

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

Project reference	26-008
Project title	Market-led Approach to Sustainable Management of Agrobiodiversity for Livelihood Outcomes
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Nepal
Lead organisation	Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)
Partner(s)	Annapurna Rural Municipality, Lekhnath Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Machhapuchhre Development Organization (MDO) Kaski, Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperative, Panchadham Agriculture Development Cooperative, Phewa Watershed Ecosystem Management Board, Pokhara Metropolitan City, Ramsar Management Authority, Rupa Rural Municipality, The Bazaar
Project leader	Ram Bahadur Rana, PhD <i>Principal Investigator</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	Half Year Report 1 (HYR 1)
Project website/blog/social media etc.	www.libird.org

1. Progress over the last 4 months (June – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project

The project started in June 2019 and all project staff are fully onboard and field site offices are established. Staff orientation completed to develop common understanding amongst staff on project concept, logical framework, indicators, targets, and major activities. Visits to local government offices, namely Pokhara Metropolitan City, Annapurna Rural Municipality and Rupa Rural Municipality, covering project sites was organized in order to share project initiatives, and to discuss their roles and involvement in project implementation and later in mainstreaming the Unified Landscape Branding (ULB) mechanism for biodiversity conservation for livelihood outcomes. Similarly, the project implementation approval letter from respective local governments was obtained as per the rule of Nepal Government to start the project formally. The project team conducted field visits to nine lakes of Lake Cluster of Pokhara Valley (LCPV) and interacted with management committees, partner organizations, and R&D organizations active in the region. Progress made over the past four months (June–September 2019) against the agreed baseline timetable under respective output headings for the project is presented below.

0.1 Baseline Assessment: Baseline assessment started with basic information collection of project's target beneficiary, i.e. agricultural cooperatives and farmer groups active in the watershed of LCPV (Pokhara Metropolitan City, Annapurna RMC and Rupa RMC). As per the information collected, there are 47 organizations active in LCPV watershed area, out of which 16 are cooperatives (agriculture and fishery cooperatives legally registered at Cooperative Division Office), 4 homestay groups and rest (27) are farmers group registered at local government authority (Rural Municipality). The total number of households involved in these organizations is 4008 as per the record. The next step in baseline assessment is detailed household level and group level data collection. The project team has developed detail methodological framework: 1) Capacity/Need Assessment of Cooperatives and Farmers Groups, 2) Market Study of Target

Commodities, and 3) Commodity-wise Household Survey. The field implementation and reporting of above three baseline studies is planned in Q3.

5.1 Inception Meeting in Project Site: A project launching workshop¹ was successfully organized on 19 July 2019 in Pokhara. The programme was chaired by LI-BIRD Executive Board Chairperson Mr. Krishna Prasad Baral, with the Honourable Minister Lekh Bahadur Thapa Magar from the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperative (MoLMAC) of the Gandaki Province as chief guest. A total of 67 persons (12 women, 55 men) from different sectors: public, private, educational institution, research organization, civil society organization, and agricultural cooperative attended the workshop. The market-led approach to biodiversity conservation, i.e. Unified Landscape Branding (ULB), and multistakeholder engagement (public, private, cooperative and civil society organizations) model of the project was highly appreciated by the forum. On the same day, the first project partners meeting was held.

Output 1: Increased income and employment opportunities to smallholder farmers through the production and sale of agricultural biodiversity-based products at local and regional markets

1.2 Organize Farmer's Field Schools (FFSs): FFS modality has been proposed to promote good agricultural practices (GAP) and building farmer's capacity. From the long list of commodities, the project team have identified six commodities for FFS, such as fish, local rice, foxtail millet, bee keeping, coffee, and fresh vegetables. As of the reporting period, certain progress has been made in terms of background setting. In case of fishery development, Fishery Research Station (FRS), Begnas and Rupa Fishery Cooperative (model fishery in LCPV) have agreed to develop and promote good agricultural practices on aquaculture (GAP). A preliminary field survey and interaction with respective lake management committees was conducted by the project team and experts on 15-20 September 2019. An experiment on date of sowing (August planting; normal planting is March) of foxtail millet has been set up in three locations to determine the suitability of the crop for multi-season planting to increase volume of production.

A value chain analysis (VCA) study was conducted in five cooperatives/groups from 30 July to 3 August 2019. A detailed household level production plan was developed for targeted crops. Similar production plans for other cooperatives/groups will be developed in Q3.

1.3 Produce and distribute quality seeds and planting materials: Project distributed 10 different types of 19,142 fruit saplings to 260 households from agriculture cooperatives and farmers groups of Pokhara Metropolitan City (PMC) in June 2019. The programme was led by PMC where project co-financed NPR which is 20% of total cost, with farmers and PMC bearing 50% and 30% costs respectively. The project distributed seasonal vegetables to 245 households in the project area (detail disaggregated datasheet maintained).

1.5 Establish and operationalize ULB mechanism: The concept of marketing local produce through Unified Landscape Branding (ULB) approach was shared in project inception meeting (19 July 2019). The project builds upon the previous work done in Begnas Tal-Rupa Tal (Swiss Resource Award project) area, where a landscape branding logo was developed and being used by one of the partners in the project. The project team proposes to utilize the same logo with appropriate modification after approval from the project steering committee (PSC).

Output 2: Increased consumers awareness and knowledge about the value of local biodiversity based food products

The project is engaging 4 (3 women, 1 man) students from local agriculture technical school (Ananda Jyoti High school) under on-the-job training (OJT) programme as one of the approaches to increase awareness on the value of local diversity and conservation. They are engaged in project level day to day activities, including baseline survey, school programmes, farmers training and workshops.

¹ Project launching workshop and project brochure (http://www.libird.org/app/news/view.aspx?record_id=83) and (http://www.libird.org/app/publication/view.aspx?record_id=340&origin=results&QS=QS&sortfld_221=Date&revresearch=true&top_parent=221)

Output 3: Local stewardship and capacity for the conservation and management of biodiversity and lake ecosystem enhanced

One-day orientation programme on Ramsar Convention was organized on 20 July 2019 with the objective of raising awareness of lake management committee members and people from upstream area on Ramsar Convention, its legal status and where Nepal stands in terms of wetland conservation. 22 persons (4 women, 18 men) participated in the programme. The project has a target that these lakes will have designated habitats for wetland biodiversity conservation by habitat delineation for migratory birds and wild rice species.

For effective stewardship of wetland biodiversity, the project is working on formulation of high powered 'Project Steering Committee' (PSC) responsible for strategic oversight and policy influencing. Since the project is aspiring for integration of 'Unified Landscape Branding' and 'Conservation Fund' as sustainable mechanisms for wetland biodiversity management into government's programmes and policy, the project team has prepared PSC terms of reference (ToR²) with policy mandate.

Output 4: Policy framework developed for scaling up market-led approaches for agrobiodiversity management for improved livelihood outcomes

4.4 Liaise with Ramsar Focal Unit: The Ramsar Focal Unit for LCPV area is not formally in place due to lack of clear mechanism for its formulation. Hence, the project team's one of the major agendas in PSC meeting will be to discuss how the project can facilitate development of working mechanism for Ramsar focal unit, and how the project can work intimately with them.

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.

No unexpected development to report, however, the point mentioned in 4.4 above has exerted additional task for project team on coordination and establishment of the Ramsar Focal Unit.

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.

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

No issues to be raised.

² Note: Detail ToR is prepared and can be share on request.
Half Year Report 2019