

# Darwin Initiative: Second Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2011)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	18-006
<b>Project Title:</b>	Integrated River Dolphin Conservation for Sustainable Ecosystem Services in the Brahmaputra
<b>Country(ies)</b>	India
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Zoological Society of London
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Aaranyak, Wildlife Institute of India
<b>Project Leader</b>	Dr. Rajan Amin, Dr Abdul Wakid
<b>Report date</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> April – 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept, 2011
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Half Yearly Report
<b>Project website</b>	<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).**
  - a) *Development of further set of material and tools for community outreach and awareness activities completed for use by DCN members. **Education cards & posters nearly completed. Successful organization of a series of theatrical and educational events in Guwahati and in several surrounding communities, to mark the first annual International Dolphin Day, end of Oct 2011. Boat accessorisation for use as educational vehicle.***
  - b) *Early summer/pre-monsoon season standardised dolphin and habitat survey across the Brahmaputra mainstream and its tributaries completed (inc. acoustic and sample collection/analyses); database populated, report and maps produced/updated and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders and steering committee. **Reports on Brahmaputra mainstream & Kulsi tributary sent to ZSL. Maps & database development in process. Need for supplementary trainings on methodology, protocols etc., workshops being organised to take place end of Nov-early Dec, 2011.***
  - c) *Second intensive fishing community engagement and awareness programmes completed along the Brahmaputra mainstream (during the upstream journey of the survey boat). **1) Trial interviews on fisheries practices, dolphin awareness, use of dolphin oil, etc. conducted at 29 DCN sites. Questionnaire is currently being refined. 2) Initial agreement with Patna University group to collaborate on dolphin oil bait fisheries impact & alternative strategies studies. 3) Planning of theatrical performances in village sites in conjunction with Dolphin Day, Oct-Nov 2011. 4) Agreement with NEDFi and Keteki to start Water Hyacinth handicrafts alternate livelihoods pilot project in Jhanjimukh; first awareness meeting among the targeted villagers completed.***
  - d) *Monsoon season standardised dolphin and habitat survey mainly in the Brahmaputra tributaries for documenting seasonal distribution of dolphins completed; database populated, report and maps produced/updated and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders and steering committee. **Kulsi tributary April pre-monsoon survey report sent to ZSL. Need for further trainings with Tom Akamatsu on acoustic methodology. Exploring possibility of follow-up trainings with Tom Akamatsu.***
  - e) *DCN activities in 30 priority sites across Brahmaputra Valley by trained DCN members supported by research staff (land-based dolphin and habitat monitoring surveys*

(weekly); fishermen community engagement activities, dolphin stranded dolphin releases and carcass collection, protection, research support activities, monthly reporting etc). **Exploring possibility of collaborating with Assam Veterinary College to establish a functional state-wide carcass retrieval system (utilizing DCN network) and training in necropsy procedures. Preliminary discussions with Paul Jepson (ZSL) about participating in training. Permit issues need to be clarified.**

f) *Baseline research, survey and monitoring studies ongoing. A supplementary training programme is being developed, with workshops in the first week of December.*

g) *Half yearly report prepared and submitted to Defra.*

**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.**

Issues remain in gaining permission from Indian governmental agencies, both for working with dolphin carcasses and for the presence of non-Indian citizen researchers in survey areas. 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. A further meeting with the PCCF of the Assam Forest Department was held during Raj Amin's end-of-October 2011 visit. The meeting was very positive and hopefully, these permission issues will be resolved very shortly.

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

**Discussed with LTS:**

**Formal change request submitted:**

**Received confirmation of change acceptance:**

**3. 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](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 e.g. Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**