



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

<b>Project Ref No</b>	23-024
<b>Project Title</b>	Securing marine fisheries, livelihoods and biodiversity in Myanmar through co-management
<b>Country(ies)/Territory(ies)</b>	Myanmar / Burma
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Irrigation (Department of Fisheries/DoF), Pyoe Pin, Rakhine Coastal Conservation Association (RCA), Rakhine Fisheries Partnership (RFP), University of Exeter.
<b>Project Leader</b>	Martin Callow
<b>Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)</b>	31 October 2016 - HYR1
<b>Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/WCSMyanmar/">https://www.facebook.com/WCSMyanmar/</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/WCSMyanmar">https://twitter.com/WCSMyanmar</a> <a href="https://programs.wcs.org/myanmar/">https://programs.wcs.org/myanmar/</a> <a href="https://myanmarbiodiversity.org">https://myanmarbiodiversity.org</a>
<b>Funder (DFID/Defra)</b>	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).

The project commenced with the hire of a new full-time staff member: U Thaug Htut has been employed as WCS's Fisheries Monitoring Officer. In addition, a sub-contract has been completed and signed by Pyoe Pin (the project's core partner), which has enabled partner funds to flow to the Rakhine Coastal Conservation Association and to support Dr Maung Maung Kyi as the Fisheries Partnership Manager. Similarly, Darwin and match funds have been used to sub-contract the University of Exeter to provide training for WCS local staff and the RCA in project research methods.

#### **Progress towards Output 1: A gender-sensitive participatory planning process has led to the development and adoption of a co-management plan for coastal fisheries in Thandwe District in Rakhine State.**

During this period, stakeholder meetings were held in Thandwe District (Thandwe, Kyeintali and Gwa) to officially launch the project with the DoF, local partners and community members. One hundred fourteen people attended these events: 39 fishers/fish-workers, 32 DoF staff (including the Rakhine State Fisheries Director), and 43 RCA members (including a Rakhine parliamentarian). Sixteen women attended these stakeholder meetings; a concerted effort will be required from all project partners to ensure female representation is expanded (a common challenge for development projects in Myanmar). Our strategy will focus on identifying barriers to women's participation, identifying and targeting women who should attend the meetings, and possibly running a series of parallel side meetings (focus groups) for women.

The aforementioned stakeholder meetings not only launched the project but also solicited feedback from community members on the challenges faced by the fisheries sector in the region. The events secured strong buy-in for the project from stakeholders, particularly the DoF

(State and District officials) and RCA members. In addition, through these meetings, agreement was reached for the project to target the township of Kyeintali (the base for the RCA).

To support the project's uptake, a sustainable fisheries management training workshop was conducted in July 2016 to transfer knowledge on sustainable fisheries management practices, generally used input and output controls, and to identify participatory project team members. This training in Kyeintali was attended by 38 persons (9 women): Government = 2, DoF = 2, Fishers = 24, RCA = 8, WCS = 2).

**Progress towards Output 2: Baseline data is available and routine participatory collection of additional data is integrated into the governance mechanisms for co-management.**

A variety of data has been secured from the DoF and RCA during the first 6 months of the project, mostly related to fishers, licences, gear types, target and non-target species catch and household numbers in the Thandwe district. The quality of these data is variable, however the data have provided deeper insights into the project area and, in a country where few reliable data exist, helped the project team to refine the implementation model. As such, we have devised an implementation plan that will see us interview 390 fishers (from a total of 1,387) from 10 landing sites in Kyeintali (at each landing site we will also conduct key informant interviews and participatory mapping). We will also interview the 5 traders and 25 collectors / processors now known to operate in Kyeintali.

We have worked with the University of Exeter to design appropriate survey tools, including socio-economic survey questions/forms (fishers and traders), fisheries participatory mapping protocol, fish landing site surveying (for Catch Per Unit Effort/CPUE, Bycatch Per Unit Effort/BPUE and length-weight frequency data) and acquired novel "Pelagic Data Systems" GPS tracking devices to attach to a selection of purse seine vessels (supported by vessel owners and DoF). Two training workshops have been delivered to WCS and RCA staff in the use of the survey tools, with a specific focus on training a core team of project enumerators. The first training session targeted 13 trainees (5 women): WCS = 1, DoF = 2, RCA = 6, fishers = 4). The second training event targeted 9 additional trainees (3 women): WCS = 1, RCA = 8).

Following training, baseline data collection commenced in October 2016 (over 30 surveys have been completed to date). An intensive period of participatory socio-economic, key informant, mapping and catch surveys has been scheduled for the remainder of year 1. One Pelagic data logger has been deployed (and is transmitting data); the RCA have identified a further nine purse seine vessels who will participate in GPS tracking and these units will be deployed in October/November 2016.

**Progress towards Output 3: A strategy to reduce unintended bycatch of marine vertebrates has been developed and implemented by local fishing communities.**

A workshop was also held in July 2016 to share knowledge of the threats to Rakhine's marine wildlife and to share knowledge of the tools and practices that fishers might deploy to minimise unintended bycatch. This training in Kyeintali was attended by 38 persons (9 women): Government = 2, DoF = 2, Fishers = 24, RCA = 8, WCS = 2). It is important to note here that, in the coastal communities of Rakhine, efforts to reduce bycatch are going to have to identify a powerful incentive mechanism as most if not all species caught provide important income for poor fishers.

Also, as per output 2, during this period, we have worked with the University of Exeter to design a boat-based survey methodology to determine the presence and conservation status of dugong and other marine vertebrates known to be caught as bycatch in coastal fisheries in Rakhine. An initial reconnaissance of the Kyeintali marine region was undertaken on Wednesday 5 October 2016 and, while not scheduled in the Darwin workplan, additional surveys will likely be factored in to determine seasonality in species presence and seasonal fisheries-related risks. While the project intends to reduce bycatch, it is increasingly clear that quantifying BPUE will be challenging due to its (often) unreported nature, and as such estimates maybe misleading. To that effect, we are considering what other strategies might be deployed for reducing bycatch – such as circle hooks (to reduce turtle bycatch), acoustic

deterrent devices (for cetaceans), and lights on nets (for turtles). That said, minimising dugong interaction with fisheries via these kinds of technical approaches will likely be challenging to implement (as they are non-specific to dugong) and success may only be achieved through time-area management of fisheries. As such, it may be more effective to use the results of participatory mapping of dugong and fisheries activities to design seasonal or area closures to reduce the interactions. Mutual learning over the coming months will help us further understand how best to mitigate bycatch.

**Progress towards Output 4: Lessons learned from fisheries co-management planning and practices are shared to boost national fisheries resource governance capacity.**

While no Output 4 activities were scheduled to be delivered in quarters 1 and 2, a variety of opportunities emerged that enabled the team to share knowledge of sustainable co-management with a variety of State/Region and Union leaders. Through match funding, WCS and Pyoe Pin were able to host the DoF Director General and Director of Research at the South-East Asia and Pacific Regional Fisheries Summit in Jakarta (July 2016). Similarly, our “Thriving Fisheries” project (funded by the blue moon fund) has enabled us to visit Aweyarwady, Thanintharyi and Mon States/Regions to share learning about co-management and the activities under this Darwin-funded project to DoF staff and members of the regional fisheries partnerships. In terms of our digital reach, various tweets, and Facebook and website posts have communicated the project and its activities to WCS Myanmar’s audience base. On Facebook we have an audience reach of 426,224 and have achieved 31,128 engagements since May 1, 2016, while on Twitter we have recorded 305,607 impressions and 5,424 engagements since May 1, 2016.

**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 only unscheduled development so far is a shift in the project start date, from April 1, 2016 to May 1, 2016 (owing to late notification of project’s success). The budget remains the same.

**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: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

**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?**

Pyoe Pin is currently seeking to secure its third phase of operating funds from DFID. The current phase is due to complete in December 2016 and until additional DFID funds have been secured (or additional donors secured), Pyoe Pin is unable to commit to longer-term engagement with the project. While Pyoe Pin is optimistic about the third phase, to mitigate the risk, we are supporting Pyoe Pin to identify other sources of funding. While we anticipate Pyoe Pin will be successful, if the worst-case scenario were to manifest we would be able to work with the RCA by sub-contracting them directly for the work they conduct as part of this Darwin-funded project partnership. We regard Pyoe Pin's engagement with this project, and indeed their programme as a whole, as essential for advancing the sustainable resource governance agenda here in Myanmar.

**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](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**