



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

Project reference	25-010
Project title	A sustainable landscape for Critically Endangered primates and marginalised communities
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Vietnam
Lead organisation	Fauna & Flora International
Partner(s)	GreenViet
Project leader	Josh Kempinski
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	31 October 2019 HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	N/A

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).

Activity 1.1 Preliminary consultations and FPIC with effected / bufferzone villages regarding a new PA in Kon Plong

In 2018, the project conducted the first round (initial step) of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process in combination with Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour (KAB) (Activity 1.10) and social economic survey at 14 villages in and around the proposed protected area. Project planned to conduct second round of FPIC and consultation meetings at villages regarding new protected area (PA) during project year 2 along with feasibility study finalisation. Therefore, from 20th to 26th August 2019, before conducting second round of FPIC process, project invited an FPIC expert to conduct training for four project staff and four local volunteers from wildlife trade prevention volunteer network. The training focused on FPIC process and village meeting facilitation skills. With support of expert, the project team conducted field practice at Kon Du village, one of the 10 target villages.

In August-September 2019, project team continued to conduct FPIC meetings at remaining 9 target villages to translate the significant messages of protecting primates, wildlife, and forest habitat. The project also consulted with local villagers on the proposed boundaries for new protected area and local use/dependency on forest resources, by conducting participatory resource use mapping. It was clear that local participation in the new protected area planning is very important to avoid conflicts between conservation and forest resource use demands. Within the FPIC process, group meetings mapped forest resources use, meeting groups of males and females separately to explore issues that may occur and potential benefits; what local villagers can do; and what will not be allowed once a new protected area established. As result, 100% local villagers supported and agreed with the process of developing a new protected area.

Activity 1.2 Develop a feasibility study for the new PA

During last 6 months, one of the the project's main focuses has been on the completing the comprehensive feasibility study, for establishing Kon Plong as a Protected Area, especially gathering biodiversity baseline data as much. For nearly 20 years, there has been no updated data on overall biodiversity of Kon Plong forest since WWF's initial survey in 2001.

The project continues to conduct consultation meetings and workshops at village, commune, district and provincial levels on land use planning, protected area boundary and zoning for the development of feasibility study during project year 2. During this reporting period, project focused primarily on gathering the biodiversity data, plus the social surveys, KAB & FPIC (community consultations and securing consent for project development towards the new PA) – See Act. 1.1.

A compressive course-grid camera trap study was discussed and developed from the beginning of the year under a collaboration between Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), FFI and GreenViet. Moreover, Southern Institute of Ecology (SIE) is also involved in the partnership to support biodiversity data collection, accelerating progress of establishing new PA.

In April and May, a survey team from FFI and GreenViet was sent to Kon Plong for setting 65 camera trap stations (with 1 or 2 units placed at each) as well as conducting gibbon occupancy survey. The total of 129 camera traps were set in the north area of Kon Plong forest and retrieved in August after more than two months of recording. By the end of September, those camera traps have been moved to the south area for 'stage II' to get comprehensive scientific data for all forest areas within Kon Plong District. This has been considerable piece of work, beyond what was originally considered or budgeted for, and would not have been possible without support from IZW (who provide the Panthera camera traps to FFI for free, under MoU), human resource support from GreenViet, and financial from the Darwin project and other funders.

The data from the camera traps is still being processed and analyzed (and the stage II data, both from the cameras and the additional gibbon survey, will not be available until December). However, there has already been very significant results. As yet unpublished information, the camera traps recorded Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*) (CR), which is of huge importance in Vietnam where records are extremely rare; Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) (VU); Asian small-clawed otter (*Amblyonyx cinerea*) (VU); Owston's palm civet (*Chrotogale owstoni*) (EN) in possibly the highest numbers anywhere in its range, with the civet recorded at 40% of camera trap stations, so far; crested argus (*Rheinardia ocellata*) (EN); and other rare species in Kon Plong forest. Once all the data has been collected and analysed, FFI will combine the results from north and south area, gibbon and grey-shanked douc surveys, and other biodiversity data, before producing a full activity report, and the feasibility study itself.

The gibbon data collected to date, albeit from a rapid survey (and only half-complete), suggests an approximate, total population of *Nomascus Annamensis* of 40-55 gibbon groups, and thus population estimate of around 140 – 200 individuals (and potentially more).

In addition to camera trapping/mammals surveys, FFI also conducted a rapid study on rare and threatened plant species in June 2019. In partnership with Southern Institute of Ecology (SIE) of Vietnam, project supported SIE to conduct rapid biodiversity assessment in Kon Plong in July 2019. The results from this assessment will contribute to the biodiversity report as a crucial part of feasibility study. Project will continue to complete the biodiversity surveys, land use planning and boundary zoning during the second half of project year 2.

Activity 1.11 Develop school-based awareness raising, sub-national workshops and study tours, and content for FFI's website and social media

The project organised village events, developed community posters and used facebook posts to raise awareness. In July 2019, project staff with support from district Forest Protection Department (FPD), Kon Plong Forestry Company, Thach Nham watershed Protection Forest Management Board and the local Wildlife Protection Volunteer Network (Act. 1.17) conducted an awareness raising programme in 10 key villages. The message used to communicate focused on the conservation of grey-shanked douc langur and gibbons. A total of 325 local villagers engaged in this activity, including 154 males and 171 females. In addition, 38 volunteers local Wildlife Protection Volunteer Network supported this programme. The project used slide shows, posters and open questions to facilitate & interact with participants. As a result, local people understood the importance of conserving the douc langur, which they refer to affectionately as "Hoa" and 100% agreed that it is necessary to protect this species. Through this activity, project staff also trained volunteers on how to facilitate awareness raising meetings at local villages.

Activity 1.17: Establish local, volunteer wildlife trade monitoring network and undertake annual (at least) market assessments

In March 2019, the project established 9 volunteer groups/clubs to monitor local wildlife trade and crimes, which involved the following people: Local commune officers, secondary school teachers and students from five communes in the the project district (Kon Plong). The project provided trainings on wildlife trade monitoring skills, whilst ensuring that monitoring remains overt (not covert) and places the participants at no personal risk. At this stage, the project regards the volunteer groups as only collecting openly available data from markets etc., as opposed to being an informant network of any kind or undertaking covert intelligence gathering.

From 15th to 25th May 2019, the project conducted 10 local meetings with the volunteer groups/clubs to help them develop their skills, work-plan and regulations. All groups/clubs have completed their working mechanism/regulations and plans for the latter 6 months of 2019 - which focuses on raising awareness for local people and gathering any market data. It was very impressive that many local people saw themselves as able (and willing) to contribute to conservation through engagement in the network. There were 185 members in March and by end of September 22 more members joined this network; there are now 207 members.

Activity 2.1 & 2.2 Policy review and Policy development process

The project delayed these activities and planned to hire an expert to review all sub-national development plans and goals, related to law/policy at national and local levels, pertaining to land use, tenure, community-based forest management, collaborative management, protected areas and primate conservation. Project already developed a ToR for this and will soon hire an expert.

Activity 3.4 A review of existing farming systems – SWOT and gap analysis

Project staff consulted with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Kon Plong district and Mang Canh People's Committee to collect information about farming system in these area. In August from 23rd to 25th 2019, project team conducted survey on farming systems and interviewed 32 households in Kon Du village. In this village, local farmers mostly plant wet rice with one crop per year, with very basic cultivation techniques, a lack of fertilizer, and with seeds bought from other farmers. Farmers also plant cassava, mainly, coffee, and medicinal plants. However, planting cassava results in low yield due to lack of taking proper care and poor soil quality. Coffee trees and medicinal plants also lack fertilizer and water (irrigation). In conclusion, it is necessary to support techniques for farming system in Kon Du, and other villages. The project will hire an expert on agriculture development and market system development to review existing farming systems in the nine remaining target villages, during the next quarter.

Activity 3.8: An eco-stove design and procurement programme to reduce local fuel wood requirements

Project staff conducted a rapid assessment on the use of firewood of local community and the practicality of using eco-stove in Kon Plong in July 2019. There were 6 selected villages representing 6 communes in the project site, in this survey. Direct observation on the current stoves that local people are using by visiting local houses accompanied interview with village leaders. More research is required, but feedback from participants showed that current eco-stove designs (developed for colder climates in northern Vietnam) will be unsuitable here.

Other trainings for staff

In May 2019, the project sent one staff for training on camera trap data management to learn how the data will be analysed, using camertrap-R. Also in May, two project staff participated in a five day training on SMART software which led by an expert from Global Wildlife Conservation. This tool will be soon applied in Kon Plong once the community patrol team is established. Those short trainings built capacity for project staff, in preparation for future activities in this project.

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.

Illegal logging is an extremely complicated issue in the proposed project area. Local communities use timber for making traditional houses, as they have done for many years. This type of logging is considered an illegal activity under the current law on forest management. It raises the conflict among local people with forest owners and it is very sensitive for law enforcement agencies to handle those cases. To avoid that situation, the proposed protected area boundaries will be carefully adjusted with fully engagement of local people in the protected area planning process.

Currently, forest owners focus on basic forest management and stock taking, and do not integrate wildlife protection/snare removal into their annual workplans. Therefore wildlife animals are under high threat from trapping and snaring. During biodiversity surveys extremely high rates of snaring were recorded with many animals found dead in snares and hunter camps encountered often.

Travel conditions in this poor, remote area are difficult with many long, unpaved roads to different communes, sometimes unpassable in the rainy season. With a limited budget for travel, project staff have to use a motorbike to travel regularly from village to village, which can take the whole day, sometimes in the rain. Project staff have fallen off their motorbike(s) several times during last 6 months, although no serious injuries are reported.

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?

No

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**