



**Darwin Initiative/D+ Project
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2019)**

Project reference	24-003	
Project title	Conservation and poverty alleviation through scalable agro-biodiversity practice in Laos	
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Lao PDR	
Lead organisation	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)	
Partner(s)	Village Focus International (VFI) Nam Et Phou Louey Management Unit (NEPL MU), Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)	
Project leader	Ben Swanepoel	
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	1 April 2019 – 30 September 2019 – HYR3	
Project website/blog/social media etc.	http://www.wcs.org/ https://laos.wcs.org/	

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).

Progress in carrying out project Activities

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

Work has started on developing CCA's for the 5 villages of the Sam-Nua village cluster, with meetings held at the district level setting out the process to be followed, obtaining permissions and developing the timetables. Training was carried out with district and village officials from the 5 new villages on the CCA development process.

Training was provided to the district team who then conducted household surveys to collect PRA data (socio-economic and natural resource use information) for the 5 villagers of Sam-Nua village cluster.

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.

In 5 villages of Boumfat cluster, the team assisted village authorities to identify areas of coffee expansion for the 2019 coffee planting season. Efforts were made to improve the management of cattle raising activities currently creating a major threat to wildlife and forest habitat within the TPZ of NEPL NP. Meetings held in Phonsong and Longnumpar villages (both Boumfat cluster villages) resulting in agreements to move cattle from the TPZ areas, and a survey was conducted to establish the extend of the problem.

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.

Coffee demonstration plots have been established in 5 villages of Boumfat cluster. 5 village coffee growers groups have been established, with strong woman representation.

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.

Focus remains on developing the organic shade growth coffee enterprise in 5 villages of Boumfat cluster.

Consultation meetings were conducted in 5 villages of Sam Nua cluster to generate a list of community needs relating to agro-biodiversity and other livelihood developments.

District teams were assigned to assist NEPL MU in developing and implementing livelihood development activities in Hiem and Xone district. (These districts contain the 10 Darwin villages)

60 households were supported through this grant to plant out coffee seedlings during the planting season in 5 villages of Boumfat cluster. The livelihoods team provided the necessary tools and equipment, and technical support to ensure the correct organic farming methods were applied during the planting process. The team supported the growers by conducting regular monitoring and support visits to the 5 villages.

Trainings were provided by the livelihoods team to the 60 household coffee growers in terms of organic formulas to combat green scale, and on the use of organic fertilisers.

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

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.

Community monitoring related to the terms of the conservation arrangements are conducted through NEPL NP ranger teams and the enforcement reports generated through the SMART data management program. This, along with the land use monitoring is communicated to the coffee producers during village coffee growers group meetings and are governed through individual coffee growers' contracts.

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.

In addition to the outreach campaign, a village radio outreach campaign has been developed for all villages in the Xone and Hiem districts where key radio messages have been developed for broadcast over the village radio networks (These are village speaker systems) Messages will be broadcast twice a week for a 12-month period.

During this report period forest rangers conducted 122 patrols covering more than 6,079 km of foot, boat and vehicle patrols. As a result of these efforts, 373 threats were uncovered and eliminated, and 39 people were caught and received some form of sanction. In addition, 80 guns were confiscated, 123 hunting camps / shelters destroyed, and 131 snares removed from the field. A total of 98 cases are still pending at the local courts.

During this report period, 39 individual biodiversity observations of key species such as; Serow and Sambar, Hornbill and Gibbon sp. were recorded.

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.

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.

Some conflicts have been experienced between the households involved with the coffee enterprise and those that have decided not to be involved. Main issues are related to village land use conflict and perceptions of unfairness. NEPL NP staff have been holding meetings with the relevant village authorities to address these problems.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS:	No not at this point
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Formal change request submitted:	No not at this point
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Received confirmation of change acceptance	No not at this point
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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?

Not at this time.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. Additionally, if you were funded under R25 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to 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: 25-035 Darwin Half Year Report**