



DARWIN INITIATIVE



Pre-Project Funding Report

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

Project Title	Government-civil society partnerships for protected areas in Timor-Leste
Country	Timor-Leste (East Timor)
Project Ref No.	536/ App1/667
UK Organisation	BirdLife International
Names / Titles of those who travelled to the host country	Roger Safford, Programme and Projects Manager
Grant Value	£1,839
Start and Finishing Dates	14-27 September 2005
Report Date	23 September 2005 (submission date for stage 1 proposal; schedules did not allow earlier return, so remaining working days on visit spent on further planning)

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.

- Meetings with government departments: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (main government counterpart, responsible for forest conservation and terrestrial protected areas), including both forestry and fishery (regarding marine protected areas) departments; Secretariat of State for Environmental Coordination, Territorial Ordering and Physical Development (has taken responsibilities of former environment Ministry); Ministry of Justice (Land and Property Department, important in relation to land tenure and use, which will affect park establishment)
- Meetings with Civil Society organisations to identify roles and responsibilities for project with BirdLife: Fundação Haburas (national environmental NGO), National University of Timor-Leste
- Meeting with UNDP to learn about support to convention accession, especially CBD; the World Bank is not assisting directly or technically, and so it was sufficient to meet UNDP.
- Visit to site of proposed (Pilot) National Park to meet local forestry staff, villager leaders and district and sub-district administration, and see at first-hand the issues affecting park establishment and management.

All these meetings were planned (and all planned meetings took place), except for Ministry of Justice, the need for which was identified on the visit.

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 visit went very smoothly and without setbacks: all planned meetings took place and the field site visit, although brief, was very productive.

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 planned project intervention was validated by the visit, as reflected in the minimal changes to the purpose and outputs between the pre-project proposal and the stage 1 proposal. The pre-project funding was needed primarily to confirm and agree the role of BirdLife in the protected area establishment process and other conservation initiatives. Meetings with the government and UNDP achieved this aim. As well as confirming the strategy, the visit achieved buy-in for BirdLife's

activities, by demonstrating that no duplication of activities was likely; this had been a concern before the visit. The role of civil society partner organisations was unclear before the visit, as their role in national development had not stabilised since independence; the visit revealed clear technical and capacity-building roles for NGOs and the university, and a willingness in government to work with them.

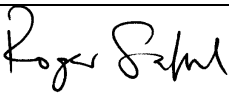
4. Briefly describe the outcomes and conclusions arising from discussions with the host institution(s). What is the value of the project to the host institution(s) and what will their intended contributions be. Have any other partnerships evolved as a result of the pre-project grant?

BirdLife's role (desired by all) is to support the protected areas programme, with special attention to providing high quality information on biodiversity, and bringing civil society institutions and local communities into the process. This marks a shift away from support to conventions accession which was the subject of the proposal submitted but rejected in round 12. The University will participate on three levels: (1) academic staff will provide and gain expertise through a national working group including NGOs and government, to be convened, and Terms of Reference developed, through the project; (2) students will attend training events, and (3) final year students will be given the opportunity to carry out dissertation projects related to the protected areas programme. Fundação Haburas will be involved through (1) technical input to the community consultation process, based on strong experience in traditional/non-government management systems, and (2) capacity-building in biodiversity conservation through on-the-job training and courses. The government will benefit through support to implementation of its policy. Civil society organisations will benefit through new international collaboration on biodiversity where few other opportunities currently exist, as BirdLife is the only international biodiversity conservation NGO active in Timor-Leste. All will benefit through capacity-building, which is a high priority in every institution in Timor-Leste.

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.

- Timor-Leste has very significant biodiversity, and the site of the first proposed national park (the Tutuala-Lore region) is extremely impressive, with a high diversity and large area of intact natural ecosystems; it has not achieved the regional and global recognition it deserves.
- Timor-Leste is favourable to implementation of conservation programmes with international assistance. The government is outward-looking and views biodiversity conservation as a priority, and civil society institutions are ready to become involved.
- Human resources and capacity are extremely limited, and the roles of civil society organisations are sometimes unclear in a new society post-independence; some NGOs are derived from the resistance movement and are still finding their role.

Signed: 

Date: 23 September 2005

Name / Title: Roger Safford, Programme and Projects Manager

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.