Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2011)

Project Ref No 17-026

Project Title Restoration of Priority Pacific Island Ecosystems for People and

Biodiversity

Country(ies) Fiji & Palau

UK Organisation BirdLife International

Collaborator(s) Palau Conservation Society (PCS), BirdLife International Fiji Programme

(BFP), Palau Ministry of Resources and Development, Dept of Health, Environmental Quality Protection Board, Kayangel State Govt, Traditional Chiefs, and Kayangel community, Govt of Fiji Dept of Environment, Local communities Fiji (Ringgold, Vatu-i-ra, and Mabualau Islands), Pacific

Invasives Initiative, Pacific Invasives Learning Network

Project Leader Steve Cranwell

Report date November 2010

Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

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Project website http://www.birdlife.org/regional/pacific/pacific_in_act

ion/current_projects.html#h

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).

Eradication of rodents and feral cats from Kayangel Atoll & government and civil society stakeholders in Palau have the capacity to perpetuate and manage restored island ecosystems

The Palau project has experienced a number of complications and delays in the implementation of project activities for much of the project, in the last six months however, the Palau Conservation Society (PCS) was able to make significant progress and achieved numerous objectives, and as a result the work plan is now back on track. Achievements for the period April to September 2011, were most notably completion of the operational plan including contributions from the Project Steering Committee and local stakeholders; conducting a second round of biological monitoring to strengthen existing baseline data; the sourcing and purchase of all eradication materials; completion of the island baiting track network and other preoperational preparations, and implementation of the rodent and cat eradication operations. The biosecurity plan for Kayangel has also been drafted and priority biosecurity activities have been implemented (such as education and outreach and inspections of incoming boats).

PCS have with Kayangel's leaders established a community group to examine larger resource use issues and the group is working on a management plan for the entire state (marine and terrestrial). Within the scope of the Management plan Kayangel's leadership and community are examining Protected Area needs and options and PCS have helped Kayangel submit a successful application to join Palau's Protected Areas Network. The Kayangel State has already been appropriated funds through the National FY2012 budget to support conservation work in the state. In addition, PCS staff participated in a capacity building exchange in support of the management planning process in Fiji during this period. There has also been ongoing planning and preparation for a Coconut Oil Mill which will be an important livelihood activity in the state. Community members have already reported increased agricultural yields as a result of the eradication operation. Outreach and education have been ongoing, and the community has been briefed along the way, project reports have been shared widely and included in local

and international newsletters. Raw video is being put together for a documentary showcasing the project and operation. The main activities to be completed in the final quarter for PCS are re-evaluation of the projects social and biological indicators, strengthening the biosecurity capacity, and compilation of the draft management plan.

Sustainable management of restored island ecosystems is improved through enhanced protection status of islands

In Fiji management plans for two sites (Vatuira and RingGolds) have been drafted and tabled at the respective Nakorotubu and Laucala District council meetings. Both Councils have endorsed the Management options proposed and the landowning clans from the four villages have implemented actions highlighted in the plans. These include supporting *Qoliqoli* (marine taboo areas) and traditional taboos on over harvesting and use of natural resources for the eight Important Bird Area (IBA) islands. In addition to traditional protection consultations also continue with provincial and national government officials in securing national protection status for these IBAs.

The development of livelihoods as a mechanism for supporting the sustainable use of the Islands natural resources has had good success with the RingGold Island communities. The development of handicraft skills by this project has been further supported by the Ministry of Women and Culture who have channeled additional assistance increasing productivity. As a result women particularly from Laucala (in the RingGolds) have had a steady source of income selling handicrafts to resorts and major towns in the nearby islands of Vanualevu and Taveuni. The income is understood to mostly support children's education but outcomes from the revenue generated are yet to be formally evaluated.

The development and implementation of island restoration projects is enhanced through effective dissemination of best practice

In Fiji, lessons learned from this project have been shared with communities at other Important Bird Areas. Notably the Participatory Appraisal process which has proven to be a successful mechanism for identifying natural resources available (and needed) to a community. The process of then linking sustainable resource practices and identifying complimentary livelihoods engenders strong support as a result of being a community owned process. Those that have then capitalised on opportunities have done so independently once the initial skills and start-up support has been provided.

Similarly, a participatory approach to management planning has resulted in a community agreed and owned outcome. Although, this process takes some time it has developed champions for IBAs (RingGolds and Vatuira) and widespread support from chiefs and traditional leadership. This experience has been shared between staff of the BL Fiji programme involved in this project assisting others in developing management plans for IBAs in Natewa and Taveuni.

PCS have compiled a "Lessons learned" document which includes information from the eradication itself, but also on project management, fund management, and community involvement. The information has been made available to IAS networks in the region and will be included in accompanying information to the final report but is available now if desired

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.

Persistence by the PCS project leader has meant multiple complications in finalising arrangements, logistics and planning needs for the eradication have been overcome enabling the rodent and cat operations to be implemented. This has been no small undertaking and while the rodent operation has been completed the eradication of cats requires continuation of a sustained effort. Additional technical support will be sought to assist this but a follow up effort beyond March maybe necessary to complete the eradication and certainly to confirm the result.

This will not affect the project budget as local people have been trained and are willing to see the operation through. For Fiji, it was anticipated a management planning process (with protection outcomes) would be completed for the island of Mabualau. The island landowners (Nadrukuta clan) are widely dispersed throughout Fiji and while there is a contact representative for the clan (in Suva) it is their wish that management decisions are agreed collectively in person. An inability to get the representation together to discuss and agree on the draft plan has delayed this action however, five of the eight have agreed to come together in January as such it's anticipated this will enable the management plan to be finalised. At this stage the activity is expected to be completed (and protection options ratified). Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement? No, this is the first time this has been raised, but no project alterations are required Discussed with LTS: no/yes, in..... (month/yr) Formal change request submitted: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?
Yes No X
If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.
Estimated carryforward request: £

no/yes in....(month/yr)

Received confirmation of change acceptance

4. 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 <u>planned</u> modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should <u>not</u> be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.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: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report