

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	17-029
Project Title	Berbak to the Future: Harnessing carbon to conserve biodiversity
Country(ies)	Indonesia
UK Organisation	ZSL
Collaborator(s)	Department Forestry / Berbak National Park, ERM
Project Leader	<i>Tom Maddox</i>
Report date	<i>31 October 2009</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR 1</i>
Project website	http://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/asia/indonesia/ (<i>dedicated website not live yet</i>). <i>Brief information leaflet attached</i>

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).

Progress is described against each of the planned outputs:

1. Institutional framework

Within project infrastructure is now good. Agus Suratno joined the project as manager in September in place of Kaavya Varma who had accepted a position at the WCMC by the time the grant was released. Agus is an Indonesian national, but educated to PhD level in the US in remote sensing and environmental studies. He completed his PhD in August and flew straight to Indonesia to join the project. Agus is assisted on the ground by Zaqie Al-Ichlas and so far by a single field team of four scouts and one community specialist. We have almost completed the building of a project field base within the National Park (see photos) and have just received additional funding to refurbish a second base elsewhere in the park. Our main river boat is complete, together with a small speedboat and two canoes.

Politically we have also made good progress, although there is still plenty to do. MoUs have been signed with ERM (Environmental Consultants), the GTZ Merang REDD Pilot Project (a similar carbon-based project in South Sumatra which possibly represents a good model for the final institutional framework) and Gita Buana (a Jambi-based Indonesian NGO focussing on community issues) as a framework for collaboration. An MoU has also been drafted with Berbak National Park, but its signing has been delayed by repeated delays in finalising an umbrella MoU with the Ministry of Forestry for all of ZSL's activities. This appears to be an issue affecting several NGOs at present but is being worked on continuously by the ZSL team. We are aiming for completion before 2010. Finally, we are also working on bringing together the national park, regional forestry offices and the national office of wildlife conservation on a specific plan to work together on law enforcement within the Berbak ecosystem.

2. Carbon baselines

In a slight change to original plans (see box 2) we have employed forest carbon specialists to conduct initial measurements for carbon baselines. These will include a rough assessment of existing carbon stock, accurate calculations of deforestation rates up to 2009 and the building of a model based on what we know about deforestation drivers to predict future deforestation rates which will be our initial 'business as usual' baseline. This initial desktop study will be

complete by early 2010, after which time we will work on validating and strengthening it with field measurements of carbon and additional data for the predictive modelling working towards final calculations for the project design document at the end of the grant period.

3. Quantification of co-benefits

Biodiversity: July to September were spent conducting a camera trap study of large mammals across 225 km² of the National Park. The cameras were placed to optimise chances of obtaining an estimate of tiger density in the region. Analysis of the results was underway during October but not complete at the time of writing.

Local communities: Because various local NGOs are already active with communities in the Berbak region and have much of the data we require we have focussed on building initial relationships with NGOs. We have now signed an MoU with Gita Buana, who work with communities in most of the area of interest, on the understanding that they will be sharing existing demographic data and helping us implement further community work. ZSL and Gita Buana have since submitted two joint proposals for community work in addition to that already planned in the Darwin proposal.

4. Strategies to mitigate carbon emissions

No work has been carried out towards this objective at this point.

Other

Three supporting grants have been obtained in the last six months as planned in the Darwin Proposal. The USFWS has supported the building of a project centre within the national park office and the secondment of a senior government advisor to the team. The USFWS and 21stCT have also supported the creation of an environmental crime and conflict unit comprising all three sectors of government with authority in the region. The team's role will be to address the immediate threats to and from wildlife in the area, to ensure we do not end up conserving an empty forest. They will also play a key role in quantifying and defining strategies to mitigate illegal logging. The STF has supported the tiger-focussed population assessments in the Berbak region. A grant application in conjunction with local NGO LASER was submitted for investigating payment disbursement mechanisms for REDD to local communities to UNEP but this was unsuccessful. Two further proposals related to incorporating local communities into the development of REDD have been submitted in partnership with local NGO Gita Buana to the NORAD funding agency and Taronga Zoo, Australia.

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 key problem we have had so far is the progression of the umbrella MoU with the Ministry of Forestry, described above. Ultimately the MoU is essential if ZSL is to cement the status of Berbak as an REDD development project, but in the short term it has had no impact on project developments or budgets.

The key change has been the recognition of the need for a full preliminary desktop analysis of the carbon potential of the area instead of the simple GIS analysis planned. A desktop analysis is a preliminary assessment of the project feasibility based on satellite imagery and existing literature. Certification requires a much deeper level of information, but a desktop analysis represents the framework that can be validated with field data over time. A desktop analysis is usually conducted by projects looking to secure investment before carbon credits have been generated. Initially we did not think this would be necessary because the Darwin grant gave us financial resources for three years. However, it turned out that without the independent data a desktop analysis can provide it has been very hard to garner concrete project support, particularly on the local level. We have now commissioned a desktop analysis of the project

potential by PT Forest Carbon in Jakarta. This will assess carbon baselines (as planned in the initial proposal) but will also assess project eligibility and economic feasibility and provide guidelines for consequent future project development within the context of planned VCS and CCBA certification. The desktop analysis will be vital for demonstrating to stakeholders the potential for their forests and will also be useful guiding future project planning. Preliminary results will be made available for a planned presentation at the Copenhagen climate conference in December 2009.

The desktop analysis needed budgetary reallocations but did not affect the overall amount. It also means that some of the activities planned to be complete by September will be late, whilst some planned for 2010 will be early but overall it should greatly strengthen the project. The most likely implications this may have for future changes is if the analysis shows that the project becomes more or less economically feasible if focussing on certain parts of the project area. Depending on how well the contracted company perform, there may also be an argument for continuing to engage their services or other similar contractors with experience in carbon work to 'hold our hand' through a certification system they are far more familiar with. These questions will be re-assessed at the end on year one.

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

Yes, changes were made to the budget to incorporate a third party desktop analysis (change request 17-029) which were approved on September 2nd.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in...Sept 09..... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

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

No

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**