



Darwin Initiative/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2019)

Project reference	26-005
Project title	Green Health: improving indigenous participation through the CBD's ABS
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Guatemala
Lead organisation	UCL
Partner(s)	UVG
Project leader	Michael Heinrich
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	HYR1
Project website/blog/social media etc.	https://twitter.com/HealthDarwin

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).

Activities that have been scheduled, in the agreed timeline, to happen or start in Q1 and Q2.

1.1 A 'round table' comprising all relevant stakeholders to sign a cooperation agreement for the project's duration, following a TD format.

A successful meeting with all the relevant stakeholders was held with intensive discussions about the project's purpose and a general agreement on future activities. The government agency CONAP completed its institutional process to adhere to this project formally in Sept 2019, assigning two officials. Institutional letters of commitment, in agreement with the operational plan, have been obtained from all partners. Final signatures on the cooperation agreement required the presence of all that will sign and this will be executed in the November meeting.

1.2 Writing and submission of IRB protocols for UK, Guatemala and Maya council.

It was established and agreed by UCL (UK) that there is no need for an internal ethical approval as fieldwork and derived data will be handled solely by UVG staff. UCL will only analyse secondary data on plant species based on material supplied by UVG. Protocol for the ethical approval from UVG (Guatemala) and the governmental protocol for plant collection have been submitted and an agreement with Releb'aal Saq'e stating approval of Maya protocol compliance (equivalent to an IRB) has been obtained.

1.3 Appointment/election of a TD steering board constituted by at least 30% women and 25% indigenous leaders, signing of MOU with operational plan for year 1.

The TD steering board has been elected, in presence of all stakeholders and the constitution is as follows: two representatives of the ACGERS Council (Pablo Ax and José Ché), two representatives of CONAP (Gloria Apen and Jose Luis Echeverría), one representative of UCL (Michael Heinrich), one representative of UVG CES (Mónica Berger) and one of UVG CEAB (Ana Isabel Ambrosy), one representative of the private sector UK (Alan Hesketh). This steering board is 38% female and 38% indigenous. In addition, a Consulting body was created to provide specialized support, conformed of Martin Hitziger (CITES), Ian Thompson (ABS expert), and Inés Puluc (Maya scholar from the Maya Kaqchikel University). The operational plan was co-designed by all stakeholders during the kickoff TD meeting and will be formalized as an MoU to be signed in the November meeting (see 1.1).

1.4 Steering board meetings are conducted to discuss the development of the framework with all stakeholders (including preparation of materials for discussion).

This activity is scheduled to take place through most of the project time. Following election of the TD steering board, it started the discussion over the work and the vision to guide the project. Steering board meetings are scheduled and will continue throughout the duration of the project.

1.5 Conduction of eight TD workshops for discussion and negotiation of components for implementing Addis Ababa's principles and Nagoya.

The first TD workshop, in presence of all stakeholders, took place in August in Guatemala City. The different parties undertook a series of activities to help communication and discussion of their purposes, final aims and personal desires for this project. The workshop was fundamental in clarifying doubts and assess concerns/fears, through an open communication of potential dangers and obstacles. The action points for the next few months have been agreed and tasks have been assigned. A document was produced as evidence (memoire) of all activities conducted and agreements reached, which is an integral part of the MoU all parties will sign in November (see 1.1.).

2.1 Organisation of community meetings via AGERS Council to present project details to elders, individual enrolment of healers, creation of participants' list within Maya ceremonial protocol.

Eight community meetings have been conducted in Poptun with men and women representing the AGERS Council. The council chose a small committee comprised of 8 people (6 men and 2 women) to represent their interests in all activities concerning this project to be held locally, nationally and internationally. This committee met all the other stakeholders and discussed the project outline and details. Three ceremonies were conducted to a) request permission to address this project, b) bless the women to be involved in the new gender approach of the project, and c) request for the "opening of the roads" to conduct this project, request permission for the participation of the foreign colleagues (UK), which was granted, and bless all participants. Three workshops have been held in Poptun to start the ethnographic component of the project, one with female healers, and two with male healers. Both groups followed the Mayan protocol to elect a final list of participants, comprising 27 women and 21 men.

2.2 Initial ethnographic research of most-common referred plant lists per ailment (syndromic and cultural ailments).

The ethnographic research on the published literature has started and it is due to continue for further 3 months. In the meantime, an initial short list of selected plants has already been compiled ahead of the TD workshop, in order to explain methodologies and aims of the project, and to provide ground for discussion. Ethnographic field data collection has been on-going for two months with 21 ajkoom (traditional healers). We are creating a "cultural epidemiology" database, where healers record all patient cases, focusing on cultural diagnosis, selected treatment and specific phytotherapy employed.

2.3 Participatory observation, interview and focus groups to build up medical case studies.

Since June 2019 the team at UVG has been working with the healers to teach and make them practice how to collect valuable and relevant field data, related to their medical/spiritual practice. The healers have started compiling journals with their patient cases and treatments, which will constitute the basis for the later selection of 25 case studies that the project will focus on.

3.1 Sharing information on medicinal species (from output 2) with industrial partners and identification of species with commercial potential, protectable by IP rights

This activity is scheduled to take place over several months but has been initiated with the sharing of the initial short list (mentioned in 2.2). This has allowed the industrial partners to use the list as an example to explain to the other stakeholders, in practical terms, what they are seeking and consider desirable from a commercial perspective. A decision tree on the selection of species for commercial development is under discussion.

4.2 Establish the baseline of access and availability of medicinal plants to the healers

GPS data for almost 200 accessions have been collected. However, based on the outcomes of the ethnographic work and the long-term goals of this project, a minimum of 20 target species will be selected for guaranteeing improved access.

On a separate note: With partial support through UCL's Global Engagement Office, a stakeholder meeting with participants from Chile, Colombia, México and Peru was held at the UCL School of Pharmacy (08.10.19), which provided important insights into the implementation of the NP in these countries (and the associated challenges). M. Hitziger, who could not attend the meeting in Guatemala also attended. We are in also in contact with representatives of the next CoP (Kunming China), regarding a possible contribution of the project partners to the CoP2020.

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.

UVG Staff has experienced serious difficulties due to the delays in the transfer of funds resulting in their salaries not being paid and for the Darwin activities taking place in Guatemala, including kick-off meeting and TD workshop. This created considerable emotional and financial strain on UVG staff (not receiving salary) on top of having to resort to personal loans in order to organise the project's activities due to late funds. In order to avoid this, it has been proposed that trimester fund allocation request be sent one month in advance now that the overseas cash-flow mechanisms have been established.

In addition, clarifying the requirements of said cash flow mechanisms between the UK and Guatemala should have been established earlier on.

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 N/A

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.

We do not expect to incur into significant underspend

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

As part of the TD focus on horizontal project management, the Maya partners will be responsible for directly executing part of the money intended for research with indigenous healers and patients. UVG has signed a contract with the Council to allocate quarterly funds (from the Guatemala budget already received by UVG). This makes more efficient and transparent the timely payment of direct costs incurred by healers' participation in this project, while at the same time builds capacity for adequate fund management at the local level.

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 R25 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 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: 25-035 Darwin Half Year Report**