

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	14-037
Project Title	Building University Capacity to Train Future Cambodian Conservationists
Country(ies)	Cambodia
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International
Collaborator(s)	Royal University of Phnom Penh, Ministry of Environment (MOE) and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (MAFF)
Report date	31 September 2005
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	N/A

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).

The project is well on schedule. A notable achievement has been the upgrading of the course from a Diploma course to a Masters of Science in Biodiversity Conservation. This will be among the first Masters of Science degree courses in Cambodia, and the first degree course in Conservation.

Planned Project Implementation Timetable:

Financial Year Apr 2005-Mar 2006. Key Milestones: Q3&4: Advertise course, select students (Entrance Exam) and provide one semester' bridging course. Develop teaching modules; Conduct lectures (largely led by British trainers); Initiate specimen collection and library facilities; Train curators and librarians.

Actual Project Implementation Timetable:

June: British-Australian teacher Callum McCulloch was recruited as FFI Project Coordinator, based at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP). Mr Rath Sethik, of Department of Biology, became the project's first "Darwin Scholar" to assist with teaching and research.

July: With FFI assistance, the RUPP submitted a successful application to Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to launch Cambodia's first Masters of Science degree in Biodiversity Conservation. The application package includes details of the course curriculum, trainer CVs, proposed eligibility criteria, and an explanation of the course goals, objectives and rationale.

The project office was established at Room 415, Faculty of Science, RUPP. The project email address is: Darwin.kh@everyday.com.kh

August: Project Steering Committee was formed, including senior staff from FFI Cambodia, Department of Biology and Department of Environmental Sciences. The Steering Committee chair is Dr Neth Barom, Vice Rector of Science Faculty, RUPP.

Teachers for the Bridging Course were identified, and baseline courses developed in English for Scientists, Computer Science, Statistics and Introductory Ecology. These will be delivered in Q4 by a combination of British and Cambodian teachers.

September: The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports approved RUPP's application to launch Masters of Science degree in Biodiversity Conservation.

The course was advertised in all the leading national newspapers and sent to all environmental NGOs and government agencies in Cambodia. 150 requests for application forms were received within the first 48 hours.

A large laboratory at RUPP was chosen by the Faculty of Science to become Cambodia's national herbarium and zoological reference collection, and the FFI and RUPP Project Coordinators drafted plans for the room's renovation, insulation and air conditioning.

The FFI Cambodian accountant and secretary completed advanced courses in English and Accounting, to enhance their capacity to help administer this project.

NB All project material outputs to date, including newspaper adverts, application posters, course information packs and application forms, acknowledge the support of Darwin Initiative and feature the Darwin logo. Copies will be forwarded to Darwin Initiative on request.

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.

The project started three months earlier than originally planned. RUPP's request to upgrade the course from a Diploma to a Masters course meant that the students would first need a three-month Bridging Course to bring them up to the required standard. Therefore, work began in June 2005 to organise the Bridging Course and to secure the necessary approval from the Ministry of Education to launch a Masters of Science degree course. The Bridging Course will be conducted from mid-November 2005 to mid-January 2006, and the first semester of the Masters course is on track to begin in February.

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

A decision was made to begin the project 3 months earlier, without affecting total project cost. This was approved by Ms Margaret Okot by email on 23 June 2005, after a revised implementation timetable and budget had been submitted.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: yes, in 06/05

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: yes, in 06/05

3. 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.

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.**