

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

Project reference: 24-019

Project title: Developing a Community Based Ecotourism Model at Lake Natron, Tanzania

Country(ies)/territory(ies): Tanzania

Lead organisation: BirdLife International

Partner(s) Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA); Engaresero Eramatare Community Development Initiative (EECDI); Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO); Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB); Honeyguide Foundation

Project leader: Ken Mwathe

Report date and number (e.g., HYR3): HYR1

Project website/blog/social media etc. (see social media coverage in the attached report)

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).

This brief report covers the period from **July to October 2017**:

Project approval occurred in July 2017 and the project will run to June 2020.

PMA1: Recruit Project Manager/Finance and Admin Assistant

a. Project Manager

Mr Emmanuel Mgimwa has been recruited as Project Manager. His first action was to organise the project inception meeting (see below) and to convene the first meeting of the Project Steering Committee.

Emmanuel has a Bsc. in Wildlife Science and Conservation and is currently registered for an Msc. in Wildlife Ecology (by Thesis) at the University of Dar es Salaam. He previously supported various institutions, including universities, in delivering community and research projects across Tanzania. His immediate former position was as the manager for BirdLife's USAID (PREPARED) funded Mara Wetlands Project (based in Musoma in northern Tanzania) where he was involved in the development of an Integrated Management Plan for Mara Wetlands. He demonstrated the ability to bring together many stakeholders; from local communities, to civil society, scientists to government agencies and district and regional administrators. Emmanuel is also an enthusiastic birder.

b. Finance and Administration Assistant

The project is in the process of recruiting a Finance and Administration Assistant. The terms of reference were developed and an external advert placed on the BirdLife website.¹ A total of 15 applications were received from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria out of which five candidates were shortlisted for interview. The interviews were conducted on 13th November. Suzan Temba has been selected as the new FAD Assistant. Suzan has valuable experience in both financial and administrative support of projects and will start in November 2017.

¹ <http://www.birdlife.org/job/finance-and-administration-assistant-lake-natron-ecotourism-project-based-arusha-tanzania>

PMA3: Convene inception meeting

The Project Inception meeting was held on 5th October 2017 at Mto wa Mbu township in Monduli District. The main agenda of the meeting was to introduce the project to all stakeholders, agree on project implementation structures and share lessons from other projects for synergy and collaboration.

The meeting created an understanding of the Project amongst stakeholders as well as their roles and responsibilities in the delivery and implementation of the project. The meeting also established links and network opportunities between stakeholders working in the area, village government leaders and local communities, and gave the opportunity for the participants to learn from previous work in the area and to agree on the coordination structures.

The meeting was attended by 41 participants, of which 5 were females, representing 17 different organisations and agencies from government, local community and civil society.

The full (unedited) inception meeting report is attached with this report.

The meeting was officially opened by a representative from the Regional Administrative Secretary's office based at the Regional Commissioner's Office in Arusha. He underscored the tourism potential of Lake Natron, thanked BirdLife and Darwin Initiative for the "new and timely" project and expressed optimism that the project would contribute towards changing the lives and livelihoods of local communities. He promised full government support.

BirdLife's work in Tanzania was introduced as well as the objectives and outputs of the new project. The project sought to address challenges such as poor coordination of tourism investment, poor advertisement of the area, limited capacity of local communities in managing ecotourism and business in the area and little appreciation of the value of the site for biodiversity and ecotourism. Project activities and coordination structures were also shared.

Two presentations sharing lessons from similar projects were given by African Wildlife Foundation, Lake Natron Ramsar Site Manager. A key lesson learnt from previous project implementation in the area is to consult with local communities to ensure genuine buy-in, and linking with district and regional administrations as well as ensuring that project activities are recognised within the district planning frameworks for sustainability after project closure.

During discussions the participations made the following observations and recommendations:

- i. The Arusha Regional Tourism Officer Mrs Flora Assey said the project was timely as the Regional Commissioner had formed a special committee to scrutinize the barriers and challenges against ecotourism in the Lake Natron. This project will help in addressing the identified challenges.
- ii. Hon Councillor Sakai thanked BirdLife International for prioritizing matters that are crucial to the local community such as capacity building and catchment protection through tree planting. He said the bottom-up approach of the project will support effective implementation.
- iii. The project was cautioned about politics which sometimes derails good projects. Fidelis Olekashe from AWF said it was critical to work with all leaders including politicians but ensure that the project is not derailed by politics.

Way forward

It was agreed that:

- BirdLife International to introduce the project to the village assembly at Engarasero village with participation of Magadini and Pinyinyi village leaders.
- Stakeholders and participants attending the meeting will raise awareness of the project within their networks and communities.
- Stakeholders and project partners to support and help delivery of the project and ensure that the objectives are met and outputs produced.
- BirdLife International to translate key project documents (e.g brief and power point presentations) into Swahili language and share them with local communities.

- BirdLife International to write official letter to the RAS informing his office of the role given for chairing the PSC (see below).

PMA5: Convene Project Steering Committee and Project Management Committee

i. Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee was held back to back with the inception meeting (see above) and was attended by 27 participants of those 2 were females.

The objectives of the PSC was to elect the chair as well as review and validate the draft Terms of Reference for the group.

After much discussion, it was agreed that the Project Steering Committee will:

- i. Advise BirdLife on policy, legal and institutional matters pertaining delivery of the project;
- ii. Promote cross-sectoral cooperation;
- iii. Receive, review periodic reports and advise on the periodic progress reports;
- iv. Promote awareness of and ownership of the project;
- v. Ensure that the project is implemented in line with government policies and priorities;
- vi. Advice on value for money;
- vii. Provide technical advice to the project and any other task that may arise and considered important.

Election of Chair

Out of 30 at the PSC, 27 voted for the Regional Administrative Secretary's Office to chair the PSC from the beginning to the end of the project. This will ensure ownership at the highest possible rank of government within the Arusha region. The Regional Natural Resource office and Regional Tourism office then co-chaired the meeting on behalf of the RAS office.



Regional Administrative Secretary Reps Chair the PSC for the first time

It was further agreed that the PSC TORs will be translated into Swahili and shared with members and any additional comments and inputs will be received from members via email.

The next PSC meeting will be called before the end of the first project year through the Chair.

Details of the PSC meeting are included in the attached inception meeting report.

ii. Local Project Management Team

Following the Inception Meeting, BirdLife International convened meetings with villages and traditional leaders of Engarasero, Pinyinyi and Magadini village council at Engarasero village on the 11th October 2017 and with Engaruka Juu and OldonyoLengai villages at Engaruka Juu on the 17th October 2017. The objectives of these meetings were to introduce the project to the leaders and to agree on the project deliverables and modalities of project implementation. The meeting was attended by village chairpersons, village executive officers (VEO), traditional leaders (Laigwanaan), women representatives and religious leaders. At least 51 participants, 6 of them females attended the meeting.

At the meeting:

- The participants were briefed on the project and proposed implementation plan.
- Existing village, ward and district development plans were agreed upon.
- It was agreed that each village council will be involved in monitoring project implementation and will work with the project to fast track implementation, mobilise, and address any challenges the project might face.
- They promised support and cooperation in the delivery and implementation of the project and introduce the project to their respective village assemblies.
- *Way forward:* It was agreed that each village council will develop village priorities based on the project activities and implementation plan.

Meetings with Monduli and Longido district councils

The Project Manager, accompanied by John Salehe of Nature Tanzania, visited Monduli and Longido district councils on the 18th and 19th October 2017. The aim of the meeting was to meet the district council leaders and seek political and technical support towards project implementation. The team met Mr. Hassan Kimanta the District Commissioner (DC) and acting District Executive Director (DED), Mr. Steven Ulaya. At Longido the team met with the District Administrative Secretary (DAS), Mr. Toba Nguvila and District Community Development Officer (DCDO), Mr. Hendrich Smamer.

The district leaders thanked BirdLife for the project which was hailed for being timely. They mentioned that the project will address some of the pressing challenges that hinder ecotourism development at Lake Natron. They promised full support and will share with the team District plans that directly link with the project.

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.

Apart from the later start date for the project, everything seems to be on course. We will do our best to implement the activities as scheduled in the project and will raise a flag if anything unusual happens.

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/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.

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

No

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**