

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

Project Ref No	20-014
Project Title	Conserving biodiversity and reducing poverty through wildlife-friendly farming in Cambodia
Country(ies)	Cambodia
Lead Organisation	Wildlife Conservation Society
Collaborator(s)	Forestry Administration and Ministry of Environment, Royal Government of Cambodia; Sansom Mlup Prey (SMP); Imperial College London and Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP).
Project Leader	Wildlife Conservation Society – Cambodia Program (WCS)
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	HYR1
Project website	www.wcscambodia.org

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) 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 towards *Output 1: 2,000 households participating in Ibis Rice*

In Quarters 1 and 2, we committed to assisting the SMP in informing target villages about the Ibis Rice Scheme, establishing Village Marketing Network (VMN) committees in each target village, signing conditional agreements, and providing training and seeds to farmers. In 2013, the VMNs added 61 new family members: 39 families from 9 villages in Preah Vihear, and 22 families from the 2 villages in Kampong Thom province by the Tonle Sap. This brings the total number of participating families to 782 in 11 villages. We also held trainings with the 11 VMN committees to reinforce the scheme's procurement policies and procedures, which included discussing with them how to monitor members' compliance with the Ibis Rice rules.

Progress towards *Output 2: Land-use plans finalised in 15 villages*

In Quarters 1 and 2, we committed to planning and finalising land-use plans and ensuring that community zones in protected areas are legalised. Three land-use plans have been finalised in the past six months, bringing the total number of Ibis Rice villages with completed land-use plans to nine. The land-use plans are used as the basis to monitor Ibis Rice compliance. To finalise the community zones in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary (KPWS) the project has had several meetings with the Provincial Community Zone Demarcation Committee resulting in the declaration to complete the zoning of KPWS, Preah Vihear section, this dry season.

Progress towards *Output 3: Implementation of land-use plans by Government agencies*

In Quarters 1 and 2, we committed to consulting with government agencies and other authorities, and conducting monitoring activities. Over the past 6 months, teams from the Ministry of Environment and the Forestry Administration have intervened in 74 incidents of illegal land clearance and hunting across the entirety of both protected areas. In June, the Government doubled the number of teams deployed to deal with the situation, and we expect this level of law enforcement to be maintained or even increased in the future. Monitoring activities are described further under Output 6.

Progress towards *Output 4: Protection of threatened bird populations by community members*

In Quarters 1 and 2, we committed to recruiting bird nest protectors and ensuring their effectiveness in protecting bird species. Fifty-three local villagers have been directly employed to protect the nests of threatened bird species. For bird species that have finished nesting this season, there has been a combined 10% increase in the number nests found, compared to last season. One notable example is that the number of Sarus Crane nests protected has risen from 25 to 40, with 66 chicks successfully fledging. Twenty-three Giant Ibis nests were found.

Progress towards *Output 5: Ibis Rice PES is self-financing and sustainable.*

In Quarters 1 and 2, we committed to marketing Ibis Rice and expanding the number of customers; in the past 2 quarters, we have added 36 new customers (14 retail and the rest wholesale) bringing the total to 75 regular customers. WCS's local partner, SMP, continues to bring the rice to market, even with the expansion of the Ibis Rice program across the entire Northern Plains landscape. We have hired a marketing expert to improve customer service and promotional activities, with impressive results. Sales increased steadily from 6 tonnes/month in April to 11.7 tonnes/month in September 2013 (estimating a total of 107 tonnes sold in 2013).

Progress towards *Output 6: Impacts of Ibis Rice PES programme on poverty and land-use*

In Quarters 1 and 2, we worked with University partners to plan surveys on poverty and land-use trends of target villages. A methodology was developed and implemented to measure household compliance with the Ibis Rice rules, through measuring the fields of VMN members every year in order to detect new forest clearance. Analysis of satellite images by a WCS GIS officer is being used as a second method of checking for new forest clearance. New land clearances are passed to the protected area officials to investigate the legality of the clearance. Monitoring in Quarter 1 found over 90% compliance with the rules by Ibis Rice households. Results are currently being reported to the individual village committees to discuss how compliance can be improved in the future. Poverty surveys will be completed late in 2014.

2a. 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.

Cambodia's national election was held in July and political parties have been supporting illegal land clearance by the public. VMN members may have thus cleared land illegally, breaking the rules of Ibis Rice and making them ineligible to sell to the scheme at the next harvest (in December). Significant flooding this rainy season may have damaged many farmers' rice crops. We do not expect this to significantly affect project activities.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

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

Yes No

3b. If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible through the formal Change Request process. However, it would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication now 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?

None