

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

Project reference	24-028
Project title:	Future-proofing Cambodian Wildlife-Friendly farming: securing conservation and livelihoods
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cambodia
Lead organisation	Sansom Mlup Prey
Partner(s)	CIRAD
Project leader	Nicholas Spencer
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	HYR1 31/10/2017
Project website/blog/social media etc.	http://ibisrice.com/ https://www.facebook.com/lbisRice/

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).

We report below on the activities planned for and actioned in this six month period, as identified in our implementation plan.

Output 1 Village Marketing Networks (VMN) have the capacity to manage the expansion of Ibis Rice compliance, Organic internal controls, production and sale independently

1.1 SMP staff & VMN members recruited and trained to manage increased volume of Organic Ibis Rice internal controls, organic purchase, production, and institutional implementation

SMP recruited Keo Socheat as Head of Agriculture to fulfil the lead agronomist role in SMP and Son Brosethy as our internal GIS officer. Four new field officers have been recruited to support the internal control system that has been expanded to 504 households this year from 180 last year. This also increases contact time with farmers and our ability to communicate effectively.

1.2 Training in organic internal control monitoring and record keeping for VMN members so that compliance can be managed without the support of partners even after the switch to organic Ibis Rice which requires much more documentation than Wildlife-Friendly alone

Step 1 of 3 in the internal control training completed with 12 participants including 2 women from 4 villages from 8-10 June 2017. Step 1 consists of an initial training on organic requirements and inspection techniques. This was followed by step 2, experiential training called 'shadow inspections' (June-Aug 2017) where VMN inspector trainees watch and assist experienced inspectors.

It has been helpful to include village leaders, local authorities, and key stakeholders in the VMN inspector training even if those participants are not going to become VMN Inspectors. The training provides a deeper insight into the Organic program's principles and rules giving them a more comprehensive understanding, generating greater buy-in to the programme. We intend to invite additional representatives from village and commune authorities to participate in 2018.

Output 2 Ibis Rice farmers have tested and adopted drought-resilient agricultural practices and complementary soil conservation techniques along with levelling and water efficiency trials

2.1 Seed for drought-resilient jasmine rice strain purchased

130kg of foundation breeder seed of Pkha Romdoul was purchased in May. Pkha Romdoul has been observed to resist both drought and flood better than other jasmine varieties. This seed was distributed to six seed farming households, who will replicate this breeder seed such that the entire farming group can be supplied with very high purity, '1st generation' seed stock.

2.2 SMP develops and tests an organic-certified version of drought-resilient rice seed stock and new soil conservation techniques

CIRAD were contracted at the beginning of October to design and implement crop diversification and soil-conservation activities. Dr Florent Tivet and Vira Leng spent a week in Ibis Rice villages in October assessing current soil conditions and rice health, as well as consulting with farmers. As a result, nine farming households in three villages are trialing a new species (see list below) either on currently fallow land or to be sown on rice paddy as it is harvested. Farmers were selected based on their willingness to establish and maintain these trials, and their ability to keep livestock from entering plots. This meant that plots with good fencing were preferred for the first year's trials. All farmers will be invited to meetings and trainings at the trial plots to raise general awareness about the project. For farmers that show interest there will be a field trip to CIRAD's trial facility in Kampong Cham.

In plots chosen the depth of top-soil has been measured along with samples taken for full soil tests. CIRAD has chosen the trial varieties based on experience gained from their 15 Ha experimental farm which has been under research for the last 12 years. The seed selection is varied to enable a comparison of the best performing seed under specific seasonal and localised conditions.

The varieties fall into two groups: (1) Those that are used primarily for soil improvement, biomass production and fodder for livestock. (2) Crops that improve the soil and have the potential to become secondary or alternative cash-crops to rice. Species being trialed include:

1. *Cajanus cajan* (Pigeon pea)
2. *Amaranth*
3. *Crotalaria juncea*
4. *Stylosanthes guianensis*
5. *Crotalaria ochroleuca*
6. *Centrosema pascuorum*
7. Jute
8. Kenaf
9. 2 cultivars of Cowpea
10. 2 cultivars of mungbean
11. *Sesbania* Var. Pakistan
12. Sorghum Pool preto
13. Sorghum IRAT 203

Output 3 Threatened species populations increase as a result of improved protection around Ibis Rice villages

3.1 Bird nests protectors protect nests of key species and report to birds nest protection coordinator

Throughout the rainy season (May - October) community wildlife rangers conducted awareness raising and biodiversity SMART (spatial monitoring and reporting tool) patrols in important breeding habitat areas for globally threatened waterbirds in the Northern Plains landscape. Between project start and October, 16 Giant Ibis nests (15 fledglings), 27 Sarus Crane nests (47 fledglings), 121 Lesser Adjutant stork nests (still incubating at the time of report) were located, monitored and protected by local community nest protectors within both Kulen Promtep and Chepp Wildlife Sanctuaries.

3.2 Monitoring of forest cover and land-use change by WCS rangers and GIS team

WCS community rangers and MoE patrol team staff collected SMART data during monthly monitoring patrols, recording both planned and unplanned land clearance incidents. SMART observational data will be used as ground truthing during an annual forest cover assessment conducted by GIS teams for the protected areas in the 1st quarter of 2018.

Output 4 Poverty reduced and income improved as a result of Ibis Rice

4.4 Training and seed provided to farmers as necessary

See 2.2 above. The first phase will be to trial a range of alternative crops. 12 farmers are participating in the initial trial phase and all participating farmers will be invited to awareness sessions on those trials.

Output 5 Impacts of Ibis Rice program on threatened bird populations, habitat trends and human livelihoods monitored, recorded and disseminated to a wide audience, including relevant national and regional PES policy-makers

5.2 Results of monitoring are used by Ibis Rice Compliance Unit

The collected data is in process of being verified together with village level stakeholders, local authorities and PDoE. The verified results are planned to be disseminated in November and December 2017.

Establishing baseline/ developing monitoring and evaluation framework

In the startup phase of the project we have been refining the monitoring and evaluation framework and collecting baseline data for monitoring progress against.

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 delay in project launch and particularly Q1 payment meant that the SPOT (*Satellite Pour l'Observation de la Terre*) 1.5m resolution satellite imagery could not be procured until August. This meant that the wet season had arrived and cloud cover became an issue in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary. Airbus, the provider of the imagery, cannot provide imagery with >10% cloud cover. This has delayed our mapping of the forest baseline. We will make sure the satellite is tasked in April next year.

We saw this year that the mapping requirements for the organic certification require 100% accuracy and inclusion. Some farmers did not disclose their fallow land which caused some issues with the inspection and accuracy of land data and history. We are addressing this in our methodology for communicating with farmers around land use mapping.

Currently the process for requesting new land use plans and resolving mapping errors or omissions with the protected area authorities (Provincial Department of Environment, PDoE) is not clear or efficient. This will have an impact on expanding the program to villages where the baseline is outdated or incomplete. We will work with the ministry of environment and the PDoE in the dry season to formalise and streamline some of these processes including the integration of SPOT data into the PDoE's process.

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	N/A

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?

Payment delays can have a significant impact on smaller, local NGOs, such as SMP. The quarterly accounting format is sensible and facilitates good project management. We look forward to streamlining the accompanying payment mechanism in the 2nd half of the project year.

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**