

## Darwin Initiative Main and Post Project Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the “Writing a Darwin Report” guidance: (<http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/reporting-forms>). It is expected that this report will be a **maximum** of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes)

**Submission Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

### Darwin Project Information

Project reference	24-003
Project title	Conservation and poverty alleviation through scalable agrobiodiversity practice in Laos
Host country/ies	Lao PDR
Lead organisation	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
Partner institution(s)	Village Focus International (VFI) Nam Et Phou Louey Management Unit (NEPL MU), Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)
Darwin grant value	£ 433,478
Start/end dates of project	1 April 2017 30 March 2021
Reporting period (e.g., Apr 2018 – Mar 2019) and number (e.g., Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 Annual report 3
Project Leader name	Ben Swanepoel
Project website/blog/Twitter	<a href="http://www.wcs.org/">http://www.wcs.org/</a> <a href="https://laos.wcs.org/">https://laos.wcs.org/</a>
Report author(s) and date	Ben Swanepoel, 29 April 2020

Please see attached link to a Google Drive folder containing all supporting documentation, which includes a presentation of activity photos taken by local staff during implementation.

#### **Important note:**

*In light of the global risks associated with the COVID-19 virus, WCS took a series of precautionary measures to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus and suspended all field operations on March 17<sup>th</sup>, limiting staff to work from home agreements. This is currently still in force. These measures have impacted on some of the activities planned for this report period and is likely to have a significant impact on activities planned from May onwards until the COVID situation is deemed safe.*

*Impacts on this report period are mostly limited to an underspend which has been dealt with through an official budget change request already submitted. In terms of this report, some of the documents needed for activity verification (mostly meeting minutes or signed attendance registers) are unavailable to the project team due to them being unable to access the office during the WCS and GoL lockdown which is still in force.*

*There is a possibility that WCS will need to request a 6-month no-cost extension, depending on the direction of the COVID19 pandemic, but this can be discussed at a later date.*

## 1. Project rationale

Since the approval of the NW extension area by Decree in 2017, Nam Et Phou Louey National Park (NEPL NP) is now Laos' largest, and most biodiverse protected area. It is also the first of only 2 protected areas to receive National Park status which occurred in 2019. The NP is largely situated in the northeast province of Houaphan, which has the country's highest poverty rate. Over 30,000 people inhabiting 98 villages rely in large part on the NPA, being fully dependent on NEPL's agro-biodiversity resources for their subsistence and income. In addition to weak governance of these resources, these communities lack the means for effective stewardship and access to improved production systems. This has resulted in unchecked agricultural encroachment, wildlife hunting, and overexploitation of NEPL's resources, leading to increasing deforestation and subsequent destabilization of local livelihoods.

This reliance of forest-dependent populations on agro-biodiversity for subsistence and income introduces opportunities to improve and diversify livelihoods by mainstreaming climate-smart agro-biodiversity approaches into formal governance instruments to create community-focused incentives that enable sustainable resource management linked to biodiversity conservation.

Through this project, climate-smart agro-biodiversity will be promoted and mechanised through community conservation agreements linked with improved conservation practice. We will employ a phased approach that builds on established participatory land use planning (PLUP) carried out by WCS.

### Project location

The project is located within and around the villages associated with NEPL NP which covers three provinces in the Northern uplands of Lao PDR, Houaphan, Luang Prabang and Xiengkouang Provinces.

Activities presented in this annual report focused on the 5 villages of the Boumafai cluster in Xone district.

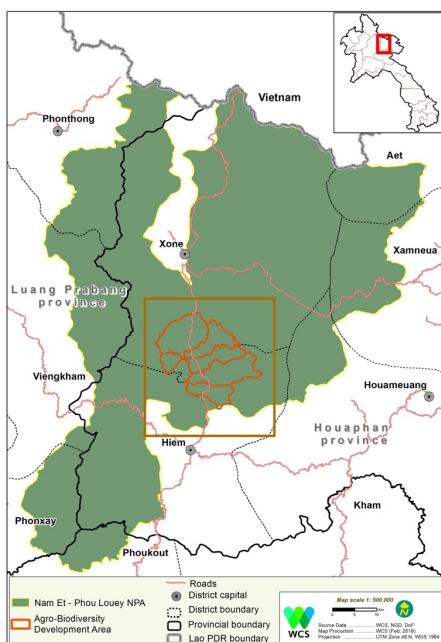


Figure 1: NEPL NPA in relation to Lao PDR with the Boumafai cluster highlighted in red.

## 2. Project partnerships

**Nam Et Phou Louey Management Unit (NEPL MU), Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)** This constitutes our primary partnership governed through a formal MOU approval process.

The current MOU ends in December 2021 after which a new MOU application will be submitted.

**Village Focus International (VFI)** VFI were our technical partners in developing the process that led to the signing of 10 Village Conservation Agreements. (CCA). The terms of this partnership are formally captured in the TOR of the consultancy contract between WCS and VFI. Their contract has not come to an end

**SAFFRON coffee company** Saffron coffee company are our technical partner and buyer of the coffee that will be produced through the organic wildlife friendly coffee enterprise developed in NEPL through this grant. They are based in Luang Prabang and provide training, coffee seedlings and technical support relating to production aspects

### **3. Project progress**

#### **3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities**

**Output 1 - Model community conservation agreements (CCAs) are developed and implemented in forest-dependent communities.**

##### ***Activity 1.1 - Conduct CCA development process.***

Currently 5 villages have signed CCA's, and 5 additional villages have received draft CCA's for review and final approvals during this report period. (01 Draft CCA from Ban That village)

The 5 villages were from the Sam-Neha village cluster during which the following consultation process was followed:

District level consultation – Meetings held setting out the process to be followed, obtaining permissions and developing the timetables.

Village level consultation – Introductory meetings held with communities of all 5 villages during which a total of 324 villagers (170 Woman / 154 Men) attended and participated in the consultation.

CCA implementation training – training missions were conducted at various levels to prepare for implementation.

- District and village officials trained on the CCA development process.
- District team of officials tasked with implementation of the CCA process.
- District and NEPL NP team on conducting household surveys.

Household surveys - Household surveys were conducted to collect PRA data (socio-economic and natural resource use information) for the 5 villagers of Son-Neua village cluster. (02 PRA raw data) (03 PRA survey assessment)

PLUP revisions – A revision of current PLUP's were conducted as part of the CCA development process. This information forms the baseline for zonation of appropriate land use and will be used by the LENS 2 project team later during 2020 as part of the official PLUP revision process.

Feedback on village surveys – Results of the survey were discussed at the district level and then at the village level during which a village action plan was developed for each of the 5 villages to be included in the CCA for each village.

Development of draft CCA's – Draft documents were drawn up based on the consultation process and presented to the 5 villages for discussions and review.

The agreements were to be signed during an official ceremony in March, but this was cancelled due to COVID19 restrictions on WCS staff movement and GOL control measures.

*Output 2: Forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL have improved livelihoods through sustainable use of non-timber agro-biodiversity resources in managed village forests and diversified agro-biodiversity production systems in agricultural land.*

**Activity 1.2 - Carry out participatory mapping, zonation for appropriate use and establish management regulations for all forest lands within village boundaries.**

PLUP village boundaries and current activities were reviewed for the 5 villages of the Son-Neha cluster during the PRA and CCA village consultation process. Based on this information, all 5 villagers will have their current PLUP's formally revised during a full consultation process to be conducted post COVID19.

Within these 5 villages, there are currently a number of disputes over whether there is sufficient land available for village agricultural activities, particularly for cattle farming which has significantly expanded over the past few years and become a major problem for the NEPL NP as illegal cattle farming within the TPZ expands.

WCS is currently contracting (through match funding) a consultant to investigate the drivers of this cattle expansion to assist us in formulating a strategy to address this threat.

During an extensive consultation process during 2019 involving district officials and village representatives from 10 districts including Zone district, NEPL regulation with regards to activities allowed or disallowed in the 2 primary village zones, the Controlled Use Zone (CUZ) and the Total protection Zone (TPZ) were revised. The revised NEPL regulations were officially approved and signed by each of the 10 district governors during February 2020. These revised regulations will be distributed as part of an outreach campaign to take place after the COVID19 restrictions. (04 Draft NEPL NP regulation reviewed)

**Activity 1.3 - Provide direct support and management for priority agro-biodiversity village forest lands.**

Direct support and management for priority village forest lands was provided during this report period through the following activities.

The revision process of the 5 village land use plans of the Son Neha village cluster.

The development of the final draft CCA's in 5 villages of the Son Neha village cluster which places conditionality on the adherence to PLUP boundaries and agreements in exchange for incentives provided through this grant and other livelihood initiatives.

The development of a shade grown organic wildlife friendly coffee enterprise in 5 villages which provide incentives to communities and direct benefit to 80 households (currently) to protect key village forest areas and abide by both the PLUP agreements and household conservation agreements (coffee producers)

The protection of the village CUZ through regular monthly ranger patrols during which all illegal activities related to the land use of this zone were identified and neutralised, and people concerned brought to the district courts for prosecution. (05 SMART law enforcement report)

The monitoring of village land use areas through monthly deforestation reports, summarised into an annual deforestation map for 2019. (06 Deforestation map for 2019)

During May 2019, extensive consultations were held with villages of the Boumfat cluster in order to quantify the illegal cattle farming situation and to discuss the removal of the illegal cattle in accordance to agreements that were signed by these communities in 2018. (12 Attendance register to this meeting)

**Output 2: Forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL have improved livelihoods through sustainable use of non-timber agro-biodiversity resources in managed village forests and diversified agro-biodiversity production systems in agricultural land.**

***Activity 2.1 - Conduct training in sustainable NTFP collection and processing.***

In December 2019, a survey was conducted in the 5 villages of the Son Neha cluster to determine the current NTFP activities and to identify the potential products that we could support through training, value adding and marketing. Details of this survey will be discussed under section 3.1.

Capacity development activities for key NTFP's will start after COVID129 restrictions have been lifted.

***Activity 2.2 - Establish demonstration plots.***

No new demonstration plots established.

***Activity 2.3 - Establish women's associations.***

Previously, after discussions with NEPL Management Unit, district and village officials, it was established that the communities were unwilling to establish woman's association within the Boumfat cluster related to the current coffee enterprise as they preferred to see an equal participation within the coffee enterprise structures, which are currently:

- The village coffee grower group
- The household coffee grower agreements.

Through discussions with the communities of the Son Neha village cluster during December 2019 however, a few of the communities expressed a desire to form woman's handicraft groups and assistance from the Lao woman's union. Once the development of these handicraft activities and other NEPL product support continues after COVID19, woman's groups will be formally established.

**Output 3: Local income-generating activities that are climate smart and innovative, including environment-friendly sustainable agriculture through the Conservation Enterprise Development Program (CEDP) are set up and expanded in the forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL.**

***Activity 3.1 - Investigate feasibility of NTFP and agro-biodiversity products for conservation enterprise development.***

During November 2019, a project planning meeting was held to develop a survey of the 5 villages of the Sam Neha cluster aimed at identifying potential NTFP and livelihood activities to be supported through this project and other match funded activities in the future.

The survey focused on the following:

1. The need for Village NTFP management plan and regulations.
2. Selection of NTFP products currently collected that hold potential for improved practices, increased value, certification,
3. The potential to develop or grow handicraft products through woman's associations
4. The potential for additional conservation enterprise development.
5. The need for improved cattle management

The survey was conducted during December 2019 and involved consultation in all 5 villages which was attended by a total of 284 people (152 Woman / 132 Men). The survey was divided into 3 separate data forms, NEPL, Bamboo markets and cattle management. Local staff conducted the surveys and provided feedback to NEPL technical team.

As a summary of the key results, the following;

1. 7 of the 10 villages have asked support for the development of **village NTFP management plans**. This would include: (09 NTFP survey data)
  - Identification, mapping and demarcation of the village NTFP focal area.
  - Development of regulations for the village to regulate the use of the area to exclude “poaching” of NTFP’s by not village residence.
  - Group marketing of certain NTFP products based on village consensus.
2. 5 of the 10 villages asked for support in developing **bamboo handicraft products**. (07 Market survey data)
  - A bamboo market study during the survey revealed that 3 local market shops focused on buying bamboo handicraft from local villages and were willing and needing to increase the quantity and range of products.
  - There was an interest shown from 2 villages to create woman’s associations specifically aimed at handicraft products such as bamboo and weaving.
3. 2 of the 10 villages were selected for providing support for **improved cattle (management)**, based on current numbers of cattle in each village area and the level of illegal cattle farming currently active within the NEPL NP TPZ. (08 Cattle management data)
  - The challenge here is the scale of the problem, and the resources that would be required to improve management to any reasonable scale given that the intensification of farming methods is an expensive and long-term solution beyond the scope of this grant.
  - Where short term solutions such as the provision of fencing to limit cattle access to the NEPL are available, there will be considered in exchange for guaranteed reduction of numbers of cattle inside the TPZ.
4. 3 of the 10 villages felt that if they had access to tea markets, they would be interested in developing **tea plantations** in their village areas.

Other NTFP opportunities identified included, honey, red mushrooms and various medicinal products.

Based on this information, we are currently developing activities in each of these villages to address the support for most of these activities and are currently waiting the COVID19 to release our staff to begin with field activities.

### ***Activity 3.2 - Conservation enterprise development process.***

Under this activity, the focus remains on developing the organic shade growth coffee enterprise in 5 villages of Boumfat cluster.

There are now currently 80 households participating in the coffee enterprise in the 5 villages of the Boumfat cluster covering a total of 32,24 ha of coffee plantation under shade cover within the village forest lands.

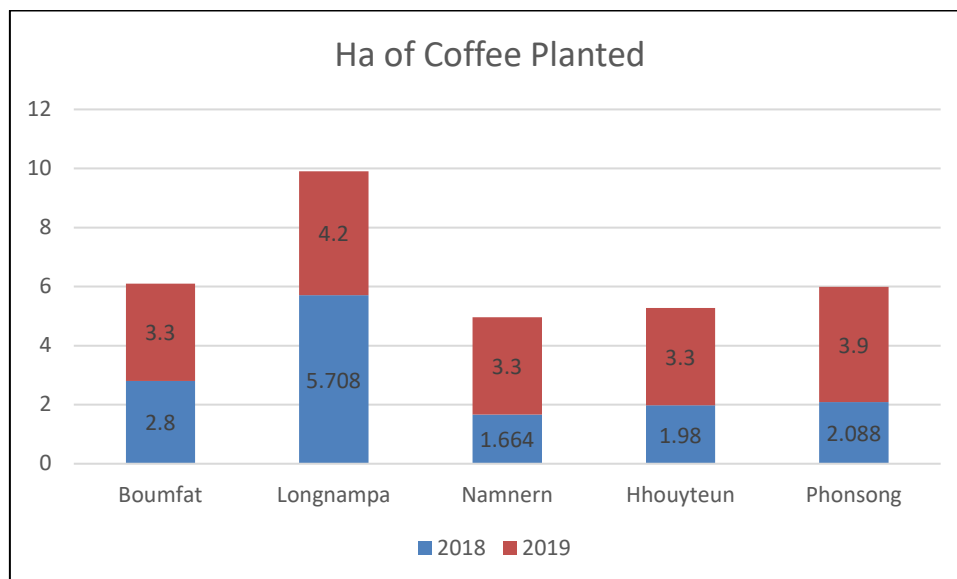


Figure 2: Coffee expansion from 2018 - current.

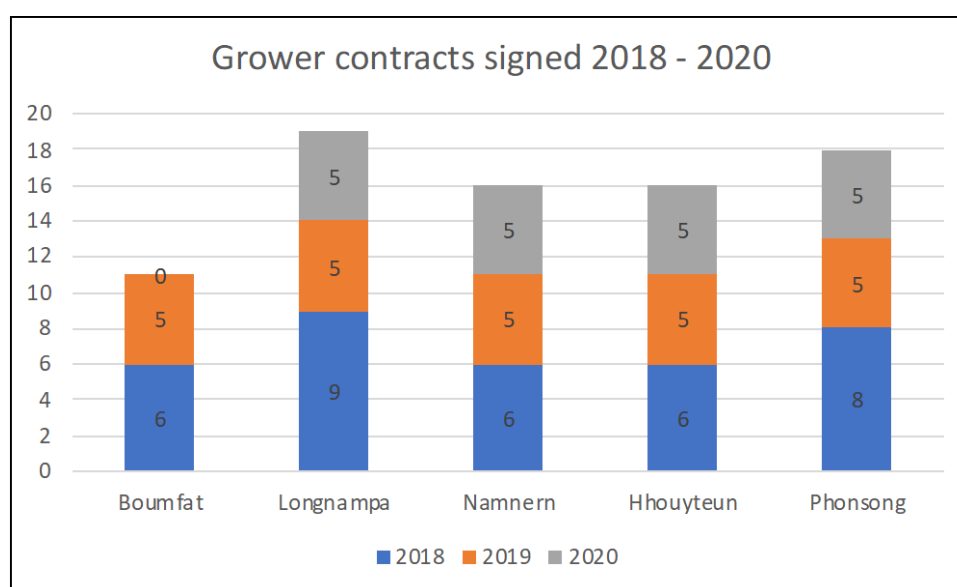


Figure 3: Household agreements signed to date.

A summary of activities relating to the coffee enterprise is as follows:

1. District cooperation

The NEPL livelihoods teamwork in close consultation with the district team on all aspects of the project development. Consultations and interactions with district officials take place almost on a weekly basis, and each training, monitoring and field activity is accompanied by district representatives.

A list of more formal communications and meetings conducted during this report period are summarised below:

- May 2019 - District meeting to identify potential coffee production areas for 2019 expansion.
- June 2019 – To discuss with district committee issues around illegal cattle farming in the NEPL NP which breaches the CCA's of the Boumfat cluster.
- October 2019 – To discuss coffee processing facility, its location, design and ideas around the management of the facility.
- March 2020 - District meeting to discuss and identify potential coffee production areas for the 2020 expansion period.

- March 2020 – Further discussions around the building of the Coffee facilities.

## 2. Training and capacity development

Due to the capacity building nature of the program, every activity, including quality control monitoring is seen as capacity development, and planning of seedlings, planting over into the field and day to day maintenance is all accompanied and led by the technical team of WCS and NEPL MU. In addition to the in-field training mentioned, below is a summary of key training events and capacity building activities that took place during the period of this grant.

### May 2019 – Project management training (Match funded)

A training workshop was held in Luang Prabang to assist NEPL and District government teams in basic coffee project management and to share feedback and experiences gained during the development of village level coffee enterprises. The training was organised by the AFD funded reinforcement and expansion of coffee sector in Laos.

### July 2019 – Organic farming methods

Training was delivered by WCS to 16 coffee growers from on how to make organic pesticide to control green scale.

### February 2020 – Coffee processing facility field visit.

As part of the planning to develop a village cluster coffee processing facility, a field visit was conducted to Santai district of Houaphan province in order to investigate the design and location of a village cluster level coffee processing facility. The tour was attended by WCS, NEPL MU, district and key village representatives. Aspects such as water systems, washing system, drying areas, processing steps and construction methods were studied and discussed.

### March 2020 – Processing facility

Saffron provided training to district and village authorities around the elements of a village cluster processing facility, aimed at assisting in the planning and location selection, water needs and design elements. A total of 11 district and village staff attended this workshop.

## 3. Quality control monitoring and support

Monitoring and support activities during the grant period were based on practical in-field support conducted through WCS and NEPL technical staff and site visits by the SAFFRON technical project staff. The local WCS and NEPL field team conducted regular (up to 4 visits per month) visits to the coffee project area to provide support and for monitoring purposes as well as more dedicated time during key periods of seeding, planting and harvesting. Below is a list of key activities relating to monitoring and support for the coffee production processes funded through this grant.

### **Seedling development**

Between March and April 2019 and March 2020, the NEPL livelihoods team consisting on average of 1 WCS, 2 NEPL staff and 4 Xone DAFO officials, assisted a total of 80 households representing 80 Men and 79 Woman (contracts are signed between the household husband and wife team) in 5 villages in providing equipment, organic fertiliser and technical services in building nurseries, securing seeds from SAFFRON, planting out the seeds, maintenance of the seedlings and planting over into bags.

### **Planting activities**

During 2019 SAFFRON, WCS and NEPL livelihoods team provided support to the coffee growers during this time. The team of SAFFRON, WCS and NEPL continued to support the Boumfat cluster with the planting process, providing day to day support in terms of transportation of seedlings to villages, providing equipment and technical advice using shade grown, organic methodologies.

### **Monitoring of planted out seedlings.**



During August and September of 2019 - The NEPL livelihoods team conducted monitoring and support visits to all 5 villages offering advice and support to 60 households, with efforts been made to keep domestic cattle out of the plots, ensure that seedlings are mulched and cleared of weeds and larger seedlings supported by sticks.

### **Seed and nursery preparation**

During January and February of 2020, WCS, NEPL and DAFO staff provided technical services, all equipment and materials and in field support for the building of shade cloth nurseries in all 5 villages as well as the planting out of coffee seeds in these 5 villages. The outcome of this activity was the completion of 5 village nurseries.

### **Planting over into seed bags**

During February and March of 2020, the NEPL livelihoods team lead the growers in the technical aspects of planting over the seedlings into the plastic bags at the 5 village nurseries.

### **Provide tools and equipment for planting season.**

During March 2020, WCS procured and provided tools and equipment in preparation of the planting season. Spades, Organic fertiliser, spray bottles and fencing materials were provided. Much of the ongoing support during this period had to be conducted remotely once the COVID19 restrictions became enforced during March.

## **Output 4: Species and forest habitat protection is significantly increased in the total protection and controlled use forests of NEPL adjacent to target communities.**

### ***A. Conduct land-use monitoring.***

We continue to monitor land use on a monthly basis through regular field monitoring visits to the project sites and through the analysis of satellite and fire data to produce monthly deforestation reports when clear satellite imagery is available. (10 Monthly deforestation report)

A deforestation report for 2019 was compiled, offering management valuable insights into the current land use challenges around the project area and is currently being analysed. (06 Deforestation map 2019)

In addition, monthly ranger patrols were conducted where habitat threats and changes relating to the NEPL NP land use boundaries and zones were reported and captured in the SMART data management system. (05 SMART enforcement report)

Special efforts were made by the WCS /NEPL technical team to engage with district and village authorities to strengthen the biodiversity corridor between the Boumafata cluster and Xone district capital. In June 2019, meetings were conducted with the district committee to discuss issues around illegal cattle farming in the NEPL NP which breaches the CCA's of the Boumafata cluster.

### ***B. Conduct community monitoring related to CCA.***

Currently, CCA monitoring in Boumafata cluster is conducted during regular monitoring and support visits to the coffee villages, and through individual incidents involving participating households caught by ranger teams.

During an annual planning event in May 2019 and March 2020, meetings were held within the coffee growers' groups to determine if individual growers are eligible to extend their coffee plot areas with support from this project based on their compliance to their conservation agreements. New growers are also first vetted based on their compliance to NEPL regulations from the previous year.

### ***C. Conduct outreach campaigns.***

The Outreach strategy was developed during a workshop held between WCS and NEPL staff in May 2019. There will be 2 parts, a broad reaching village radio campaign and the outreach campaign (one day event in each village) delivered to villages of Xone and Hiem districts.

In June 2019, meetings were held with officials of Xone and Hiem districts to outline the goals and objectives of an upcoming outreach campaign, to establish a district outreach team and to review the current NEPL NP regulations regarding CUZ and TPZ zones. Regulations within these zones will be one of the key outreach messages during the campaign.

During August and September, the village radio outreach campaign was initiated in all 10 key Darwin villages. The radio campaign consists of an agreement by the village to implement the awareness campaign through the village's speaker system. Outreach and conservation messages were developed and recorded for radio by NEPL staff. The village authorities agree through a contract to play the radio slot twice a day from Monday to Friday for a period of 1 year.

All equipment and media for the outreach campaign is currently on order and the campaign will commence soon after the COVID19 restrictions have been lifted.

#### ***D. Conduct law enforcement monitoring including community-led monitoring.***

Law enforcement activities took place during this report period focusing on key areas of biodiversity aimed at reducing threats in the landscape. All enforcement data is captured and entered into the SMART data management program and is used to inform monthly patrol strategies. This information, along with the land use monitoring is communicated to the coffee producers during village coffee growers group meetings and village coffee group meetings.

Ranger teams are multi agency, composed of staff from 6 organization, DAFO, NEPL, Military, Police, POFI and local village Militia. The 10 ranger teams conducted a total of 211 patrols covering more than 9,520 km of foot patrol throughout the NEPL NP.

As a result of these efforts, 776 threats were uncovered and eliminated, with 34% related to Land use issues and 57% related to hunting.

591 people were caught by our ranger teams and received some form of sanction. In addition, 170 guns were confiscated, 254 hunting camps / shelters were destroyed, and 313 snares removed from the field. A total of 131 cases from this report period involving 336 people are still pending at the local courts. (05 SMART enforcement report)

#### ***E. Conduct biodiversity monitoring.***

Biodiversity monitoring was conducted through ranger observations recorded through SMART, and in addition, we are currently conducting (match funded) an extensive camera trap survey during this dry season which should provide an excellent baseline for future monitoring activities.

As a summary, 83 individual biodiversity observations of key species such as; Serow and Sambar, Hornbill and Gibbon sp. were recorded during this report period. Through a special gibbon monitoring initiative, the number of gibbon groups recorded during this report period is 29.

Additional biodiversity monitoring information is provided through the eco-tourism livelihoods activity using camera traps and sign observations.

Although not directly funded through this grant, preliminary results from the match funded camera trap survey are encouraging with 3 cat species, dhole, black bear, serow and muntjac well represented in the data from the first survey block!

**Output 5: A scalable model of sustainable, climate-smart agro-biodiversity is established and incorporated into forest resource use practices by forest-dependent communities.**

All current activities within this grant are contributing towards this output.

#### **A. Develop guidelines**

This is currently in progress as the implementation of the project unfolds.

#### **B. Conduct cross-village exchange and demonstration visits.**

In order to improve the value chain of the coffee enterprise we are currently in the process of constructing a small village cluster processing facility. A demonstration visit was conducted to Santai district of Houaphan province in order to investigate the design and location of a village cluster level coffee processing facility. The tour was attended by WCS, NEPL NP, DONRE and DAFO staff. Aspects such as water systems, washing system, drying areas, processing steps and construction methods were studied and discussed.

Cross-village exchange visits and networking is integrated into the village cluster approach to the implementation of this project, especially related to the Boumfat coffee enterprise. This can be seen through the activities taken place during this report period which include the meetings, workshops and training sessions that took place during this report period.

#### **C. Produce working papers.**

Will be developed as part of the lessons learned during the various implementation activities.

### **3.2 Progress towards project Outputs**

#### **Output 1 – Model community conservation agreements (CCAs) are developed and implemented in forest-dependent communities.**

**1.1 – 10 village CCA's signed.** The CCA model was developed specifically for the context of this grant. A total of 5 CCA's have been signed, and an additional 5 CCA's have progressed through to the draft phase and are awaiting approval from the district authorities.

**1.2 - 74,000HA managed under CCA's.** Currently there are 27,195 HA managed under CCA's. Once the additional 5 CCA agreements have been approved, this will place an additional 10,409 ha under CCA management.

**1.3 Exclusive agro-biodiversity use rights over 7,000 hectares.**

NA at this point.

#### **Output 2 – Forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL have improved livelihoods through sustainable use of non-timber agro-biodiversity resources in managed village forests and diversified agro-biodiversity production systems in agricultural land.**

**2.1- 500 farmers trained –** Training of 80 households (80 Men and 79 Woman = 159 people) in coffee nursery management, seedling planning and care, coffee production, organic pest control and organic fertilisation.

Larger scale training of NTFP farming improvement and development of handicraft activities will commence in the 5 new villages soon after the COVID19 restrictions have been lifted. Indicators can still be achieved as the next level of training will involve more community-based training, and not individual growers.

**2.2 15 Demonstration plots established –** 35 coffee demonstration plots were established in 5 villages during the early stages of the project. Each coffee grower currently starts with a 50mX50m demonstration plot to test the area for suitability and evaluate the grower's

motivation and performance before expanding. Indicator should possibly refer to separate agro-biodiversity products?

**2.3 - Woman's associations established** – 5 Village coffee growers' groups have been established in each of the 5 coffee growing villages as part of the coffee enterprise structure. Village and district officials do not accept the development of woman's associations within this enterprise context.

During the feasibility survey of potential NTFP and handicraft activities, 2 of the 5 new villages have expressed a need for woman's associations and we will use this as a start and develop a model that the other villages can experience. This is then likely to expand to the other 8 potential communities.

***Output 3: Local income-generating activities that are climate smart and innovative, including environment-friendly sustainable agriculture through the Conservation Enterprise Development Program (CEDP) are set up and expanded in the forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL.***

**3.1- 1 Agro-biodiversity conservation enterprise** – Shade grown, organic wildlife friendly coffee enterprise established and currently under expansion

***Output 4: Species and forest habitat protection is significantly increased in the total protection and controlled use forests of NEPL adjacent to target communities.***

**4.1 - Illegal extraction of timber reduced by 50% against a 2017 baseline.** – To be determined through the 2020 annual deforestation mapping assessment. Indicator could be achieved, although there are many external factors that are impacting on this result which are unrelated to project activities. The impact of COVID19 on economic activity could create a driver for deforestation in these poorly resources forest communities

**4.2 - At least 90% of community members aware of hunting laws by 2019 against a 2014 baseline = 30%** - To be measured after the outreach campaign in 2020. Achievable, as 596 community members from 10 villages have participated in the CCA and PLUP consultations during which time laws and regulations were explained and discussed. Radio campaigns currently covering all 10 villages are underway delivering conservation messages, and a key message during the outreach campaigns relate to the hunting regulations.

**4.3 - 50% reduction in hunting and poaching in the NEPL total protection zone adjacent to target villages.** - To be determined through the analysis of SMART ranger data once all CCA's have been signed. Indicator could be achieved, although very difficult to attribute directly to project activities due to the widespread hunting from people not associated to the villages of the project. As with deforestation, the economic impacts of COVID19 on hunting pressure is likely to increase.

***Output 5: A scalable model of sustainable, climate-smart agro-biodiversity is established and incorporated into forest resource use practices by forest-dependent communities.***

**5.1 Impacts and lessons learned published.** – Records been kept for later in the project time frame.

**5.2 By the end of the project, at least 4 exchanges are held.** – One study tour conducted focusing on organic coffee enterprise, and one demonstration visit related to a coffee processing facility. Indicator is realistic and achievable.

**5.3 At least 2 working papers produced and shared.** - Records been kept for later in the project time frame.

### 3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

**OUTCOME** - *Reduced deforestation and improved conservation practice through implementation of scalable agro-biodiversity practice in village forestland and agricultural land that protects biodiversity while improving incomes and welfare for forest-dependent populations.*

#### **A. Local Livelihoods:**

*By the end of the project, at least 100 households in 10 forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL will benefit from an increase in household revenue (> 15% compared to 2017 baseline) as a result of improved forest resource stewardship.*

80 Households from 5 villages are receiving direct benefits through support for developing a coffee enterprise. Increased household revenue will occur once coffee production reaches the harvesting phase. The indicator remains relevant and should be achievable within the grant period, although in terms of the coffee enterprise, real benefit will gradually increase after a period of 3 – 5 years.

#### **B. Biodiversity:**

*Populations of target species: northern white-cheeked gibbon, large predators (Asian golden cats, clouded leopards, dholes) and large and medium sized ungulate prey species (sambar deer, muntjac, serow, gaur and wild pigs) will be stable or increasing compared to a 2015 baseline.*

Improved land management through the reviewed PLUP, the signing of CCA's in 10 villages as well as the 80 household conservation agreements should reduce illegal activities and thus provide a favourable environment for the recovery of key species. Increased awareness through the outreach campaign will also positively impact on this indicator. Measurement of this outcome will be determined after a longer time period, towards the end of the project activities. Preliminary results from a match funded camera trap survey are encouraging with 3 cat species, dhole, black bear, serow and muntjac represented in the data of the first block!

#### **C. Forest Cover:**

*By the end of the project, rate of deforestation in the NEPL total protection zone adjacent to target communities is reduced by 60% from 2016 baseline.*

Comments mirror the section above – PLUP, CCA's, household conservation agreements, increased awareness through outreach campaigns will all contribute towards this indicator.

#### **D. Policy:**

*By the end of the project, a scalable model of sustainable, climate-smart agro-biodiversity is established and available for replication in forest resource use practices by forest-dependent communities in other protected areas in Laos.*

Ongoing, to be measured later in the life of the project.

### 3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

All assumptions remain relevant and positive or are yet untested through project activities.

### 3.5 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty alleviation

**What contribution is your project making to this higher impact?**

**Biodiversity impact**

Improved management of 27,195 ha of key habitat through improvement of land use planning around 5 villages inside the NEPL which has now been declared one of only 2 National Parks in Lao PDR.

Improved boundary demarcation between the NEPL NP management zones (Controlled use zone and total protection zone) and Village land areas and NEPL NP boundary through reviewed PLUP's in 10 villages.

Improved levels of biodiversity awareness within 10 villages inside the NEPL NP through the CCA agreement process and radio outreach campaign which currently extends to 9,025 people which is the estimated population of the 2 village clusters.

More effective biodiversity and habitat protection regulation due the NEPL NP revision process conducted during 2019.

### **Human development and well-being (poverty alleviation) impact.**

Capacity building and training opportunities provided to 80 households with regards to coffee planting, disease control and nursery management.

Development of a new conservation enterprise in 5 villages that will provide increasing economic benefit beyond the life of the project.

Direct support to 80 household to develop a new income stream that will create increasing economic benefit beyond the life of the project.

Establishment of a model enterprise that can be expanded into other regions in Laos.

## **4. Contribution to the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)**

The project contributes to a number of SDG's including 1) No poverty 5) Gender equality 12) Responsible consumption and production 13) Climate action 15) Life on land. However, the contribution at this stage of the project is still relatively minor and cannot yet be measured, even at the National level.

## **5. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements**

No Significant contribution at this current stage of the project implementation

## **6. Project support to poverty alleviation**

- What evidence is there that the project is working to alleviate poverty?

The establishment of 1 new enterprise not previously present in the area will have an impact on alleviating poverty over the longer term. 80 households in 5 villages are currently engaged in an economic activity that was not available prior to the project inception and are receiving technical and financial support for the development of the enterprise.

Securing a buyer for all the coffee produced in the 5 villages at guaranteed higher prices than the official national annual rates on condition of organic farming methods as stipulated in the coffee grower agreements will contribute to an improved value chain as well as the construction of a processing facility within the village cluster.

- Who are the expected beneficiaries of this work?

Direct beneficiaries are at least 100 households in 10 villages but should extend beyond this amount due to high demand for participation in this coffee industry and other NTFP production and value chain improvements during the next phase of this project. It is expected that by the end of the project, an additional 100 households will be receiving some level of support for improved NTFP livelihood and handicraft activities.

The total population of the 10 target villages is around 9,000 people, and they will all benefit indirectly through improved management of the village production and forestry areas and through additional funds hopefully leveraged through the work already done on the successful management and monitoring of the CCA's and Village Action Plans.

- Are there any notable achievements this year?

The expansion of the coffee enterprise to 80 households as well as the first coffee "harvest" (very small) from these project activities must be the highlight of the year. In addition, SAFFRON tested coffee grown from the project area and find it to be of excellent quality.

## **7. Project support to gender equality issues**

- Is there evidence that the project is working to address gender equality?

The 80 Household coffee agreements are co-managed by household husband and wife teams with a split of 79 Men and 80 women. Village Coffee Grower associations are represented by 17 woman which is 24% of the total membership. Woman are part of every consultation meeting and capacity development activity.

During the next phase of activity development in the 5 new villages, the team will actively be promoting the development of woman associations and the development of handicraft activities which in this current culture is predominately conducted by woman.

- Are there expected to be any direct gender equality impacts from this project? If not direct, please comment on any indirect impacts.

Woman and men (Husband and wife) teams jointly hold the coffee grower contracts. This will still only impact indirectly on households, as traditionally, the men in the household still take most of the financial decision-making roles. In terms of capacity building however, this will be a direct positive impact of woman involved in the project. As mentioned, we believe that the role of woman in handicraft and NTFP activities will be of greater benefit to woman as will the establishment of woman associations / groups during this next period.

- Are there any notable achievements this year?

Only those mentioned above.

## **8. Monitoring and evaluation**

- How can you demonstrate that the Outputs and Activities of the project actually contribute to the project Outcome?

While a small amount of coffee was harvested during this report period, the situation regarding the delivery of outputs and outcomes remains similar to the previous year in that indicators such as the number of households currently involved, people received training number of CCA and PLUP are relatively easily measured and evaluated against the outputs.

The difficulty comes in evaluating the outcomes, which are far more difficult to measure, especially during this time frame of the project and the reality that many of the current socio economic and environmental challenges go beyond the scope of these grant activities. However, we continue to measure and gather baseline information such as:

- Monthly and annual deforestation reports
- Threat monitoring through SMART
- Biodiversity monitoring through ranger patrols using SMART
- Land use through the process of data collection in the CCA development process
- Village socio-economic data through surveys conducted as part of the CCA process.

As the economic benefits of the project activities take effect, the contribution of this project to the outcomes can be more easily described.

- What are the indicators of achievements (both qualitative and quantitative) and how are you measuring these?

Indicators for each output, outcome and activity have been captured within the log frame and are reported in detail under each of these sections, both in the log frame and activity section.

- Have there been any changes made to the M&E plan over the reporting period?

No changes have been made.

- Do partners share the M&E work or is this the role of one organisation? How is information shared amongst partners/stakeholders?

Partners share the M&E work, although WCS still take the lead in ensuring that the monitoring feedback reaches the correct audience and that corrective action is taken where necessary. For example, SAFFRON provide technical input and quality control over the coffee production, and organic requirements, but the WCS technical team ensure that these inputs are shared with the NEPL MU during monthly management meetings and technical discussions.

The main information sharing mechanism is the monthly management meetings which are attended by all district representatives and management team members. Other mechanisms are the integrated nature of the project whereby all activities, field visits, training events and community consultations are attended by the relevant district officials. The project team also hold annual report back workshops with the relevant district officials.

## **9. Lessons learnt**

- What worked well, and what didn't work well, this past year?

The SAFFRON technical partnership continues to provide excellent technical support which is of great benefit to the NEPL technical team and the communities.

The WCS and NEPL livelihoods team on site provided excellent direct almost weekly support to the household coffee growers ensuring an excellent quality of activity and support provided.

The coffee enterprise located in a single village cluster makes operational activities, monitoring and feedback less complicated as it is easy to scale up and expand.

A lack of resources developed during 2019 when a large World Bank project came online after a 2-year delay, resulting in an unrealistic workload for WCS and NEPL technical staff. All original 5 years indicators of this WB funded project have to be delivered over a period of 2 years. WCS have compensated for this by employing additional technical staff and restructuring the livelihood technical team.

A slow CCA development process as a result of external partnerships and complex land issues within the remaining 5 villages has contributed to a delay in the deliverables of some of the grant activities.

- If you had to do it again, what would you do differently?

As mentioned in the previous report, we would undertake the CCA process internally, and rather focus partnership efforts on finding suitable agro-biodiversity development NGO / organisation with a strong link to these communities around NEPL and an institutional framework already established within the provinces related to NEPL NP.

- What recommendations would you make to others doing similar projects?



As an environmental agency undertaking this work, it is really important to develop strong partnerships with agro-biodiversity NGOs, right from the start, as developing any new income stream / enterprise in local communities in remote areas is complicated and for a conservation agency, has a slow and longer learning curve.

Within this partnership, let the environmental agency focus on the development and monitoring of CCA's and PLUP's, provide outreach and awareness activities and conduct enforcement activities around the area with strong local community involvement. The NEPL MU still need to take the lead (with WCS) in overall project coordination and management activities, but the agro-biodiversity activities should be implemented through appropriate specialist NGO / organisations.

- How are you going to build this learning into the project and future plans?

Probably too late into the project implementation to make too many changes now, but we will be relying more heavily on SAFFRON as technical partners for the coffee enterprise and also have started to engage with GRETT in terms of bamboo handicraft product development.

## **10. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)**

All comments provided have been addressed. (11 responses to Y1 and Y2 Queries)

## **11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere**

No additional comments

## **12. Sustainability and legacy**

WCS has a long-term strategy of technical support to NEPL NP and are constantly looking for opportunities to continue with the community engagement activities once they have been established. For example, the eco-tourism products WCS developed with NEPL MU has been under WCS support for the past 11 years, and technical support for law enforcement, outreach and biodiversity monitoring for the past 17 years.

During the term of this grant WCS has secured additional or complimentary funding through AFD, USFWS, EU and SOS for activities broadly related to NEPL NP management activities especially community engagement activities which will include broadly, livelihoods support.

SAFFRON will continue to support the coffee enterprise into the future regardless of WCS or NEPL NP funding after this grant, but it is important to point out the function of NEPL which is the monitoring of the CCA's, protection, outreach and awareness and overall management function.

The large World bank funded grant currently under implementation on NEPL NP is providing NEPL management the opportunity to supplement or expand livelihood activities in an additional 40 villages around the park until July 2021.

## **13. Darwin identity**

The organic wildlife friendly coffee project gains a lot of attention from senior GoL forestry and other agency officials visiting NEPL NP due to the unique manner in which it links community development activities directly to conservation outcomes. All such visits are accompanied by the NEPL technical team to ensure that the full story is told, and that credit is provided to Darwin and other match funders.

As reported previously (Y2 report), each village now has a village coffee information board prominently displayed and branded with the DARWIN logo. In addition, each coffee plot has an ownership board branded with the Darwin logo and the plot owners name displayed at the entrance to the individual plots.

Due to WCS program approach in supporting NEPL NP, there were a number of broader WCS visibility events that included the coffee enterprise. A few examples of these are:

During May 2019 a NEPL NP Decree ceremony was held up in Hiem. The meeting was attended by high ranking Lao government officials from multi-agencies, Provincial and District

Governors and many other institutions. A poster display depicting the coffee project was part of the WCS / NEPL display booth which was visited by a few hundred people during the 2-day event.

In September 2019 – WCS attended the “Sustainable ecotourism solutions expo” in Vientiane. Within the booth, WCS also promoted the Darwin Coffee project by displaying a coffee enterprise poster.

In October 2019 – Staff from WCS and NEPL NP participated in the International coffee day, which was held in the UNESCO town of Luang Prabang, where posters were displayed, and information was provided to those that attended

During February 2020 – NEPL and WCS provided technical support to the development of an EU promotional video highlighting 25 years of AFD development in Laos. Both the eco-tourism and coffee enterprises were highlighted in this promotional video.

Social media mentions of the Darwin project mainly through the current coffee enterprise include:

- NEPL Facebook: <https://web.facebook.com/NamNernNightSafariLaos/>
- Saffron Facebook: <https://web.facebook.com/SaffronCoffee/>
- NEPL Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/p/Bqbm\\_fqn1jx/](https://www.instagram.com/p/Bqbm_fqn1jx/)
- Saffron Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BkP-vDQjBjV/>
- UK Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/380231802077768/posts/2441700275930900/?d=n>

#### **Was the Darwin Initiative funding recognised as a distinct project with a clear identity or did it form part of a larger programme?**

- Our partners understand the Darwin project as a unique entity, but also where and how it is integrated into the broader program of work on NEPL NP.
- The project currently sits within the “Livelihoods development” component of the management unit of NEPL NP.

#### **14. Safeguarding**

WCS’s policies and procedures are framed by the organization’s Code of Conduct, a revised and updated version of which was formally adopted in February 2019. This provides explicit guidance as to how WCS personnel must comport themselves during their work and applies to all staff at WCS as well as those that act on behalf of WCS. The Code of Conduct covers diverse issues such as conflicts of interest, safeguarding human rights, combatting human trafficking, sexual harassment, protection of whistleblowers and many others. Under the Code of Conduct WCS, personnel are accountable for their actions and the actions of others under their management authority, and for ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct prohibits bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, and child abuse as well as documents WCS’s organizational commitment to comply with human rights standards and human subjects’ protections as it undertakes its conservation work.

WCS follows established national and global standards for safeguarding human rights including the World Bank Social Framework, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Belmont Report that outlines the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research. WCS has also established a Global Grievance Redress Mechanism to ensure that we respond in a consistent and timely way across the organization to investigate, document and take appropriate action to address complaints of alleged human rights abuses by WCS staff, partners, consultants or anyone working on our behalf.

## 15. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020)

Project spend (indicative) since last annual report	2019/20 Grant (£)	2019/20 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)				
Others (see below)				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

## Annex 1 - Report of progress and achievements against log-frame for financial Year 2019 – 2020

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2019 - March 2020	Actions required/planned for next period
<p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>Sustainable, climate-smart forest resource use practices are successfully adopted by local communities bordering NEPL and modelled for PAs across Laos, leading to biodiversity protection and improved welfare of vulnerable communities</p>		<p>One new sustainable climate-smart forest resources enterprise has been established in 5 communities living inside the NEPL NP. Other impacts such as modelling across Laos and improved welfare and biodiversity protection remain to be measured.</p>	
<p><b>Outcome</b> Reduced deforestation and improved conservation practice through implementation of scalable agro-biodiversity practice in village forestland and agricultural land that protects biodiversity while improving incomes and welfare for forest-dependent populations.</p>	<p><b>0.1 Local Livelihoods:</b> By the end of the project, at least 100 households in 10 forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL will benefit from an increase in household revenue (&gt; 15% compared to 2017 baseline) as a result of improved forest resource stewardship.</p> <p><b>0.2 Biodiversity:</b> Populations of target species: northern white-cheeked gibbon, large predators (Asian golden cats, clouded leopards, dholes) and large and medium sized ungulate prey species (sambar deer, muntjac, serow, gaur and wild pigs) will be stable or increasing compared to a 2015 baseline.</p> <p><b>0.3 Forest Cover:</b> By the end of the project, rate of deforestation in the NEPL total protection zone adjacent to target communities is reduced by 60% from 2016 baseline.</p> <p><b>0.4 Policy:</b> By the end of the project, a scalable model of</p>	<p><b>0.1</b> 80 households participating in coffee enterprise 5 participating villages. Increased household revenue still to be measured as significant harvests supported through this grant are yet to be realised.</p> <p><b>0.2</b> Results will only become known after surveys conducted during 2020 and the analysis of SMART biodiversity data collected by rangers.</p> <p><b>0.3</b> Annual deforestation report produced for 2019 - Results will become known after all monitoring data from 2020 is included.</p> <p><b>0.4</b> Not due.</p>	<p><b>0.1</b> Continue to develop and expand the coffee industry activities on an annual basis</p> <p>Improve NTFP collection and marketing values in the 5 new villages and introduce handicrafts.</p> <p><b>0.2</b> Continue to collect monthly baseline data and implementation of CT survey.</p> <p><b>03</b> Continue to monitor baseline and new deforestation reports for change.</p>

	sustainable, climate-smart agro-biodiversity is established and available for replication in forest resource use practices by forest-dependent communities in other protected areas in Laos.		
Output 1 ; Model community conservation agreements (CCA) are developed and implemented in forest-dependent communities.	<p><b>1.1</b> At least 10 villages have village forests under community conservation agreements (CCAs) signed off by the District Governor and neighboring villages by the 3rd year of the project (baseline = 0 in 2016);</p> <p><b>1.2</b> By year 4 of the project, 74,000 Hectares of targeted landscapes are managed under CCAs (baseline = 0 hectares in 2016);</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Forest-dependent communities gain exclusive agro-biodiversity use rights over 7,000 hectares of land during the course of the project (baseline = 0 hectares managed exclusively for agro-biodiversity forest 2015).</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> 5 villages have signed CCA's 5 villages have draft CCA's awaiting signing by district officials after COVID19.</p> <p><b>1,.2</b> 27,195 ha managed under 5 current CCA's. 10,409 ha will be added after signing of new 5 village CCA's.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Nil. – This will occur during the development of NTFP management areas during 2020</p>	
Activity 1.1 Conduct CCA development process		CCA model developed. 5 villages signed CCA's 5 Draft CCA's produced.	
Activity 1.2, Carry out participatory mapping, zonation for appropriate use and establish management regulations for all forest lands within village boundaries.		PLUP's completed / reviewed in 5 villages including zonation and regulations. PLUP revision process in 5 villages underway CCA's signed in 5 villages which include regulation, and 5 draft CCA's in an additional 5 villages. NEPL regulation review completed and ready for distribution during outreach campaign	
Activity 1.3 Provide direct support and management for priority agro-biodiversity village forest lands.		Support and management provided through 5 CCA's signed and 5 CCA's in draft. NTFP management plans to be developed in 2020.	

<p><b>Output 2.</b> Forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL have improved livelihoods through sustainable use of non-timber agro-biodiversity resources in managed village forests and diversified agro-biodiversity production systems in agricultural land.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> By year 4 of the project, at least 500 famers trained in collection and processing of agro-biodiversity resources in managed village forests (i.e. coffee, red mushrooms, bamboo shoots, honey and bees wax,) with at least 25% being women (baseline = 0 farmers training in 2016);</p> <p><b>2.2</b> By quarter 2 of year 3 of the project, at least 15 demonstration agro-biodiversity production systems established in village agricultural land (baseline = 0 demonstration systems in 2016);</p> <p><b>2.3</b> By year 3 of the project, at least 4 women’s associations focussed on collection and processing of products established (baseline = 0 NTFP associations in 2016);</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> 80 households trained in coffee production (80 women and 79 men) Training for NTFP development on schedule for 2020.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> 35 coffee demonstration plots established during the first phase of the project.</p> <p><b>2.3</b> 5 Village coffee growers groups established with 24%-woman participation. 80 Household coffee grower contracts signed (80 Woman / 79 Men)</p> <p>Woman’s associations to be developed during 2020.</p>
<p>Activity 2.1. Conduct training in sustainable NTFP collection and processing.</p>		<p>80 households trained in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coffee nursery establishment and management</li> <li>• Plant disease management</li> <li>• Preparation and planting of coffee seedlings</li> <li>• Care and management of coffee plants</li> </ul> <p>NTFP training to take place during 2020</p>
<p>Activity 2.2. Establish demonstration plots.</p>		<p>35 Coffee demonstration plots have been established in 5 villages during the early stages of the project.</p>
<p>Activity 2.3 Establish women’s associations.</p>		<p>5 Village coffee growers groups established with 24%-woman participation. 80 Household coffee grower contracts signed (80 Woman / 79 Men)</p> <p>Woman’s associations to be developed during 2020</p>

<p><b>Output 3.</b> Local income-generating activities that are climate smart and innovative, including environment-friendly sustainable agriculture through the Conservation Enterprise Development Program (CEDP) are set up and expanded in the forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL.</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> By the end of the project, at least 1 Agro-biodiversity / conservation enterprise is established, and linked to national / regional markets (baseline = 0 conservation enterprise in 2016);</p>	<p>3.1 Coffee enterprise established in 5 villages currently involving 80 households. Demonstration plots established and expansion stage well in progress.  Linked to national and regional market through SAFFRON partnership.</p>
<p>Activity 2.1. Investigate feasibility of NTFP and agro-biodiversity products for conservation enterprise development</p>		<p>Feasibility studies conducted for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coffee</li> <li>• Cardamom</li> <li>• Red mushrooms</li> </ul> <p>NTFP, livelihoods and market survey conducted in 10 villages. Results from the survey indicate a need for support with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tea</li> <li>• Cattle management</li> <li>• Bamboo</li> <li>• Handicrafts</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 2.2. Conduct conservation enterprise development process</p>		<p>One conservation enterprise developed in 5 villages. (Organic shade-grown coffee)</p>
<p><b>Output 4.</b> Species and forest habitat protection is significantly increased in the total protection and controlled use forests of NEPL adjacent to target communities</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Illegal extraction of timber and non-timber natural resources in NEPL total protection zone adjacent to at least 10 village areas is reduced by 50% against a 2017 baseline (to be established);</p> <p><b>4.2</b> At least 90% of community members in the target villages are aware of hunting laws and the impacts of illegal hunting by 2019 against a 2014 baseline = 30%;</p> <p><b>4.3</b> By the end of project there will be a 50% reduction in hunting and poaching in the NEPL total</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Collection of baseline data through monthly deforestation and fire reports collected, annual deforestation map produced. Information on illegal logging activities collected through SMART enforcement data. Analysis still to take place.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Outreach radio campaign currently in progress in 10 villages. Outreach campaign to take place 2020 after COVID restrictions are lifted. Communities in 10 villages received inputs on NEPL legislation and regulations during the CCA consultation and signing process. NEPL regulations review process completed.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Baseline information collected on a monthly basis through SMART enforcement data. Camera trap surveys currently under way.</p>

	protection zone adjacent to target villages (compared to a 2017 baseline to be established).	Analysis to take place after surveys.
Activity 4.1	Conduct land-use monitoring.	Monitoring currently through monthly deforestation reporting, fire maps and SMART enforcement data.
Activity 4.2	Conduct community monitoring related to CCA.	Baseline established through CCA socio economic surveys in 10 villages.
Activity 4.3	Conduct outreach campaigns	Radio campaign currently underway Outreach campaign to take place in 2020.
Activity 4.4	Conduct law enforcement monitoring including community-led monitoring	Law enforcement monitoring is occurring on a monthly basis and data analysed through SMART.  Monitoring measurements to take place by the end of Y3 on 5 coffee villages.
Activity 4.5	Conduct biodiversity monitoring	Enforcement information on ranger efforts, threats and results collected on a monthly basis through SMART enforcement data collection.
<b>Output 5</b>	A scalable model of sustainable, climate-smart agro-biodiversity is established and available for replication in forest resource use practices by forest-dependent communities in other protected areas in Laos.	<p><b>5.1</b> By the end of the project, an evaluation of impacts and lessons learned guidelines from this project is published and disseminated to all stakeholders including local government agencies, CSOs, development and technical partners;</p> <p><b>5.2</b> By the end of the project, at least 4 exchanges are held with other forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL to expose them to sustainable agro-biodiversity concepts and practices in a participatory fashion promote wider adoption;</p> <p><b>5.3</b> By the end of the project, at least 2 working papers outlining the</p>



	effectiveness of sustainable climate-smart agro-biodiversity are produced and shared at national, regional or international events.	
Activity 5.1. Develop guidelines.		Not yet due
Activity 5.2 Conduct cross-village exchange and demonstration visits.		Occurring throughout the current 5 coffee villages as a result of the cluster development strategy.
Activity 5.3 Produce working papers.		Not yet due.

## Annex 2 – Original Log-frame

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<p><b>Impact:</b> Sustainable, climate-smart forest resource use practices are successfully adopted by local communities bordering NEPL and modelled for PAs across Laos, leading to biodiversity protection and improved welfare of vulnerable communities.</p> <p>(Max 30 words)</p>			
<p><b>Outcome:</b> Reduced deforestation and improved conservation practice through implementation of scalable agro-biodiversity practice in village forestland and agricultural land that protects biodiversity while improving incomes and welfare for forest-dependent populations.</p>	<p><b>0.1 Local Livelihoods:</b> By the end of the project, at least 100 households in 10 forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL will benefit from an increase in household revenue (&gt; 15% compared to 2017 baseline) as a result of improved forest resource stewardship.</p> <p><b>0.2 Biodiversity:</b> Populations of target species: northern white-cheeked gibbon, large predators (Asian golden cats, clouded leopards, dholes) and large and medium sized ungulate prey species (sambar deer, muntjac, serow, gaur and wild pigs) will be stable or increasing compared to a 2015 baseline.</p> <p><b>0.3 Forest Cover:</b> By the end of the project, rate of deforestation in the NEPL total protection zone adjacent</p>	<p><b>0.1 Local Livelihoods:</b> Number of Community Conservation Agreements finalized and endorsed by government; number of conservation enterprises established, and linked to national / regional markets; results of participatory rural appraisals</p> <p><b>0.2 Biodiversity:</b> Quantitative data from camera trap arrays and gibbon surveys in forests near target communities;</p> <p><b>0.3 Forest Cover:</b> Results of satellite imagery analysis; Forest cover monitoring reports;</p> <p><b>0.4 Policy:</b> Guidelines produced and disseminated; number national, regional and international conference attendance.</p>	<p>Rates of habitat and species loss will respond to changes in local land use practices;</p> <p>Local communities continue to be willing to participate in innovative activities;</p> <p>Local authorities continue to be supportive and engaged;</p> <p>Other policy initiatives will prioritize local innovative models of benefit-sharing that empower local forest-dependent communities;</p> <p>Climatic events and/or disease do not impact wildlife populations in such a way that may reduce our ability to reach wildlife targets.</p>

	<p>to target communities is reduced by 60% from 2016 baseline.</p> <p><b>0.4 Policy:</b> By the end of the project, a scalable model of sustainable, climate-smart agro-biodiversity is established and available for replication in forest resource use practices by forest-dependent communities in other protected areas in Laos.</p>		
<p><b>Outputs:</b></p> <p><b>1.</b> Model community conservation agreements (CCA) are developed and implemented in forest-dependent communities.</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> At least 10 villages have village forests under community conservation agreements (CCAs) signed off by the District Governor and neighboring villages by the 3rd year of the project (baseline = 0 in 2016);</p> <p><b>1.2</b> By year 4 of the project, 74,000 Hectares of targeted landscapes are managed under CCAs (baseline = 0 hectares in 2016);</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Forest-dependent communities gain exclusive agro-biodiversity use rights over 7,000 hectares of land during the course of the project (baseline = 0 hectares managed exclusively for agro-biodiversity forest 2015).</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Signed CCAs;</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Maps of areas covered by approved CCAs;</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Maps of demarcated agro-biodiversity forest areas covered by approved CCAs.</p>	<p>Appropriate forest and land governance policies, which recognize the community-empowered resource use rights are in place or in review;</p> <p>Political climate and decentralization process continues to support community-focussed land use planning and improved stewardship.</p>
<p><b>2.</b> Forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL have improved livelihoods through sustainable use of non-timber agro-biodiversity resources in managed village forests and diversified agro-biodiversity production systems in agricultural land.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> By year 4 of the project, at least 500 famers trained in collection and processing of agro-biodiversity resources in managed village forests (i.e. coffee, red mushrooms, bamboo shoots, honey and bees wax,) with at least 25% being women (baseline = 0 farmers training in 2016);</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Attendance and summary reports from village-level trainings;</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Demonstration systems established and mapped;</p> <p><b>2.3</b> Records of women's associations established;</p>	<p>Pilot studies and feasibility assessments carried out indicate that sufficient benefits and feasible enterprise opportunities exist to provide additional income to villages;</p> <p>Local communities continue to be willing to participate in innovative activities;</p>

	<p><b>2.2</b> By quarter 2 of year 3 of the project, at least 15 demonstration agro-biodiversity production systems established in village agricultural land (baseline = 0 demonstration systems in 2016);</p> <p><b>2.3</b> By year 3 of the project, at least 4 women's associations focussed on collection and processing of products established (baseline = 0 NTFP associations in 2016);</p>		Local authorities continue to be supportive and engaged;
<p><b>3.</b> Local income-generating activities that are climate smart and innovative, including environment-friendly sustainable agriculture through the Conservation Enterprise Development Program (CEDP) are set up and expanded in the forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL.</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> By the end of the project, at least 1 Agro-biodiversity / conservation enterprise is established, and linked to national / regional markets (baseline = 0 conservation enterprise in 2016);</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Formalized pilot village-based enterprise agreements; Activity and sale reports from the model enterprise(s).</p>	<p>Pilot studies and feasibility assessments carried out indicate that sufficient benefits and feasible enterprise opportunities exist to provide additional income to villages;</p> <p>Local communities continue to be willing to participate in innovative activities;</p> <p>Local authorities continue to be supportive and engaged;</p>
<p><b>4.</b> Species and forest habitat protection is significantly increased in the total protection and controlled use forests of NEPL adjacent to target communities.</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Illegal extraction of timber and non-timber natural resources in NEPL total protection zone adjacent to at least 10 village areas is reduced by 50% against a 2017 baseline (to be established);</p> <p><b>4.2</b> At least 90% of community members in the target villages are aware of hunting laws and the impacts of illegal hunting by 2019 against a 2014 baseline = 30%;</p> <p><b>4.3</b> By the end of project there will be a 50% reduction in hunting and poaching in the NEPL total</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Household surveys and community monitoring reports; results from ranger-based monitoring tool SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool);</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Community outreach campaign reports and household surveys;</p> <p><b>4.3</b> SMART reports quantifying prevalence of biodiversity threat as measured by threat encounter per kilometre walked inside the NEPL total protection zone.</p>	<p>Over a decade of direct implementation support to management of NEPL supports that there will be adequate and available relevant imagery and practical feasibility of field-based monitoring programs at the site level;</p> <p>Link between rates of habitat and species loss and encroachment;</p> <p>Local authorities are supportive and engaged;</p> <p>Climatic events and/or disease do not impact wildlife populations in a way that will prohibit us from</p>

	protection zone adjacent to target villages (compared to a 2017 baseline to be established).		successfully reaching wildlife targets.
5. A scalable model of sustainable, climate-smart agro-biodiversity is established and available for replication in forest resource use practices by forest-dependent communities in other protected areas in Laos.	<p><b>5.1</b> By the end of the project, an evaluation of impacts and lessons learned guidelines from this project is published and disseminated to all stakeholders including local government agencies, CSOs, development and technical partners;</p> <p><b>5.2</b> By the end of the project, at least 4 exchanges are held with other forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL to expose them to sustainable agro-biodiversity concepts and practices in a participatory fashion promote wider adoption;</p> <p><b>5.3</b> By the end of the project, at least 2 working papers outlining the effectiveness of sustainable climate-smart agro-biodiversity are produced and shared at national, regional or international events.</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Guidelines produced and disseminated;</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Reports of exchanges held between local communities;</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Working papers produced; attendance and presentations of project results at national, regional and international events attended.</p>	<p>Results from this project will be applicable and scalable to other similar contexts in Laos;</p> <p>Local authorities are supportive and engaged;</p> <p>Local communities outside of our project focal area are willing to participate in innovative activities;</p> <p>Other policy initiatives are in place to support and empower improved resource stewardship by local forest-dependent communities.</p>
<p><b>Activities</b> (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)</p> <p><b><i>Output 1: Model community conservation agreements (CCAs) are developed and implemented in forest-dependent communities.</i></b></p> <p><b>1.1 Conduct CCA development process.</b> With technical support from VFI, WCS will deliver 10 CCAs prior to Year 3 through a process that includes updating Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs) and Land Use Plan (LUPs), as well as the production of Community Action Plans (CAPs). CCAs will provide zoning, management rules, indicate agro-biodiversity support within village boundaries, and outline community commitments regarding access, protection, and prohibitions for adjacent Total Protection Zones of the protected area, the area in which agricultural and extractive activities are prohibited.</p> <p><b>1.2 Carry out participatory mapping, zonation for appropriate use and establish management regulations for all forest lands within village boundaries.</b> We will ensure that over 74,000 ha of village forest lands within village boundaries in the controlled use zone of the NPA are clearly mapped, zoned for appropriate use, and managed under community developed regulations according to the CCAs. We will carry out practical training with community members and provide guidance related to monitoring approaches and will ensure that these village forest lands will be clearly demarcated on village maps and be informed by specific regulations regarding broad scale clearing and use of various agricultural activities.</p>			

**1.3 Provide direct support and management for priority agro-biodiversity village forest lands.** Under the CCA process, WCS will support the identification of over 7,000 ha of priority agro-biodiversity village forest lands in the controlled use zones. These priority agro-biodiversity village forest lands are a subset of the overall 74,000 ha village forest lands, and through the CCAs will be under exclusive community use rights and management regulations by the beginning of year 4 of the project. We will carry out practical training and provide guidance for community members using these areas, in order to support development of NTFP-specific management plans and regulations for these priority agro-biodiversity areas. Regulations will focus on the use of and access to these areas for NTFP collection, NTFP enrichment planting, and sustainable harvesting rates.

***Output 2: Forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL have improved livelihoods through sustainable use of non-timber agro-biodiversity resources in managed village forests and diversified agro-biodiversity production systems in agricultural land.***

**2.1 Conduct training in sustainable NTFP collection and processing.** We will train more than 500 farmers in sustainable collection and processing of NTFPs from village forest. This training will include extension and support by the WCS team, training workshops, and cross-farm and village demonstration training exchanges.

**2.2 Establish demonstration plots.** We will conduct site-based assessments to determine ideal locations for establishment of 15 demonstration agro-biodiversity production systems. Once locations are selected, we will then coordinate with 'lead farmers' who will serve as community trainers, and provide them with training, equipment, and improved planting material where appropriate to support demonstration site establishment. Training will focus on processes for out-planting of NTFPs, combining NTFPs and recognised crops, and improving cropping systems to involve more permanent land cover.

**2.3 Establish women's associations.** We will conduct focus group surveys and targeted training programs to establish four women's associations to support the management, collection and processing of NTFPs. These women's associations will be product- or location-based depending on the outcome of the CCA processes.

***Output 3: Local income-generating activities that are climate smart and innovative, including environment-friendly sustainable agriculture through the Conservation Enterprise Development Program (CEDP) are set up and expanded in the forest-dependent communities bordering NEPL.***

**3.1 Investigate feasibility of NTFP and agro-biodiversity products for conservation enterprise development.** WCS, with support from our CEDP, and based on the results of the CCA process, will investigate the feasibility of smallholder agricultural / forest product enterprise development, including investigating product certification.

**3.2 Conduct conservation enterprise development process.** Based on the results of the feasibility studies, we will complete targeted village-level capacity building exercises, hold technical trainings in enterprise development, and work with CEDP to establish additional support for enterprise development.

***Output 4: Species and forest habitat protection is significantly increased in the total protection and controlled use forests of NEPL adjacent to target communities.***

**4.1 Conduct land-use monitoring.** WCS will complete annual assessments of CCA implementation including delivery of benefits and adherence to conservation commitments as related to agricultural encroachment along the boundary between the village and the total protection zone, and appropriate use in village forest zones. We will also conduct quarterly professional ranger patrols through the TPZ adjacent to villages, and support community participation in regular boundary patrolling and monitoring.

**4.2 Conduct community monitoring related to CCA.** We will complete annual assessments of CCA implementation including assessing: household incomes against indicator target values; the number of women's associations established and functioning; the area of priority agro-biodiversity village forest land under management rules; and adherence to conservation commitments as related to illegal NTFP and timber extraction.

**4.3 Conduct outreach campaigns.** We will design and conduct comprehensive outreach campaigns in all 10 villages in the first 2 years including regulation awareness, wildlife theatre outreach, and on-going support and engagement by the WCS and Nam Et – Phou Louey management unit outreach team.

**4.4 Conduct law enforcement monitoring including community-led monitoring.** We will complete annual assessment of CCA implementation related to law enforcement, including adherence to conservation commitments as relates to illegal hunting pressure. We will realize targeted illegal gun handover meetings, quarterly ranger patrols to address poaching in the total protection zone, and community led snare sweeps of forest areas in the TPZ adjacent to villages.

**4.5 Conduct biodiversity monitoring.** We will conduct camera trap monitoring in year 4 and combine this information with long term monitoring conducted in the protected area to determine the status and progress towards the biodiversity indicators. The stabilisation or improvements to the status and populations of these species will be supported through the activities under 4.1 – 4.4 such as reducing hunting threats including the presence of poachers and snares and reducing habitat loss through deforestation. We will produce quarterly status reports through analysis of ranger-based SMART data collection.

***Output 5: A scalable model of sustainable, climate-smart agro-biodiversity is established and incorporated into forest resource use practices by forest-dependent communities.***

**5.1. Develop guidelines.** We will develop guidelines for the development of agro-biodiversity enterprise, and for agro-biodiversity based sustainable agricultural systems and practices, and disseminate them through national technical working groups, community-focussed knowledge sharing campaigns, and national and regional conservation / development forums.

**5.2 Conduct cross-village exchange and demonstration visits.** After successful commencement of the planned activities and demonstrations, we will support annual cross-village visits to demonstration sites to foster collaboration and cooperation between participating villages, and extension to villages outside the scope of this project.

**5.3 Produce working papers.** We will produce working papers outlining the effectiveness of sustainable climate-smart agro-biodiversity approaches. We will present these findings at national, regional and international forums.

## Annex 3: Standard Measures

**Table 1 Project Standard Output Measures**

Cod e No.	Descripti on	Gende r of people (if relevant)	National ity of people (if relevant )	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Year 4 Total	Total to date	Total plann ed durin g the projec t
6A	Training and capacity building around NTFP /AB enterprise management and development	Mixed	Lao National s	36	60	80	324	176	500
6B	Practical skills training and capacity building activities. Max of 3 days per session	Mixed	Lao National s	3 events	9 events	6 events	6 events	18 Events	24 events
13B	Camera trap survey results, SMART enforcement database,	NA	NA	1 (SMART)	1 (SMART)	2 (Smart and deforestation)	3 (SMART, Deforestation report, CT report)	4	4
14B	Conferenc es attended	NA	NA	1	4	2	1	7	4
20	Motorcycl e	NA	NA	0		0	0		

**Table 2 Publications**

**Nil**

## Annex 4 Onwards – supplementary material (optional but encouraged as evidence of project achievement)

### Checklist for submission

	Check
<b>Is the report less than 10MB?</b> If so, please email to <a href="mailto:Darwin-Projects@itsi.co.uk">Darwin-Projects@itsi.co.uk</a> putting the project number in the Subject line.	NO
<b>Is your report more than 10MB?</b> If so, please discuss with <a href="mailto:Darwin-Projects@itsi.co.uk">Darwin-Projects@itsi.co.uk</a> about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	YES
<b>Have you included means of verification?</b> You need not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	YES
<b>Do you have hard copies of material you want to submit with the report?</b> If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	NO
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	YES
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	YES
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	