

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref. No.	18-007
Project Title	Collaborative Conservation of Critical Kerinci Seblat National Park Buffer-Zone Forest
Country(ies)	Sumatra, Indonesia
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International
Collaborator(s)	Lembaga Tiga Beradik
Project Leader	Zoe Cullen
Report date	31 st October 2010
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	1
Project website	NA

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).

This project started in April 2010. Being an entirely new project, the initial priorities were as follows, and were carried out during April and May 2010:

- To establish a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between FFI and Lembaga Tiga Beradik (L-TB), our local NGO partner;
- To recruit key members of the FFI field team, including the Field Manager (Ibnu Andrian); book-keeper (Bayumi Rusli); and GIS specialist (Maryati Moechlisin);
- To establish the Darwin Initiative Village Forest Conservation Project office, in Bangko, the administrative capital of Merangin District;
- To gather the new team (FFI and L-TB) to prepare a detailed project work plan and introduce new staff, plus FFI Indonesia Program Director (Darmawan Liswanto) to key stakeholders, in particular Merangin District Forestry Department and the Bupati and Vice Bupati (Head and Deputy Head) of Merangin District.

Project Activities June – October 2010:

Activity 1.2: Selection of 8 priority villages for support to establish Village Forests: As explained in the project proposal, the level of political support for community-based forest management in Merangin District is very high, and has continued to strengthen during the first six months of this project. Following a successful campaign initiated by L-TB against the proposed conversion of 80,000ha of forest in western Merangin for pulp and paper plantation, Hutan Desa (Village Forest) has become the forest management alternative of choice in Merangin District. In May 2010, both FFI and L-TB, plus other NGOs also involved in supporting community-based forest management, participated in the formal submission of the Merangin District's request for 17 Hutan Desa to the Indonesian Minister of Forestry. This is an unprecedented number from a single District, representing a total area of 49,514ha of high biodiversity forest in the buffer zone of Kerinci Seblat National Park.

As per our work plan, FFI and L-TB selected a cluster of 6 of these 17 villages as the focus area for this project. The villages were selected on the basis of strategic importance for biodiversity conservation, using criteria including proximity to Kerinci Seblat National Park (KSNP), in particular the Sipurak Hook ecosystem, areas to known for high occupancy of Sumatran Tiger, scale (both size of individual Village Forests, and total area protected by selecting adjacent villages to facilitate protection of a larger forest block), and strength of community commitment to sustainable forest management. The 6 villages are: **Lembah Masurai Sub-District (SD)** – 1. Kotorami, 2. Tanjung Dalam: **Muara Siau SD** – 3. Durian Rambun, 4. Lubuk Birah, 5. Lubuk Beringin; **Pangkalan Jambu SD** – 6. Birun.

The seventh village selected – Tiaro – borders the area selected above, and has an exceptionally proactive village head determined to secure community tenure and a forest management framework. However, the forest area there is designated as 'Other Use Land' rather than 'State Forest'. As such, it is not eligible for Hutan Desa, but in order to cultivate the local momentum for forest protection and secure this strategic forest area, the team are facilitating the community to establish 'Customary Forest' / Hutan Adat, that will be recognised by the Bupati. We believe that, while focussing on village forest as the most secure designation for community-based management of natural forest, if we also demonstrate a practical alternative for biodiversity rich but *Non-State Forest*, that we will be able to facilitate protection

of a larger contiguous forest area and maximise community enthusiasm for protection of their traditional forest estates.

For various reasons - outlined in the section below – we have postponed selection an 8th priority village until 2011. However, due to the scale of District ambition for Village Forest (17 requests to date), a number of project activities to date have indeed made vital contributions to this wider goal of 17 Village Forest designations.

On 9th June 2010 the project hosted a tri-partite meeting between FFI, L-TB and the Merangin Department of Forestry (DisHut) to establish a formal Working Group on the Establishment of Village Forests (Kelompok Kerja Pengembangan Hutan Desa / KKPHD). This tri-partite working group now meets weekly on both a formal and ad hoc basis, to ensure coordination, collaboration and strong communication on the process of supporting communities to establish Hutan Desa. Critically, it also ensures strong partnership between the Darwin-supported project and the District Government.

Activities 1.3 & 2.1: Training in Participative Mapping, Forest Management & Forest Law:

Village Meetings: Village meetings have been used as a vehicle to socialise meaning of Village Forest (opportunities, costs, management implications etc) to ensure that participating communities have a truly thorough understanding of the process and its intended outcomes. They were also used to discuss both Village Forest and village administrative boundaries. Full village meetings were facilitated as follows:

Birun: 11 June and 7 & 9 July 2010; **Tanjung Dalam** 15 July; **Durian Rambun** 21 July; **Lubuk Birah** 23 July and 20 August; **Lubuk Beringin** 24 July and 19 August; **Kotorami** 5 August; **Tiaro** 14 & 17 June

Legal Training: 6-8 August training in preparation of Village Laws (Perdes) related to Village Forest protection and management, hosted in Bangko (Merangin District capital) and attended by Village Head (or representative of), and representatives from village parliament (BPD) and customary law committee (Lembaga Adat).

Activity 1.4: Participative Mapping & Agreement of Village Forest Boundaries:

To date, the key priority in terms of articulating boundaries has been to facilitate villages to agree administrative boundaries with their neighbours. The majority of villages in Indonesia do not yet have legally recognised administrative boundaries – but without these, it is clearly not possible to define Village Forest boundaries. The speed to progression of the Village Forest recommendations in Merangin to the legal verification phase has been dramatic – much faster than could possibly have been hoped for at proposal preparation. Thus the focus to date has been on facilitation of boundary definition on paper, through bilateral discussion between communities. FFI and L-TB facilitated the following bi/multi-lateral discussions, and subsequently digitised the agreed results in GIS for submission to the Dept of Forestry as part of the Village Forest verification process (see below):

Kotorami and Dusun Tuo villages: 17 August; **Birun, Lubuk Beringin, Lubuk Birah, Durian Rambun, Kotorami, Dusun Tuo** villages: 30 August; **Lubuk Birah and Lubuk Beringin** villages: 1 October.

Activity 1.5: Establish & Implement Village Forest Management Framework: The legal training above was essential capacity building to contribute to Activity 1.5. However, as per the proposal work plan, further delivery on this activity has not yet been initiated.

Activity 1.6: Legal Designation of Village Forests: At proposal preparation stage it was legal designation would not begin until Year 2 of this project. However, the momentum behind Village Forest in Merangin, and the prior ground-work already completed by L-TB, FFI and other local NGO colleagues, has accelerated this process.

24th May 2010: FFI & L-TB joined DisHut Merangin & other NGO colleagues involved in campaigning against conversion of TNKS buffer zone forest to pulp & paper plantation, and Hutan Desa as an alternative, to formal submit request for 17 Hutan Desa to the Ministry of Forestry in Jakarta;

11th August: FFI & L-TB facilitated DisHut Merangin to present the case for Hutan Desa in Merangin to Directorates of Social Forestry, Planning and Forest Protection of the Ministry of Forestry in Jakarta – this was essential as Merangin is unique in Indonesia for the number and area of village forest proposed.

4-8th October: FFI & L-TB facilitated Ministry of Forestry Village Forest verification team to check field conditions in the villages of the Darwin project area. The verification process addressed all 17 Hutan Desa nominations, and verification was facilitated with DisHut Merangin and NGO colleagues providing support to villages outside the Darwin focus area. To date, FFI and L-TB are the only NGOs with long-term support in place for Hutan Desa facilitation in Merangin, through the generous support of the Darwin Initiative.

Activity 2.2: Partner capacity-building:

L-TB: Supported to attend **FFI Hutan Desa / Community Carbon Pool** workshop in Ketapang, Kalimantan (May 2010); **DisHut Merangin:** Members of KKPHD supported to attend a) Training on **Hutan Desa Establishment** (1 week - August 2010); b) Landscape-level forest management based on matrix of community forestry models - **Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan / KPH** - (2 days - October 2010); **Local govt & NGO partners:** **GPS / GIS training** (3 days - March 2010, match-funding from UNESCO).

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.

1. Speed of Village Forest Verification: As noted above, the progress with legal designation of Village Forest in Merangin has been exceptional as compared with experience to date in other districts. For various reasons:

- Motivation and district-level momentum to move quickly, to avoid repeat of threat of allocation of proposed Village Forest areas to commercial plantation concessions – including outstandingly pro-environment and community empowerment stance of District administration;
- National Government target establish 500,000ha Village Forest by 2013;
- Willingness of local NGOs to collaborate and facilitate the designation process, and lobby central government to move quickly;

For very positive reasons, this is causing us to re-evaluate the budget allocation and prioritisation of activities of this project. I am in the process of preparing a budget change request for this purpose, which will be submitted within 2 weeks, at the latest. Latest update from the Dept of Forestry is that they hope the Minister will issue the Stage 1 Village Forest licenses (Izin Pencadangan) in December 2010.

Bupati designation of Hutan Adat (customary forest) Tiaro Village is also anticipated to be completed by the end of 2010.

Due to the need to move rapidly in the field, to establish the Village Forest working group and prepare communities for Village Forest designation by the Ministry of Forestry, we have not yet had time to conduct the planned 'Project Inception Workshop' (Activity 1.1). However, we have been able to achieve the main objectives of this workshop (socialisation of the Darwin funded program of work with key stakeholders) by combining this information into village meetings, Village Law training, and meetings with local Government. As such, we would like to propose to reallocate these funds to host a multi-stakeholder event to officially acknowledge and publicise the approval of the initial Village Forest licences by the Ministry of Forestry. With the precise date to be determined by the licence approval process, this will be hugely positive event, providing a forum to publically recognise the extraordinary commitment and achievement of local communities and government, a platform to raise awareness of the need for forest protection at District, Provincial and National level, and increase awareness of the critical role of Darwin Initiative funding in supporting this process. The case for this proposed re-allocation of budget will be explained in more detail in the budget change request that is under development.

2. District Action to Tackle Illegal Forest Encroachment & Conversion: Since 2002-3 there has been a growing problem of illegal forest conversion, of State and National Park forest in western Merangin District. Since 2005 L-TB has been working with District Government, conducting intensive awareness-raising among those clearing forest illegally, coordinating community-based forest monitoring and law enforcement in partnership with national park and forestry rangers, and lobbying District Government to take action to protect this critical and (legally) protected forest (values include: watershed, biodiversity, carbon, micro-hydro energy generation, NTFFP supply, cultural / Adat).

The encroachment area overlaps with one Village Forest nomination (not one of the 8 supported by the Darwin Initiative), and clearance is being coordinated by powerful coffee producers primarily facilitating arrivals from neighbouring provinces to conduct illegal clearance and cultivate coffee for sale outside Merangin District.

Since persuasive steps to resolve the encroachment threat have proved unsuccessful, the District, Provincial & National Govts. are now in the final stages of preparing to implement a law enforcement operation to remove those clearing forest illegally. The outcome of this operation will inevitably influence the Village Forest programme in Merangin. If it is successful, then it will set a strong precedent for forest protection, not only in Merangin but throughout Indonesia – demonstrating that laws are indeed more than just text on paper. And will also enable key villages bordering the national park to being a process of forest restoration, and potentially increase the number of Village Forest nominations (as suggested by the Ministry during the verification visit in October).

However, if the operation is not successful in resolving encroachment, those clearing forest illegally will feel empowered to continue and extend their activities; and local communities that have been waiting for legal action to protect their customary forest estate will no longer see any reason why they should not participate directly in the clearance process themselves. Thus we are waiting to see the outcome of this significant operation to see how it will influence attitudes and activities in the District going forward. A more detailed briefing on this issue was sent to the Darwin Initiative earlier this month, and we will provide regular updates on the process.

3. Match-funding: As noted by the Darwin Initiative at project inception, this project has high co-finance targets, with a significant percentage yet to be secured at project inception. This situation has greatly improved since project inception, with approval of a GBP grant from ICAP, to start in January 2011, plus additional small scale match funding secured from UNESCO Jakarta and the Goldman Environmental Awards. Fundraising activity has also included submission of 2 major proposals to TFCA (Debt for Nature Swap Fund) and CLUA (Climate Works Program), which would provide additional substantial match to the project – more than meeting our co-financing targets.

Whilst great progress on co-finance has been made, the delay in securing these funds has made us more cautious in Year 1, with some implications for project activities and proposed budget allocations. As noted below, a budget change request is now being prepared and will be submitted within 2 weeks.

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

Issues related to request for budget amendment have not yet been discussed with LTS International – as such, no changes have yet been made to the original agreement.

Discussed with LTS: Not yet.

Formal change request submitted: In preparation.

Received confirmation of change acceptance N/A

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

No

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: £ N/A

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No. Thus far the procedures seem clear, supportive and very efficient.

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 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 e.g. Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**