

## Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017)

<b>Project reference</b>	22-009
<b>Project title</b>	Securing Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve's grasslands and wellbeing of local communities
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Nepal
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Zoological Society of London
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and Himalayan Nature (HN)
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Hem Sagar Baral</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)</b>	HYR3
<b>Project website/blog/social media etc.</b>	<a href="https://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/asia/suklaphanta-wildlife-reserve-%E2%80%93-nepal">https://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/asia/suklaphanta-wildlife-reserve-%E2%80%93-nepal</a>

### 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).

Regular meetings were held with the District Livestock Service Office (DLSO), Suklaphanta National Park (SuNP) and the Buffer Zone Management Committee (BZMC) to discuss the project's impact, sustainability, and future collaboration opportunities to reinforce and extend the project's success. Site visits were conducted by project staff for monitoring and evaluation purposes and to identify opportunities to strengthen the project through consultation with the community. The progress made during this reporting period against each output is provided below.

#### **Output 1: Two fully functional veterinary clinics established within the Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve buffer zone.**

The two veterinary clinics supported by the project continue to provide services to the local communities of the buffer zone. During this reporting period, 5,272 veterinary procedures were conducted by the two clinics, including artificial insemination, castration and vaccination. These services were provided to 4,152 households from local communities (project target = provide veterinary services to 5000 households annually by project end). The number of veterinary procedures conducted by the clinics has increased by 73% in the first half of this final year compared to the baseline value of 3053 procedures conducted by both clinics. The local community are more aware of veterinary health needs and are actively using the services provided by the clinics. DLSO has already taken ownership of the clinics and has integrated them into the government management system.

#### **Output 2: Women-run dairy cooperatives facilitating more productive cattle farms within the SWR buffer zone.**

The cooperatives have been extremely successful in promoting an improved breed of livestock and providing financial support to households to purchase these livestock. A total of 76 households (project target = 20 households) have used the cooperative's services to purchase

the improved breed of livestock and maintain their livestock sheds. During this reporting period, 23 additional households have taken loans from the cooperative to purchase the improved breed of livestock. Similarly, the revolving fund provided by the project has grown by 27%, through NPR 140,603 (GBP 1,033.85) as interest on soft loans and NPR 134,250 (GBP 987.13) as savings from its members. The average milk production for the first six months of this year has increased by 18% compared to the same period last year. Cooperative members have earned NPR 1,696,000 (GBP 12,470.59) through milk sales (total milk sold= 42,400 litres; average market price= 40 NPR/litre; NPR:GBP conversion=136:1).

### **Output 3: Grassland management guidelines in place and plan operational**

Site-specific grassland management guidelines were produced and distributed to relevant stakeholders and community groups for the effective management of grasslands. Data from the grassland experimental plot was collected and is being analysed. Similarly, a total of 100,353 fodder seedlings were distributed by DLSO to community members through the two veterinary clinics supported by the project. It is anticipated that seedling distribution and planting on community and private lands will be instrumental in meeting the objective of reducing grazing pressure to secure SuNP's grassland and habitat. The process of developing National Terai Grassland Management Guidelines has begun.

### **Output 4: Annual biodiversity monitoring programme for SWR in place. Target species include hog deer (*Axis porcinus*), swamp deer (*Cervus duvaucelii*), Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Bengal florican (*Houbaropsis bengalensis*) and Hodgson's bushchat (*Saxicola insignis*).**

Annual tiger monitoring was completed for 2016/17 by SuNP with support from NTNC, HN and ZSL. A data analysis workshop was held by SuNP with support from project partners. The recent survey results show that the tiger population has remained stable at 17 since last year; an increase from the baseline of 15 tigers established in 2014/15. Similarly, the annual Hodgson's bushchat population monitoring survey was conducted. Suklaphanta hosts a small population of this species, which has remained stable over the two years of monitoring conducted so far. A manuscript setting out the results from the Hodgson's bushchat survey has been prepared for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Project partners also supported the park in the translocation of 7 swamp deer from SuNP to Chitwan National Park.

### **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 project has received overwhelming support from local communities, SuNP, the BZMC and its nine user committees. The women-led cooperative has been extremely successful. The cooperative members initiated the monthly saving programme by their own initiative, contributing to the revolving fund supported by the project. The success of the cooperative has been the highlight of this project and provides a model for gender-focused community development elsewhere. Other buffer zone communities throughout the park have approached the project requesting support for similar initiatives in their area.

Veterinary centres have cemented the project's success by safeguarding the livestock assets of the local communities. The engagement of DLSO has been a key strength of, and value addition to, the project ensuring the long-term sustainability of the clinics and facilitating the replication of a similar model in other communities.

The project has resulted in increased milk production. However, community members are selling their dairy products at local markets at relatively low prices because of low demand and high supply. The buffer zone communities have requested support from the project to access a larger market, enabling higher prices to be charged. A consultation meeting to address the issue of access to market for dairy products, primarily milk, was held by the BZMC. Attendees included

members of the cooperative and representatives from other communities interested in rearing improved breeds of livestock. Some community members have taken the initiative to work with neighbours to collectively sell milk in a nearby town where it has a price of NPR 50/litre. To support this enterprise community members have requested support to establish a community-run dairy chilling centre, where milk can be collected from all community members before being delivered to larger dairy industries. This will increase access to market for all community members increasing their income.

**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: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

**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 to report.

**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. Additionally, if you were funded under R23 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate 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](mailto: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**