

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	14-046
Project Title	Sustainable tourism supporting species conservation in the Srepok Wilderness, Cambodia
Country(ies)	Cambodia
UK Organisation	IIED - International Institute for Environment and Development
Collaborator(s)	WWF Greater Mekong – Cambodia Country Programme
Report date	21 October 2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR3</i>
Project websites	www.iied.org/SM/tourism/projects/cambodia.html ; www.panda.org/greatermekong

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project

Progress on activities planned for the first half of FY06/07 are as follows:

Learning exchange in Nepal

In May/June of 2007 Cambodian government officials and members of and Srepok Wilderness Area Project (SWAP) visited Nepal on a two-week study visit to some of the country's national parks and community conservation areas. The visit had a number of objectives, the primary one being to expose government officials and local staff associated with the SWAP to ecotourism operations and community protected areas/forests in an Asian setting. The team visited three different protected areas and was exposed to and educated on the relationships between communities, government and private enterprise in the both protected area/forest and tourism arenas. Of special relevance were the successes with community forestry and associated ecotourism around the Royal Chitwan National Park where communities are capable of generating in excess of a million dollars a year in tourism revenues. This money is then reinvested in the park and community projects. It was felt by the whole team that this was an excellent model for the SWA project, and builds on a complementary visit to Namibia in 2006.

Also in June, the Senior Project Officer for the SWA project, Mr. Keo Sopheak, was sent to The Nature College in South Africa to complete an extensive six-week conservation course that emphasized the practical aspects of protected area management. There was a tourism component to this course in the form of an extensive section on guides and guide training. Capacity building is an integral part of the success of the SWA project and Sopheak has been a leader on this project since its inception. Upon his return Sopheak set up a training schedule to insure that his lessons learned are being passed on to all the SWAP staff.

During the reporting period Darwin funding was also used to send one of SWAP's local community extension team staff on a study tour to the Philippines, this was a structured exchange learning programme in which aspects of indigenous land management and tenure were discussed as well as non timber forest product (NTFP) community livelihood projects, specifically in this case wild forest fruit processing. The lessons learned here have been beneficial in setting up indigenous honey and resin cooperatives within the SWA.

3D-modelling tool replicated further a field

The 3D models discussed in the last Darwin report now exist in 4 locations, one at the SWA HQ and four within communities around the SWA area. This tool is constantly being expanded and revised and within this reporting period it has been hugely beneficial in illustrating and defining the



Figure 2 : 3 D map building in the northern community cluster.

zoning plan (part of the SWA/Mondulkiri Protected Forest – MPF management plan). This is particularly relevant to this report because an integral part of the zoning plan includes zoning for ecotourism areas. 3D mapping of community ecotourism concessions will be made much easier with this tool.

Socio-economic surveys

The definitive socio economic survey mentioned in the last report has been audited by external consultants and will now be published; this will be done the end of October 07. Follow up surveys to test the impacts of community extension work will take place early in 08.

Wildlife census, enforcement, and camera-trapping



Figure 3 : Dhole (Asiatic Wild Dog) in Mondulkiri Protected Forest

Conservation law enforcement continues to be a vital component of the project, as without it, future ecotourism would not be possible. Ranger patrolling is planned and monitored using MIST surveys and the information they supply forms the MIST monitoring database. As reported previously, 10 teams from 5 outposts continue to patrol the SWA. Ten illegal hunting incidences were reported in the MPF during this report period. It is clear that better patrolling systems and more patrolling time have resulted in more discoveries. 887 patrol days were conducted in the SWA including the core and conservation zones.

There is a confirmed presence of a growing number of large mammal species in the MPF including the repeat confirmation of tiger and wild water buffalo presence. A total of 33 illegal hunting, fishing and logging activities were dealt with. 60 animals were confiscated from poachers. Some camera trapping was done during this wet season but with limitations due to damage to the equipment during the wet season. Presence of tiger-prey species were reconfirmed, including: banteng, muntjac, civet, and wild pig. This activity will begin again in the dry season.

Tourism feasibility study

The SWA ecotourism feasibility study - which included extensive community participation - has been completed and already used in presentations to potential investors interested in the SWA area. The tourism feasibility study was also used extensively in the SWA strategic management plan, which is also now complete. As a follow on the feasibility study, a draft version of a SWA ecotourism management plan has been drawn up. A version of the plan is now available for comment; preliminary comments have highlighted areas that need attention and work is continuing on this. A trail and trail guide have been completed for trails along the Srepok River.

Tourism and other training

Due to unforeseen circumstances SWAP's ecotourism technical advisor left the project in September. A new ecotourism team leader (ETL) has been recruited and will lead the tourism initiative in the SWA project. She will be assisted by a community ranger and a local tourism volunteer who after a probation period will become a counterpart to the ETL. This will ensure continuity and capacity building in the tourism section of this project. Some work has already been done by the previous TA on the groundwork for a Wildlife and Ecotourism Management Board to bring together communities, local government, investors and advisors (WWF). As mentioned above work was also done on the ecotourism management plan. Other training includes training of trainers (TOT) in 3D participatory modelling, training on forestry land laws in 3 villages and representatives from various NGO's who were trained in the use of Environmental Education materials



Figure 7 : Environmental training in the Northern Cluster.

and tools.

Communications

A number of press releases and stories have come out of recent activities within WWF. Keo Sopheak was interviewed by a national newspaper in South Africa on the unique Cambodian presence he had created on the course. He has also been interviewed locally for press releases. A report was published and distributed on the Nepal study tour and is being used by government and WWF for further information sharing. The MOMS study was published along with the MIST audit. The ecotourism feasibility study was also published. A draft manual for participatory 3 Dimensional Modelling in Khmer has been circulated. Visual aid materials for environmental education have been produced and these have been used by other NGOs extensively. The recent community fire report has now been rewritten in a summary form, has been translated into Khmer and is due to be published. A recent video on the SWAP project entitled "The Making of a Protected Area" has also been launched.

http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/asia_pacific/news/on_the_ground/index.cfm , or:
http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/asia_pacific/our_solutions/greatermekong/dry_forests_ecoregion/index.cfm?uNewsID=80200



Figure 5 : Bear in the MPF a sample of the variety of wildlife available for ecotourism.

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 need for new infrastructure and upgrading of old infrastructure remains a threat: The N76 national road remains a potential threat to the MPF. This threat was mitigated by the construction of an outpost and rangers put in place. However settlement and movement along this road continues to be a problem. There are definite plans for a road from Vietnam running through the top of the core zone of the MPF and plans for hydroelectric dams on the upper Srepok River.

Planned strategy to meet these challenges: WWF Cambodia hopes to cooperate closely with WWF at a regional and international level to address the potential impacts of these threats. They have also already engaged and will continue to engage with national and provincial government to seek alternatives and highlight the impacts of these threats. While these threats have been highlighted in the last 6 months they have currently been mitigated enough that they will not affect the project timetable or budget.

Granting of concessions in and around MPF by government. A concession was recently granted to the Gold Metal Group for gold mining exploration inside the MPF conservation zone. BHP Billiton has recently been given mining rights in an area bordering on the south western end of the MPF. A 56 000 hectare land cut recently removed a large portion of the MPF for plantations. The possibility of other concessions for plantations, ecotourism and hunting remain a threat.

Planned strategy to meet these challenges: Work with national and provincial government and other relevant NGO's in the landscape. Where applicable, communicate with WWF network to leverage further support. While these challenges have been highlighted in the last 6 months they have currently been mitigated enough that they will not affect the project timetable or budget.

Rampant land grabbing and unsustainable use of natural resources within MPF. Despite the efforts made by WWF and the Forestry Administration this continues to be a problem. Corruption and human migration lie at the heart of this matter.

Planned strategy to meet these challenges: National, provincial, district and communal authorities to be consulted. While these challenges have been highlighted in the last 6 months they have currently been mitigated enough that they will not affect the project timetable or budget.

Existing communities looking for opportunities to expand activities and extend living space. Communities within the 'community use zone' are expanding and threatening sustainability.

Planned strategy to meet these challenges: Need to consult with provincial district and communal authorities and work with other local NGO's in the landscape to look at population issues. While these challenges have been highlighted in the last 6 months they have currently been mitigated enough that they will not affect the project

<p>timetable or budget.</p> <p>Wet season hampers progress. Once again a particularly wet season has slowed things down in SWAP.</p> <p>Planned strategy to meet these challenges: Good momentum in the dry season and astute division of wet and dry season tasks has kept the project on target.</p> <p>Resignation of ecotourism technical advisor: Unexpected though this resignation was, the project remains on target.</p> <p>Planned strategy to meet these challenges: The quick appointment of a capable ecotourism team leader and the maintenance of the momentum already in hand will keep budget and project goals on target.</p>	
<p>Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</p> <p>N/a</p>	
<p>Discussed with the DI Secretariat:</p>	<p>no/yes, in..... (month/yr)</p>
<p>Changes to the project schedule/workplan:</p>	<p>no/yes, in.....(month/yr)</p>