



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

Project reference	25-017
Project title	Enhancing rural Caucasian community livelihoods through fruit and nut conservation
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Armenia and Georgia
Lead organisation	Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
Partner(s)	Nature Heritage NGO (Armenia), National Botanical Garden Georgia (Georgia) and Institute of Botany, Georgia (Georgia)
Project leader	<i>Dr Elinor Breman (PI), Dr Aisyah faruk (Co-PI)</i>
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	31/10/2018
Project website/blog/social media etc.	<i>Project page on Kew website currently in progress. Tweets done on Co-PI account</i>

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).

Progress updates for Outputs in project log frame

Output 1: An initial assessment of the original community in Georgia by colleagues led to a notable change in the community and resulting log frame (see notable change 2). Similarly in Armenia, the social scientist (SS) assessed the target community (Kachik village) and identified changes based on recently updated numbers of villages (see notable change 3).

Despite these changes, the teams are on track to reach their target for Output 1. The Armenian team have engaged with 100 households (average 4 people per unit) to introduce the project and distribute project leaflets. Additional leaflets will be printed and distributed to ensure the target of 60% of the community is aware of the project. In addition, they successfully hit their intended target of engaging with 30 children before the end of 2018 through conducting a quiz to introduce the project and sustainability at the local school. In Georgia, there was a delay in leaflet distribution, however, partners have finalised their design and will be printing 1,000 copies by the end of October to be distributed before the end of December 2018 in line with the log frame deadline.

Communities in both countries have been interviewed to identify the level of fruit and nut harvesting, as well as to gather preliminary information for species threat assessments. A total of 237 villages were interviewed across both communities. This represents 20% of the total adults from the Georgian community, and 10% from the total adults from the Armenian community. A further 10% of adults within the community in Armenia will be engaged to reach their target by 2019.

During this process, both communities, supported by partners and the SSs have successfully formed the Community Steering Committee (9 in Armenia and 13 in Georgia) and appointed their respective Biodiversity Champions. This is ahead of the intended log frame deadline and target number of committee members.

Three potential locations (all accessible to the community) for the demonstration plots were chosen by the community in Armenia, whilst in Georgia, the community have arranged for the

demonstration plot be located close to the local school. Again, this in in line with the intended deadline of the end of 2018.

Ahead of the March 2020 deadline, the partners in Armenia have managed to engage with 20 villages (16 females and 4 males) to introduce the theoretical and practical aspects of sustainable harvesting. This is just over 45% of the target 35 females trained by March 2020, but much less (only 11%) for the target 37 males. The partners have taken note of this and consulted the community to better understand the reason for low numbers of male attendees. We plan to enhance future workshop agendas to entice more people, particularly the male villages, to reach the 2020 target numbers. The Georgian team are currently organising their practical training workshop in collaboration with the community leaders to ensure this happens before the end of 2018.

Output 2: Partners in both countries have drafted provisional target species lists of wild fruit and nut to collect as part of the project based on literature, herbarium study and community interviews. Information on potential seeding times is being collated to enable field excursions in 2019 at the optimum time for seed collection.

Output 3: On the 3rd of September 2018, IUCN accredited trainers from RBG Kew's Plant Assessment Unit successfully trained 14 participants from both partner countries on global red-list assessments. 75% of the participants were female, exceeding the intended target of 50%. Through anonymous evaluation forms, 57% of participants felt confident enough to conduct global assessments of plant species. Since then, both our Armenian and Georgian colleagues have started field excursions to gather data for the assessments.

Output 4: Project partners in Georgia have found a suitable MSc student to conduct research. Partners in Armenia are yet to engage with an MSc student, but plan to do so before the target deadline of March 2019. Co-PI is working with other parts of the Kew directorate to draft a detailed agenda for the genetic analysis training that will take place in June 2019.

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.

Notable change request 1: Prior to the project starting, staff cost for the Red List facilitator and the related overheads needed moving from year 2 into year 1 to ensure that red list training was completed by the intended deadline in Output 3.1 of the Log Frame. Change request successful.

Notable change request 2: Partners from the National Botanical Garden Georgia (NBGG) notified us that the target community, Ebnisi, was no longer suitable for the project due to villagers moving for economic reasons and issues with maintaining the demonstration plots. NBGG engaged with a larger community nearby, Mchadijvari, which is within the same municipality and shares the same Mayor. The new target community has a larger population and a more reliable water supply for maintaining the demonstration plots past the project end.

The numbers within the log frame needed adapting in order to retain the same proportion of the community engaged with the project. In addition, funding for the SS had to be increased to reflect the higher number of people to be interviewed. We requested that the underspend from the travel budget (Red list training) could be reassigned to cover this increase. Change request approved.

A further impact relates to the timing of the leaflet distribution and the workshop. The partners had intended to conduct these activities within the reporting period (Q2) but due to these changes, the activity had to be delayed until Q3. This is, however, still within the deadline outlined in the log frame.

Notable change request 3: Due to ill health, a new SS had to be engaged in Armenia. The new SS has already visited the target community, thoroughly updating population statistics. The original agreement outlined a total of 968 villagers (428 male, 490 female and 50 children) based on 2011 census. According to the current analysis, the number of adults has decreased

to 713 villagers (365 male and 348 female) in 2018. We will submit a Change of Request form to update the log frame accordingly in a separate email.

Notable change request 4: As with NBGG, the second project partner in Georgia (Institute of Botany) have also reported an underspend in relation to the travel budget totalling £. To utilise the underspend effectively and in line with project objectives, we request that it be transferred to procure equipment relating to red listing and seed collecting activities. We will submit a Change of Request form for this change in budget lines in a separate email.

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
Changes 1 and 2 have been discussed with LTS. Changes 3 and 4 have not.

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No
Changes 1 and 2 have formal changes submitted. Changes 3 and 4 have not.

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No
Change 1 and 2 have been confirmed. Changes 3 and 4 are pending.

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: £

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

In relation to the underspend, this figure represents the change of request mentioned in the Notable Change 4 above. If the changes are approved, there will be no underspend in relation to the project for Year 1.

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**