



## Darwin Initiative/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019)

<b>Project reference</b>	26-009
<b>Project title</b>	Enhancing wetland resilience for improved biodiversity and livelihoods in Cambodia
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Cambodia/Vietnam
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT)
<b>Partner(s)</b>	BirdLife International, Cambodia Programme (BirdLife) Department of Freshwater Wetland Conservation (DFWC) NatureLife Cambodia (NLC) Cambodian Rural Development Team (CRDT)
<b>Project leader</b>	Tomos Avent
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)</b>	HYR1
<b>Project website/blog/social media etc.</b>	N/a

**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).**

***Output 1: AP, BPL and the wider CLMD wetland landscape are better understood and showcasing best practice local adoption of Ramsar recommendations and tools.***

- A land classification map was created for the CLMD, helping to identify potentially intact wetlands, which were then subjected to further assessment through field visits, including water quality testing, rapid bird assessments and meetings with local stakeholders. Six sites have now been identified as priority sites for conservation action.
- WWT, in collaboration with University College London, Institute of Technology of Cambodia, WWF Vietnam and other regional experts held an expert working group visit to Anlung Pring Protected Landscape (AP). The findings were used to develop a research plan for AP. Among the findings, a better understanding was garnered on optimal periods of inundation for locally important plants, improving the foundation of knowledge on water management strategies for the site. Water flow modelling has also been completed for the AP catchment to inform priority sustainable farming areas.
- A herpetological assessment was conducted at AP to develop a list of Fish, Reptile, and Amphibian species at the site.

***Output 2: Protected Area Management Plans informed by a participatory zoning process are developed, endorsed by government, and implemented at AP and BPL, with local communities understanding and adhering to their regulations.***

- WWT have drafted zoning maps for Boeung Prek Lapouv Protected Landscape (BPL), illustrating the different zones of the site. A land tenure review committee meeting was conducted in Takeo province on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019, with the participation of the Ministry of Environment's (MoE's) General Department of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection (GDANCP), head and staff of DFWC, the Provincial Deputy Governor in charge of natural resources management, the District Governor of Koh Andet, and some provincial authorities. As a result of the meeting: 1) Takeo administration supported the plan for BPL zonation; 2) The Takeo Deputy Governor agreed to play a

role in passing the zonation plan on to local authorities, who will then disseminate it to local communities for consultation. This has now initiated the formal consultation period.

- SMART monitoring software is now fully integrated into ranger monitoring at both sites, with BirdLife issuing monthly reports for the project partnership and local government.
- On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019, NLC conducted an awareness raising event at BPL on biodiversity values of the wetland, and the legal status of BPL. The Deputy Governor of Takeo province hosted over 300 participants, including provincial government authorities, army representatives, students, and commune authorities.
- An educational field visit was conducted for 50 university students from Takeo province by BirdLife/NLC in collaboration with the provincial DoE in September 2019. The provincial Deputy Governor joined the students to learn more about BPL's ecological values. The visit was convened by planting 200 tree seedlings at a local school.
- NLC updated two educational materials (sarus crane and general environmental awareness books) originally developed by the NGO Mlub Baitong and WWT in 2015, tailoring them to suit BPL's primary schools. In total, three primary schools will participate in the environmental education programme. Formal permission for the programme has been obtained from Koh Andet district's education office, as well as the Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sport.
- A series of environmental film showings was organised in two target villages at BPL involving 76 participants, in order to raise awareness of the biodiversity values of wetlands, and introduce them to the concept of "wise use of wetlands".

***Output 3: 1700 local people in AP and BPL are directly profiting from sustainable livelihood ventures that also reduce wetland degradation.***

- During this reporting period CRDT conducted seven meetings in three target villages (3 meetings in Kosh Chamkar village, 2 in Chres village and 2 in Kosh Tnoat village) to introduce the project to local authorities and communities, and to select the volunteer households that will collaborate with the project. In the activity plan, we planned to select 200 households as project beneficiaries, but so far we have only been able to engage 168. We will seek to engage with additional households in the next quarter.
- CRDT developed five technical training manuals on producing compost fertiliser, soil nutrient management, soil preparation, direct seed sowing/transplanting, and applying appropriate chemical fertilisers and pesticide.
- To establish a baseline for rice farming, a set of structured questionnaires on rice farming practices were conducted by CRDT in three target villages. 94 households in the three target villages participated in the interview.
- With co-funding from Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund, BirdLife/NLC installed seven waste storage boxes in different areas of AP. The local residents are fully collaborating by storing their agricultural waste in the designated locations. We have also obtained approval from the Kampong Trach district authorities to allocate a special site at the district's waste collection area to dispose of hazardous agricultural waste.

***Output 4: The extent and quality of biodiversity habitat and productivity of natural resources are increased at AP and BPL through community-based wetland restoration in core protection and sustainable use zones.***

- To remove Mimosa Pigra (an invasive species) at BPL a protocol was developed, and a control plot was designed. Based on the protocol we conducted a manual removal mission before the flooding season.
- In early October, AP was registered by the MoE as a Community Protected Area (CPA). This new title will enable communities to be directly involved in the management of the wetland. A CPA committee has already been established through community elections. WWT will ensure that the communities receive training to enable them to undertake law enforcement and ecosystem management responsibilities.

**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.**

Although not yet a direct threat to project progress, the zonation of BPL is proving to be a more protracted process than originally anticipated. There are pressures from multiple levels, with external influencers using the zonation process as an opportunity to claim land and lobby provincial and local government. This may create challenges as we move forward, but it is not yet a barrier to any of our outputs.

Project partners have reported exchange rate challenges after budgeting their project on more favourable (USD:GBP) previous rates. We are continuing to review the budgets and looking to secure additional match funds to compensate for exchange rate losses.

We are currently reviewing the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) (Indicator 0.5), as CRDT have since suggested that other poverty indices (e.g. Livelihood Assessment Tool) may be more relevant for this project. If this review yields a suggested change then we will contact Darwin to present our arguments through a Change Request and, if approved, we will generate baselines as soon as possible.

It has been a challenge to find suitable recycling facilities near to our sites and there have been requests from local farmers to find solutions for agricultural hazardous waste management, which appears to be a high local priority. We are continuing to contact commercial recycling collection schemes but these may not be sustainably affordable. We will review the situation and contact Darwin through a Change Request if required.

**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 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.

**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 R25 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 DO NOT send these in the same email.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto: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: 25-035 Darwin Half Year Report**