

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

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| Project Ref No | 22-018 |
| Project Title | Mainstreaming Biodiversity and ecosystem services into community forestry in Nepal |
| Country(ies)/Territory(ies) | Nepal |
| Lead Organisation | BirdLife International |
| Partner(s) | Bird Conservation Nepal, Department of Forests, Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal |
| Project Leader | David Thomas |
| Report date and number (e.g., HYR3) | HYR2 |
| Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc | http://www.birdlifeneal.org/projects/mainstreaming-biodiversity-and-ecosystem-services-into-community-forestry-in-nepal |
| Funder (DFID/Defra) | DFID |

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 to end September).

In this period we have made good progress towards delivering several of our key outputs, with work on the biodiversity supplement and engaging local stakeholders proceeding ahead of schedule. In the first half of this year we have focussed on drafting the biodiversity supplement ahead of developing training, in recognition of the fact that training needs to reflect contents of the supplement. Finally, in response to our first year annual review we have taken steps to improve project monitoring and evaluation through adjustments to our logical framework (with advice and support from LTSI), and through increased stakeholder engagement at both national and regional levels in line with Nepal's new federal structure.

Progress in the last six months is detailed against relevant activities in the project timetable below.

1. Information and knowledge review

Activity 1.3 - Publish results of the review in an open-access peer reviewed journal or other format

Proceedings of the national workshop on Mainstreaming Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services into Community Forestry in Nepal held in August 2015 have been published and distributed to key stakeholders including Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations working in Community Forestry (see section 5 of this report for more details). The proceedings can be found [here](#).

The extensive literature review prepared in Year 1 of the project has been summarised into a short paper, which we plan to submit to the national Forestry Journal for publication in Q3 of this year.

2. Training courses for CF professionals

In discussions with key project stakeholders beginning at a workshop in March of this year, we have decided that the training course developed for forest officers needed to be explicitly linked to the 'biodiversity supplement' that the project is developing. Therefore, in this period we have focussed on progressing output 4.

However, we have continued engagement with the national and regional training centres, and will build on outputs from the March 2016 workshop to develop a detailed training outline and methods, a draft plan and responsibilities for materials development, and a timetable for piloting and delivery of the

training at a workshop in Kathmandu on the 4th November. A formal change request detailing these timetable changes will be submitted to LTSI shortly.

3. Operational plans for 14 community forests

Activity 3.1 - Hold community level meetings for piloting the integration of biodiversity and ES in CFM

In this period we have moved forward significantly with engagement of the communities that the project plans to work with. We have identified nine sites at which to deliver our fourteen community pilots. These sites are distributed across all seven States that form the basis of Nepal's new federal government and are Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, recognising their global biodiversity importance. Approximately half of these sites have ongoing BCN projects, helping to ensure efficiency and sustainability.

Community-level meetings have thus far been held at four of the nine sites - in Phulchowki (Lalitpur district), Ghodaghodi (Kailali district), Rauta (Udayapur district), and Reshunga (Gulmi district). These initial meetings have focused on introducing the project's aims to local stakeholders and identifying specific Community Forest User Groups with which to work at the sites. Meeting participants have included Community Forest User Group representatives and local forestry and FECOFUN officials, and thus far we have agreed to work with seven CFUGs across the four sites. Similar meetings at the other five sites are planned for the next quarter.

A sample of 80 Community Forest User Groups' Operational plans collected randomly from Community Forests in the Midhill, Mountain and Terai regions of Nepal have been reviewed and scored based on their recognition of biodiversity and ecosystem service values, and planned and management practices to improve these. Scoring confirmed that most of these operational plans have focussed on timber, firewood and fodder, with limited attention to NTFPs such as medicinal plants and key ecosystem services and cultural values. This information provides a valuable baseline for us when embarking on our work with community forest user groups, and further builds on the review under output 1.

4. National biodiversity supplement to the CF guidelines

Activity 4.1 - Design, write and produce biodiversity supplement and accompanying materials

Building on the outputs from the workshop held in March 2016 that identified the focus and format of the biodiversity supplement, we have produced a comprehensive first draft of this key document. The supplement has been designed to take users through a participatory process to identify important biodiversity and ecosystem services needs and values within a Community Forest User Group, and builds management actions into the revised operational plan. A key focus has been to ensure that this guidance aligns closely to, and builds on, the current operational planning process.

The first draft of this document has been shared with the project's Project Management and Technical Committees, and comments have been incorporated. Following advice from the Department of Forests, the draft supplement is now undergoing translation into Nepali to allow wider consultation within the sector.

5. Dissemination and wider awareness

Activity 5.1 - Organise national level awareness and lesson-sharing events

We have continued engagement of key sector stakeholders at national level, including the Department of Forests, Ministry of Soil and Forests Conservation, and the Central Forests Training and Extension Centre. As described under section 3, and responding to feedback from the first AR, we have also increased our engagement at local level with awareness-raising workshops held so far at four of nine sites across the seven federal states identified in Nepal's new constitution.

In August BCN met with the CBD focal point in Nepal to demonstrate how their work was contributing to Nepal's NBSAP. This project was profiled in that meeting, as contributing significantly to achieve the NBSAP action 'By 2020, all the community managed forests to include a biodiversity chapter in their management or operational plans and respective user groups to effectively implement those plans'.

Leaflets containing information about the project, our aims and progress so far, were published in Nepali and distributed widely to national and local stakeholders.

Activity 5.3 - Disseminate and share all project materials and lessons learned through appropriate channels

The workshop proceedings described under point one above have been distributed to a total of 87 governmental and non-governmental organisations, forestry sector federations, educational institutions and key individuals working in community forestry in Nepal. This dissemination opens the door for further engagement and consultation with these institutions and individuals as we continue to develop our outputs.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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.

1. **Timetable changes:** As described above, in order to ensure the necessary linkages between the forest officer training course and the biodiversity supplement, we have proceeded earlier than anticipated with development of the biodiversity supplement and delayed development of the training course by one quarter. This is outlined in a change request to be submitted shortly.
2. **Logframe revision:** Having received a strong recommendation in our first annual review to make our Outcome and Output indicators more measurable, we have (in consultation and with support from LTSI) revised our logframe. We will send the revised logframe to LTSI shortly, but have agreed to delay a formal change request until after the MTR is completed, in case further changes are recommended.
3. **Staffing changes:** Due to a change in circumstances, the current project leader Dr David Thomas will not be able to continue to in this capacity. BirdLife have secured the services of Dr Nonie Coulthard as a direct replacement. Nonie Coulthard has over 25 years' experience in biodiversity conservation/natural resource management, international development, capacity building, and project design, monitoring and evaluation. We feel confident that Dr Coulthard's experience makes her well suited to providing the leadership and oversight required to deliver the project outcome. A change request detailing this change has been submitted and accepted.

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

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| Discussed with LTS: | Yes |
| Formal change request submitted: | Yes (change in project leader, timetable) |
| Received confirmation of change acceptance | Yes (change in project leader) No (Project timetable) |

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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

No