

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports but will contact you individually should any questions arise

Project Ref. No.	13-012
Project Title	Integrated River Basin Management in the Sepik River
Country(ies)	Papua New Guinea
UK Organisation	WWF-UK
Collaborator(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- WWF Papua New Guinea- PNG Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)- Ambunti Local Level Government- East Sepik Provincial Government- HELP Resources Incorporated- Sepik Wetlands Management Initiative (SWMI)- Project area communities
Report date	1 April - 30 September 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR3
Project website	http://www.wwf-pacific.org.fj/where_we_work/png/index.cfm

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

i) Confirm partnership agreements

- Largely completed in previous reporting periods.
- The existing agreement WWF has with HELP Resources Inc was reviewed in May 2006. A new agreement is being prepared and will be finalised shortly.
- The *Sepik River Network Action Plan* (**Annex 1**) was reviewed by stakeholders in June 2006. It was agreed during this review that a formal multilateral partnership agreement between stakeholders was not necessary. Partners will continue to rely on informal co-operation.

ii) Hiring of staff and consultants

- Largely completed in previous reporting periods.
- An Australian Youth Assistance Development (AYAD) volunteer was hired to help with the work on developing GIS maps and assist with other activities relating to the Sepik IRBM project. The volunteer's time with the project was scheduled to run from March to November 2006.

iii) Complete Background Review of the site/Monitoring database and baseline established

- Largely complete. Activities in this reporting period have included:
 - o The Sepik Field Co-ordinator (referred to as ADLEF Field Coordinator in the Darwin agreement but now employed through HELP Resources Inc) compiled socio-economic profiles for villages in the Sepik River Basin; and Ambunti Local Level Government conducting participatory rural appraisal (PRA) to inform the Ambunti District five-year development plan. This process tries to look at the existing social infrastructure and tries to assess people's development needs and aspirations. Parts of these data will be made available to WWF for the purposes of monitoring.
 - o An aerial crocodile survey was conducted in April 2006 by DEC through the stakeholder work plan. The findings are being analysed and will be made available to WWF once this is complete.

iii) Monitor changes to baseline environmental conditions and achievement of planned activities

- Ongoing.
- It has been reported by the SWMI that the number of bushfires in the Sepik River Basin has dropped dramatically after awareness-raising activities about crocodile egg and habitat protection.

iv) Formulate education strategy and produce awareness materials / Communications materials on values of the Sepik River / Continue awareness campaign

- Ongoing.
- A ***Sepik River Crocodile Festival*** is planned for December 2006. During this time school children and local communities will take part in various activities with the aim of promoting the crocodile as an iconic species for the Sepik River Basin. Information about the Sepik IRBM project will be show-cased during the Festival. A concept paper for the Festival is at **Annex 2**.
- Three thousand copies of ***Sepik Nature and Tourism brochure*** (**Annex 3**) were printed in Singapore and, after some difficulties in importing them, arrived in PNG in September 2006. There will be two launches of this leaflet: one in Port Moresby in November 2006 and the other at the project site in Ambunti in December 2006 during the Sepik River Crocodile Festival.
- Through funding from WWF's Forests of New Guinea programme, the Bauabau Theatre Group was engaged to conduct a month of awareness-raising activities on the management of Eaglewood in the Sepik region. Community theatre of this nature is an important means of raising awareness in rural areas of PNG.
- The WWF PNG Freshwater Officer (David Peter) presented a paper at the 9th International River Symposium in Brisbane, Australia in September 2006. The paper was entitled, "Challenges in managing rivers in the Pacific region – the Sepik River". The substantial delegation, including organisations such as the Global Water Partnership and the Australian National University, received the paper enthusiastically.

v) Training in IRBM

- Ongoing.
- Several meetings were held with partners to explain WWF's interpretation of IRBM in the Sepik River Basin and to highlight how IRBM is followed in other parts of the world. Many partners now understand the IRBM concept better, but key audiences that still need training local

communities and landowners. Therefore training on IRBM will be made available to selected people from the Niksek and Freeda sub-catchments. Some of this will be in the form of "Training the trainers" so as to maximise outreach.

- One student from University of Papua New Guinea was engaged by the Sepik IRBM project for six months to give him work experience on IRBM issues. Two other students will be doing their work experience with WWF for three months starting from October 2006.

vi) Design for implementing integrated river basin management policy in the Sepik basin / Define mechanism for operationalising Total Catchment Environment Management Policy / Assist DEC in the preparation of draft catchment management plan / Form catchment management institutions

- Ongoing.
- A Sepik Stakeholder Working Group was formed during the stakeholders' planning meeting in June 2006. The Working Group consists of representatives of organisations which are responsible for actions in the Sepik River Network Action Plan (see i) above). Invitations will be extended to the private sector organisations that have a stake in the Sepik River Basin. It was also agreed that the Working Group will be supported by the Ambunti Field Coordinator who will act as a secretariat.
- Discussions were continued with DEC on the review of the department's TCEM policy in light of the experiences WWF has gained, including those from the Sepik IRBM project. Under the TCEM policy the department is required to hire catchment officers for several major river basins in PNG. WWF aims to work with key officials within DEC to improve understanding of, commitment to, and funding of, the TCEM policy. The aim is that the TCEM policy and the Sepik IRBM plan are mutually supportive. A draft (and confidential at this stage) report was produced by the AYAD volunteer (see ii) above) on why the TCEM policy did not work and recommendations were also made. Further meetings will be held with DEC to discuss the outcomes of this report.
- The Guidance Document on IRBM development went through several iterations. By the end of this reporting period a near final draft was circulated to conservation staff within WWF for comment.
- Meetings were held with two possible consultants who may be contracted to support the drafting of the IRBM plan for the Sepik River Basin.
- An informal review was undertaken by WWF staff of the costs and benefits of asking the PNG Government to ratify the UN Convention on Transboundary Watercourse Management. The initial conclusions were that this could support the case for implementing the TCEM policy. Many of the principles of the TCEM policy and the Convention are similar. If the Convention is ratified by approximately 20 more countries it will come into force and oblige countries such as PNG to look more closely at management of river basins and water resources.

vii) Support LLG legislation and District development plans that reflect integrated river basin management objectives

- Ongoing.
- Following meetings between WWF PNG and Ambunti LLG in Wewak in June 2006, a working committee was formed to develop an schedule for the development of the Ambunti District five-year development plan. A budget and work plan was submitted to the MP for Ambunti-Drekikir with a view to funding being made available. According to WWF's sources, the funds have been allocated by the MP but we have not yet received confirmation. Discussions were also held with

the consultant who will be hired to develop the five year plan.

viii) Assist communities to declare new wetlands protected areas and complete management plans / Begin management planning in protected areas / Support community management and enterprise initiatives

- Ongoing.
- With respect to protected areas, the Sepik IRBM project is now focusing on two sub-catchments: the Niksek and Freeda sub-catchments. A sub-catchment plan will be developed for each. These sub-catchment plans will be supported by community protected area management plans. These community protected area management plans should be drafted in the next reporting period.
- In September 2006, the WWF PNG Protected Areas Officer and staff from DEC visited the proposed Wildlife Management Areas at Meha and Huma to sign Memoranda of Understanding with principle landowners.

Next steps

Between October 2006 and March 2006, the focus of the Sepik IRBM project will be on:

1. Grants to SWMI to undertake repeat monitoring of the crocodile population in the areas where they conducted awareness and surveys last year. They will also be undertaking further awareness-raising activities in other areas within the upper Sepik region through additional funding from WWF's Forests of New Guinea programme.
2. Signing of the reviewed partnership agreement between HELP Resources Inc and WWF on the secondment of Ambunti Field Coordinator from HELP Resources and work in Ambunti District.
3. Confirmation of collaboration with the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) with the prospect of students helping to collect data relating to river basins and water resource management, gaining experience and training in IRBM as they do so.
4. Assisting the development of Terms of Reference for a consultant to write the five-year development plan for Ambunti District; and the provision of technical input into the drafting process for the plan so that it incorporates IRBM principles.
5. Launching of the Sepik Nature and Tourism brochure in both Port Moresby and, during the Sepik River Crocodile Festival in Wewak.
6. Reviewing the TCEM policy and further discussions with DEC with a view to its implementation.
7. Support the development of community protected areas management plans for the Niksek and the Freeda sub-catchments.
8. Holding of a stakeholder consultative meeting with the PNG Government and stakeholders to lobby for ratification of the UN Convention.
9. Finalisation of the guidance document to IRBM development in PNG.
10. Hiring of a consultant will be hired to co-ordinate further monitoring on social, economical and ecological significances and the values of the Sepik.
11. If WWF's bid to the EC is successful, preparation for the start of the project, "Sepik Livelihoods:

sustainable natural resource management to improve the social and economic welfare of remote communities in the Sepik River Catchment, Papua New Guinea". This represents the major strand of WWF's continuation strategy for the Sepik IRBM work. The proposal is too large to annex to this report, but copies are available on request.

12. Submission of two further proposals on the Sepik Crocodile Festival and on Protection of migratory birds habitats.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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.

No significant problems.

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

No.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

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

No.

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.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**