

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	EIDPO028 (originally 14-037)
<b>Project Title</b>	Phase II - Building University Capacity to Train and Support Cambodian Conservationists
<b>Country</b>	Cambodia
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Fauna & Flora International
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), Ministry of Environment (MoE) and Harrison Institute (UK)
<b>Project Leader</b>	Dr. Neil M. Furey
<b>Report date</b>	28 October 2010
<b>Report No.</b>	HYR 2
<b>Project website</b>	under construction

## 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

**Planned Project Implementation Timetable:** Financial Year Apr 2010-Mar 2011. Key Milestones (Q1 & Q2): Develop Centre for Biodiversity Conservation regulations and management committee; Recruit Director and develop Centre for Biodiversity Conservation operational plan and budget; Deliver the MSc in Biodiversity Conservation curriculum; Identify and coach Cambodian lecturers to replace international lecturers; Enable final year MSc student research theses; Darwin Research Scholars conduct original research in collaboration with other organisations; Organise expeditions to collect additional specimens of plants and lower animals; Issue call for papers and undertake rigorous peer-review of manuscripts submitted to the *Cambodian Journal of Natural History*.

### **Actual Project Implementation Timetable:**

**April:** Students belonging to the 5<sup>th</sup> MSc cohort completed courses in “*Integrated Natural Resources Management*” and “*Environmental Impact Assessment*”. In line with the aim of coaching Cambodian lecturers to replace international lecturers, the first course was delivered by Dr. Brad Pettitt (Murdoch University, Australia) and Dr. Mak Sithirith (RUPP), and the second by Dr. Ngin Laymithuna (MoE) and Mr. Spoann Vin (RUPP). Assistance was provided to students from the 4<sup>th</sup> MSc cohort to gather data for their research theses in collaboration with other organisations. Three guest lectures were hosted by the project at the RUPP. The first in a two-part study of freshwater zooplankton in the Mekong River (north-east Cambodia) was initiated by Darwin Research Scholars, with assistance from Dr. Ken Wong (RUPP).

**May:** Students from the 5<sup>th</sup> MSc cohort completed courses in “*Environmental Law*” and “*Biodiversity Management*” which were delivered by Dr. Jorg Menzel (freelance legal consultant) and Dr. Neil Furey (FFI). Two guest lectures were hosted by the project at the RUPP. A conservation assessment of the Song Saa Islands (south Cambodia) was led by Dr. Furey with assistance from Fauna & Flora International. A grant application submitted to the Rufford Foundation (UK) by a Darwin Research Scholar proved successful (see [http://www.ruffordsmallgrants.org/rsg/projects/thy\\_neang](http://www.ruffordsmallgrants.org/rsg/projects/thy_neang)). Peer review processes were completed for all eligible manuscripts submitted to the *Cambodian Journal of Natural History*, including several papers by Darwin Research Scholars and alumni from the MSc programme.

**June:** Ongoing consultations to establish the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation were undertaken with senior RUPP representatives. Students belonging to the 5<sup>th</sup> MSc cohort

undertook final exams on 1<sup>st</sup> semester subjects (“*Research Analysis – A process of inquiry*” and “*Integrated Natural Resources Management*”), after which the summer break began. Students from the 4<sup>th</sup> MSc cohort completed data collection for their research theses and began analysis and writing. Darwin Research Scholars completed two manuscripts and submitted these for peer review publication. Development of curation and administrative procedures employed at the two natural history collections in the RUPP continued. Design of layouts and final corrections to proofs for the *Cambodian Journal of Natural History* was completed.

**July:** First semester grades for the 5<sup>th</sup> MSc student cohort were finalised. Preparations were made for an advertising campaign to recruit candidates for the 6<sup>th</sup> MSc student intake. Training of Darwin Research Scholars continued with two attending courses in Lao PDR and Thailand. Scholars also undertook the second survey in a larger study which aims to evaluate seasonal and altitudinal variations in amphibian and reptile occurrence at Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary (south-west Cambodia). Publication and distribution of the 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 issue of the *Cambodian Journal of Natural History* was completed, as was posting of journal online (all issues of the journal can be downloaded free from <http://www.fauna-flora.org/reports.php>). A call for manuscripts for the forthcoming issue was simultaneously released.

**August:** Consultations to establish the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation continued, leading to key agreements on its institutional basis and operational structure, and future recurrent funding from the university. Activities to recruit candidates for the 6<sup>th</sup> MSc cohort also continued, including advertisements in newspapers, broadcasts on radio stations and placement of posters at institutions around the country. Students from the 3<sup>rd</sup> MSc cohort and four BSc students successfully defended their thesis projects. Tuition scholarships for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester were awarded to the two highest-scoring students in the 5<sup>th</sup> MSc cohort (on the basis of their 1<sup>st</sup> semester grades). One 2<sup>nd</sup> year MSc student attended a conference in Japan with external support. Darwin Research Scholars undertook the second survey in a two-part study of bats, amphibians and reptiles at the Veun Sai Protected Forest (north-east Cambodia).

**September:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> semester for the 5<sup>th</sup> MSc cohort began with a course on “*Species Conservation*” which was delivered by Dr. Neil Furey (FFI) and attended by MoE staff. Activities to recruit students for the 6<sup>th</sup> MSc cohort concluded at the end of the month (with 36 applications received at the time of writing). Two guest lectures were hosted by the project at the RUPP. Darwin Research Scholars undertook a herpetological survey at Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary, in addition to biannual monitoring of large mammal transects at the site. An additional Darwin Research Scholar was recruited to the project research team. Peer review processes were initiated for eligible manuscripts submitted to the *Cambodian Journal of Natural History*, including papers by Darwin Research Scholars and alumni from the MSc programme.

Note: All project outputs, including workshops, MSc advertisements, course information packs, and media releases have acknowledged the support of the Darwin Initiative and/or featured the Darwin logo. Copies are available on request.

**2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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 notable problems or unexpected developments occurred during the reporting period.

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

Not applicable.

**Discussed with LTS:**                      no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

**Formal change request submitted:**    no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

Received confirmation of change acceptance      no/yes in.....(month/yr)

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

No.

**If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.**

**Estimated carryforward request: £**

**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.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International directly.**

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk) . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**