

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref No	18-006
Project Title	Integrated River Dolphin Conservation for Sustainable Ecosystem Services in the Brahmaputra
Country(ies)	India
UK Organisation	Zoological Society of London
Collaborator(s)	Aaranyak & Wildlife Institute of India
Project Leader	Dr. Rajan Amin & Dr. Abdul Wakid
Report date	1 <sup>st</sup> July – 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2010
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	1 <sup>st</sup> Half Yearly Report (3 months)
Project website	<a href="http://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/asia/river-dolphin-india/">http://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/asia/river-dolphin-india/</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).**

**Note: The project formally started 1st July and therefore the following list of activities are on-going to be completed in the first 6 months of the project (31<sup>st</sup> December 2010). Progress on these and other activities to be started will reported in the annual report.**

- i. *Steering committee established; Project management reporting procedures and ToRs setup; Project meeting held in Guwahati - attended by all partners and relevant NGOs, groups; working groups for each project area established and detailed implementation plans drawn up. **Only partially completed due to revised start date.***
- ii. *Project research posts advertised, interviews held, two Indian scientists with relevant experience in freshwater ecology recruited as research staff; 2 local research assistants recruited; ToRs and contracts setup. **One research scientist and two local research assistants recruited, ToRs and contracts established. The recruitment of a second researcher is ongoing.***
- iii. *Purpose-built boat being constructed; additional river boat being procured for use in smaller tributaries, monitoring and sample analysis equipment being procured and installed for dolphin and ecosystem surveys. **Construction of purpose-built boat is ongoing and will be completed by end of November. The first survey will be conducted in February, which is the most suitable season for dolphin boat surveys. Quotations for an additional boat are being obtained and compared with local hire costs. Monitoring and sample analysis equipment list has been finalised and quotations are being obtained.***
- iv. *GIS database system for Brahmaputra River dolphin and ecosystem to be developed with detailed design specification and manual; at least 2 project core staff trained in its use. **The GIS database system design is complete and its development will begin in November. Staff training on GIS use is ongoing in Aaranyak's GIS lab***
- v. *Protocols, training material and data recording forms developed and at least 5 programme core staff and 30 DCN members trained in standardised land-based dolphin surveys. **Development of protocols, training material and data recording forms for DCN members is ongoing. A training workshop is being organised to take place***

at the end of November, 2010.

- vi. *Development of initial set of material and tools for community outreach and awareness activities ongoing; training of at least 2 programme staff and 30 DCN members. **The development of materials and tools for community outreach and awareness activities is ongoing (poster, manual, education cards, information sheets etc).***
- vii. *Community engagement and awareness programmes initiated in 30 prioritised dolphin areas by DCN members with support provided on an on-going basis. **Thirty DCN sites have been assessed and suitable DCN members have been identified. A training programme is being developed with a workshop in the last week of November. After training, community engagement and awareness programmes at the DCN sites will begin.***
- viii. *Detailed specific research projects, methodologies, monitoring and data collection procedures developed for quantifying factors impacting on dolphins and wider ecosystem; identified staff enrolled in PhD research, training, projects initiated. **Specific research projects have been identified. Design of the methodologies and data collection forms for each project has started. One member of the project staff is developing a PhD research project.***
- ix. *Website enhanced (and maintained) on all partner sites with link to downloadable. **Information has been added to the ZSL website and enhancement is ongoing***

**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.**

Although this project was supposed to start from April, 2010, there was a delay in gaining permission from Indian governmental agencies because there is now a revised policy for external government funded projects. We therefore delayed the start of project activities by 3 months to 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2010. The permission process is still taking time and we are still unable to begin some of the project activities related to animal handling and working in the protected area. Hopefully, the permission issue will be resolved before the next report submission.

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

We have already discussed the matter with the LTS International and they agreed to our request to change the project start date to 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 2010

**Discussed with LTS:** Yes, in May 2010 (month/yr)

**Formal change request submitted:** Yes, in End of June 2010 (month/yr)

**Received confirmation of change acceptance** Yes in June 2010 (month/yr)

**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?

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 LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto: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**