



Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

Project Ref No	21-007
Project Title	Livelihoods in the Balance – protecting Cambodia’s remaining seasonally-inundated grasslands
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Cambodia
Lead Organisation	Wildfowl & Wetland Trust (WWT)
Partner(s)	Mlup Baitong, Chamroen Chiet Khmer, Forestry Administration of the Royal Government of Cambodia
Project Leader	Tomos Avent
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	31 st Oct 2016. HYR3
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	N/A
Funder (DFID/Defra)	DFID

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).

Output 1

We have expanded our sustainable farming programme by 100% in the first half of Year 3 to ensure those who have historically farmed land in the former buffer area of the reserve can continue to do so, but in a more sustainable manner and with greater security for future use/tenure. Groups have been identified and training has begun through CCK with on-the-ground support from the Wetland Apprentice. These farms are being mapped as part of the agreement that ensures members of the group are not involved in any form of encroachment into the conservation area.

As stated in the Y2 Annual Report, land tenure within the Protected Landscape will be impossible, especially now that management of our sites has transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to the Ministry of Environment. These changes do however create an opportunity for formal designation of sustainable natural resource use zones (harvesting of natural products) and community-use zones (e.g. farming using environmentally-friendly techniques). We will be providing our ecosystem service appraisal and updated land-use maps to support the zonation process and will work with the MoE to ensure all stakeholders are fully engaged. We are aware of the resource limitations within the MoE at this time, so are making sure that the zonation is not rushed before funds are secured for a full consultative process.

Output 2

The new MoE Protected Area regulations mean that a Community fishery cannot officially overlap with a Protected Area. We have adapted the Community fishery maps, so that they only include the area outside of the Protected Landscape and are working with the MoE to ensure that regulated sustainable fishing by local communities (similar to the regulations and use rights within the registered Community Fishery) will still be permitted when the new zoning is completed.

We have worked alongside the Fisheries Administration and new rangers from the department of the environment to crackdown on external fishing pressures. Multi-stakeholder meetings, which have included Vietnamese government counterparts, have been held to empower the Community Fishery groups to close access to their designated fishing areas, increasing the belief that local actions (e.g. patrolling and fish habitat restoration areas) will actually have lasting impact for their future yields. The number of illegal fine mesh nets recorded within the reserve over the last year has decreased.

The trainers for the Sarus Crane Rice (SCR) Group expansion are all members involved in the first phase of the project, reinforcing the training and capacity enhancement that they have received to continue this expansion into the future. Equipment sharing agreements have been created for the SCR Group to allow members to gain benefits from cooperatively owned equipment and resources. This is an additional incentive mechanism for members and also helps sustainably fund the group's central running costs.

The Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) centre has been refurbished to improve catering facilities and ablutions for tourists, and equipment has been bought for value-added activities at the site. New information panels have been drafted and CBET member training has continued. Elections have been held for all key positions within the group.

Output 3

Consultations with vets and local communities have fed into the wetland health risk assessment and drafts are now in the process of being written.

An environmental education programme has been created and delivered at schools around AP, and support provided to create healthier working and play environments around the schools, with biodiversity gardens and wetland themed littler collection facilities, which were painted by the school children.

Data collection for ecological surveys and water management trials has continued along with Local Community Group (LCG) and community fishery patrolling. The transfer to MoE has created officially recognised site managers for each site who have been integrated into the LCGs. Illegal activity patrolling at BPL has increased as a result of this change, and the project has supported additional resources for the groups. Awareness events have been held to ensure community members are aware of reserve regulations, with additional recorded messages being played in each village in and around the protected landscape.

Community clearance of invasive non-native species has continued.

Output 4

A Community water-users group is formally established around AP and surrounding floodplain, and a water management protocol has been written and implemented, with associated training for the user group members.

A paper has been submitted to the Cambodian Journal of Natural History on the impact of adjacent shrimp farming on water quality inside the AP Protected Landscape. Shrimp farmers have been consulted about the potential to transfer to other more profitable livelihoods. Lepironia production is seen as an attractive option, as there is a direct and guaranteed sales channel through the International Crane Foundation's handicraft scheme, and the final products can be sold at the tourism centre.

Water management features continue to be monitored at BPL.

Output 5

A large workshop was held in Phnom Penh with 38 attendees, including; representatives from all relevant regional and national government departments, Site Managers from Cambodia's Ramsar sites, national and international NGOs, and local universities. Wetland management frameworks were discussed, especially in relation to other departmental policies relating to

wetlands and water use within Cambodia. The workshop was followed by a study tour, where all workshop attendees were invited to visit BPL to give their comments on; practical techniques to address common threats to Cambodian wetlands, methods to improve ecological and hydrological management, and experiences of community engagement, awareness and empowerment. The information collected during the workshop and study tour is being fed into the draft guidance.

A multi-stakeholder working group has been established and the structure of the guidance has been agreed. The process is officially endorsed by the Wetland department of the Ministry of Environment and Ramsar Focal Point, and a draft is now being written for completion by the end of the calendar year.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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 transfer of management of wetland Protected Areas from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries to the Ministry of Environment (MoE) has taken much longer than we were originally told to expect. Although the formal transfer has taken place, no strategy was created for re-zoning the areas into the MoE zonation framework and we still do not have confirmation of the department under which BPL and AP will be administered. Many of the ministerial changes are likely to be positive for the conservation of the site, but this uncertainty and delay has caused confusion for community members, especially on which activities are now permitted and restricted. We have had to adapt certain elements of the project so that we can continue to make progress during this period. We had intended to submit a Change Request to Darwin in the first half of this year, but wrote to LTS to explain why we needed to put this on hold. Although there are still uncertainties, we now have a better grasp of the situation, and consequently have been able to create an adapted logframe to ensure all community initiatives and conservation work can have an equal or enhanced impact under the new Protected Area management framework. The Change Request will be submitted in November 2016.

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:	No – to be submitted in November
Received confirmation of change acceptance	N/A

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., 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. 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 please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that

Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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 e.g., Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**