

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	15/022
Project Title	Government-civil society partnerships for protected areas in Timor-Leste
Country(ies)	Timor-Leste (East Timor)
UK Organisation	BirdLife International
Collaborator(s)	Government of Timor-Leste, National University of Timor-Leste, National NGOs <i>Santalum</i> and <i>Halarae</i>
Project Leader	Roger Safford
Report date	20 October 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	none specific to project (major news on www.birdlife.org : http://www.birdlife.org/news/pr/2007/08/timor-leste_np.html)

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).

See question 2 below for more detail on the political disturbances and their consequences. Progress has been good against the major milestones that will have greatest impact, while improved conditions are allowing planning to carry out remaining activities in the last 18 months of the project.

National Directory of Key Sites for Biodiversity Conservation published and launched

- Drafts and layouts exchanged and strong ownership of Timorese co-authors ensured. Currently at final proof stage; publication is imminent.

First National Park in Timor-Leste declared (ceremony and government resolution)

- Following much consultation and negotiation in which BirdLife's role was crucial to prevent this being relegated below other Government priorities, Government Resolution no. 8/2007 on *Creation of Nino Konis Santana National Park* was approved by the Council of Ministers and signed by the Prime Minister (*Jornal de República*, 1 Aug 2007). Ceremony to follow.

Consultation groups (Steering Committee, Working Group, Local Advisory) established; then, regular (3-6 monthly) meetings of consultation groups throughout.

- Steering Committee for National Park established under Resolution no. 8/2007

Ahead of schedule, we have begun working on a proposal to UNDP-GEF for support to implementation of the CBD Programme of Work of Protected Areas in Timor-Leste (contributing to Darwin project output 5, with special attention to CBD implementation).

Plans for workshops to identify site priorities and plans for detailed profiles, and roles of NGOs and university planned for current period. Training on community-based PA management and implementation, along with surveys, to be held in Oct 07-Mar 08.

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.

The year began with the return of the Project Manager to Timor-Leste on 2 April, following her evacuation on 8 March. However, the political situation remained tense, associated with Presidential elections in April followed by Parliamentary elections in late June. Parliamentary elections were inconclusive: no party won a majority, and none would form a coalition with the the previously

governing Fretilin party, which received the largest share of the vote. After more weeks of uncertainty, a "coalition of losers" finally formed a government, and the security situation has gradually improved since. However, the new government then began a complete restructuring, under which the location (and therefore management) of the Protected Areas Division was uncertain for several more weeks, until it was finally placed in the new Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Impacts were as follows:

- visits by specialists impossible because of security problems of travel around Timor-Leste (the manager is based in Dili and so was able to return)
- routine work with Government staff slowed down because staff positions and authority to act were in question for much of the period
- tenuous relations between government and many civil society institutions; however NGOs *Santalum*, *Halarae* and University remain committed partners.

Work was therefore concentrated on what was anyway the top priority: facilitating declaration of the first National Park, which was achieved; and also the finalisation of the directory of key biodiversity sites, which is now very close to publication. Plans have also been made for an intensive programme of technical visits to catch up on planned activities, with ToR developed and staff confirmed or identified. On current projections, the total 2007/8 annual budget (and therefore also 2008/9 budget) will not be affected; but some adjustments between budget lines are a possibility. We are presently revising the schedule in relation to staff availability, and will present a reschedule to the Darwin Secretariat in due course. Despite the difficulties, we remain confident that we will be able to complete this project, because:

- we have continued to achieve much despite difficult conditions, demonstrating strong partnership and shared commitment to achieving goals, even through change of government;
- the government team remains intact despite political changes, which have now been finalised;
- the security situation has greatly improved, making travel possible, with the first elections since independence completed largely peacefully, and a new but still sympathetic government elected for the next 5 years.

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

Not yet; changes to the timetable and budget (but no carry-forward) will be proposed to the Darwin Secretariat in the next few weeks, when agreements in principle are made with staff and consultants.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no

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

No - only to appreciate Darwin's continuing support and understanding through the difficulties in Timor-Leste, which is also well appreciated in-country. ETCF Comments on AR1 were taken on board, but no further information was requested for inclusion in HYR2 - only in AR2.

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 the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.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: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**