



DARWIN INITIATIVE



Pre-Project Funding Report

This report should be completed and submitted with a Stage 1 Darwin Application

Project Title	Sustainable fisheries management for wildlife and people at Koshi Tappu
Country(ies)	Nepal
Project Ref No. (if known)	296
UK Organisation	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Names / Titles of those who travelled to the host country	Seb Buckton
Grant Value	£1,472.80
Start and Finishing Dates	11 th -18 th October 2004
Report Date	19 th September 2005

1. Please provide a concise overview of the activities undertaken during the pre-project development visit. (Please also include relevant activities before and after, as appropriate). Please highlight those that were not planned.

Planning for the visit was carried out via email with staff from the host country partner, Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN). This enabled all the necessary activities to take place whilst I was in Nepal. After arriving in Kathmandu I met with key staff at BCN, including Hem Sagar Baral, who has recently been appointed CEO, and Conservation Officer Ishana Thapa, who carried out liaison for the visit. We discussed the arrangements that had been made for the week ahead, what I wanted to achieve during the visit and plans for the project. In Kathmandu I visited the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), the government department responsible for managing Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR), with BCN staff. Here we met the Director and Deputy Director. We also met the National Programme Manager for Participatory Conservation Programme of UNDP and Sameer Karki from the Ecosystem and Sustainable Livelihoods Unit of IUCN-Nepal. We discussed the project in relation to existing and forthcoming activities at KTWR and key problems that the reserve is facing. From 13th-16th October I visited KTWR with BCN staff, staying at Koshi Camp, a tourist camp adjacent to the reserve that is affiliated to BCN. We toured the reserve to see examples of some of the problems facing the reserve, and visited the KTWR HQ where we met with the Reserve Warden. I also discussed the potential for a project in more detail with BCN staff. After the visit, further discussions were held with BCN staff over the development of the proposal for Stage 1 submission.

2. Were any difficulties or setbacks encountered? If so, how did they impact on the intended achievements for the visit, and on the intended Darwin project proposal. The timing of the visit had to be changed once funding had been confirmed due to changes in my work programme subsequent to the bid being submitted. To avoid the monsoon (when travel within Nepal is difficult) the visit was delayed until October, which meant that Stage 1 submission could not be made in 2004. However, this has enabled a more complete and thorough assessment of the needs for the project and the development of the partnership and work plan for the Stage 1 proposal. There were national holidays during the latter part of the visit which meant that all meetings had to be held at the beginning of the visit, rather than after the site visit. This meant that some discussions had to be carried out via email on return to the UK. This has taken more time, but has not impinged significantly on the development of the project.

3. Briefly explain how the pre-project funding has helped to confirm or change the planned project intervention – what difference did getting the grant make?

The pre-project funding helped enormously with getting the direction of the project right. Initially the focus was on managing the fishery in and around KTWR. However, during the visit it became apparent that a host of issues are associated with the declining fishery, the root cause being the dependency of local people on natural resources (especially from wetlands). Reserve staff cannot effectively control the use of natural resources by people living around the reserve by prohibition: instead the key to effective protection is the involvement of local people in the management of resources, and the provision of sustainable livelihoods through wise-use of wetlands in and around the reserve. This has resulted in a shift of emphasis and a change in project title, to 'Managing wetlands for sustainable livelihoods at Koshi Tappu, Nepal'. Furthermore, there was a clear need for a project to raise awareness locally, and this would be best achieved through developing a demonstration / education facility that is available through partnership with Koshi Camp. These changes in approach would not have been possible without the pre-project visit. Additionally, the current political situation in Nepal was confirmed as unlikely to have a significant bearing on the potential for this project to achieve its aims.

4. Briefly describe the outcomes and conclusions arising from discussions with the host institution(s). What is the value of the project to the host institution(s) and what will their intended contributions be. Have any other partnerships evolved as a result of the pre-project grant?

Discussion with the host institution confirmed that BCN was the most appropriate host partner. The direction of the project (see above) was also discussed and agreed. BCN would gain greatly through built capacity as part of this project. They are currently core-funded with assistance from RSPB, but although they make great use of the limited resources available to them, they have limited funds and skills to carry out project work. It was agreed that BCN will act as the focal point for the project within Nepal, and liase between all host-country partners (IUCN-Nepal, DNPWC and Koshi Camp). They will also provide staff as project officers, including new appointees, who will receive training under the project. BCN will also help facilitate the training and other activities to be carried out. New partnerships between WWT and IUCN-Nepal, Koshi Camp, and DNPWC were also formed during the project visit, and all will help facilitate and steer the project, and provide staff for training.

5. Conclusion and lessons learned from the Pre-Project Grant

Briefly highlight the main conclusions (positive and negative) gained from the pre-project grant. Please also include any suggestions you may have for improving the impact of this funding scheme.

- The project needs to focus on livelihoods and awareness-raising, not purely fisheries
- The political situation in Nepal should not be a barrier to this project being carried out
- Maintaining unambiguous working relationships with Nepalese partners will be key

Signed:

Name / Title: Dr Sebastian Buckton
Principal Project Officer

Date:

19th September 2005

Please restrict this report to no more than two pages in length and send the completed form to ECTF with your Stage 1 Application Form either via email to darwin-applications@ectf-ed.org.uk or by post to ECTF, Pentlands Science Park, Bush Loan, Edinburgh EH26 0PH.