee Foundation
Partner(s)	Office Guineen des Parcs et Reserves (OGPR)
Project leader	<i>Professor Christophe Boesch</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	<i>HYR4</i>
Project website/blog/social media	www.wildchimps.org / www.facebook.com/wildchimps

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).

Activity 1.2. *An area of 40 ha is protected and reforested after site identification and consultation with community landowners by year 4*

The WCF Reforestation and Wildfire Control programs work in concert to establish and maintain reforestation sites, then protect them from the destructive effects of wildfire. In the second quarter of 2020, April-June, 253 fires were detected throughout the Park through direct observation and the continuous monitoring of the satellite-based, fire-detection system of NASA, FIRMS (Fire Information for Resource Management System). Of the 253 fires, 91% occurred in April (n= 231), with incidence declining precipitously in May, as the first rains of the year marked the end of the fire season and the start of the rainy / agricultural season. In total, of the 1,071 wildfires detected in 2020, WCF staff and community-based fire brigades were able to get 145 of the fires under control and extinguished.

As described in the year-3 annual report, 80 ha of regenerating forest (NER sites, Natural Ecological Regeneration) were protected through the use of fire management tools, firebreaks and prescribed burns. Now, as the rainy season is ending (May-October), the focus of programmatic efforts will return to preparing NER sites for the upcoming fire season. Moreover, in the 4th quarter of 2020, WCF teams will reinitiate the prescribed burn campaign and construct firebreaks to protect the previous year's NER sites, plus add another 140 ha for a total of 220 ha benefitting from protection during the 2020-2021 fire season.

Comparative studies conducted by WCF between the NER approach and the conventional nursery-raised transplant method for reforestation indicate that the NER approach is much more effective, as the survival rates of nursery-raised trees was found to be only 2%. Although the survival of nursery-raised trees is quite low, trees cultivated in the project's nurseries will serve to supplement the species diversity of NER sites and other degraded areas throughout the Park. For example, in August, 8,204 nursery-raised trees were donated in support of the annual Presidential Reforestation Initiative, benefitting 4 of the 15 communes of the Park and enhancing the greater reforestation objectives of the project area.

Activity 1.4. *24 farmers apply FMNR techniques in their fields, Model Farmers, and 125 people from the community are trained in FMNR techniques by the Model Farmers*

Relative to 2019, project activities expanded substantially in 2020, allowing for the project to have a much greater impact by engaging with a greater number of local farmers. During the reporting period, 121 farmers benefitted from continued project support and assistance in the maintenance of their FMNR (Famer-Managed Natural Regeneration) efforts, which involve the selective maintenance of certain trees in the active agricultural fields. In the second quarter of the year, 146 agroecology training sessions were conducted in 31 villages of the Park, benefitting 2157 participating farmers. Of the participants, 497 farmers are implementing 1 or more of the 11 agroecological techniques that have been taught. Of these 487 farmers, 147 are benefitting from continuous support and monthly follow-up visits from project staff. With the 3rd quarter representing the peak of the growing season, project activities shifted from the more theoretical trainings to hands-on support and demonstrations in the active fields of 133 local farmers. Techniques demonstrated included: maintenance of soil fertility and the installation of live-fencing, while 100 farmed fields benefitted from support in the installation of erosion control measures.

Activity 2.3. *30 Natural Resource Management Plans completed by the end of year 4*

During the 2nd-3rd quarter of the year, participatory natural resource maps produced in collaboration with the village committees were digitised and georeferenced. Over the past several months, spatial analyses are being conducted to determine the national park internal zoning configuration that will allow for the optimal balance between the needs of the human communities, and at the same time, the habitat needs of the resident wildlife communities of the Park. Activities under this output experienced some delays due to COVID-19 restrictions relative group size and the organisation of meetings. Nonetheless, much progress was made in the development of an integrated landscape management approach, in which environmental, biodiversity, and agricultural data were collected and are being integrated into the land-use planning.

Activity 2.7. *Capacity-building / training of 3 gardening cooperatives on subjects including: seed preparation, transplanting, bio-pesticide / fungicide preparation, cooking and nutrition, including the provision of equipment: wheelbarrow, shovel, seeds, etc., during year 3*

During the latter half of the 2nd quarter, the activities of the 96 gardening cooperatives are reaching their peak, with harvests occurring around June. Once garden products are harvested, farmers re-focus their attention and activities on the larger farmed fields that are cultivated and maintained throughout the rainy season and represent the bulk of their annual harvests.

Leading up to the harvest of the vegetable gardens, WCF staff provided technical support and training to 96 different gardening cooperatives, covering 10,721 m² of cultivated land and spread across 13 villages. Topics covered during the training sessions included: improving production, use of bio-pesticides, and techniques for conservation and storage, such as canning. The principle products harvested by the cooperatives, included: onions, tomatoes, chili peppers, eggplant, okra, and lettuce. Once products were harvested, the project provided support to cooperatives in the marketing of their products. For example, one group produced 10+ tons of onions, which were transported and sold to distributors in the nearby city of Labe, thereby providing *complete* support to local farmers at every step of the process, from sowing to the harvest and commercialisation of their products.

Activity 3.1. *20% increase in the frequency of use of the reforested corridor by wildlife in year 4*

Activity 3.2. *20% increase in the number of different species using the corridor by year 4*

At present, there are 300+ active camera-traps installed throughout the Park. Camera-traps are continuously monitored and periodically moved to different locations to ensure full coverage of the Park. Camera-trap data are downloaded on a rotating cycle of 6-8 weeks, with the number of videos downloaded during the present reporting period totalling 105,109 videos. Downloaded videos are initially processed to determine the presence of targeted wildlife species, then analysed by our team of experienced data analysts based in Labe to extract more detailed data, *i.e.* abundance, distance from camera, sex, and age. Results of these analyses will then be used to identify, spatially, potential movement corridors and their frequency of use. Final analyses will be presented in the annual report.

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.

None at this time.

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.

The prevalence of COVID-19 in Guinea reached its peak during the months of May-June, and has slowly declined since. During the peak months, project activities were reduced to those deemed “critical and/or essential”. Throughout the course of the crisis, project staff have proceeded with extreme caution, following all international and national guidelines. Project activities that were most affected were those that require community meetings, given national guidelines and restrictions on group sizes. As such, activities related to participatory planning and the development of natural resource management plans have experienced some delays. At this point, WCF intends to continue making progress on the development of the 30 natural resource management plans, as described under Activity 2.3, however it is unlikely that all 30 plans will be completed by the end of year-4 of the Darwin Initiative project.

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 at this time.

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. 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**