

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2012)

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 2012</i>
Report No.	<i>HYR3</i>
Project website	<i>No dedicated website but see Section 3.3 below</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).

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

Four meetings were held with the steering committee over the past six months—as detailed in previous reports, we share this committee with a Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) project that also supports the development of the ‘toolkit’ of methods for assessing ecosystem services (ES). We are close to finalising the toolkit (version 1, see 1.2 and 3.1), hence this additional activity.

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

The scientific framework is now very close to completion, based on the field work which we have undertaken, and experience from other pilot sites assessed through the CCI project.

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

An initial specification of the database has been discussed with the implementing team at Birdlife International. This will be further developed in the next few months and data from the field sites in Nepal will be entered to check its suitability before it is launched as part of BirdLife’s World Bird Database at the end of the project.

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

The 4th local start-up meeting took place during the field visit to Nepal in April, at Rara National Park (RNP) headquarters and involved 15 members of the local community and other stakeholders. The group conducted the rapid appraisal for the site following the guidance provided by the toolkit.

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

Fieldwork was conducted from 18 April – 2 May at RNP, with a team of 5 project staff from BirdLife International and Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN), 3 local staff, the assistant warden and other local guides. We undertook a community workshop, focus group discussion, carbon surveys, household surveys for harvested wild goods, water and cultivation. Biodiversity data were also gathered for the site.

2.4 Undertake rapid review of ES at all IBAs

The analyses of the rapid review of ES for all 27 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Nepal (workshop during the previous reporting period) were incorporated into the National Report

which was published in October (see 3.5). State, pressure and response data for all IBAs were entered into the BirdLife WBDB to establish a baseline for monitoring in future.

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

Three papers are in various stages of development. The two sites from 2010 are almost ready for submission as case studies to peer-review journals. We are working on two further papers with BCN and other Nepali colleagues. Agreement was reached this quarter on the key messages from these papers and the presentation format of the main results. An overview paper is also being developed to present the new toolkit methods to the wider scientific community.

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

BirdLife International published a news story about the RNP visit (28 May). The Nepali leaflet (produced during the previous reporting period) was distributed to the general public at an event on World Environment Day (5 June 2012). A Rara poster and Nepali documentary DVD was distributed at RNP and to all BirdLife Asia Partners and country programmes during the Regional Partnership Meeting in Singapore (see 4.2). A third newsletter was published and disseminated to networks in Nepal and internationally.

3.3 Develop websites to disseminate ES information

News stories were published on both the BirdLife International and BCN sites. Project documents and photos were uploaded to the project webpage of the Darwin Initiative site. To coincide with the CBD COP11 side event on 11 October (see 3.5), a new 'Spotlight on Ecosystem Services' was added to the BirdLife website along with a news story to promote the launch of the National Report at this high level event.

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

Data from one of the field sites was presented at the BIOECON conference in Cambridge on 19 September. Ishana Thapa and colleagues from BCN attended the CBD COP in Hyderabad, India, to launch the National Report (see 3.5)

3.5 Prepare, publish and launch National Report

The report, '*Conserving biodiversity and delivering ecosystem services at Important Bird Areas in Nepal*' was prepared during June – September with wide consultation with experts in the UK and stakeholders in Nepal. It was launched at the CBD COP11 on 11 October at a BirdLife side event. This event was supported by the Government of Nepal with a speech by the Secretary, Ministry of Forests & Soil Conservation. 1000 copies were produced to be disseminated at the event, in Nepal, UK and to relevant networks.

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

Project experiences were shared with BirdLife Asia Partners from 14 countries during the BirdLife Asia Regional Partnership Meeting from 27 May to 1 June in Singapore. A two day training workshop for all participants (40) was delivered by BCN and BirdLife staff.

Jyotendra Thakuri (BCN Field Assistant) attended training in the UK on Biodiversity Monitoring from 21-30 August organized by the Darwin Field Study Council, with travel supported by this project. He also visited the BirdLife Cambridge office to meet with several senior staff and gain new knowledge/skills about bird survey techniques, GIS, population modeling and fundraising.

Ishana Thapa attended training on 'Economic Tools for Conservation' from 20 – 31 August organized by the Conservation Strategy Fund and held at Stanford University. Her travel was also funded by this project.

4.3 Develop toolkit & guidance

The toolkit is continually being developed through, e.g., the addition of a new service 'coastal protection' in collaboration with new partners at the Geography Department, Cambridge University, and also expansion of the socio-economic content of the methods (further work on the latter is planned through the Post Project, if successful). Development is therefore ongoing though the toolkit version 1.0 methods are due to be published as supplementary material to the overview paper (see 3.1).

4.4 Share experiences across the whole BirdLife Partnership

A side event is being planned for the Birdlife International World Congress in 2013 where all 117 global Partners will be present. This will focus on sharing of the project outputs and other ecosystem services work being undertaken by the Partnership.

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.

A last minute closure of the local airfield for expansion near RNP in April threatened plans for the field trip that month. There was a risk that we would not have been able to complete the field work at this final site as moving the dates was not possible. However, BCN and Park staff were able to rearrange the logistics to enable the team to get in and out of the Park. This allowed the work to go ahead as planned but resulted in a greater spend due to extra days being required for travel and the need to charter planes and cover other minor unexpected costs. We have readjusted the spending to ensure that the project can continue as originally outlined.

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

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:

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

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**