

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2018)

Project reference:	24-012
Project title:	Incentivising community-led marine biodiversity conservation on Atauro Island
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	East Timor
Lead organisation	Blue Ventures Conservation
Partner(s)	
Project leader	Alasdair Harris
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	October 2018 - HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	www.blueventures.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).

1.1 Community consultations on ecotourism homestay workplan and activities at 2-3 villages.

Consultations were completed in Beloi before this reporting period. Although consultations on homestays previously concluded that homestays were not desired in Uaro-ana, one family contacted us in August to re-discuss homestays and ask for support to apply for development funds from the local government. We agreed to support them in accessing funding in Dili and will report on the progress of this in the next reporting period. There have also been some homestay exchanges in this reporting period between Beloi and three communities from the mainland, Com, Metinaro, and Railaco. These may lead to further expansion of our support for developing homestays.

1.2 Community, NGO and wider stakeholder consultations for natural resource management at 2-3 villages, with local consultations consulting both communities and women's groups.

Consultations were completed in Ilik-namu and Beloi before the reporting period. We have also been invited to work with communities on the mainland in Behau, where community members have asked for support on fisheries management. Community consultations in Behau began in April at three meetings, which aimed to discuss marine management. These took place on: 10th April (43 participants, 17 of which were women), 29th May (26 participants, 16 of which were women) and 5th June (36 participants, 14 of which were women) representing 44% female engagement overall. During these meetings, participants decided that fisheries management is needed and that measures (i.e. a two year no-take zone and a temporary closure) would be discussed and implemented.

1.3 Train (minimum) 10 community members in habitat monitoring, including use of underwater 360° video.

Ten community members were trained in seagrass mapping methods before the reporting

period. Additionally, a training programme based on the Seagrass Watch methodology and designed for long-term monitoring, was delivered to 11 participants in June. This did not include underwater video as after trialling this in another site we found the footage was not good enough quality to be useful for monitoring, and video footage was time consuming and inefficient to analyse. Instead we have been using technology to engage community members in activity 1.5. The habitat monitoring team now comprises eight women and three men; six of whom also take part in the homestay programme.

1.4 Conduct participatory habitat assessments across southeast and northeast areas of Atauro.

Seagrass mapping was completed in Beloi and Biqueli before this reporting period and these data were shared with stakeholders in Dili on the 14th August. Seagrass monitoring began in 2017, and eleven monitoring sessions (over 13 months) were completed as of July 2018, for a total of thirty-four transects, covering 6 km of coast. During this period, monitoring sessions took place with the 11 certified operators and Blue Ventures staff on the 1st June and 20th July in Beloi and Biqueli respectively. Reef surveys, carried out by Blue Ventures staff and ecotourists using the Reef Check methodology, continued throughout the reporting period.

1.5 Train (minimum) 10 community members in fisheries monitoring, simple analysis and presenting information back to communities (minimum 50% women).

Eight women from Ilik-namu completed their training before the reporting period and an additional four women were trained in Behau in June, bringing the total to 12 (100%) women. An exchange visit with the Ilik-namu and Behau fisheries monitoring teams took place in Behau, in August, to promote experience sharing and give the Ilik-namu team a chance to provide peer training to their less experienced colleagues from Behau.

1.6 Establish participatory fisheries monitoring programme in 2-3 villages for duration of project.

Fisheries monitoring in Ilik-namu has continued in this reporting period. An additional programme, replicating the one in Ilik-namu, started in Behau in July, involving the four women trained in fisheries monitoring (see 1.5). Recent developments suggest that the Behau programme will also include cuttlefish, in addition to the list of species from Ilik-namu, as some fishers mentioned it is an important fishery.

The programme was specifically designed to engage women in CBNRM as, likely due to social norms, female participation in CBNRM activities (e.g. talks about Tara Bandu) was lower than male participation. Additionally, one of the programme goals was to improve women's status in their community. Since its start, we have received positive feedback from the local authorities, who take pride in seeing women from their community working on natural resources, and the Ilik-namu team was invited to attend community consultations on Timor-Leste's new fisheries strategy in September. The team, who have recently decided to double their survey efforts, actively participated in the meeting, which is a promising sign that the programme is starting to have a positive effect on their confidence and status in the community.

1.7 Disseminate results of participatory monitoring to communities, community leaders and women's groups on Atauro, including through use of 360° VR engagement tools showcasing underwater monitoring footage.

A major data sharing session was held on the 14th August with government representatives in Dili, sharing the results of the seagrass mapping programme that was completed in March. Three additional sharing sessions are planned for the next reporting period, starting in Biqueli in October and continuing in Beloi and Vila. Additionally, considerable effort has been made to process our reef and seagrass data backlog (e.g. input, verification and analysis) and prepare it for dissemination. In lieu of the 360° video we shared pictures and videos captured by

ecotourists as an attempt to engage and inspire community members. However, we were surprised to receive negative feedback from the communities as pictures and videos were perceived to undermine the data, which they prefer to be presented using tables and graphs.

2.1 Village level workshops, with communities and women's groups, to discuss fisheries management options based on participatory monitoring data, and discussions on key fisheries and threats.

Workshops were held in Behau on 10th April, 29th May and 5th June, where the community decided to establish a two-year complete no-take zone on a section of their reef. This system is based on previous Tara Bandu regulations, which restricted access to a very productive reef in order to improve fish populations, but was disrupted during Timor-Leste's struggle for independence. They also decided to test a temporary closure system, based on a six-month closure, followed by a three-month open season, to see the effect closures may have on invertebrates (e.g. octopus and cuttlefish).

2.2. One key fishery selected for trial management measure through further consultations with communities and women's groups, with minimum 1 village.

Consultations were completed in Ilik-namu before the reporting period. During this reporting period, the Behau community decided that the key species identified in Ilik-namu (grouper, tuna, fusilier, lobster), plus cuttlefish, are the key fisheries they want to focus on.

2.3 Work plan agreed upon with community – including women's groups – for timeline for local fisheries management (eg. location, duration, rules).

Progress on the work plan in Ilik-namu was delayed as engaging with the community has been hindered by communication issues due to the remoteness, community conflict, and service issues with mobile networks. We are continuing our attempts to engage the community through key representatives and our community-based fisheries monitoring operators.

A work plan was agreed on in Behau, with temporary and permanent closures mapped via GPS on 5th June, and suggested draft regulations shared with the community the same day.

2.4 Support provided to community and women's groups for implementation of workplan.

A team comprising BV staff and community members worked in Behau on the 3rd (10 participants, four of which were women), 15th (eight participants, two of which were women) and 29th (10 participants, two of which were women) of August, to prepare the moorings to mark the temporary and permanent closures and to discuss the management structure for the upcoming Tara Bandu (see 4.2 for more details on training content). Representatives are considering establishing an LMMA Management team that includes a manager, representatives from local authorities (the village and sub-village chiefs, and the sub-district representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries), the fisheries monitoring team, and community representatives (fishers, youth, women, and church).

3.2 Homestay Association set up with legal paperwork completed, with equal representation of women within Association board.

The legal paperwork was submitted several times during the last reporting period. However, ongoing political instability has produced a situation where policies and procedures are unclear, and we have been asked to resubmit to comply with changing requirements. We expect this to be completed in the next reporting period, however, this will depend to an extent on the country having a stable government.

3.3 Business plans developed and standards for homestays agreed upon.

Completed in Beloi before the reporting period. The participating families are currently discussing options to create a community fund, which the homestay association would donate

to, and would be used to support the local administration, the church and the Haru Ina Tara Bandu, which includes a large portion of Beloi's coast.

In June, we facilitated the homestay association's participation in the second Dili Handicraft Market, which showcases local businesses.,

3.4 Participate in exchange trip to Raja Ampat, Indonesia, to meet and learn from a successful homestay group.

This activity was completed ahead of schedule and therefore before the grant period and using alternative funds to Darwin. However, a return trip with the Raja Ampat Homestay Association (RAHA) and communities from the Tun Mustapha National Park in Malaysia, is currently being organised in partnership with WWF, RAHA and 73 Ltd. The exchange is planned for November 2018 and will see participants share their experiences in hospitality, and engage in workshops on leadership, community organisations, and business, all aimed at promoting independence and self-management. This will use funds from Darwin for our participation (i.e. BV costs in country) and the activities we are hosting such as participatory video training costs, whilst WWF, RAHA and 73 Ltd costs will be covered by match funding.

3.5 Training given on key areas such as health and safety, budget management, tourist expectations, ecoguiding etc.

An exchange trip was organised with Agora Food Studio (AFS) in Dili in February, giving the homestay women an opportunity to discuss how to best use local ingredients to create nutritious meals with the AFS team. The exchange led to a formal partnership between the Atauro Homestay Association and Agora Food Studio under their Timor-Leste Food Innovator Exchange (TL-FIX) project, which started in June and aims at researching and promoting local food. The project gives women the opportunity to show leadership in an environment they are comfortable with (e.g. preparing and sharing food), ultimately promoting their standing in the community and contributing to improving gender equality.

3.7 Workshops with further villages for subsequent expansion of homestay association.

Some early conversations have taken place in Uaro-ana and internal discussions about which communities might be appropriate for homestays have taken place. However, for the moment we are focusing on and making sure we learn from and document the experiences of setting-up the first homestay association, before we start supporting another community.

4.1 Workshops with community (from activities 2.2 to 2.5) and women's groups to discuss potential benefits of developing an LMMA and locally relevant mechanisms for management (eg. Tara Bandu).

Completed in Ilik-namu before the reporting period. In this reporting period, three workshops were held in Behau on 10th April, 29th May and 5th June (see 1.2). Respondents agreed that catches are declining and that management measures need to be taken, and are now finalising regulations that include a two-year no-take zone and an adjacent temporary closure (three months open, six months closed). Female participation was encouraged during coordination with the local authorities, with women outnumbering men in the May meeting (61% women).

4.2 Training in LMMA management and what it means for the village, including exchange trips to the village of Adara to meet other villages engaged in LMMAs, with minimum 50% participation by women.

Ongoing in Behau. Three training sessions took place on 3rd, 15th and 29th August (with on average 28% women present). These included a visit from a representative from Beloi, who shared his experiences as a fisherman with Tara Bandu. The training also included sessions on LMMA demarcation and maintenance, outreach, and marine management (e.g. the differences between permanent and temporary closures).

During these sessions, participants strongly encouraged us to hold outreach/training sessions

with fishers separately from the wider community and in a more informal setting. We have therefore started to hold informal sessions on the beach with fishers (the first session was held on the 17th September). It is likely that these sessions will only be attended by men, due to social norms. We are, however, encouraging women's participation by directly involving the fisheries monitoring team in these sessions.

Further training will be provided after the creation of the LMMA management team, likely in the next reporting period. Training content and frequency is currently being decided but is planned to comprise monthly sessions on topics such as basic ecology, fisheries management, monitoring and conflict resolution.

4.3 Workshops to decide on LMMA criteria (eg. size, zoning, rules), with minimum 50% participation by women.

Completed in Ilik-namu before the reporting period. Workshops took place in Behau on 10th April, 29th May, and 5th June (on average 47% women present), which resulted in a draft regulations document being produced. Measures currently agreed include a permanent no-take zone and a temporary closure, both of which have been marked with GPS.

4.4 Workshops to draft a local management plan for the LMMA, with minimum 50% participation by women.

The draft management plan for Ilik-namu is pending approval (see Activity 2.3). Workshops were completed in Behau on 10th April, 29th May and 5th June, the results of which have informed the production of a draft management plan that is currently pending approval.

4.5 Delineation of LMMA and outreach by communities.

Following consultations carried out in Behau in April and May, the temporary and permanent closures were marked with GPS in June and the buoys to mark the boundaries of the LMMA were constructed at three sessions on 3rd, 15th, and 29th of August.

4.6 Support on any required administration with Ministries.

We continue to maintain positive relationships with relevant Ministries (Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Tourism). Most notably, in September, we were invited to participate in the Environment Working Group of the new Secretary of Environment, as well as the Stakeholder Meetings for the Coral Triangle Initiative National Coordinating Committee, which is heavily supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

We continue to support the homestay association's formal registration with the Ministry of Justice in Dili, and have repeatedly submitted the application materials to comply to changing requirements. The latest development is that the Ministry requires \$ in the association's bank account to proceed with the registration. We have agreed to loan the association \$, and the eight participating families each will contribute \$, so that we can proceed with the registration.

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.

There have been issues with the Homestay Association caused by petty jealousy within the village manifesting itself as conflict with the community and aggression towards the homestay association. Conflict resolution meetings have been held by local authorities and village chiefs, and BV staff have been privy to these meetings, but are there as observers now the Homestay Association is operating as an independent entity. In August, Blue Ventures, the Homestay

Association and local authorities arranged for a local organisation, Belun, who specialise in community conflict, to lead the conflict resolution process.

Since then, it was agreed by Belun and the local authorities to wait a little to let conflict subside before completing the homestay registration (which in the local context is seen as a key factor in defending the association from conflict). Meanwhile, it was recommended by local authorities that BV refrains from sending volunteers to the homestays in Beloi. Although this means that we will have to find a different way to make the homestays a viable livelihood (likely catering to internal tourism from expats in Dili), we see this as a really valuable learning opportunity - to learn from our mistakes before attempting to work with other communities and it has exposed some of the failings within Timorese society, namely that the village chief has not been doing the awareness raising that they have been claiming to do, and as such, some of the work we have done may have not been well communicated to all members of the community. This is really important to know for our other areas of work and as such we have increased the communication and awareness raising within the communities. It also offers a good incentive to the communities to focus on, and continue with, marketing the homestays beyond the clients that BV has so far brought them.

Several LMMAs were established during the first year of the project by local communities, with the support of Conservation International and no involvement from Blue Ventures or use of Darwin funds. Although this project was not instrumental in setting up the LMMAs it has been instrumental in supporting these communities in the ongoing management and monitoring of the LMMAs, which is why they were included. The project formally engaged with three of the new LMMAs between 2017 and 2018, signing access agreements for monitoring and ecotourism purposes. Feedback from local authorities clearly suggests that as a result of our continued financial and technical support, Blue Ventures is seen as a valued and trusted partner, which will promote further engagement in conservation initiatives.

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

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

We are currently trying to register as an NGO in Indonesia for our ICF DEFRA funded programmes. We therefore kindly ask that any material relating to the Raja Ampat exchange (including the paragraph in this report) is not made publicly available as this could threaten our position within Indonesia.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. Additionally, if you were funded under R23 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**