

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2017)

Project reference:	Ref No: 24-023:
Project title	Safeguarding a critical biodiversity conservation corridor in Cambodia's Eastern Plains
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cambodia
Lead organisation	WWF-Cambodia
Partner(s)	Mondulhiri Provincial Department of Environment (PDoE), Mondulhiri Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (PDAFF), and the Cambodian Centre for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC)
Project leader	Samuel Hamy (Interim)
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	HYR1
Project website/blog/social media etc.	www.goo.gl/UoVh7k

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).

This report covers the actual project implementation period of 4 months, from 1 June to 30 September 2017. Upon agreement between DEFRA and WWF, some of the project activities scheduled in quarters 1 and 2 were moved to quarter 3, to allow time for recruitment and formalisation of partnerships and agreements. Thus the main activities conducted in quarter 2 are linked to outputs 3, 4 and 5, and selected to ensure that the project will meet the objectives listed in our proposal under the expected time frame.

Output 1: Vulnerable farming households from 8 remote forest communities inside a Protected Area improve their livelihoods through the learning and implementation of innovative, sustainable and more efficient agricultural practices (crop selection and rotation, irrigation technics, natural fertilizer and pest killer, fire breaks, HWC mitigation tools)

WWF-Cambodia, with the support of an M&E Senior Technical Advisor of the WWF-Greater Mekong Program, is developing the terms of reference (TOR) to conduct a rapid rural assessment. WWF-Cambodia will contract an experienced consultant on agricultural patterns, productivity and market viability with the 8 communities living in the PPWS/SWS Biodiversity Conservation Corridor. The assessment process will be implemented between January and March 2018.

Output 2: Greater understanding of local communities' perception of Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) in the PPWS/SWS complex

WWF-Cambodia has developed a questionnaire on the perception of Human Wildlife Conflict by local communities. The questionnaire was used for interviewing households living in the 18 communities in and around the PPWS/SWS complex. The 8 communities in the target biodiversity conservation corridor (BCC) were part of the interviewing process. A total of 90 participants (72 male, 20 female) were interviewed in August, 2017.

Output 3: Better knowledge of Asian elephant movements across two critical protected areas in Cambodia.

3.1: Two meetings have been held between WWF-Cambodia, the PDoE Director and the Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary Director, to discuss the following components (1) successful application of the DARWIN project and the objectives and timeframes listed (2) reviewing previous elephant satellite collaring surveys in Mondulhiri (3) reviewing legislation (4) assessing provincial level capacity and training requirements to undertake the elephant movement study and the formulation of a specialist dart team (5) joint collaborations between biodiversity teams and enforcement official to assess the current status of the corridor and assist in removing current pressures and threats. A follow up meeting is scheduled in quarter 3, outputs expected will include (i) Letter prepared to be sent to the Ministry of Environment to request permission to immobilize and collar elephants in Mondulhiri (ii) names and positions of designated team members and (iii) continued joint co-ordination between research and support for threat assessment and removal in the corridor area

3.2: Due to on-going heavy rains during this period accessibility across the corridor areas has been reduced. However, joint field surveys including law enforcement and research teams commenced at the end of August. These surveys aimed to identify elephant presence and researchers also recorded any other direct or indirect signs of other species. Furthermore, all threats such as land encroachment, illegal logging and poaching were recorded and mapped and the enforcement officials applied penalties as per the Cambodia Law.

A total of 4 field trips are being undertaken covering approximately 3/4 of the corridor area; all trips will have hopefully been completed by mid-October 2017. These baseline surveys revealed so far recorded elephant presence in 9 different locations and provided evidence that elephant movements across the recently-paved road crossing SWS are now occurring. Surveys also recorded the presence of 5 other species, two of them globally endangered (banteng and silvered langur), but also the existence of illegal activities (clearance, logging and small scale hunting) throughout the areas, which resulted in 11 chainsaws and 1 hand tractor being confiscated, 3 illegal camps destroyed and 8 warning letters distributed. Surveys will continue every month to record elephant and other key species presence as well as to reduce illegal activities to conserve the integrity of this corridor.

Output 4: The revised management plan of SWS is approved and implemented by PDoE and local communities to preserve globally significant biodiversity while promoting and supporting appropriate and sustainable development to assist in alleviating poverty

WWF-Cambodia has signed agreement with the Ministry of Environment to develop 2 critical documents: (1) Zonation of the Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS), and (2) its Management Plan including the approved zonation. The Ministry of Environment experts (with the support from WWF-Cambodia) are currently in the stage of collecting and analyzing biodiversity data to feed these documents and enable smart management of the Sanctuary. The zonation plan should be completed by March 2018 and get approval from the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, the Management Plan of SWS will be completed by end of 2018 and will have to be approved by the Minister of Environment.

Key species distribution maps are currently being produced using all existing data to highlight the importance of the corridor area, these will be integrated zonation discussions held with the Ministry of Environment in quarter 3.

Output 5: The concept of biodiversity conservation corridor is nested in the Cambodia Environmental Policies

WWF Cambodia has been actively involved with the Ministry of Environment and with a Cambodian Law Firm appointed by MoE to review the new Environmental Code of Cambodia and to make sure the Code will be applicable at the field level, especially in terms of effective law enforcement to protect biodiversity and natural resources in the Eastern Plains Landscape.

The Ministry of Environment has agreed to declare a biodiversity conservation corridor between Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary (PPWS) and SWS. The Prime Minister of Cambodia already approved the zonation of PPWS in 2016 and once he will have approved the zonation of SWS which is currently under development by the Ministry of Environment, the core conservation zones of the two wildlife sanctuaries will be connected through an effective and protected corridor.

Meanwhile, the protected area law enforcement teams and community patrolling teams have conducted regular monthly meetings to review the corridor patrolling strategic plan and further action plan in order to make sure that there is no new land encroachment along the corridor between PPWS and SWS.

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 project was initially supposed to start in April 2017 but there have been some delays in the agreement process between WWF and DARWIN, leading to the project to start in June 2017. In May 2017, WWF submitted an updated work plan reflecting the delays in implementation.

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 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?

For the period June-November 2017, the management of the project is led by Samuel HAMY as interim project leader.

From December 2017, it is expected to have a dedicated project coordinator.

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 R23 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**