

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref No	EIDPO042
Project Title	Implementing community-based landscape and resource monitoring to consolidate voluntary conservation
Country(ies)	Mexico
UK Organisation	Global Diversity Foundation
Collaborator(s)	Instituto de Ecología (INECOL), GDF-Mesoamerica (Investigación y Acción Biocultural, <i>Ánima Mundi</i>), Oaxaca State Ministry of Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries Development, Universidad de la Sierra Juárez and Centro de Investigaciones Tropicales - Universidad Veracruzana.
Project Leader	Gary J. Martin
Report date	31 October 2012
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	General updates on the project are available on GDF's UK website, http://www.global-diversity.org/mesoamerica/projects/community-monitoring-chinantla

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

As proposed in our project timetable, we have dedicated the first six months of the project to six broad sets of activities: 1) Monitoring and pGIS programme, 2) training in participatory monitoring methods, 3) Participatory research and adaptive management implementation, 4) Advanced training for research centres and academic institutions, 5) Dissemination, and 6) Coordination, follow-up and evaluations. These activities have been developed in the three main recipient communities of the project: San Pedro Tlapeusco, Santiago, Tlapeusco and Nopalera del Rosario; one additional activity was carried out in San Antonio Analco, a collaborating community.

Monitoring and pGIS programme. Between May and July 2012, we coordinated efforts with the Mexican Network on Ethnoecology and Biocultural Patrimony, which funded a process of community territorial planning (CTP) for the community of Nopalera del Rosario. Implemented by GDF-MA and our consultant David Jiménez, this process allowed us to complement the management plans for Santiago and San Pedro Tlapeusco – produced as part of our previous Darwin-funded project – by elaborating a management plan for Nopalera del Rosario. This, in turn, has ensured that we work to build local monitoring strategies in an integrated manner among all three communities.

Between September 23 to 29 we started the process of training in basic pGIS (Activity 1.1) with a community workshop in San Pedro Tlapeusco directed at its new team of Community Researchers. During this workshop, the latter were trained in the importance and usefulness of maps, reading maps and their elements, micro- and macro-location, scale mapping, base maps and technical maps. All the themes followed a theoretical and hands-on approach, accompanied by practical exercises that allowed community researchers to learn the techniques and the production of community maps (Activity 1.2). These techniques will be further put into practice and integrated with the rest of the monitoring activities.

Training in participatory monitoring methods. We started the training in participatory methods by organising a workshop in the communities of Santiago and San Pedro Tlapeusco, with the aim of developing basic research abilities and concepts with the new teams of

community researchers. Between August 12 and 18, we carried out a workshop, in collaboration with our project partner INECOL, in which 10 new community researchers were trained in (i) the overall process of research, (ii) identification of conflicts and opportunities regarding natural resource management, and (iii) elaboration of research questions based on those conflicts and opportunities. More specific training events – on creating expanded plant and animal registers (Activity 2.1), on floristic composition, vegetation characterization and monitoring (Activity 2.2), on animal species abundance and monitoring (Activity 2.3) and on basic weather monitoring (Activity 2.6) – have been postponed to the following months (please see box 2, p.4 below for explanations). We also conducted other training activities, such as computer training for community authorities of Analco on June 13 and 14, which will allow them to register information regarding natural resource management projects. Moreover, a workshop on “History, Agrarian Law and Ethnodevelopment in Mexico” was carried out on July 6 to 11 in Nopalera, Santiago and San Pedro Tlatepusco.

Finally, between July 15 and 23, external consultants and collaborators from “Kooperativa Rayenari”, Cristóbal López and Nydia Prieto conducted a workshop called “Kasa de las Historias” (House of stories). The purpose of this workshop was to continue integrating natural resource management and monitoring with local cultural expressions and dissemination among the communities’ youth. Primary school students at Santiago and San Pedro Tlatepusco narrated, recovered and illustrated local stories related to local plants, animals, vegetation, water and other natural resources. Considerable material was produced, including children's poetry and story books, and poetry illustrations. Additionally, based on all of this material, “Kooperativa Rayenari” has produced a book on oral traditions of the Tlatepusco communities and a children's colouring book. The material will also be analysed by GDF-MA intern Brenda Lira, as part of her undergraduate thesis, which deals with how Chinantec stories can be understood as indigenous literature related to biocultural diversity.

Participatory research and adaptive management implementation. Although the specific community training workshops for monitoring activities have not yet started, we have been developing, in collaboration with our partners INECOL and Universidad de la Sierra Juárez, the protocols for training and research in every monitoring theme that will be covered by the project. Additionally, we have begun the expanded inventories of useful plants (Activity 3.1). Through a detailed revision of the digital herbarium databases produced during the previous Darwin project, the specialist on Chinantec flora Claudia Gallardo (INECOL) is working on determining scientific names. The monthly weather monitoring (Activity 3.3) has not started due to the lack of a meteorological station. Given our lack of funds for such an acquisition, unless we are able to secure funds from elsewhere, we are considering omitting this activity from the overall project.

Advanced training for research centres and academic institutions. Although the formal training activities for research centres and academic institutions are set to start in 2013, GDF-MA staff are currently supervising the undergraduate thesis of the intern Brenda Lira on Chinantec stories as indigenous literature related to biocultural diversity. Brenda, who is accompanying us through the project's framing and implementation, is learning a great deal about the biocultural diversity approach, specific ethnographic and anthropological methods for data collection, and ethics and best practice for social research with communities.

Dissemination. Between April 25 and 27, Claudia Camacho, along with GDF-MA field biologists Ana Laura Terán and Elisa Santana, participated in the VIII Mexican Congress of Ethnobiology, at Tabasco, Mexico, where they presented the general project approaches during a presentation entitled “*Knowing and protecting a problematic zoological group: the bats of the Chinantla, Oaxaca*” (Activity 5.1). This paper synthesises GDF's community-led approach to sustainable natural resource management, which integrates training, monitoring, environmental education and local culture. Between May 21 and 25, project leader Gary J. Martin and GDF-MA staff Claudia Camacho and Carlos del Campo participated in the 13th International Congress of Ethnobiology (ICE) at Montpellier, France, where they presented this project's approaches through two presentations: a) “*Community-based studies of territory and habitats to support traditional management and biodiversity conservation in a Chinantec community in*

northern Oaxaca, Mexico” during a session entitled “Traditional Ecological Knowledge Related to Vegetation and Habitats”; and b) “*The denial of biocultural diversity: how conservation market mechanisms disrupt food sovereignty in an indigenous community of Oaxaca, Mexico*” during a session entitled “Exploring the linkages between biodiversity, rural food systems and institutions within diverse landscapes” (Activity 5.2).

The community cross-visits (Activity 5.7) were originally planned for the 4th quarter of FY1. However, we decided to start these early when we were alerted to an ideal opportunity: a summer exchange workshop (29 July – 3 August 2012), which took place at the National Centre for Indigenous Missions (CENAMI in Spanish), entitled “Agrarian and community territorial defence”. Representatives from Santiago Tlapeusco, San Pedro Tlapeusco and Nopalera del Rosario participated in the workshop: they exchanged experiences, information and lessons learnt with representatives from other Mexican communities regarding the effects and consequences of Mexican agrarian legislation, new mechanisms for the privatisation of indigenous territories, extractive mega-projects, agricultural re-conversion, experiences of territorial defense, REDD initiatives and the green economy. These are all themes that are at the root of current problems and opportunities the Chinantec community researchers are beginning to explore as part of this project; they reported back to us that they found this opportunity for broader exchange to be extremely valuable.

In addition to the activities included in the original project timetable, between April 11-14, former GDF-MA collaborator Antonia Barreau participated in the Society of Ethnobiology Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado, where she presented the work: “*Neoliberal conservation and the division between nature and culture: Payments for environmental services disrupt food sovereignty in an indigenous community of Oaxaca, Mexico*” based on the work that she and Tomás Ibarra developed in Santiago Tlapeusco, as part of the previous Darwin project. As an international dissemination activity, project leader Gary J. Martin and GDF-MA staff Claudia Camacho and Carlos del Campo participated in the pre-congress workshop of the 13th ICE entitled “*Conservation by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Advances in Participatory Action Research, Dissemination and Advocacy*”, organised by GDF, BEDE, TCF and the ICCA forum. During the latter, all the methodological, research, dissemination and ethical aspects of the present project were shared with an international and very diverse group of indigenous representatives, practitioners and academics. As an additional dissemination activity, we translated into Spanish the paper “*When formal and market-based conservation mechanisms disrupt food sovereignty: Impacts of community conservation and payments for environmental services on an indigenous community of Oaxaca, Mexico*” and distributed copies to Chinantec communities. This paper was written during the last Darwin Initiative-funded project, and this particular local dissemination initiative is an important part of our continuing collaborative research approach.

Coordination, follow-up and evaluations. On June 15th, we carried out the first partners meeting for the project (Activity 5.5) with the participation of INECOL scientists Luciana Porter, Federico Escobar, Claudia Gallardo, and Matthias Röss; Irma Juan Carlos (SEDARFP Oaxaca); María Delfina (ISNJ- Oaxaca); Eddi Ellis (CITRo U.V.); David Jiménez (Altepetl A.C.); and GDF-MA staff Claudia Camacho, Carlos del Campo, Ronny Roma and Maricruz Rodríguez Audirac. We reviewed, collectively, the entire project, its approaches, detailed activities, responsibilities and logistical arrangements in order to ensure that activities would be developed in a smooth and integrated manner. Between May 7 and 13, GDF’s new Regional Programmes Director, Emily Caruso, visited the communities along with GDF-MA field coordinator Ronny Roma, to get to know field sites, the community research teams and the authorities at San Pedro and Santiago. GDF-MA staff also participated in regional and local community assemblies and working meetings with the leaders of CORENCHI (May 12), Nopalera (June 16-18), San Pedro (June 27, July 18, September 20), and Santiago (June 30, July 29-30, September 18). We also worked with the recently formed new CR teams in formal meetings (May 14 to 23, July 25 to 31, September 19) in order to establish good working relationships with all of them. Overall, as part of our project oversight, we maintain ongoing internal coordination and evaluation through face-to-face and Skype meetings.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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.

During the first six months of the project, we have encountered a delay in the implementation of activities 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.6, which are all elements of community training for resource monitoring. This delay has arisen principally as a result of intense political activity in the Chinantla region during this period. Consequently, local authorities, community members and government and non-government institutions working in these areas have been obliged to dedicate considerable time to numerous meetings, during which a number of projects ongoing in Chinantec communities were discussed, clarified and decided upon by communities. At the heart of these political tensions lies the desire by communities to protect and defend their territories in the face of certain development and conservation policies and projects. The policies and projects they object to often lack clear objectives and explicit agendas, and are likely to affect local rights to resources, food sovereignty or autonomous decision-making regarding the use and management of their natural resources. GDF-MA has been called upon repeatedly to advise those communities who are facing such policies and projects and to mediate in discussions between community authorities and the proponents of these interventions. This investment of time and energy has gone beyond what we could have predicted, and yet represents an essential aspect of our continued good work among Chinantec communities and could not be avoided. During the second quarter of the project, we expect to be able to implement field activities without delay, to recover for lost time, and to continue to progress in line with our original project implementation plan.

Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

No, these issues have not been discussed with LTS International yet.

Discussed with LTS: **no/yes, in.....(month/yr)**

Formal change request submitted: **no/yes, in.....(month/yr)**

Received confirmation of change acceptance **no/yes in.....(month/yr)**

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £

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.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**