



**Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects  
Half Year Report  
(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020)**

<b>Project reference</b>	24-028
<b>Project title</b>	Future-proofing Cambodian Wildlife-Friendly farming: securing conservation and livelihoods.
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Cambodia
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Sansom Mlup Prey Organization
<b>Partner(s)</b>	CIRAD
<b>Project leader</b>	Nicholas Spencer
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HRY3)</b>	April – September 2020 – HRY7
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	SMP : <a href="https://www.facebook.com/sansommlupprey/">https://www.facebook.com/sansommlupprey/</a> <a href="https://sansommlupprey.wixsite.com/smpcambodia">https://sansommlupprey.wixsite.com/smpcambodia</a>  IBIS Rice : <a href="http://ibisrice.com/">http://ibisrice.com/</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/IbisRice/">https://www.facebook.com/IbisRice/</a>

**1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).**

## **Output 1**

Between the 28th and the 31st of May, the SMP Compliance Manager conducted a training on organic inspection for all SMP Project teams. The objectives were to train the new team members, as well as train the old members in using the Kobbo toolbox (new data collection software) and especially the Project Coordinators in entering and cleaning the data after the collection. The training was conducted at SMP's office in Prey Lang and involved 21 people, including 8 persons who joined the training online.

Afterwards, from June 18th to 20th, a training was organized for VMN Committee members and IBIS members who were interested to become ICS inspectors in the provincial office of Preah Vihear. It was the opportunity to train them on: how to prepare and sign farmer contracts and sale agreements, and how to support the farmers in completion of the farmers diaries. Finally, the good inspector skills have been also reviewed. 25 VMN Committees members (including 6 women) were present during the training from Tmatboey, Prey Veng, Kompenh, Narang, Dang Phlet, Bra, Sambeur, Krala Peas, Okak villages.

To strengthen the capacities of the trainees, a first refresher training session was organized from June 23th to 25<sup>th</sup> as well as a second one from July 9th to 11<sup>th</sup>, with the participants to review, individually or by small groups, the lessons, processes and tools, and to evaluate their understanding and capability of conducting ICS by themselves.

To summarize, the teams identified that among the trainees, 15 VMN inspectors were able to proceed to a shadow ICS inspection (i.e. follow an experienced inspector as an observer and practice). Only 10 VMN inspectors were estimated to proceed to witness inspection, meaning they will continue to gain experience alongside an experienced inspector and gradually take over more of the inspection process.

In June and July, 517 Farmer diary books were distributed to 517 IBIS members. During the conduction of ICS, SMP teams went to support the IBIS farmers in completing the information, before collecting the Farmer diaries and analysing the data. This year, VMN inspectors were also encouraged to participate to ICS, supported by SMP teams to gain more experience and understanding (7 VMN inspectors participated in 15 inspections, as witness inspectors).

Refresher trainings on Farmer diary were conducted just before the start of the organic external audit, from 21st to 29th September. The training aimed to remind and clarify the objectives, benefits and compliance rules of the IBIS Rice project, clarify about the organic standards requirements and support them on how to fill the document by themselves at each stage of the process and following the calendar. Especially, SMP teams supported them in filling missing information (like remove the weeds at this time of year), important before the external audit. These meetings, held in each of the 11 villages, gathered 432 people (including 315 women).

## **Output 2**

In May, when SMP teams were able to go back to the field after COVID-19 lockdown, they started to distribute the seeds to IBIS farmers. In total, 28,199 kg of seeds (Phka Rumdoul, HNN and Sbai Mongkol) were distributed in the 11 target villages in Preah Vihear.

In July, SMP teams started to establish demonstration sites in order to present the techniques and results of land levelling and seed production techniques. Land levelling technique enables the field surface to be even, which improves the efficiency of water, labour and energy resources utilization. From 22nd to 25th July, SMP teams provided training on land levelling techniques and

benefits, as well as a reminder on seed production, which process should be enhanced by the levelling of lands. Finally, 4 demonstration fields were established in Prey Veng and Thmat Boeuy villages, totalling 7 hectares now under demonstration.

In mid-August, teams went visiting the fields under demonstration to monitor the rice seedlings growth and advise farmers on problems. This year, 19 seed producers have been identified and distributed seeds for production in Preah Vihear: 6 for Phka Rumdoul foundation seeds, 11 for Phka Rumdoul certified seeds and 2 for Sticky rice seeds, in Dang Phlet, Thmat Boeuy and Prey Veng villages.

The estimation is that they will be able to produce 1,323 kg of rice seeds, which will be distributed among other IBIS members.

During this reporting period, Pest & Nutrient management trainings were also conducted between July and September in all the target villages.

The objectives were to provide explanations on the basic needs of the plants (solar radiation, nutrients, water) and improve the understanding of IBIS members of how to better manage major nutrients (nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K)), availability in their fields and final absorption by the plants, without using chemical inputs. Pest management training aimed to train IBIS members on methods for pest and disease management, as well as insects and predators control methods, without using chemical inputs but rather by managing profitable pests in the rice fields and reducing harmful ones.

Training on Pest management was organized in Preah Vihear from July 13th to 29th, and training on Nutrient management from September 21st to 29th. In total, they gathered 430 participants, including 316 women.

### **Output 3**

Throughout the rainy season (May - October) community wildlife rangers conducted awareness raising and biodiversity SMART (spatial monitoring and reporting tool) patrols in important breeding habitat areas for globally threatened waterbirds in the Northern Plains landscape. Between May and October 2020, 17 Giant Ibis nests (12 fledglings), 13 Sarus Crane nests (10 fledglings), 68 Lesser Adjutant stork nests (64 fledglings), 11 Woolly-necked Stork nests (10 fledglings) were located, monitored and protected by 48 local community nest protectors within both Kulen Promtep and Chepp Wildlife Sanctuaries.

During this reporting period, due to COVID-19 the SMART team in charge of monitoring planned and/or unplanned land clearance activities, could not collect information on the field. The SPOT satellite imagery used to monitor and generate the land clearance points and present them to village meetings and field verification have been collected but analysis of results are still ongoing and will be submitted in the next period report.

### **Output 4**

This year, recruitment of farmers was delayed because of COVID-19 and late receipt of funds to start the land verification from GPL. However, after May 8th, SMP team continued the promotion of IBIS project and recruitment of farmers, process that had been started beginning of the year. Overall, there were 600 farmers who registered in participating to IBIS Rice project in 2020, among them, 130 were new farmers.

Then, SMP teams could start the process of ICS (Internal Compliance System), which was implemented all along July to September 2020. From July 17th to 21st, SMP team joined the Compliance meeting organized by WCS team (Compliance stage 1) in each of the 11 villages in Preah Vihear: 201 offences related to Wildlife-friendly non-compliance, were identified (169 perpetrated by non-IBIS members and 32 by IBIS members).

Then, land verification could start in each village, especially for new members and non-compliant households that lacked land information, by collecting the UTM data of each field. Meanwhile, SMP teams collected the Farmer diaries of IBIS members and analysed the data in comparison of IBIS 12 organic rules.

Finally, in total 2,684.30 hectares have been mapped in the two locations (1,804.73 ha in Preah Vihear 879.57 ha in ST-Prey Lang). After land verification and compliance inspection, 48 new members in Preah Vihear were found not compliant, in majority because of land clearance and because their lands were not registered in the PLUP system. Therefore, 82 new members signed a sale agreement with IRCC this year.

After ICS inspection and wildlife-friendly inspection, 444 IBIS were able to continue the process and participate to the external audit for organic certification, which was conducted from 12th to 18th October. At the time of this report, 442 IBIS members were enabled to sell paddy this year to IRCC (315 as Organic, 126 as Ibis 1, 1 as Ibis 2), but the final buying list will be complete after the last Compliance stage 2 (reviewing the non wildlife-friendly cases).

## **Output 5**

In mid-February 2020, SMP recruited a Development and Communications coordinator, who developed a communication strategy for SMP, and increased the communication on the organisation's activities and impacts.

From the beginning of April until the end of September, SMP published 16 posts related to the Ibis Rice project in Preah Vihear province. Overall, SMP Facebook account has now 592 followers. Links to our partner IRCC's Facebook page are also made on a regular basis, in order to promote Ibis Rice project in general, as this post related to a video presenting the project on 24th April (<https://www.facebook.com/sansommlupprey/videos/514390482573726/>).

SMP also highlighted the visit on June 09th of the British Ambassador to the IBIS Rice project site in Tmatbauy Village in KPWS, supported by the Darwin Initiative (<https://www.facebook.com/sansommlupprey/posts/1058955941214871>) and shared the British Embassy in Cambodia Facebook's post (<https://www.facebook.com/sansommlupprey/posts/1061311550979310>). The SMP's post reached 1,610 people and received 112 reactions, comments and shares. Finally, an article was published by the Thomson Reuters Foundation on August 28th about IBIS Rice project's activities and outcomes to local communities (<https://news.trust.org/item/20200828143508-vv76f/>).

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

- Short dry season in July
- Late receipt of funds from a donor which delayed the starting of land verification (and therefore recruitment of farmers and ICS)
- Non-compliance : a lot of cases continue to use chemicals. IBIS farmers need more trainings on organic standards, especially to understand that any use of chemical inputs is prohibited (existence of development project in the targeted areas which are influencing IBIS farmers in non-compliance).
- Difficulty for farmers to complete the Farmer diaries by themselves due to illiteracy/innumeracy issues.
- Difficulty to access the villages and rice fields in Rainy season.

**2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

During this reporting period, field activities were impacted by the COVID-19 health crisis. To prevent the spread of the virus, SMP stopped all of its field activities from March 15th to May 8th, with teams working from home and following-up with IBIS members, VMN Committees and local authorities by phone.

Due to the low number of reported cases in Cambodia, SMP decided to resume its work in Preah Vihear province, and focused efforts on implementing and following-up on activities that couldn't be done during the previous months. The field teams continued to observe requirements of social distancing during meetings/trainings which continued to limit the implementation of all activities.

Globally, COVID-19 impacted the activities related to recruitment of farmers and land verification, which have to be done at the beginning of the year and continues until September. These activities are part of a long process and essential for the certification as wildlife-friendly and organic, as well as the implementation of the IBIS scheme in general. Moreover, the rice seeds were distributed late and the harvest reflection meetings with VMN and IBIS members were organized late compared to the next plantation cycle.

Finally, the partnership with CIRAD was paused because of COVID-19. As the pre-season was missed, SMP team therefore decided to follow-up on activities previously implemented by CIRAD. In this regard, SMP will continue to conduct itself activities related to soil conservation techniques and crop diversification, as well as scale-up the cultivation of HNN sticky rice variety, previously identified by CIRAD as a drought-resilient rice variety that will bring additional options to farmers.

**2c. 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
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Formal change request submitted:	Yes/No
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Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes/No
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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?**

<p><b>Yes / No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £</p>
<p><b>3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.</b> Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.</p> <p><b>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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.</b></p>
<p><b>4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</b></p>
<p>SMP would like to raise two points related to budget use for the next 2 quarters :</p> <p>1 – As mentioned above on the part 2b. related to impacts of COVID-19, SMP was not able to sign another contract with the CIRAD, as all activities in the field were paused between March and May 20 (pre-planting season). Therefore, SMP would like to request the possibility to use the budgeted amount to continue by itself the implementation of activities previously undertaken by CIRAD, as trials have already been conducted and SMP possesses itself the knowledge and capacities to implement activities related to soil conservation techniques, crop diversification, and scale-up of HNN sticky rice variety.</p> <p>2 – Regarding the budget line Other Costs, the approved budget was originally comprising for this year the SPOT satellite imagery fees. However, these costs have been covered this year by another grant, then SMP would like to request Darwin to use this amount to purchase direct rice seeding machines, which will support the implementation of the agronomy activities.</p> <p>We will send the similar request to LTS International when submitting this Quarterly financial report.</p>

**If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.**

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

Please send your **completed report by email** to [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk). The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**