

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2011)

Project Ref No	18-005
Project Title	Understanding, assessing and monitoring ecosystem services for better biodiversity conservation
Country(ies)	UK and Nepal
UK Organisation	Birdlife International
Collaborator(s)	Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN)
Project Leader	<i>Alison Stattersfield</i>
Report date	<i>31 October 2011</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR2</i>
Project website	

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 outlined below based on the key milestones during this period (April-October) as in the project implementation timetable. Bold denotes activities that we aimed to undertake during this period. Other activities mentioned are in addition to what we planned at this stage.

1.1 Convene UK expert meetings

Regular meetings (5) were held with the Cambridge Conservation Initiative project steering group to guide development of the scientific framework for ES assessment methods. Planning is underway to organise a second annual workshop in Cambridge, with a provisional date of 7th February 2012, co-funded by CCI.

1.2 Compile & refine scientific framework for site-based ES assessment & monitoring

Extensive technical developments of the scientific framework have taken place during this period. Improvement of the methods has been underpinned by expert input and on-the-ground trialing by our CCI partners in Montserrat and at Wicken Fen (UK). Further progress has been made in refining the IBA monitoring methods and a form has been circulated to BCN local contacts including government officials at seven IBAs to date. A national IBA monitoring training workshop scheduled for the end of 2011 funded by WWF-EFN will provide a greater input for the IBA monitoring.

1.3 Develop database to hold ES data & test for analyses & indicator development

We have continued to use Excel spreadsheets to record the initial field data gathered at the first two study sites - Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park (SNNP) and Phulchoki Mountain Forests (PMF) for analysis. A spreadsheet has been set up to hold the rapid review data and has been populated with carbon storage values for some of the IBAs.

2.1 Hold local start-up meetings at 3 selected IBAs in Nepal

In Nepal, focus group meetings were held from 13 to 21 June with local communities and other key stakeholders at Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR) in preparation for the field visit in Q3. An initial scoping study of the ecosystem service benefits captured by each group was carried out. In addition, documents on any previous studies on ES assessment at Koshi have been collected.

2.2 Conduct field work & enter biodiversity & ES data for 3 IBAs

Field work was completed at SNNP in June. Field work has been completed for most ES at PMF. Data from the two sites are being analysed for two draft papers to be submitted to peer-

review journals. A table for tracking progress in IBA monitoring has been set up and will be reviewed quarterly.

2.4 Undertake rapid review of ES at all IBAs

A draft methodology for the rapid review has been developed ahead of schedule. Existing information for IBA monitoring and rapid ES assessment has been compiled for all 27 IBAs by a consultant employed by BCN and this has been provided to the Secretariat. Carbon storage in IBAs that are protected areas has been estimated as a first task.

3.1 Develop case studies based on experiences at 3 IBAs in Nepal (& elsewhere)

Case studies are being developed for the first two sites (SNNP and PMF) in the form of peer-review journal articles.

3.2 Produce a range of other awareness-raising / advocacy materials

A project update newsletter was distributed to 39 people in Nepal representing 26 institutions (including NGOs, INGOs, GOs, Media) and emailed to the BirdLife Partnership of 116 organisations. At the closing ceremony of Wildlife Week in Nepal (20 April) BCN presented and distributed the ES Nepali leaflet and also did so at a Student Conservation Conference in Kathmandu. A second poster has been distributed by BCN to relevant government offices and NGOs to raise the profile of ES within Nepal and in particular from lesser known sites such as Rara National Park. The ES documentary produced last year has been translated into English and 50 copies have been produced for dissemination to key officials and interested organisations.

3.3 Develop websites to disseminate ES information

No updates have been made to the websites during this period.

3.4 Promote ES & biodiversity conservation at local, national & international meetings

A range of meetings have been attended in Nepal at which the project has been promoted (full details will be given in the annual report). One example was on 4 Sept 2011, when BCN attended the second meeting of the National Wetland Technical Committee, organised by the Government's wetland project (CSUWN). BCN shared plans for the forthcoming ES fieldwork at Koshi wetland and opportunities for collaboration were discussed. In October 2011, a presentation on the project was made by Jenny Birch (Project Manager) at the 4th Ecosystem Services Partnership meeting in Wageningen, Netherlands.

4.2 Share experiences with other Asian BirdLife Partners / organise regional training

A meeting took place with Cristi Nozawa (Director of BirdLife Asia) in Cambridge in September to discuss how to share experiences with Asian BirdLife Partners and seek their input into further development of the toolkit. It was agreed to hold the workshop in Singapore over a period of 2-3 days in April/May 2012. This may have implications for the annual budget (carrying over of funds – see below).

We have held meetings with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust who had a Darwin project at one of our study sites (15-014) to discuss how to build on their work. It is the intention of WWT to use the 'toolkit' being developed by this project, as part of a CEPF project at IBAs in Cambodia with engagement from the BirdLife Cambodia regional programme team.

4.3 Develop toolkit & guidance

Version 1.0 of the toolkit was finalised and sent out for an 8 week external expert review in July. Feedback has started to be collated for a revised document. This will be discussed in detail at the next steering committee meeting in October. The BirdLife Secretariat has continued to support in-country Project Staff on ES assessment through Skype calls and emails and also during a visit by Ishana Thapa from BCN to the BirdLife office from 21 – 23 June. Continued support for the development of the IBA monitoring work has taken place, with a 1 day session on 23 June with staff members from the Secretariat.

4.4 Share experiences across the whole BirdLife Partnership

As mentioned in 3.2, a project newsletter was produced and distributed to BirdLife Partners in May. There is increasing interest from the Partnership in the ES methods being developed and discussions with several partners has led to potential uptake of the methods for ES

assessments as part of on-going funded projects (Jensen – High Andes, MacArthur - Vietnam) and new proposals (Jensen – Fiji).

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.

Completion of the field work at the first year's pilot sites took longer than expected. This is partly due to us adding a fourth site to the list, as considered necessary for comprehensive testing of the methodology. It has also been difficult for BCN staff to obtain some of the information from contacts in Nepal and to fit this into a busy work schedule. This has meant a delay in analysing and presenting the data for publication. However, this is now underway and should be completed by the end of 2011. This will not have an impact on the budget, but has meant that we have had to pay particular attention to time management over the past few months to ensure all other tasks are still on track.

Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement? No – no major impacts expected

Discussed with LTS: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance n/a

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

Note that with the postponement of the Asia Regional Workshop into the first quarter of Year 3, we anticipate an under spend this year in order to carry over the allocated funds for this workshop into the following year.

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £3,200

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

We would have appreciated some feedback on the first annual report. Although we feel that we have delivered well on the project, we would have liked to have had an independent critical review to ensure that we are indeed delivering as expected by the Darwin Initiative. Our in-country partners, who have been excellent in implementing and promoting this project in Nepal and the wider Asia region, would also have appreciated some comments.

Will there be a review and feedback on the reports submitted in April 2011? Will the next annual report in 2012 be reviewed?

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 LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.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: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**