



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

Project reference: 25-029

Project title : Rehabilitation of the ecosystem of the Park W landscape

Country(ies)/territory(ies): Niger

Lead organisation: TREE AID

Partner(s): COGEZOH

Project leader: Aboubacar Gadage

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

Project website/blog/social media etc.

<https://www.treeaid.org.uk/2018/strengthening-forest-management-mali/>
<https://www.facebook.com/TREEAID/>

@TREEAID = twitter account

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).

The project is on track and has already made good progress against the planned outputs. Below is a summary of progress against the agreed timetable (showing only activities that were intended to begin in Q2)

Output 1 Local communities in 12 villages in the peripheral area of the park W have their capacities strengthened in sustainable forest management

1.1 Assessment of the COFOBs and COFCOM in the intervention area

The project team finalised the identification and selection of the 12 villages which will benefit from the project. Then between the 5th and 14th of September 2018, the village land tenure commissions (COFOBs) located in the 12 targeted villages and the commune level commission (COFCOM) located in the Tamou commune were assessed to determine their level of organisation and operation and the level of support they need. In several villages the COFOBs do not exist or are not functioning at all and where they do exist they lack technical and operational capacities. Moreover, the existing COFOBs and the COFCOM need to be supported to become more inclusive and integrate more women and people from different socio-economic groups as members.

1.4 Update land use maps of the Tamou Faunal Reserve

The mapping of the 12 targeted villages as well as the Tamou Faunal Reserve started. The project team organised a participatory evaluation in order to understand the uses of the resources in the project areas and the situation of the biodiversity and the conflicts linked to wildlife. Hot spot areas were identified around the Reserve as well as degraded areas to benefit from our water and soil conservation, rehabilitation and assisted natural regeneration actions. This process will inform the development of 12 local conventions and the management plan for the Tamou Faunal Reserve. The land use maps will be generated in year 2.

1.5 Development of 12 local conventions and one management plan for the Tamou Faunal Reserve based on the updated land use maps.

Activity 1.4 needs to be completed before activity 1.5 can start.

Output 2 Developed partnership between Park W management authorities and local communities in order to protect the biodiversity of the WTBR/Niger

2.1 Local exchange forum between the forest guards, the management unit of the WTBR and 24 patrol members in order to establish system of data collection, protection and surveillance.

Between the 28th and 30th of September, 55 people attended the forum including 13 forest guards, the 18 patrol members, 3 representatives from the management of the WTBR, 7 forest agents, 5 staff from COGEZOH, 7 forest officers, 6 post guard chiefs, 2 village chiefs and the Director of Human Resources for the Ministry of Environment. The meeting was an opportunity to remind each participant of their role and responsibilities in the control of natural resources. The participants also had the opportunity to share the difficulties they face in their collaboration and the obstacles that impact their ability to be effective. The Director of Human Resources from the Ministry of Environment reminded the participants of the work of the Water and Forests Officers according to Nigerien law. All the participants confirmed their willingness to collaborate on the project.

2.3 Training of the 24 patrol members on the different fauna species in the area and on data collection

Two training sessions have been organised between the end of August and the end of September 2018, attended by 18 people from 9 of the project villages. The remaining 3 villages (6 people) will have their training at the end of October. The training is focusing on data collection, the type of data to collect, the methodology for the data collection and to whom the data should be transferred.

2.4 Development of a coordination unit for local patrol and follow up activities.

The project team identified the stakeholders which will take part in this coordination unit (representatives of the park management unit, COGEZOH, patrol groups and project staff). The unit will be effective next semester.

2.8 Establishment of demonstration plots for physical protection techniques against Human-Wildlife conflicts

In August, the project team purchased all the equipment to establish the demonstration plots which include wire fences, other small material, chilli seeds, and cuttings from *Comifora Africana*. Two demonstration plots are completed and 4 are under development. The 6 demonstration plots aim to show the population how to reduce the damage and incursion from wild carnivores to their livestock. It's important for the farmers to understand that the only way to keep their livestock safe during the night around the park is to keep them in enclosed areas. This initiative will contribute to reduce livestock loss for the local communities as well as reducing the reprisals on wildlife. This activity needed to be started during the rainy season as the cuttings from *Comifora Africana* need water to sprout out.

2.9 Establishment of an early warning system

This activity didn't start yet. Bikes will be bought and distributed to the local patrol members once they are all identified and trained. This will happen over the next couple of months.

Output 3 Supporting local economic development through the establishment 10 VTEs based on sustainable forest product value chains

Some potential products for the future VTEs have been identified in each village such as honey and products based on honey and wax, soap or creams.

Project Start up, Monitoring and Evaluation

1.1 Project launch

The official launch of the project will be held between end of October and beginning of November (depending on Government officials availability) with the participation of the implementing partner and different project stakeholders.

1.2 Workshop to define the M&E plan with the partner

The workshop attended by the implementing partner, TREE AID Niger, TREE AID West Africa and the management unit of Park W was organised between the 1st and 3rd of August at the general directorate of Water and Forest. The purpose of the meeting was to remind participants of Darwin's expectations, their responsibilities in the project but also to define the appropriate tools and approaches to adopt for good project implementation. The team also went through the expected results, activity planning, budget, beneficiary selection and the project priorities in order to have everybody on the same page.

During the meeting, COGEZOH staff were trained on the Darwin and TREE AID narrative and financial reporting tool. At the end of the meeting, a detailed plan for the next quarter (Jul-Sep) had been developed.

Establishment of project baseline (baseline on biodiversity)

It will take place during the next semester as the same time as the RHoMIS survey.

RHoMIS (Socio-economy baseline)

It will take place during the next semester as planned. This is so that the VTE beneficiaries can be identified and targeted to track their income.

Training M&E collection for the partner

The training will be organised end of October / beginning of November.

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.

A delay in the transfer of funds caused a small delay at the beginning of the activities.

Moreover, a violent conflict between the Park W officers and a number of inhabitants of the village of Gosso Peulh (one of our targeted villages) emerged which led to the death of three people including one forester and 2 community members. This threatened the successful implementation of the project in the area as the forester didn't want to go in the village anymore and the community were living in the fear of getting arrested. However, TREE AID and its partner COGEZOH took steps with the authorities in charge of the Park, the Prefect, the mayor and the local communities which defused the situation. The first contact with representatives of the community helped restore trust between the different actors which is essential for the good implementation of the project.

The third challenge is the accessibility of certain areas during heavy rain. The flooding of certain roads made access to some villages impossible.

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:	No
Formal change request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	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?

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**