



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

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)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	https://twitter.com/HealthDarwin

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).

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

In the past six months, steering board meetings have continued, allowing discussion, decision-making guiding the project through challenging conditions, i.e. the pandemic. Further meetings are scheduled and will continue throughout the duration of the project. Minutes of each meeting are available on request. A large part of the discussions had to be moved online.

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

This activity has been severely affected by the pandemic. The first workshop of Y2 was organised for May 2020, but had to be cancelled, ultimately because the borders of Guatemala are closed. The TD workshop was rescheduled for November 2020 and then online in early December 2020. It is most likely that remote mode will reduce the effectiveness of policy discussions and persuasive reasoning with Government officials and other stakeholders but at this stage there is no alternative.

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

This activity went well, but had to stop in late March, due to government policies on COVID -19 in Guatemala. It is expected to restart in November 2020, with the extended delay of around 4 months and to be finished by Y3Q2.

2.4 Analysis of the ethnomedical and ethnobotanical data to assess how gender, age and socio-cultural background affect access and use of medicinal plants.

Data gathering was delayed by 4 months, as researchers were not allowed/able to gather data (interviews and collection, see 2.5) due to the lockdown and travel restrictions within Guatemala (i.e. to the region of work). To manage the activity under these circumstances, local healers, who had in-person training during previous fieldwork trips, went to collect plants and gather the data independently, instead of UVG researchers. Online meetings were held to organise the healers' fieldwork and the UVG team is currently analysing the collected data/specimens sent. Some data still needs to be collected.

2.5 At least 90% of plants used by the healers in the medical case studies are collected, deposited and identified at UVG herbarium.

This activity is ongoing but considerably delayed, as key months to collect flowering (identifiable) specimens were lost due to the stringent travel and work restrictions imposed in Guatemala during the pandemic. A number of specimens have been collected this month, but couldn't be deposited at UVG herbarium due to lockdown in Guatemala and UVG. Nonetheless, UVG researchers are working

remotely identifying the last batches of collected specimens. It is necessary to extend collection period into the first quarter of year 3 (as mentioned in 2.4).

2.6 Integration of academic knowledge on the species collected through literature research on traditional uses, toxicological and pharmacological assessment (safety and efficacy) based on bibliographic evidence.

The integration of academic knowledge for the plant species collected is ongoing. It has been achieved for the species positively identified up to this point and bibliographic evidence has been found for several species. It will be completed once collection and identification of species is complete.

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

The information from the initial and ongoing list of identified species has been shared with the industrial partners. A series of online meetings and email discussions were used to decide upon the specific criteria to be used for the selection of species with commercial potential.

3.2 Selection of 1 or 2 plants from the list produced by the industrial partners in 3.1 that will be used as a proof of concept.

This activity is taking place now. Several considerations about the species are taken into account within the discussion on the selection of the plants and will be finished by the end of Y2Q4. Importantly, pre-existing knowledge on the species, their safety and accessibility are taken into account focusing on eight species.

3.3 Stakeholders meetings/workshops lead by the industrial partners to build a model ABS agreement.

This activity is still on track; the model ABS agreement has been drafted by our industrial partner and was meant to be discussed in the TD workshop in May (cancelled due to the pandemic). Discussion with all stakeholders on the ABS proposal is a key step of this project and ideally should have been done face-to-face, but the circumstances are uncertain, therefore such discussion will be approached in the online workshop of December. The intent is to revise the draft based on the discussion results.

3.4 Workshops to present the model agreement to the broader indigenous groups to facilitate consensus and agreement on potential pathways to benefits

The model ABS agreement, from 3.3, has been drafted and will be presented to broader indigenous groups once it has been discussed with all stakeholders in the workshop of December 2020, revised and approved. The delayed workshop reduced the time left for revision and approval before the deadline of Y2Q4. Therefore, there could be a potential delay for the presentation of the agreed model; nonetheless, if such activity were to be manageable remotely, it could still be achieved in time.

3.5 Stakeholders' meetings to discuss examples of non-monetary benefits of interest to the communities involved or propose new ones.

This activity has been started through online meetings to discuss possible benefits of interest to the communities involved. The December workshop will be crucial for this activity.

4.2 Consensus meeting with AGERS Council elders to choose local options for assisted (artificial) reproduction of key species

This activity has been completed. An online TD workshop was held to prioritise and select plants for assisted reproduction. ACGERS Council elders, with the assistance of the UVG staff, decided on the priorities. The reproduction was selected and information on environmental data for assisted reproduction researched to implement a baseline plan for starting artificial reproduction in 2021.

4.6 Meetings for the identification of biodiversity-rich areas (including key medicinal plants) that could be targeted for protection (GIS mapping).

This activity is on hold, as the identification of said areas is tied to identification of the richest collection sites. The activity could be completed only once collection of plant specimens has finished (see 2.5, 2.6).

5.1 Writing of lay publications regarding process (replication) and outcomes (communities' information process), dissemination in digital and printed forms.

This activity is ongoing. The data collection during the past few months is being used to provide an overall view of the process and outcomes. There is still some data to be collected, but drafting of lay publications has started.

5.2 Writing of academic papers.

This is an ongoing activity, a paper has been published, papers on the methodology will be produced based on the remote meetings held in the past months and the TD workshop of December 2020.

5.3 Production of videos and dissemination in online-formats.

Activity currently on hold and delayed due to COVID-19 impact. It is now scheduled to be finished by Y3Q2, but country policies and time constraints may delay it.

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.

UVG Staff continue to experience serious difficulties due to delays in funds transfer from UCL to UVG, resulting in salaries not being paid. This is due to issues with the banks involved in the chain of transfer and we are currently changing the transfer from GBP to USD. The problem is outside of the teams' control, but creates considerable financial and emotional 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, trimester fund allocation requests need be sent one month in advance now that the overseas cash-flow mechanisms have been established.

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.

Scheduled fieldwork was cancelled and delayed for 5 months due to the national lockdown in Guatemala. Even afterwards, researchers were not allowed to travel by UVG policy. This affected all activities based on fieldwork (2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 4.6) and will impact the budget. Delayed/on hold activities have to be moved to the last quarter of Y2 and even to Y3. A change request form is being drafted. Online meetings were held to keep track of different activities and guide the project as well as online training for healers about fieldwork. The discussion with ACGERS, for activity 4.2, had to be adapted in the form of an online workshop (key species to prioritize for PopolJay). It was necessary to organise a number of tutorial videos to support the activities that healers had to take on instead of UVG researchers. This included good practice in fieldwork training as well as specific equipment use.

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: No

An initial and preliminary projection of COVID impact on the activities was attached to Y1 report. However, having now established a strategy for adapting the project and the move to an online meeting in December, a change request form will be made soon.

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: £ *

*please note this is a projection and the exact amount will be clarified in the Change Request Form

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.

We have a significant underspend of UCL's travel budget and it is anticipated that this will be included in a change request as well as some changes to the schedule as indicated above.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? (things you may know that probably I am not aware of?)

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.

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**