



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

Project reference	25-021
Project title:	Prosperous Mekong Communities Through Fisheries Co-management That Protects River Biodiversity
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Xebanghien River basin, Savannakhet, Lao PDR
Lead organisation	WWF Laos
Partner(s)	- Department of Livestock and Fisheries - National University of Laos
Project leader	Francois Guegan
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	April - September 2019, HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	

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).

After the MoU was signed with the Department of Livestock and Fisheries (DLF) in March 2019, we have been working alongside our Government counterparts to plan and begin work in the target villages. We have been carrying out the following project activities in the reporting period:

- During April 2019 we completed a six month action plan (April – September 2019) agreed within the field team (WWF staff and Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)) and subsequently with DLF.
- We also undertook a group discussion between local authorities (District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO)) and two control villages (Houyhoy and Kenglataeng) in Phin district in order to clarify the project's goals, activities as per their request (DAFO & village authorities) and also to collect some missing data from the villages.
- In May 2019 we supported a DLF monitoring visit and project activities in the 10 target villages (3 districts) by hosting group discussions with villagers as part of our Free Prior and Informed (FPIC) approach along with WWF staff and PAFO, DAFO.
- During May-June 2019 we began our 6-step process of Participatory Aquatic Resources Management to draft the villages Regulation for Fisheries Co-management in our 10 target villages (3 districts) this is also a part of our FPIC approach to the activities.
- During June 2019 we began the process of forming Fisheries Management Committees (FMC) through group discussions in each target village (10 villages in 3 districts). Alongside the local villagers this process also involved representatives from PAFO, DAFO, the District Women Union Office, the District Governor's Office, the District Natural Resources and Environmental Office, the District Justice Office, the District Public Security Office, the District Defence Office, the Area Development for Village Office and Village level authorities.

- We also supported the formation of Village Women-led production Committees (VWC) with the structure developed through group discussion for each target village. It is this committee who will monitor and support the livelihood activities for our target villages (10 villages in 3 district). This activity also led villagers to draft their elementary regulation for livelihood management together with WWF staff.
- During July 2019 we provided training on the usage of our Fish Catch Monitoring form (FCM) and Last Species Sighting survey form (LSS) to our governmental partners. In the meantime the WWF has come to an agreement with PAFO and DAFO to select 150 fishermen from 3 districts to take part in our LSS study. Additionally we selected 8 fish species with various levels of occurrence and rarity to include in the LSS survey.
- We also facilitated revisions and improved Villages Regulation for Fisheries Co-management in the 10 target villages.
- We organized large group discussions and focus groups on needs based assessments with the target villagers at 10 target villages. The needs based assessment was also an open local platforms to share ideas, exchange knowledge and feedback on the needs and feasibility of livelihood improving activities among communities. This activity was a part of our FPIC approach.
- We supported the completion of draft regulations for Village Women-led production groups through village group discussions. The regulations outline key rules for each community and are used as group management principles. Communities are also able to use this as a tool for monitoring and supporting the group and their own activities at the same time as our supported work in all 10 target villages.
- During August 2019 we completed training on the usage of Fish Catch Monitoring (FCM) forms to 95 fishermen from the 10 target villages and 9 control villages.
- During Mid-September 2019 the 95 fishermen from 19 villages started using the FCM forms alongside their fishing activities. However, a flood even occurred, one that was unprecedented in the past 30 years. It affected 12 of 19 villages within our project's area causing serious damage to local communities and the environment. The FCM will need to be started at a later date.
- Finally, we completed FMC and VWC regulations, reviewed and approved by DAFO and Village Office. Preparations have been made for the announcement and dissemination of regulations.

Photos of Work:



- Date taken: 9 June 2019
- Activity: 2.1 Survey 10 target villages and select pilot households to develop women-led production groups; seek FPIC
- Village name: Ban Houaysing village



- Date taken: 31 May 2019
- Activity: 2.1 Survey 10 target villages and select pilot households to develop women-led production groups; seek FPIC
- Village name: Ban Donkiao village



- Date taken: 6 June 2019
- Activity: 2.1 Survey 10 target villages and select pilot households to develop women-led production groups; seek FPIC
- Village name: Ban Phai village



- Date taken: 9 July 2019
- Activity: 2.2 Form 10 women production groups (one in each village)
- Village name: Keangsangkou



- Date taken: 6 July 2019
- Activity: 2.2 Form 10 women production groups (one in each village)
- Village name: Ban Naxano village



- Date taken: 23 July 2019
- Activity: 2.2 Form 10 women production groups (one in each village)
- Village name: Ban Paxia village



- Date taken: 10-17 June 2019
- Activity: 2.3 Survey group members pre-project (combine with activity 1.3)
- Village name: Ban Houaysing village



- Date taken: 10-17 June 2019
- Activity: 2.3 Survey group members pre-project (combine with activity 1.3)
- Village name: Ban Gngang village



- Date taken: 10-17 June 2019
- Activity: 2.3 Survey group members pre-project (combine with activity 1.3)
- Village name: Bann Narthang village



- Date taken: 6 July 2019
- Activity: 2.4 Select livelihoods diversification activities to be supported and funded through the project
- Village name: Ban Naxano village



- Date taken: 5 July 2019
- Activity: 2.4 Select livelihoods diversification activities to be supported and funded through the project
- Village name: Ban Donkhiao village



- Date taken: 8 July 2019
- Activity: 2.4 Select livelihoods diversification activities to be supported and funded through the project
- Village name: Ban Don kao village

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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.

A flood caused by days of intense rain over the Annamites Mountain range occurred in early September 2019, causing the levels of the Xebanghien River (where our target villages are located) to be above flood levels a total of 9 days, from Sept 4 to Sept 13. This means that the whole crops of the area (rice) was destroyed. The Government of Laos called for assistance to development partners to provide assistance to the victims of the floods, which also affected the whole of the southern part of the country (a total of 5 provinces and more than 100,000 people directly affected), but aid is not reaching the villages as much as it should.

12 of the 19 villages in our project have been affected. This has further delayed implementation (for example fish catch monitoring) but we will be able to compensate in the coming months.

One of the team members (Somjit) resigned at the end of July 2019. The position is currently being replaced. A change request will be sent once we have recruited a suitable candidate.

A fraud was identified in early July 2019 and appropriate measures have been applied. This has not compromised project 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
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

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?

Nil

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**