



**Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects  
Half Year Report  
(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021)**

<b>Project reference</b>	26-022
<b>Project title</b>	Uprating community forest management in Nepal: enhancing biodiversity and livelihoods
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Nepal
<b>Lead organisation</b>	ForestAction Nepal
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (BRGE) Kathmandu Forestry College (KAFCOL) Federation of Community Forest User Groups (FECOFUN) Jhapa Division Forest Office Jhapa
<b>Project leader</b>	Naya Sharma Paudel, PhD
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2021, (HYR3)
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/JalthalBiodiversity">https://www.facebook.com/JalthalBiodiversity</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/BiodiversityNep">https://twitter.com/BiodiversityNep</a> <a href="https://www.flickr.com/photos/184289092@N07/albums">https://www.flickr.com/photos/184289092@N07/albums</a>

- 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).**

Following are activities conducted against each of the output during first half of the year. Evidence of the activities are included in the supporting documents.

**Output1: Forests are sustainably managed with greater diversity, enhanced structural complexity and improved productivity, and institutional capacity for biodiversity conservation enhanced**

*Plantation of bamboo and banana:* While discouraging conventional plantation (exotic species in forest), we supported communities in native species plantation. A total of 1200 bamboo culms, 1200 banana trees and 300 native fodder seedlings were planted in different parts of Jalthal forest of which two thirds of each were supported by the project. These plantations were carried out with aim of increasing feed/fodder to wild elephant (Doc 001).

*Natural regeneration rescue:* Jalthal forest has tremendous natural regeneration potential. But plantation has undermined it. We encouraged communities for protection of naturally regenerating seedlings/saplings. We have rescued over 5000 native seedlings from Mikania invaded areas in five different community forests (CFs) (Doc-001).

**Output 2. Mikania invasion including satellite populations substantially reduced and controlled, degraded forest areas and wetlands reclaimed and converted into productive systems through 'integrated site management'**

*Mikania removal:* We are using adaptive approach in Mikania removal. It looks unstable but we adopt this given the complex nature of the problem. This year we supported five CFs in organising Mikania removal in monsoon season (an unusual practice but informed by emerging knowledge). More than 20 hectare of area was cleaned during monsoon season (Doc-001).

*Wetland restoration:* We have supported communities and collaborated with division forest office (DFO) in restoration of degraded wetlands namely *Jhilka Pokhari* and *Latamari Jhil* (Doc-001).

**Output 3. Biodiversity conservation and values are appreciated and integrated into community forestry policy and planning process; communication/awareness raising materials highlighting biodiversity conservation prepared and disseminated for diverse stakeholders**

Biodiversity in forest management plans: We have organised field visits with local people, organised an interaction meeting with CFUG to incorporate biodiversity in community forest management plan (Doc-001, 002). We have also organised a workshop to sensitize local people to prioritise species for conservation (Doc-001). Similarly we organised forest walk with experts and local people (Doc-003). We have campaigned to mitigate the conflict between development and biodiversity conservation (Doc-004).

We have published one peer review article (Doc-005) and two popular article in Nepali language, one to highlight Biodiversity of Jalthal forest (Doc-006) and another to discuss about highly misguided plantation activities in Nepal (Doc-007).

**Output 4. Forest based enterprises including fishery and ecotourism facilities established and operationalized for enhancement of local livelihoods.**

We have supported women group to establish fisheries (one already established and one in progress) which will benefit a total of 50 poor households (Doc 001). Similarly, we have supported poor women of 17 households to keep goat for income generation and the goat keeping has been linked with agroforestry and fodder tree plantation. We have also closely monitoring the agroforestry in Mikania invaded area which will benefit 126 poor households (Doc-001, 003). Local people have also produced compost using invasive species and weeds and used the product in their farm (Doc-001).

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for COVID-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

Project has faced indirect problem due to a conflict between environment and development. While we are highlighting the socio-ecological importance and biodiversity significance of the remnant forest, government of province no-1 has prepared a plan to construct a road through the forest. The proposal comes without study and appears for short term political gain. The road construction will degrade the already fragmented forest. We communicated our results with government officials, leaders and relevant stakeholders. We did not oppose the road *per se* but tried to highlight the importance of the forest and long term impacts of the road to the biodiversity and forest health (Doc-004).

Many local people are against the road construction but they are not speaking out because of political cause. Some afraid of the 'against the development' label.

**2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of COVID-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

Amidst second wave of the covid-19 global pandemic, Nepal imposed lockdown on 29<sup>th</sup> April in most part of the country and that lasted until 21<sup>st</sup> June. Beyond this, local administration imposed a three week long lockdown in July in the project sites. We were about to plan and begin the year 3 activities the lockdown has affected our activities. This year impact was far higher than year 2020 lockdown. Second wave was more serious than first wave and restrictions were strict. Following were major impacts:

1. We consecutively missed opportunity to work in monsoon for second year. We missed to conduct expedition to collect and identify plants flowering in monsoon.
2. We could not materialise one experiment in May 2021, which depended on experts travel.
3. RBGE, the UK partner of the project could not travel to the field and our scientific exploration and communication materials based on that are pending.
4. We paid our staffs with no work progress during lockdown, nevertheless some desk works were carried out by field staffs.

As the project activities were affected in 2020, we made a change request extending project time table within the same budget ceiling. Project was supposed to complete by May 2022 will now complete in March 2023.

In response to the pandemic, we reduced number of our larger events and small meetings were organised. We organised online meetings and facilitated capacity building of local staff.

**2c. 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.

**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. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

**4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

Currently we do not have any issues but we may contact you during last week of November. Whether RBGE experts can materialize their travel or not will have effect on project expenditure and timeline. We will settle this issue soon and contact you if required.

**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.**

*-we got some comments and feedbacks but will be addressing those in annual report.*

**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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**