



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	19-007
Project Title	Developing Capacity for <i>in situ</i> conservation in Iraq
Country(ies)	Iraq
Lead Organisation	RBGE
Collaborator(s)	Nature Iraq, BirdLife International
Project Leader	<i>Anthony Miller</i>
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	<i>HYR3</i>
Project website	<i>www.iraqdarwin.org</i>

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) 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 to end September).

1.1 Complete. Nature Iraq's book on the KBA's of Iraq is due for publication in early 2015. A paper on Peramagroon is in prep for submission late 2014.

1.2 UK based workshop scheduled for January 2015.

1.3 Work continues on identification of plant profiles, now about 90% complete. A paper is also being prepared from this work and will be submitted for publication in early 2015.

2.1 Successful testing of print versions of guides for plants in the field in May 2014 provided useful feedback for usability design. A mobile version of the bird app was also tested during the fieldtrip and feedback from the bird team is being incorporated into the content. A complete version will be available for testing in the autumn and accessible online by the end of the year.

Changes in staffing and the loss of Richard Porters NI supported field time means that we have decided to reduce the number of interactive guides produced by the project. Whilst we have generated significant baseline field data on both dragonflies and butterflies of Peramagroon an id guide developed from current data is likely to have significant gaps. We considered developing a partial guide which allowed users to record additional species. However, instead we have set up and are trialling a citizen science based approach for the first time in Iraq. This aims to both inform people about these taxa and gather data on species and distribution nationally. An information leaflet has been produced which encourages people to submit images of dragonflies and butterflies www.iraqdarwin.org/thebighunt. A soft launch took place in Oct 2014 and the project will be refined before being more widely publicised. The project has immediately proved to be an excellent way of reaching out to other conservation organisations in Iraq.

2.2 Bwar continues to gather data for the manual and has mapped tree density across Peramagroon. He visited Edinburgh in Sept 14 where this work was reviewed and discussed in detail. Further face-to-face meetings are planned in Istanbul in December 2014 and UK in early 2015 to ensure that the document is completed successfully.

2.3 Completed

2.4 Unfortunately Baxan Jamal the community outreach officer left Nature Iraq in August

(discussed in section 2a). She had been working on a number of ideas for activities and formats for toolkits. This work will be taken over by other existing NI staff members many of whom had assisted Baxan previously. Schools, in the area have also been closed for longer than expected over the summer as they have been being used to house refugees from the IS advance. The outreach program has therefore been slowed. We expect to run final activities in late autumn.

3.1 20 students completed the 2nd online course. Because the Universities have been closed (due to IS) we have also not yet been able to start the online course for the 3rd time. Again we hope that we will be able to do this in early November and need to do so to ensure that we can complete the course before the end of the project. The University is extremely pleased with the online course and recent positive discussions with the Dean of the Faculty of Science mean that participants will be recruited from this Faculty as well as the Faculty of Agriculture. As a result of interest in the butterfly and dragonfly project we have also had other conservation NGO's get in touch with us asking about participation in the online course.

3.2 The issues outlined in section 2a mean that we have not yet been able to deliver a field training course. Members of the UK team will not be able to do this but we are planning to run a short training course led by Iraq staff in Nov 14.

A number of individuals from various organisations were able to join the UK botanical team in the field during the May trip. Awara Hamakhan joined for the entirety of the trip and was able to help teach others photographic techniques. The team visited the Halgurd Sakran national park and spent a couple of days in the field with national park staff. A recent graduate from the Faculty of Natural Science at Baghdad University also travelled to Kurdistan to spend time carrying out fieldwork on Peramagroom.

2a. 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.

The current situation with the invasion of Iraq by IS has had a significant impact on the project for a number of reasons.

- Travel restrictions mean that the UK team is not able to travel to Iraq.
- There have been major staff losses at NI (CEO - Ammar Zakri, project manager - Amr Al Faham, Community outreach officer - Baxan Jamal). This is also related to wider funding issues at NI.
- Schools and Universities have been closed. They are due to reopen in the next few weeks.

We are anticipating that there will be no possibility of travel to Iraq for the remainder of the project. Fortunately, this has happened at a stage where data collection is complete and we are in a relatively good position to work around this. An increased number of UK trips for project staff and collaborators from Iraq are planned. Any training will be delivered in Iraq by NI staff rather than in collaboration with the UK team.

The loss of Amr Al Faham as project manager has resulted in Bwar Khalid stepping up to take on this role. He now has to manage this as well as completing his work on the land use manual. However, we are ensuring that he is well supported both here and in NI to achieve this. Other work e.g. schools outreach will be spread out amongst other NI staff guided by Bwar.

The changes have resulted in significant upheaval for all and however we are still in a position to deliver the project successfully.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have

changes been made to the original agreement?	
Discussed with LTS:	Yes
Formal change request submitted: submitted for changes in 2.1 as outlined above.	No – although change request to be
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes/No

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

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

None

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 can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**