

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	16-013
Project Title	Strengthening partnerships for Ramsar implementation in South-East Asia: Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam
Country(ies)	Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam
UK Organisation	BirdLife International
Collaborator(s)	Ramsar Administrative Authorities in Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam; Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST); Malaysian Nature Society (MNS)
Project Leader	Richard Grimmett
Report date	26 th October 2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	

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 commenced in July 2007. Work plans and budget allocations have been agreed with BCST and MNS, and internally with the BirdLife programmes in Cambodia and Vietnam.

Meetings have been held by these organisations with the Government Ramsar Administrative Authorities (RAAs) in three of the four countries (not Thailand). Joint work plans have been agreed which cover common objectives and outputs, plans for future meetings/workshops, and priority sites for conservation activities. In Malaysia, a national meeting was held with the RAA, Ramsar Site managers and wetland governing bodies to discuss national issues relating to Ramsar Site management, and how to improve this.

Collaboration with the RAAs has been strongest in Malaysia, where MNS and the RAA (Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment) have agreed to work together on a wetlands information kit, for key Malaysian States, which will cover *inter alia* (1) importance of wetlands, including ecological services; (2) important wetlands; and (3) opportunities available for governments.

Preparations are being made for workshops in Cambodia and Vietnam which will be held prior to the Ramsar Regional Consultation Meeting for Asia, which is being held in Bangkok 14th-18th January 2008.

Stakeholder meetings have been held at four priority sites: Bako-Buntal Bay, Sarawak and North-central Selangor coast (Malaysia) and Kampong Trach and Boeung Prek Lapouv (Cambodia).

There has been a significant conservation achievement for one of these sites, Boeung Prek Lapouv. On 14th September 2007 the Council of Ministers in Cambodia issued a Decree which announced plans to establish the Boeung Prek Lapouv Sarus Crane Conservation Area, under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. This is based on a proposal prepared and submitted by the BirdLife Cambodia programme and the local authorities. This important Decree was recently signed by Prime Minister Hun Sen. The Sarus Crane Conservation Area covers 8305 ha with a core zone of 919 ha. The Sanctuary protects one of the three most important wintering flocks of the Eastern Sarus Crane in Cambodia (and the

world).

The BirdLife Cambodia programme is also promoting a proposal for a Crane Sanctuary for a second site, Kampong Trach, covering 238 ha. The proposal has the support of local leaders and relevant local government agencies.

In Malaysia, a management plan is being developed for Bako-Buntal Bay. A management planning team is being formed, and its members will receive relevant training to develop and implement the plan.

David Pritchard (RSPB) has been advancing with the Ramsar Secretariat and Standing Committee a "Watching the Wetlands" initiative on behalf of BirdLife, and Ramsar's other International Organization Partners. This proposed joint initiative is designed to support the work of the Convention with wetland monitoring issues. As part of this, BirdLife is exploring ways in which its Important Bird Areas (IBA) monitoring system, and WWF's site management effectiveness tracking tool, can contribute towards monitoring the status, trends and performance of Ramsar Sites. The Darwin project will explore ways in which this initiative might be advanced in the four participating countries.

Inventories of candidate sites for the Ramsar List have been drafted for four countries, drawing on BirdLife's Important Bird Areas information. These are currently being discussed with the RAAs in each country. A number of sites have been put forward for future Ramsar Site designation, and where assistance from the Darwin project will be welcomed.

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.

National workshops and the regional meeting were planned around the Ramsar Regional Consultation Meeting for Asia. This was scheduled for October 2007, but has been shifted to January 2008, so some activities have been put back (although they will still be held in year 1 of the project)

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

No, and no changes to the agreement are felt to be necessary.

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

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, 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? No

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 email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**