#### **Darwin Initiative**

### Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No. 14-035

**Project Title** Strengthening pro-poor wetland conservation using integrated biodiversity

and livelihood assessment

Country(ies) Cambodia and Tanzania

**UK Organisation** IUCN

**Collaborator(s)** Overseas Development Group (University of East Anglia); IUCN Sri Lanka;

UNDP/GEF-IUCN-MRC Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and

Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP); IUCN Eastern Africa

**Report date** 31 October 2006

Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

HYR/1

**Project website** http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/our\_work/freshwater/darwin\_index.htm

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).

Project activities for the period have been completed successfully according to the baseline timetable:

- Rufiji training workshop and scoping mission. The first workshop and scoping survey related to the Tanzania component of the above project were successfully completed, from 2<sup>nd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> May, 2006. The scoping visit (2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> May) to the Mtanza-Msona villages of the Rufiji District preceded the workshop. The scoping visit enabled the team to establish field contacts, meet relevant government officials, identify suitable sampling sites for the survey and also identify local data sources and other logistical requirements for the field surveys. The subsequent workshop held in Dar-es-Salaam (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> May) convened a team of potential experts for involvement in the project to discuss the proposed work, demonstrate and discuss methodologies to be used, and clarify how Darwin objectives can complement and assist in those of the REMP and how REMP information can be employed in achieving Darwin objectives. The workshop was attended by 14 participants including relevant stakeholders, and potential core team members.
- Rufiji dry season field trip. The first field assessment for the Mtanza-Msona villages (19<sup>th</sup> Sept 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 2006) was conducted successfully with a team of 10 people with a combination of biodiversity, livelihoods and economic backgrounds. The project was very lucky to benefit from the expertise of two volunteer members of the team, namely, Gita Kasthala (conservation ecologist, UK) and Matthew Knisely (ethnobotanist, USA). The first steps in conducting an integrated approach to field assessment were evaluated and elaborated through this field trip. Preliminary feedback reports that the level of integration developed significantly during the field period as the team members gained a better understanding of the objective of "integration". Findings from the field trip will feedback into the "toolkit" which will remain a working document to be developed throughout the project period.
- <u>Stung Treng ongoing field assessment.</u> A dry season biodiversity assessment has been conducted and the data sent to the IUCN Species programme, UK, for analysis.
- <u>Stung Treng Literature review and compilation of existing datasets</u>. Marcus Chambers has now compiled three reports based on a review of the literature and existing data sets: i) Ramsar

village/site information; ii) Deep pools information (a key Mekong habitat), and; iii) Riverbed forest information (key Mekong habitats). These reports provide a wealth of useful information to feed into the project database and mapping work.

- <u>Rufiji Literature review and compilation of existing datasets</u>. A review of the existing literature and data sets of relevance to the project work in Mtanza-Msona is now nearing completion.
- <u>Mapping of Stung Treng and Rufiji sites</u>. Base maps (GIS) of the wetland habitats of both site have now been completed. Addition of field data from the Stung Treng work to the base maps is ongoing. Field data from the Rufiji field trip is still to be transferred for mapping in the UK.
- <u>Development of the Toolkit</u>. The Toolkit continues to be developed as ideas on the format and content are advanced. A draft version was circulated to all Darwin team members and feedback on improvements is anticipated to be ongoing throughout the next 12 months of the project as fieldwork continues at both sites.

# 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.

We have recently learned that, very unexpectedly, the UNDP-GEF Mekong Wetland Biodiversity Project (MWBP) is to be closed as of December 31<sup>st</sup> 2006. As the MWBP is a partner in our own project for the work in Cambodia this is of course unwelcome news. Following a number of discussions we have decided that the project can continue at the Stung Treng site but with a priority to complete the fieldwork before the end of the year as the IUCN Office in Stung Treng will still be open to provide logistical support. Following the probable closure of the Stung Treng office in December ongoing activities will be completed under coordination of the IUCN Office in Phnom Pehn. As this development will require setting up a new regional partnership with the IUCN regional office in Hanoi for overall coordination we will be discussing the options with the Darwin Secretariat very shortly.

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

We will be discussing the implications of the closure of the MWBP with the Darwin Secretariat shortly.

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

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no, 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?

Following a recent discussion with the Secretariat I would like to raise the issue of difficulties faced in claiming for expenses incurred late in March at the end of the UK financial year. We would like to propose that the deadline for submission of the final expenses claim for the year be extended from April 10 to April 30 to allow sufficient time for expenses incurred late in March to be received and entered in the accounts. At present it is not possible to include expenses incurred late in March (especially when incurred by partners overseas) as we only close our own accounts for the preceding month on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

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