



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

Project Ref No	23-010
Project Title	Implementing a model for sustainable forest management in Cambodia
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Cambodia/Siem Pang District, Stung Treng province
Lead Organisation	Birdlife International-Cambodia Programme
Partner(s)	1) General Department of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection, Ministry of Environment and Stung Treng Department of Environment 2) Sansum Mlup Prey (SMP) 3) Cambodia Rural Development Team (CRDT)
Project Leader	Jonathan C. Eames
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	31 October 2016, HYR1
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	N/A
Funder (DFID/Defra)	Defra

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).

Project funds were only received from Darwin in June 2016 instead of April 2016. The project start date was therefore delayed approximately three months. This report therefore covers the period from mid June to September 2016.

Project management

Recruitment of staff and contractual arrangements

A team leader and a project officer were recruited. The project relocated to a new office in Siem Pang town. Phann Sithan was recruited as team leader. Sithan has an MSc. in land management and land tenure from the University of Munich, Germany. Sithan has a background of relevant experience including most recently for the Community Managed Development Partnership, Cambodia as Land Management and Climate Change Technical Advisor and as Land and Livelihood Programme Manager at the NGO Forum on Cambodia. Peak Saven was also recruited as a livelihoods project officer.

Verification of project baselines

A Monitoring and Evaluation plan will be developed in the last quarter of Year 1 and included in the first annual report. Baseline poverty reduction data, a repeat of the previous socio-economic data is currently being collated and the report will be presented as an annex to the first annual report. Population Rapid Assessments were completed in Kampourk, Khet Svay and Khet Kroum villages. By the end of December PRAs at Pong Kreeel and Pa Bang, La Kay, Nhang Sum villages (plus 101 army base) will have been completed. Supplementary feeding of vultures continued with two restaurants per month throughout the reporting period. Roost and nest monitoring for Giant and White-shouldered Ibis occurred throughout the reporting period.

Project inception workshop

This was held in October 2016 and we will report on this activity in the first annual report.

Quarterly project meetings

One meeting was organized with partners including Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Sansom Mlup Prey (SMP) and Cambodia Rural Development Team (CRDT) in July 2016 at the BirdLife International office in Phnom Penh office. It was agreed to develop a work plan and timetable for developing an organic and wildlife friendly rice initiative at the villages surrounding Western Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary.

Project monitoring, review and reporting

Monthly progress reports were drafted and are available upon request.

Output 1: Local consultation structures established at village and district level, equitably representing the views of constituents

Meetings to establish village forums in 7 target villages

Eight village meetings were organized in July, August and September within the seven target villages surrounding Western Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary comprising Pong Kreal, Khet Svay, Khe Krom, Khampourk, Pha Bang, La Kay and Nhang Sum. In total there were 330 participants, including 123 females. Either village chiefs or their deputies attended the meetings to represent the local government authority. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss local rice production, covering annual yields, seed type, how seed rice is sourced. Discussions were also held on introducing higher yielding jasmine rice varieties. Villagers were also briefed on the work of BirdLife and the importance of the site for conservation. Minutes of the meetings and photographs are available upon request.

Output 3: Management plan of Western Siem Pang Forest is developed in consultation with local communities

Consultation meetings

Meetings were held with the Director of the Stung Treng Department of Environment on 9 July at the project office in Siem Pang, and the Director and deputy director of Eastern Mekong Terrestrial Protected Areas Conservation and Chief of Minister's cabinet office on 6 September in Phnom Penh to brief on the work of BirdLife International at Western Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary. These meetings also covered how to address protected area zonation and management planning, and how to proceed with mapping of rice fields. On 27 September BirdLife hosted His Excellency Say Samal, Minister of Environment at Western Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary. During his visit the proposal to build a road through the wildlife sanctuary was discussed. In December meetings began at all seven target villages regarding resource mapping within the wildlife sanctuary, which will form a contribution to the management plan. We will report on this activity in the first annual report.

Output 4: Improved food security in seven target villages (6,630 people) through improved local capacity in agriculture, increased income from wildlife-friendly rice sales, natural resource management and direct natural resource interventions.

Cattle vaccinations and animal husbandry training provided to at least 300 households

This activity began in October 2016 and we will report on this activity in the first annual report.

Sustainable land management training and digging of 10 trapeangs

Scheduled for the last quarter of Year 1 (January-March 2017) and we will report on this activity in the first annual report.

Target villages informed about the requirements for wildlife friendly, organic rice certification, conditional agreements signed

During August an independent Cambodian consultant associated with Samsom Mlup Prey was contracted to provide an assessment of the current rice growing regimes at Siem Pang, to provide recommendations for improving rice yields, and to undertake a market chain assessment. His report is available upon request.

The Livelihood Team met with Samsum Mlup Prey and Wildlife Conservation Society staff to learn about the Ibis Rice production and the prerequisites before the scheme can be introduced at Siem Pang. BirdLife and WCS agreed to two exchanges to Siem Pang for WCS staff from October 4-8 2016 and to Thmat Boeuy in Phreah Vihear from September 14-17, 2016. In October WCS produced a short report on the potential for Ibis Rice production at Siem Pang. The BirdLife delegation to Thmat Boeuy were observers to the introduction to Ibis Rice at a new village and had the opportunity to meet project staff and villagers participating in the scheme.

Training for at least 1000 people in wildlife friendly agricultural techniques

Scheduled for the last quarter of Year 1 (January-March 2017) and will we will report on this activity in the first annual report.

Output 5: Between 2018 and 2019 no further land conversion within the boundary of Western Siem Pang Protected Forest II

Ground truth mapping of all existing rice fields in four target villages

The strategy for this activity was still under discussion with Samsum Mlup Prey in December and we will report on this activity in the first annual report.

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.

Project start delayed

Project funds were only received from Darwin in June 2016 instead of April 2016. The project start date was therefore delayed approximately three months. This report therefore covers the period from mid June to September 2016.

Change in status of the project site

The jurisdiction of the project site changed after the project inception date. On 28 April 2016 all thirteen national protected forests (including Siem Pang Protected Forest) were transferred by Prime Ministerial sub-decree 69, 2016 from the jurisdiction of the Forestry Administration, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to the Ministry of Environment. The project site was declared a wildlife sanctuary. On 9 May 2016 Prime Minister Hun Sen signed sub-decree 76, 2016 establishing Prey Siem Pang Lech Wildlife Sanctuary (Western Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary) covering 65,389 ha. The same sub-decree also upgraded Siem Pang Protected Forest (located in the north of the Important Bird Area) to Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary. The combined area of both new wildlife sanctuaries is now 132,321 hectares.

Change in principle government partner

The change in management authority, from the Forestry Administration, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to the Ministry of Environment, resulted in the loss of the senior Forestry Administration staff with whom we had worked closely up to that point. We also lost three Forestry Administration staff at the site, which was less of a loss. The overall loss of Forestry Administration personnel we have viewed as an opportunity to strengthen links with Ministry of Environment, especially at provincial level, and to review working practices with government, especially in terms of allowances and salary supplement. We have since established a working relationship with then Stung Treng Department of Environment and they in turn have appointed to staff as protected area managers to work with us. However these individuals have no relevant background or experience in protected areas management and seem only interested in rent seeking behaviour. This change is not expected to affect the budget but it may lead to delay in implementation of project activities because the Department of Environment in Stung Treng Province faces a severe capacity shortage.

Intra-government working practices

It is also increasingly clear that increasing friction exists between the General Department of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection (GDNCP) within the Ministry of Environment and the provincial Department of Environment, which reports to the provincial

governor. The lines of reporting seem unclear to all involved and this places Birdlife in a difficult situation, as we need good relations with both. It also provides a challenge when appointing counterpart staff.

Road building through the wildlife sanctuary

During the reporting period an attempt was made by the provincial authority to extend the road from Khet Svay village to Kampourk village. As soon as this activity was reported we wrote to the Secretary of State for the Environment and the same day the Minister wrote to the Stung Treng Governor advising him that the area was now a wildlife sanctuary and to identify an alternative route. We were pleased to see such a rapid intervention and that road building ceased. However we fear that this issue has not gone away and that the district or provincial authority will try to proceed again in the future. This is one issue why a good working relationship is essential between central and provincial departments.

Project start and the rice-growing year

The delayed project start made convening village meetings much more difficult because from June to October villages are engaged in rice growing and are not located in villages. The fields of most villagers are usually located some distance from their homes in the villages. Village families pack up belongings and for the duration of the rice growing season re-locate to field houses adjacent to their paddy fields.

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: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget 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.

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/work plan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g., Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**