



Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2019)

Project reference	24-016
Project title	Sustainable community-based stewardship of freshwater resources in the Northern Philippines
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	
Lead organisation	Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
Partner(s)	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR); Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
Project leader	Dr Matthew Gollock
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	31/10/2019 HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	https://twitter.com/ZSLMarine https://www.facebook.com/freshwaterconservationproject/

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).

Please note, we have included some activities in the first half of October in order to fully describe some elements of work.

Output 1: A total of 26 anguillid eels were acoustically tagged in May - two eels tagged last year were caught and released. Data from receivers is being downloaded and analysed on a regular basis. In Duba FS, all 11 eels were detected for >1 day after tagging. Median residency in the fish sanctuary from May to August 2019 was 65% (ranged from 9 to 100%). One of the eels tagged in 2018 was also recaptured and detected throughout this period. In Hot Springs FS, 14 eels were detected for >1 day after tagging. Median residency in the fish sanctuary from May to August 2019 was 55% (ranged from 1 to 100%). Four of the eels tagged in October 2018 were also detected in the Hot Springs fish sanctuary during this period. Median residency of these eels was 87% (ranged from 75 to 100%)

Para-legal training for deputised river wardens (RW) was conducted in collaboration with lawyers from BFAR and DENR. Thirty eight RW and/or community monitoring group (CMG) members and Freshwater Sanctuary Management Board (FSMB) chairs successfully graduated. Four of the six key Local Government Units (LGUs) provided a monthly incentive for their respective RW. Siitan Freshwater Sanctuary (FS) expanded from 3.2 hectares to 9.4 hectares including the 40 metre riparian easement area based on the Water Code of the Philippines. Further, the name has been amended to Freshwater Protected Area through the first joint resolution between two barangays (Ponggo and San Ramos) of Nagtipunan, Quirino.

Four key sites updated their FSMB including representations from riparian areas and landowners nearby the FS. To date, six Freshwater Sanctuary Action teams (FSAT) are now established with inclusion of a riparian committee. Four of six Freshwater Sanctuary Management Plans (FSMPs),

encompassing seven of twelve FS, have been adopted by key LGUs and allotted budget for their implementation. The remaining two LGUs have not adopted the FSMPs yet but have allotted budget for incentives of their RW/CMGs.

A FS Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool (MEAT) workshop will be conducted in December for the second evaluation of the twelve FS.

Output 2: Eel data continues to be gathered through co-operating fishers and traders paid monthly by the Southeast Asian Fishery Development Centre (SEAFDEC) in collaboration with BFAR in Aparri and Camalaniugan. The draft National Eel Management Plan (NEMP) by BFAR is to be finalized this November. In addition, an eel forum is to be conducted by BFAR back-to-back with the finalization of the NEMP with participants attending from the major island groups of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Ten eel Red List assessments were submitted to IUCN in August – six of these species are found in the Philippines. Three assessments included data collected from this project.

ZSL attended CITES CoP18 in Geneva. Decisions relating to anguillid eels were adopted and ZSL lead a side event on these species with involvement of the CITES secretariat and the UK Government.

Output 3: The team has completed the socio-economic surveys in all twelve key sites. A total of 542 respondents were interviewed, 45% male and 55% female. Results were shared back via community assemblies. Ten Community Managed Savings and Credit Association (CoMSCA) have been established with 178 active members in total, composed of 48% male and 52% female. The combined savings reached PhP 975,630 (GBP 15,009.69). The total environmental fund raised amounted to PhP 29,991 (GBP 461.40), this has been primarily used in the river warden monitoring outpost, signage within the fish sanctuary, and a river clean-up drive.

Output 4: Additional training in native tree species nursery establishment was conducted in Nagtipunan, Quirino, and attended by 30 participants (10 female, 20 male). A new nursery was established in Siitan Sanctuary, Quirino which currently holds 1,597 seedlings. Three existing nurseries in Baggao, Cagayan currently have a total of 8,745 seedlings (4,937 native trees, 3,542 native fruit trees, 266 bamboo). 100 native trees in the nursery have been planted by Hotspring Elementary School. ZSL has been invited to be a member of the ambitious “billion tree project” in Baggao LGU – we will provide training in nursery establishment. The same training is requested also by LGU Gattaran but to focus on bamboo propagation for riverbank rehabilitation. Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) was carried out in all twelve key sites. Communities collectively identified an area of 110.27 hectares for riverbank rehabilitation. A total of 14.07 hectares of the area has been identified and mapped as target areas for low impact livelihoods and agriculture. In partnership with key LGUs, the disaster risk reduction management mapping of nearby key sites is in progress. Secondary data and/ or land use maps needed have been collected.

Output 5: Another invasive species - mosquito fish - was identified in five of the twelve FS during monthly monitoring. Last year, janitor fish were observed in four FS but their presence has now been recorded in a total of seven FS. A fisheries office order entitled ‘Guidelines on the implementation of Balik Sigla sa Ilog at Lawa (BASIL)’ has been developed by BFAR National Director and aims to address issues relating to freshwater, including invasive species.

Introductory training in native freshwater fish culture was organized with the help from SEAFDEC/ Aquaculture Department (AQD) Rizal and was hosted at the BFAR farm in Claveria. The training was attended by 18 participants (8 female, 10 male) from ZSL and BFAR. A native fish pilot project was established in collaboration with BFAR using freshwater mullet fingerlings. All the fingerlings died over a period of months, likely due to water quality issues. As such the next approach is to capture larger fish as broodstock.

Riparian assessments in twelve sites have been carried out and invasive tree species identified and mapped. A total of 10.2 hectares have been identified as having the invasives - this is

expected to increase as more data is analysed. Letters of request to eliminate these invasive trees through silviculture methods (i.e. sanitation cutting) have been sent to concerned government agencies for approval, and a cutting permit sought.

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.

The Philippine military is now implementing their “oplan Bayanihan” wherein the ‘red-listed’ barangays will be regularly visited, and soldier visibility will be enhanced. One of our key sites in San Mariano Isabela is now affected and our team access will be limited for their own safety and security - this may affect delivery in those areas.

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: £0

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.

4. 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. Additionally, if you were funded under R24 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan 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**

Response to relevant Y2 annual report queries

- 1. The socio-economic assessment was originally planned for Y1 and is rescheduled now to Y3Q3. The project team should discuss how the gathered data could still be used at the end of the project.**

The socio-economic survey was completed by Y3Q2. The data has been analysed and initial results were reported through community feedback sessions. The data has been used in profiling the communities particularly in the following areas:

- a. The extent of engagement in non-sustainable agricultural practices
- b. Identification of livelihood opportunities
- c. Environmental law enforcement
- d. Access to financial services, financial literacy, savings, etc.

This has helped to inform the training programme for the rest of the project.

- 2. Nevertheless, there is no evidence about how the project is progressing regarding the output indicator “10ha of bankside have reduced impact activities implemented”**

After the Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP), the communities identified a total of 110.27 hectares as priority areas for riverbank rehabilitation. During the PLUP, the farmer-participants volunteered their farmlands as model farms of reduced-impact farming (i.e. agroforestry, sustainable farming). A total of 14.27 hectares were identified for reduced-impact livelihood interventions. In addition, some 70 farmer-fisherfolks are engaged in Pick and Pay organic vegetable production in Siitan Rapids FS. Training on mushroom production using agricultural wastes are also scheduled in the coming months.