

Progress report

Reporting period: October 2010 – March 2011

1. PROJECT GENERAL INFORMATION

Implementing Agency:	Vétérinaires Sans frontières Belgium
Project partners:	IUCN – AWF
Geographical Scope:	The W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP) Parks Complex (Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger)
Participating Countries:	Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger
Total Budget	US\$ 143.325
Co-financing:	US\$ 0
Total Cost:	US\$ 143.325
Disbursement as of 30 March 2011	US\$ 58.050
Actual expenditures reported as of:	US\$ 0
Total co-financing realized as:	Cash: 0
	Kind: 0

2. Project status as per the last reporting period

NA for the first report

3. Achievements during the reporting period

The overall level of operational achievement is quite limited for the period. This is justified by the need to create the pre-conditions for a successful implementation of the project.

In addition, the local context in the three countries of intervention around the W Park has not always been very favourable in recent months. Niger was emerging from a severe food crisis that occupied the entire humanitarian community for several months, before capitalizing the lessons learnt from this experience. Subsequently, the risk of terrorist insecurity (attack and kidnapping) was increased with severe restrictions on travel for expatriates, even south of the country yet known to be safer. Eventually, the end of the political transition, marked by a series of democratic elections, grabbed the attention of the authorities and restrained the achievement of launching workshops. In Burkina Faso, some disturbances of public order, which continue until now, even forced IUCN to postpone the launching workshop scheduled in Fada Gourma in late March. In Benin, recent months have been marked by a turbulent election campaign. All these elements are not conducive to a good start of field activities. Once things are back to normal, the launching workshops should be conducted and allow the operationalization of the project in the field. Otherwise, the project will have to find alternatives so as not to further delay the implementation (meetings between partners, joint targeting in the field, minimalist approach to start...).

The first six months enabled to work on the following issues:

- **A better understanding and internalization of the project**

Several formal and informal exchanges at the start failed to clarify a good understanding of VSF-B mission in the L4LP. Subsequently, a meeting with the project coordinator based in Nairobi, Dr. N'Guetta Bosso, lifted all ambiguity.

From this meeting, it emerged that VSF mission is mainly to help pastoral and agro-pastoral communities to increase their livestock production and partially marketing. This involves the setting-up of basic proximity veterinary services and the capacity building of local livestock market associations. The first intervention must cover the whole WAP complex and the second most of Niger part of the complex.

VSF operates more as a support structure to other implementing partners, in particular towards IUCN and AWF. This means that the VSF-B intervention will target the areas and sites of intervention of these two partners, in order to seek greater synergy of actions and impacts for the beneficiaries. National focal points are the ones responsible for the coordination of field interventions.

- **Capitalization on the local context**

VSF updated its context analysis in order to better meet the needs of the beneficiaries. Documentary researches brought out that:

- Veterinary services have previously been set-up by local and international NGOs in various locations of the WAP complex. However most of them are not functional anymore and need to be restored, through training, recycling and provision of adequate equipment. Lack of continuous coaching is probably one of the reasons for these failures.
- Pastoral and agro-pastoral communities show little interest in sanitary follow-up and treatment of their animals. This illustrates the lack of awareness of the beneficiaries on the impact of animal health on livestock production and the need of sensitisation on this issue.
- Although pastoral communities made significant efforts to organise, many professional organisations of livestock keepers are little active. Most were put in place by projects or NGOs without further support. These organisations need training to develop their technical skills and be able to better defend the interests of pastoral communities.

- **Capitalization on similar former experiences**

To address these issues, VSF can rely on its experiences and networks within the target communities. More specifically, by the end of 2010, VSF capitalised the lessons learnt through its three-year APELDO project, carried out in Niger, in Dosso region, part of the WAP complex. Among others, APELDO increased the vaccination rate, set-up a network of proximity animal health services and strengthened the technical skills of livestock keepers and livestock market associations. VSF is ready to:

- Identify, train, recycle, and equip livestock auxiliaries. Training will be practice-oriented, so that livestock auxiliaries quickly become operational. By the end of their training, they will know how to identify a sick animal, how to treat diseases, understand the danger that diseases stand for human and animal life and for livestock production and be able to sensitise pastoral and agro-pastoral communities on vaccination. Particular emphasis will be placed on the continuous coaching of livestock auxiliaries to ensure greater sustainability of their activities in the field.

- Network the livestock auxiliaries with private veterinarians, in order to create the preconditions of sustainable proximity veterinary services and provide livestock keepers with a wider range of services. In cases where there is no private veterinarian, the technical services of the State will assume the responsibility of the livestock auxiliaries network.

The veterinarian will also work to improve epidemiological surveillance in the area with the support of livestock auxiliaries and the decentralized technical services of the State. The technical services will also play an important role of sovereign control to ensure the quality of veterinary services.

- Strengthen the capacities of livestock market associations through training on animal production, communication with herders, marketing and lobbying.

- **Operational planning**

Based on the previous points and on a more accurate view of VSF-B contribution to the achievement of L4LP project results, VSF has proposed a periodic operational planning by setting the implementation timing, the external structures primarily concerned, tools, materials and methodologies for implementation (Cf. Annex 1_Operational planning).

4. Project status

No significant event affected the smooth start of the project. However, VSF and its partners faced difficulties coordinating their action. Therefore the operational achievement of the project has not yet started.

5. Project implementation progress

The project implementation has not yet started.

6. Action plan to address problems identified

Action(s) to be taken	By whom?	By when?
Clarify possible interventions and synergies between the different partners in the frame of the implementation of activity 3.2 around the W park. The budget was divided between the different partners.	IUCN, AWF and VSF/B	During launching meetings of the activities
Hold synergy and coordination meetings with program partners.	Country focal points	As soon as possible
Clarify VSF-B mission as a support structure in the implementation of animal health activities in other intervention areas of the L4LP, mainly in Niokolo area.	Project coordinator	Before the end of May

7. Progress towards achieving the project objective(s)

In order to assess the progress of the project implementation, VSF-B will follow-up various activity indicators (number of livestock auxiliaries trained, number of modules delivered, number of assets distributed, number of sensitizations conducted...) and product indicators (number of operational livestock auxiliaries, number of functional veterinarians, number of services provided by local associations).

Since VSF-B intervention mainly affects animal health, annual retrospective zootechnical surveys will be made to measure the real impacts on herds and the added value for the beneficiaries. This tool, called Light Zootechnical Monitoring, developed by VSF-B and already implemented in several projects in West Africa, enables to follow-up a series of interesting zootechnical indicators, beyond VSF-B single intervention (Cf Annex 2 Data collection sheet)

Once the launching meetings and workshops will be conducted in the three countries around the W park, VSF-B will assess the baseline situation in the sites selected by the project partners. This will help to compile the data to determine the baseline values and the targets by the end of the project.