

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

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| <b>Project Ref. No.</b>         | 15/022  |
| <b>Project Title</b>            | Government-civil society partnerships for protected areas in Timor-Leste  |
| <b>Country(ies)</b>             | Timor-Leste (East Timor)  |
| <b>UK Organisation</b>          | BirdLife International  |
| <b>Collaborator(s)</b>          | Government of Timor-Leste, National University of Timor-Leste, National NGOs  |
| <b>Project Leader</b>           | Roger Safford   |
| <b>Report date</b>              | 24 October 2008   |
| <b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b> | HYR 3   |
| <b>Project website</b>          | none specific to project (major news on <a href="http://www.birdlife.org">www.birdlife.org</a> :<br>see <a href="http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/09/timor_reserve.html">http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/09/timor_reserve.html</a> ) |

## 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).

- Collaborative research & site visits with training: surveys of birds, mammals, reptiles and vegetation
- Socio-economic assessment and consultation on appropriate conservation measures and alternative livelihoods at each site.
- Detailed site profiles drafted with all biodiversity information compiled

Following priorities identified by the Department of Protected Areas and National Parks, a biodiversity survey was carried out at Mount Mundo Perdido and Mount Laritame, Viqueque District, in collaboration with the Department of Protected Areas and National Parks. Methods were vegetation survey, bird survey (point counts and mist-netting), mammal and reptile trapping, habitat assessment and interview/discussion with local people. This confirmed that the Mundo Perdido is an exceptionally important site, being the largest remaining area of closed canopy tropical montane forest in Timor-Leste and the whole of Timor island. Threats were identified and preliminary conservation measures proposed. It is a highly suitable site of Protected Area, complementing the mainly lowland area of Nino Konis Santana National Park, declared last year. A first draft site profile account was prepared for Mundo Perdido.

- Consolidation of donor interest; new phase of PA programme launched (brought forward from Jan-Mar 2009)

Proposal developed and submitted to UNDP-GEF for *Supporting country action on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas* in Timor Leste. US\$15,000 for project development received, leading to request for US\$150,000 over two years, with a further \$85,000 to be requested in November. The \$150,000 was approved by UNDP (and commended, with no reservations), and we are optimistic about the remaining \$85,000. This is a major contribution towards achieving Darwin output 5.

Inauguration ceremony for Nino Konis Santana National Park. The National Park was declared by the Government in August 2007, without fanfare because the very delicate political situation made large ceremonies impossible. The event took place on 1-3 August 2008 and achieved its two goals:

- to celebrate the country's first National Park, raising local, national and international public awareness and buy-in for its objectives — Timorese society was represented from the level of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, to local communities, with many events strongly oriented towards the latter.
- to raise donor awareness of the need and opportunity to contribute to sustainable development under a new framework of conservation of biological and cultural diversity — all bilateral and multilateral agencies were invited; many attended and were enthused by the event.

A range of plaques, posters, signboards and leaflets were prepared in-country. Worldwide media coverage was obtained. A related benefit was that a private sector proposal to plant biofuels, possibly in

the park area, was hastily withdrawn to areas outside the park of much lesser biodiversity importance.

Through the PoWPA proposal and the National Park inauguration ceremony, engagement with UNDP with the Protected Areas programme has been strengthened, and the UN Head of Mission has taken a strong interest; UNDP support will be very valuable to the programme in future. IUCN has also been engaged through the World Commission on Protected Areas and the SE Asian Regional Office, with substantive discussions on funding needs to support policy and legislation development, technical support for protected areas, and state membership for Timor-Leste.

A project review was carried out by Cristi Nozawa and Roger Safford during a visit to Timor Leste. Findings are summarised in the next section, and attached.

A pdf version of Important Bird Areas in Timor-Leste was made available on the BirdLife website, and the first field guide to the *Birds of Timor Leste* (in Portuguese, Indonesian and English, with a foreword from President José Ramos Horta) was completed and received in Timor-Leste.

**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.**

There have been no major political disturbances in the last 6 months, although the country's infrastructure and social conditions have not recovered from the problems of 2006 and 2007, working conditions remain much more difficult than they were before 2006.

As proposed in AR2, and agreed in the ETCF assessment of that report, a project review was carried out by Cristi Nozawa (BirdLife regional director for Asia and regional vice-chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas) and Roger Safford (project leader). Among other activities, a workshop-meeting was held to plan to review the achievements of the Darwin Initiative project to date, and to propose and validate a plan for the remaining time. This plan remained compatible with the original proposal, with the objectives, outputs, indicators and Darwin budget not altered from those agreed as at AR2 (Darwin letter of 18 April agreeing final year 2008-9 budget of £80,638). All are still considered valid and can be reported against. Certain activities cannot be achieved in the time available, especially those related to development of a second Protected Area. The plan and review report are attached.

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

The intention to make changes has been stated and agreed in principle with ETCF. Since there are no changes to objectives, outputs, indicators and Darwin budget, these have not been discussed with DI secretariat.

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:                                  no**

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:      yes, but only at activity level**

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

No.