

Q3 2020

Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project **Impact Report**



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Q3 2020 Summary

Safeguarding critical forested ecosystems and wildlife in the midst of a global pandemic

Ongoing implementation of initiatives structured to safeguard forested ecosystems and critical wildlife have been the main focus of this past quarter. The project has issued and delivered new equipment and supplies, and advanced key activities under the project's collaborative and transparent benefit sharing model. The second verification is fully underway, with biomass sampling and biodiversity analyses taking place during the quarter.



- ✓ Eastern community engagement on REDD+ awareness, conserving biodiversity and REDD+ benefit distribution
- ✓ Procurement of 150 new beehives for Rombo Community
- ✓ Continued employment of 4 community rangers and 5 water rangers
- ✓ Biodiversity, Social Benefit Impact data, and tree-plot sampling for second verification
- ✓ Increased security within Chyulu National Park northern boundary



Eastern community engagement on REDD+ awareness, conserving biodiversity and benefit distribution

Engaging the small-scale farmers along the eastern border of the project area, also the national park boundary, is critical for building support for conservation and reducing incursions into the protected area for charcoal production, timber harvesting and wildlife poaching. The REDD+ Project allocated a significant grant to deliver benefits to these communities along the eastern border of the Project Area this past quarter. REDD+ Project partners have worked closely together to engage with these communities to share information about the REDD+ Project and to allow communities to select the locations and groups that will receive these benefits. The consultation process took place over 9 days and involved discussions with community leaders, chiefs, elders, and community members in 16 different locations. Through these outreach consultations, it has been agreed that the REDD+ Project will fund the provision of 100 beehives, 6 new water tanks for schools and 35 bursaries for school students in need.

The 100 beehives will be divided between two community groups living in different areas. The group members will receive training in beehive management and the honey will be sold to the new Masai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT) honey processing facility at a mutually agreed fair market wholesale rate. The consultations have also identified the schools and the names of the students who will receive school bursaries.

MWCT Q3 report, Project Office Report



Highlights





Procurement of 150 new beehives for Rombo Community

As part of the goal to develop livelihood opportunities, especially for women, the REDD+ Project is providing 150 new beehives to members of the Rombo Group Ranch, who are predominantly women. The recipients will be trained in beehive management and the Project Office beekeeping expert will be available with extra technical support.

Expanding beekeeping and honey production is being done to take advantage of a new high quality honey processing facility that MWCT is currently building. The facility, which is entirely powered by solar electricity, will develop value chain opportunities in a variety of local markets, and the community beekeepers are agreeing to sell honey to the processing facility at fair market wholesale rates. A brand and high quality packaging are being developed to support marketing efforts both within Kenya and, in time, internationally.

This is an important initiative for the project, especially for women who are being encouraged to play a central role in this process, helping to build on their independence and leadership in the community.

MWCT Q3 report

Continued employment of 4 community rangers and 5 water rangers by Big Life

The REDD+ Project continues to support the community by providing employment opportunities for those living within the project area by paying the salaries for four community wildlife rangers and five water rangers on Imbirikani Group Ranch.

The community rangers have been deployed to a critical area where forest and wildlife protection has been identified as a priority in the Chyulu Hills Project area. This location is vulnerable to degradation from increased levels of illegal wood harvesting, charcoal burning and fires. This past quarter, the rangers have continued to conduct daily anti-poaching and security patrols within the Chyulu Hills area. They are being utilized for direct forest, habitat and wildlife protection, and act as community liaisons for the project.

The water rangers play a vital role in ensuring that water resources are well monitored while at the same time protecting a vital water pipeline against vandalism, ensuring that community members receive a consistent and clean supply of water.

BLF Q3 Report



Biodiversity and social benefit impact data for second verification

The initial biodiversity monitoring report supporting the project's second verification, with data provided from all the project's partner organizations, is nearing completion. A review process has now begun.

Additionally, all the initial field surveys from the Social Benefit Impact Analysis household surveys were completed during this past quarter and the analysis and reporting is now proceeding.

One of the most significant requirements for the new verification is to undertake sampling of the 415 tree plot samples distributed across the 400,000 hectare landscape. Twelve local community members have been selected to form three tree-plot sampling teams to carry out this initiative. In addition, a new partnership has been developed with the Chief Botanist in the National Herbarium, which will provide highly qualified botanists to assist the project in identifying all the tree species in the sample plots. This is necessary because modeled carbon storage estimates across the landscape are based on species-specific data, which must be accurately collected.

This important new institutional relationship will help both the project and the country tremendously in building internal capacity to undertake this kind of technical work, as leading botanists in Kenya will gain valuable field experience carrying out this REDD+ technical analysis. Training of the sampling teams with an external REDD+ expert from Conservation International is planned for early November, after which the sampling teams will be deployed to the field over the following four months.

MWCT Q3 Report



Increased security within Chyulu National Park northern boundary

The REDD+ Project was able to make an emergency grant this past quarter to assist the Kenya Wildlife Service, the David Sheldrick Trust and the Big Life Foundation to improve their capacity to patrol and secure a remote area along the northern border of the National Park.

To support this initiative, a new 4-wheel drive vehicle was previously procured; in this quarter, building materials for a new ranger accommodation were purchased and transported to the site. Additional equipment and supplies, including food rations, a camera, utensils, and a radio were also provided.

BLF Q3 Report





Innovation to mitigate human-wildlife conflict, collaboration to stop wildfires and the recognition of REDD+ as a new vision for conservation



Challenges

This past quarter has seen the continuation of human-wildlife conflict as well as the presence of wildfires resulting from unusual weather patterns. In successfully addressing these challenges, and by providing stability in such uncertain times, the REDD+ project model has demonstrated its ingenuity and resilience.

✓ Mitigation of human-wildlife conflicts

✓ All hands-on deck to address wildfires

✓ Adapting to COVID-19



Mitigation of human-wildlife conflicts

Human-wildlife conflict continues to be an ongoing challenge in an ecosystem that supports large mammal herbivores such as elephants, which can destroy crops and also endanger human life, and large mammal predators which can predate upon livestock. Most of the species involved are threatened or endangered, and maintaining healthy populations of these large herbivores and top predators is critical for maintaining biodiversity and a functioning natural ecosystem.

The REDD+ Project supports a range of approaches to mitigating human-wildlife conflict, including construction of fences to protect farming communities, compensation programs for livestock losses due to wildlife, and mobile phone communications systems to warn community members about the presence of lions or dangerous animals in real time.

In the longer-term, the project will prioritize expanded training and technical support for improved livestock management practices, which have been shown to reduce predator losses effectively to zero.



All hands-on deck to address wildfires

In September, there were a significant number of fires in the landscape due to two years of good rainfall followed by an exceptionally hot dry season in 2020. This resulted in an usually high amount of dry grass to fuel the fires.

All partner organisations were involved in the fire response and there was impressive coordination. At a critical point, the National Park requested additional support using aerial water drops by helicopter, and the REDD+ project was able to quickly approve an allocation of \$50,000 to support this.

The project has long recognized fire as a threat and has begun to improve its fire response with the initial purchases of equipment and a new initiative in training rangers in fire fighting. In this past quarter, special training for 21 rangers was carried out and partners purchased firefighting equipment including sand buckets, rakes and forks, jerry cans for carrying water, and fire flaps for beating fires.

At the last Board meeting, it was agreed that the REDD+ Project would support the development of an integrated fire plan for the whole Project Area and allocate \$250,000 for improved fire prevention, monitoring and suppression. Additionally, a grant of \$100,000 was made to the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust for construction of a new road firebreak on the eastern side of the Chyulu Hills National Park.

REDD+ Fire Press Release and BLF Q3 Report



The ongoing impacts of COVID-19

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be a challenge in implementing many of the project activities, especially those that involve gatherings. This has meant that the community sensitisation meetings have had to be pushed to the next quarter, where the aim is to have smaller groups attend in open areas in line with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines. Additional delays include the tree plot sampling for verification by about six months, which will be postponed until the next quarter. A board meeting in August was held by Zoom to maintain the ongoing schedule of meetings.

Although the pandemic has impacted project activities, it has also emphasised the importance of REDD+ funding, which has been able to support all the partners at a time when almost all other sources of funding, such as ecotourism and philanthropy, have been substantially reduced. The Chyulu REDD+ Project has become a national case study demonstrating the importance of diversifying conservation funding through “payment for ecosystem services” schemes such as REDD+. The REDD+ model is being recognized in the region as an innovative and powerful vision for conservation funding.

BLF Q3 report



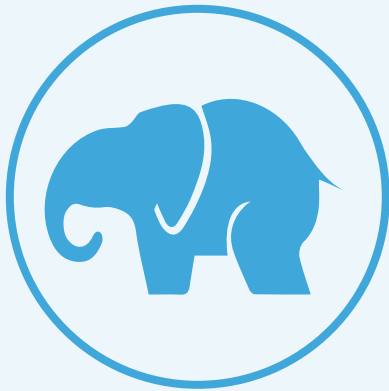
Forest Impacts



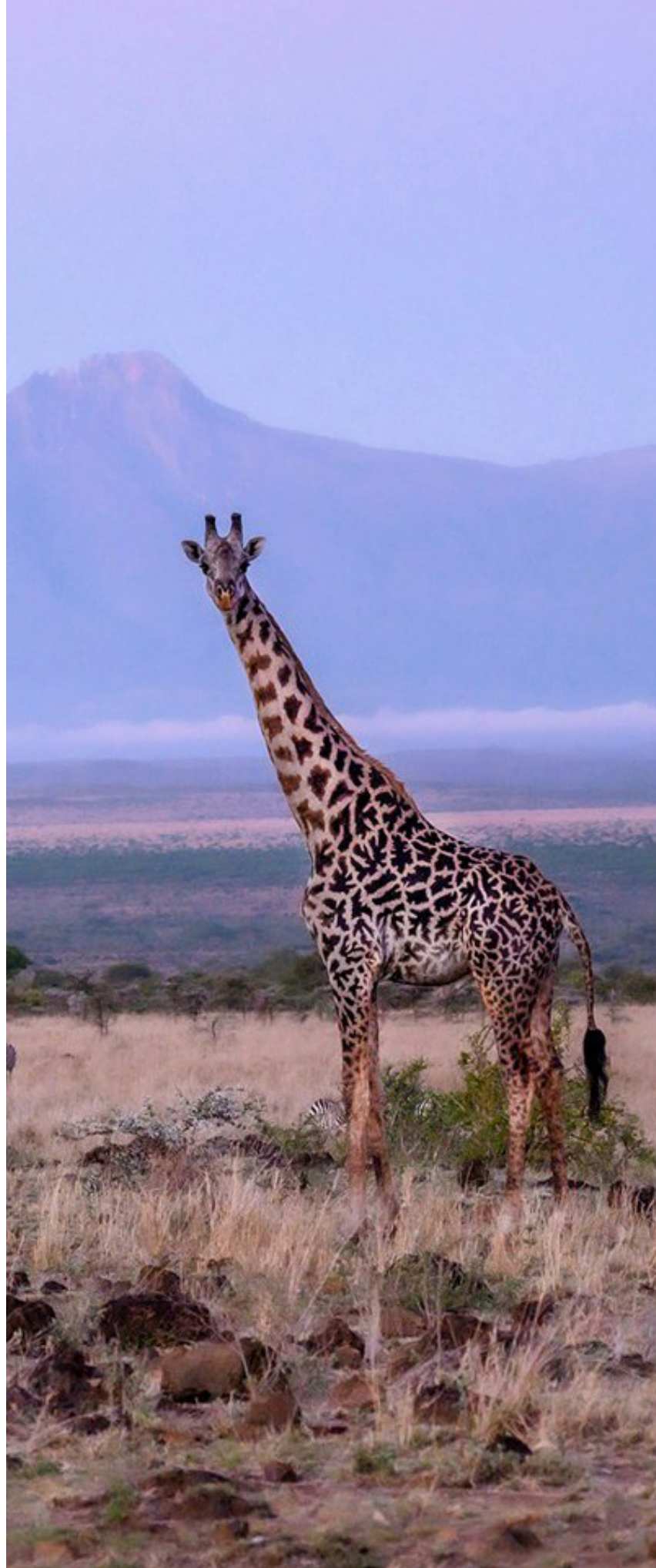
- ✓ Approximately **1,000** new seedlings planted in tree nursery
- ✓ **33** REDD+ rangers to patrol forests
- ✓ **44** arrests for habitat destruction
- ✓ **1 million** acres protected area



Wildlife Impacts



- ✓ Over **400** rangers employed
- ✓ **116,867** km patrolled
- ✓ **70** wildlife-related arrests
- ✓ **5** elephant mortalities
- ✓ **13** Lion & elephant retaliatory hunts prevented
- ✓ Approx **\$46,000** compensation for depredation incidents to herders



Impact Over Time

Community Impacts



- ✓ **25** schools supported
- ✓ Over **300** scholarships awarded
- ✓ Over **9,000** students supported
- ✓ **79** teacher's salaries paid
- ✓ **13** women's groups supported
- ✓ Over **18,000** community members reached who received information on COVID prevention





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