

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2023

Project reference	30-021
Project title	Increasing climate resilience for communities and wildlife in Siem-Pang, Cambodia
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cambodia
Lead partner	Rising Phoenix Co. Ltd.
Partner(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Village forums 2. Department of Primary Industries, New South Wales, Australia 3. Siem Pang District Governor's Office 4. Tetra Tech – USAID Morodok Baitang 5. IBIS Rice Conservation Co. Ltd. 6. Sansom Mlup Prey
Project leader	Jonathan C. Eames
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	N/A

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).

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

Output 1: 55 Climate change resilient community irrigation ponds established at three villages around SPWS leading to a reliable water supply for rice cultivation for 1,375 rural people (50% female)

1.1.1 Meetings with key stakeholders from host villages to develop and agree irrigation pond excavation, safety and maintenance protocols and agreements First protocol developed with Khampourk village within 3 months of project start date. Similar protocols developed and signed at start of year 2 and year 3 for remaining villages (one village per year).

On 11th February 2023, CDU team conducted a meeting in Kham Phouk village with the village chief and 32 villagers (2 women) to discuss and select the community irrigation pond locations to be dug for IBIS Rice farmers. Through the meeting, raised about the purpose of the pond, some rules of the ponds use, maintenance and responsibilities, safety, and contract between farmers and RP. We also discussed the numbers farmers and rice field situation for pond digging and sharing the use with other families, and ask for their participation.

1.1.2 Protocols and agreements relating to irrigation ponds signed by key stakeholders from host villages

The agreement of the community irrigation ponds, which has 13 rules, have were signed by the farmers and the village chiefs on in September 2023.

1.2.1 275 rural people from host villages trained in pond safety and maintenance on completion of each irrigation pond

32 households representing 160 rural people who signed the agreement were trained on the principles of safety and maintenance of the irrigation ponds in September 2023.

1.3.1 Pilot of ten irrigation ponds completed in Khampourk village (year 1)

In April 2023 we dug 10 irrigation tanks sized about 1,000m³ each (20m x 15m x 3.5m) in Kham Phouk village.

OUTPUT 2. 20 forest trapeangs restored within SPWS, improving climate resilience and access to water and food for 2,000 rural people (20 trapeangs x20 households each household x5 people =2,000) their livestock, Eld's Deer, and the Giant and White-shouldered ibis.

2.3 Trapeang monitoring framework (for both restored and unrestored trapeangs) established (including photographs of trapeangs) and operating within 3 months from project start.

The project started in April 2023, but from January to June 2023 twenty-one camera traps were deployed at eleven trapeangs. This followed the previous monitoring protocol established at the start of the trapeang monitoring study in 2020.

2.4 5 Biodiversity Monitoring Unit (BMU) staff trained in trapeang camera trap data collection and collation.

The trapeang monitoring protocol will be reviewed and updated with support from Paul Meek during his visit to Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary from 13-24 November. Once the updated protocol is complete 5 BMU staff will be trained in the updated protocol.

2.5 Continuous trapeang monitoring, including camera traps, capture changes in water level, and use by Eld's Deer, two Endangered ibis species, and people at restored and unrestored trapeangs (controls).

From the 2022 to 2023 dry season trapeang monitoring survey, a total of 250,714 images were retrieved. Images are uploaded on Wildlife Insights for assisted species identification and classification, and they will be analyzed over the next 6 months of the project.

OUTPUT 3. Endangered Eld's deer population at SPWS is maintained/or increases BEOP, compared to population baseline at start of project.

3.1 Develop camera trap monitoring protocol and camera trap survey manual for use by field staff

Paul Meek (Senior Research Scientist at New South Wales Department of Primary Industries) will visit SPWS from 13-24 November. Protocol for camera trap monitoring and manual for use by field staff will be discussed and implemented on this occasion.

3.2 Establish long-term Eld's deer camera trap monitoring BEO Yr1 at SPWS (designed by Paul Meek at start of the project based on Rachel Ladd's PhD research)

Paul Meek will visit SPWS from 13-24 November and we will establish the definitive protocol for the monitoring of Eld's deer with him during this trip.

Following his advice and recommendation, we purchased 60 Reconyx Professional HyperFire 2 White Flash camera and additional material such as SD cards, security box and python locks.

White flash camera should allow us to differentiate adults animal by their spot patterns, making it possible to use a capture-recapture model to estimate the size of the population.

3.3 Journal paper submitted on Eld's deer population BEO yr1

Following the establishment of the protocol and the collection of the first data in November and during the dry season from November to May, a paper on Eld's deer population will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal BEO year 1.

Output 4: Numbers of Critically Endangered Giant Ibis remain stable and White-shouldered Ibis population increases 10% above the baseline at SPWS BEOP

4.1 Giant Ibis nests located and monitored at SPWS throughout the project's lifetime.

As of mid-October, a total of seventeen nests were found in SPWS. So far, four nests fledged eight young. Five nests are currently feeding seven young and two nests are still incubating. A total of six nests failed for unknown reason.

4.3 White-shouldered Ibis nests located, and monitored in SPWS throughout the project's lifetime.

Next breeding season and nest monitoring for WSI will start in November 2023. For the 2022-2023 breeding season (November to May 2023), a total of 32 nests were found. 27 nests fledged 51 young and five nests failed.

4.4 Monthly Biodiversity Monitoring Reports produced and key data shared at Stakeholder Forums and the Cambodia Ibis Working Group

Six monthly biodiversity reports have been produced over the reporting period, and two stakeholder forums have been held where key data was shared with district level stakeholders. Romain Legrand and Samnang Eang assisted and shared data during the last Cambodia Ibis Working Group on 29 August 2023.

2. 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.

Due to the project starting in April, at the end of the dry season. The project had to dig the irrigation tanks first before completing the pre-activities to ensure they could be constructed prior to the monsoon starting. The project implemented initial meetings in Khampourk village in February 2023 prior to the start of the project.

From July to the start of September, Rising Phoenix Community Development Unit had to focus on the completion of the internal control system (ICS) to allow IBIS rice members to receive organic certification. The IBIS rice members had significantly increased in 2023 compared to

2022, which has increased the scale of this job. Therefore, additional activities linked with the irrigation tanks could not be completed until September. Therefore, in the following 2 years of the projects, full activities will be able to be completed (in the dry season) prior to the digging of additional irrigation tanks.

There has been a delay in the purchase of the capital equipment for the project, although this is expected to occur in the next 6 months of the project.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

Actual spend: ██████████

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2024)?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

4c. 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget 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.

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No.