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PALAS CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

2nd Quarterly Progress Report
April –June, 2001



European Union



Government of Sindh

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APO	Assistant Programme Officer
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ERNP	Environmental Rehabilitation in NWFP and Punjab
EU	European Union
FA	Financing Agreement
HE	His Excellency
HJP	Himalayan Jungle Project
HQ	Headquarter
HYY	High Yielding Varieties
IPDM	Integrated Pest Disease Management
KWU	Kohistan Wildlife Unit
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
NBP	National Bank of Pakistan
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PC-1	Planning Commission 1
PCDP	Palas Conservation and Development Project
PD	Project Director
PMU	Project Management Unit
PO	Programme Officer
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRB	Project Revue Board
PSC	Project Steering Committee
TOP	Terms of Partnership
TOR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UPS	Uninterrupted Power Supply
VCF	Village Conservation Fund
WP	Work Plan
WWF-P	Worldwide Fund for Nature- Pakistan

PALAS CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

2nd QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

(Period: 1 April to 30 June 2001)

Introduction

According to the Financing Agreement (4.2.1, p.8) and the Services Contract (under Reporting, p.16), the Project Management Unit (PMU) reports to the Project Steering Committee (PSC) on a quarterly basis.

This is the second Quarterly Progress Report of the EU-funded "Palas Conservation and Development Project" (PCDP), covering the period from 1st of April to 30th of June 2001.

This report presents a summary of the achievements against the planned activities undertaken by the project during its second quarter of the "Set up phase", which is part of the PCDP's Year 1 implementation period.

Summary of progress during the reporting period

The progress is reported against the activities listed and numbered in Annex 2 of the Six Months Work Plan.

1. To prepare project work plans, budgets and progress reports

1.1 To prepare a 6 month work plan and budget (set-up phase)

The final draft of the six-months (Year 1) Work Plan (January – June 2001) was submitted to the EU- Delegation Office in Islamabad on 11th of April 2001 (for final approval), after its provisional approval by the PSC during its 1st meeting on 23rd of March and the receipt of the approved minutes on 10th of April.

1.2 To develop an Overall Work Plan and budget of the project through consultation and discussion with available project staff

The basis for the Overall Work Plan, the Overall Targets and the Overall Budget (Jan 2001 to Dec 2005) were already outlined during the first mission of Dr. Thomas (BirdLife Int. HQ) in January 2001, but the finalization was only resumed, after the Year 2 WP (Jul 2001 – Jun 2002) was finalized. In the course of preparing the Year 2 WP, a lot of valuable lessons were learned for the final preparation of the overall plan document.

In the course of the preparation, two drafts were informally shared with the EU-Delegation Office for their comments and the feedback incorporated.

Together with the Year 2 Work Plan, the Overall Work Plan, Overall Targets and the Overall Budget were submitted to the 2nd PSC-Meeting for provisional approval (details of the meeting see in 1.3 below).

1.3 To prepare the year 2 Work Plan and Budget (July 2001 – June 2002)

Immediately after the provisional approval of the Year 1 Work Plan by the PSC, the PMU and the Program Officer Biodiversity (designate) started to prepare the Year 2 (July 2001 – June 2002) work plan and budget.

The budget itself, with an estimated expenditure of 574782.- EURO was kept below the provision, because funds were not expected to be available before the end of this reporting period.

The Year 2 Work Plan and budget were submitted together with the Overall Work Plan, Overall Targets and the Overall Budget to the PSC on 24th of May; the 2nd PSC-Meeting could not be convened earlier than the 27th of June.

Both, the Year 2 Work Plan, as well as the Overall Work Plan were provisionally approved by the second PSC, which was held at the office of the Conservator Wildlife NWFP, Dr. Muhammad Mumtaz Malik, in Peshawar under the Chairmanship of Mr. Khalid Sultan, Secretary Forestry, Fisheries and Wildlife, GoNWFP.

The following decisions were taken during the 2nd PSC-Meeting taken from the draft minutes, which were prepared on 29th of June:

Decision 1: As there were no queries, the minutes of the first PSC-meeting were approved.

Decision 2: The Year 2 Work Plan was approved subject to the corrections proposed under A) – L) mentioned below:

- A) All documents should have the pages numbered.
- B) It should be made sure that any seed- and plant-varieties introduced by the project to the Palas Valley, should have certification by the respective Government authority.
- C) AS “Integrated Pest Disease Management” (IPDM) is not seen as the best option for farming improvements, they should be kept at a minimum and measures for “Organic Farming” should be taken into consideration.
- D) It should specifically mentioned in the WP whether the 5 watermills are to be rehabilitated or fully reconstructed.
- E) Given the fact that health-related interventions can be a very good entry-point to an area, it was advised that Health, Nutrition and Sanitation activities should start right from the beginning.
- F) The PMU was advised that the “Objectively Verifiable Indicators” (OVIs) in the respective two Work Plans should be improved upon.
- G) The training Matrix should contain specific training for conservation and wildlife, biodiversity, etc. Mr. Ali Habib assured the PMU of WWF’s assistance in finding the right training modules, as developed trainings are available (e.g. at the Adventure Foundation, Abbottabad).
- H) The PMU was requested to separate the team-building exercise from the general induction of the new staff to the project goal, objectives, activities and approaches.
- I) The title “B) Non Technical Assistance Training” on p. 6 of the Work Plan has to be reformulated, in order to avoid misinterpretation in connection with the “Masters degree” mentioned there.
- J) A fairly long discussion revolved around the issue how the selected person for this Overseas M.Sc can be made stay in the project after he

has availed this costly and long (min. 12 months) formation at a European University. The representative of the EU-Delegation Office opined that the person should stay in the project for at least three years; the Chairman equally expressed the view that the person should guarantee that he stays in the project/with the Dept.. The representative of WWF said that a link with the PCDP should be formulated in the contract with the selected candidate prior to his final approval.

The proposal that the selected candidate should leave for this overseas training, leading to Masters degree after he has been fully briefed about the PCDP objectives and strategy and that he should discuss the project during his stay at the foreign University, found overall consensus.

- K) It was proposed that the sources of funding should be made transparent in Annex 3, so that the funding from the EU, the GoNWFP and the TA from BirdLife International are duly reflected in the Work Plans.
- L) It was also proposed that there should be a column in the budget table, that shows how much money has been used against the respective budget-head.

Decision 3: The Overall Work Plan was approved subject to the integration of the comments made

Decision 4: The PSC-meeting approved the list of candidates and gave the mandate to the PMU for choosing from up to the third candidate of the list for final recruitment.
(List of final candidates attached)

The approved minutes were not available within this reporting period.

1.4 To begin production of 6 month progress report

This activity will start at the beginning of July, as the half-yearly sectoral reports will have to be collected.

2. To establish functioning offices with suitable space, equipment and other resources/services/furnishings

2.1 Establish Project Headquarter (Pattan)

Although the Project Director officially shifted to Pattan, the major work place was still in Abbottabad, since planning was still the major activity.

Since funds were not yet available during this reporting period, no progress against the previous reporting period was possible. Lists with the required office equipment and furnishing were prepared and the quotations can immediately be requested for once funds have arrived.

2.2 Establish Liaison Office (Abbottabad)

The PCDP remains located in the old premises of the HJP. A new contract has been signed with the owner on 14th of April under the PCDP-administration. Due to lack of funds, only minor changes, repairs and maintenance to the office were possible. Only the Landcruiser (KH 5335) got a new insurance so far. The office

as a whole still runs under the same conditions as mentioned in the previous report: no photocopy-machine, one functioning printer, one tel./fax-line (not international).

2.3 Equipment (other than standard office equipment)

Since funds were not yet available during this reporting period, no progress against the previous reporting period was possible.

The respective specifications in the budget were finalized after the approval of the 6-months work plan by the PSC.

Documents to prepare the "Open Local Tender" (according to Table 2, p. 17 of the FA) for the two vehicles were obtained from the ERNP (another EU-funded project) office.

3. To recruit staff with skills, experience and motivation for the position/ToR

TORs for the newly to be recruited personnel were prepared according to the provisions of the PC-1 (p. 37) and the FA (p. 8). Through advertisement in the "Daily Jhang" on 25th of March, candidates for 5 positions as Program Officer and 2 positions as Assistant Program Officer were invited to submit their CVs until 10th of April. The review of more than 500 CVs for the 7 management posts was done by the PMU in a thorough and well documented process (e.g. a 10-pages "Internal Summary Report" about the 21 short-listed candidates was prepared by the CTA after the interviews). Fully according to merit, 53 candidates were invited to the PCDP's Liaison Office in Abbottabad for the first round of interviews, which was then held between 22nd and 28th of May.

According to the provision in the PC-1/FA, the "Selection Committee" was extended for the second/final round interviews to four members: PCDP-PD, PCDP-CTA, Mr. Ghazi Marjan (Chief Conservator of Forests, Territorial and Conservation), as well as Mr. Ali Hassan Habib, DG WWF-Pakistan). The final interviews of 21 candidates were held at the PCDP-Liaison office in Abbottabad on 30th and 31st of May.

For six out of seven posts, the top-scoring candidates were selected; the position of the Program Officer Administration, Finance and Personnel could not be decided, as the final two candidates were found below expectation (the other two and stronger candidates did not appear for the interview). The respective list was prepared and signed by the "Selection Committee" to be submitted for the 2nd PSC-Meeting for approval.

A letter (dated 1.6.01) was sent by the PMU to all finally selected candidates, in which they were informed that their selection still needs the approval of the PSC, before the formal negotiations and the signing of appointment letters would conclude this round of recruitment for senior staff positions. The candidates were requested to submit an updated list with three references, which were received by 6 of the 7 selected candidates between 12th and 26th of June and subsequently contacted by the PMU.

In the meantime, the CVs of all non-selected candidates for the post of Program Officer Administration, Finance and Personnel, as well as new CVs were collected, but the final decision regarding this position was not able to be taken during this reporting period.

Orientation to the new staff will have to be given during the next reporting period.

4. To begin to put in place essential procedures and mechanisms for office, project and staff management

4.1 Internal Procedures

Since no funds were made available during this reporting period and the selected candidates could not be finally recruited, no progress under this section was possible. This was initially planned to be done after all the new staff would be recruited, in order to make them part of this essential management tool.

4.2 External Procedures and Project Launch

TORs for the PSC and PRB were prepared and submitted to the concerned quarters of the GoNWFP.

The process of designing a PCDP project brochure was initiated and the contract for printing it was given to WWF in Lahore. The brochure was though not yet ready by the end of this reporting period.

5. To transfer HJP vehicles, equipment, staff and liabilities to the PCDP

Although physical possession of the vehicles, equipment and other HJP-assets were taken over by the PCDP as per the inventory, the formal transfer of all the assets was still not possible to be finalized, as original documentation could not be made available.

6. PMU to initiate linkages with potential project partners (other projects, NGOs, government agencies, etc.) and to confirm institutional arrangements

The visit of the EU-Ambassador, HE Mr. Kurt Juul and his team, which was initially planned twice for in May, was postponed to a later date, until some visible project implementation would have started.

Since the implementation of the project was still not started in full swing due to fund constraints, networking and making linkages were kept at a low level.

Some linkages were initiated

The PO Biodiversity (designate) participated in a 4-day training organized by the EU on "Economic and Financial Analysis" in Islamabad from 24.-27.4.01.

The PD and the PO Biodiversity (designate) participated in the "3. Frontier Biodiversity Forum", held in Peshawar on 14th of June.

The PMU was also represented in the workshop on "Ehtno-botany Applied to Participatory Forest Management in Pakistan" held in Abbottabad on 7./8.5.01.

Since admission papers had to be filed already for the one overseas long-term MSc. Program, the Wildlife Department of the GoNWFP was approached in the middle of May to nominate an appropriate candidate for this Masters training course at a European University. Several Universities in the UK were contacted and the course on "Biodiversity Conservation" at the University of Leeds selected for the candidate, Mr. Safdar Ali Shah, who is the Divisional Forest Officer, NWFP Wildlife Department. His nomination was discussed during the 2. PSC-Meeting and his nomination approved.

7. To initiate implementation of a field programme that builds on existing activities of the HJP in the Palas valley, and in accordance with the

PCDP Logical Framework Matrix (LFM)

The timing for the review of the HJP activities was changed, since the PMU decided that this event should be taking place once all the staff will have been recruited; this review is seen as the basis of the start of the PCDP and the two weeks allocated will require the inputs from the project staff and also the key activists from the local communities. Moreover, through consultative meetings the future opportunities and possible constraints in launching the PCDP interventions will be made part of the project operational strategy for setting realistic targets.

7.1 To train community facilitators and activists

During the first quarter, three community facilitators and five community activists were sent to the Mingora based research station (Agriculture, Fruits and Vegetable) for a one week training, who, later shared their experience with other farmers of Palas valley during hands on demonstration in the field. The interesting part of their trip to Swat valley was the interaction with small farmers in different villages, who are pioneers in adopting the latest techniques in their agro-based farming system for availing optimum output from their rural land holdings

7.2 To put in place incentives, instruments and mechanisms, which link conservation and development

This initiative is regarded to be important to maintain the excellent understanding and co-operation between the HJP and the communities of the Palas Valley, as development interventions in Kohistan meet with resistance to change by the conservative quarters of the society.

Organizing local communities around economic activities will be taken up in full swing when the project will become fully operational after receipt of the donor's funds Some of the ongoing activities which were carried out in Palas valley during the quarter are as follows:

- Owners of the fruit orchards were provided on spot training on the methods of collecting, storing and packing of fruits for fetching good prices in the fruit market.
- About 100kg of the certified high yield variety of maize seed was procured from the Agriculture Research institute Tarnab/Pir Sabak and distributed free of cost amongst Palasi farmers for seed multiplication and securing enhanced production of maize during coming years.
- On the request from local communities asking for help to provide vaccination coverage to their livestock against the possible outbreak of diseases in the Muro pastures and other summer grazing grounds, the project authorities resounded quickly. They engaged assistance from WWF-P for extending their help for the event which are agreed and the vaccination is now planned for mid July 2001.
- Construction of the bridal path (through blasting) at Paro was completed during the current quarter, which will facilitate easy access of the people and

their cattle through a physically tough, steep and rocky terrain with the summer flooded Musha'ga stream passing through its bottom.

The above mentioned activities can be seen as incentives for local communities which aim at linking conservation with development.

7.3 KWU to extend participatory NRM to other areas of high Biodiversity importance in District Kohistan

Through the active collaboration between the NWFP Wildlife Department, the WWF-P and the participating communities of Kegah Nullah, a participatory NRM project has been initiated for the conservation of Markhor in the area. In order to achieve the objectives of community-based NRM, tripartite terms of partnership were finalized and the CBO has established the village conservation fund to be operated under specific TORs. Under tripartite terms of partnership signed between NWFP Wildlife Department, WWF Pakistan and the local communities of Kaigah nullah (District Kohistan) the parties agreed on cost sharing basis, the construction of about 1200 RFT long water channel for a micro-hydel power generation plant. The water channel was completed during the current quarter.

7.4 To strengthen legal, policy and institutional framework for participatory NRM

Through the Forestry Sector Project, the government of NWFP had already notified the new forest policy for the province, which places significant importance on adopting the participatory NRM approach.

7.5 To introduce and multiply improved and adapted crop varieties

This is an ongoing activity

7.6 To establish and maintain fruit tree orchards and nurseries

This is an ongoing activity

7.7 To improve fodder production and storage

Will be taken up as future activity

7.8 To address issues related to crop losses through framers' training in integrated pest

Will be taken up as future activity

7.9 To construct suspension foot bridges

Will be taken up as future activity

7.10 To ensure sharing of construction costs by the community and put in place systems for joint maintenance

Will be taken up as future activity

7.11 To organise Palas communities in a functional network of CBOs

Will be taken up as future activity

Summary of Financial Activities

Donor funds (the 50000 Euro advance had already arrived on 25th of May, but this was not reported by the ABN-Amro bank to the project till the second transfer was acknowledged on the 28th of June 2001) were finally reported to have arrived in the PCDP's account at the ABN-Amro bank in Islamabad, but could not yet be transferred to the project account at the NBP, Main Branch in Abbottabad during this reporting period.

Accordingly, the project still operated on a minimum expenses basis during the entire Year 1. Among other sources, several loans had to be taken from WWF-P, which was approved by the PSC, in order to be able to pay the staff salaries. BirdLife International also provided an advance to meet office expenditure.

Outlook for the next reporting period (1st of July 2001 to 30th of June 2002)

During the next reporting period, the implementation of the project as planned and documented in the "Year 2 Work Plan" will finally start, as funds have been transferred to the Euro account at the ABN-Amro Bank in Islamabad. Approximately 50% of these funds will have to be transferred to repay the loans taken from different sources during the first six months and to start the activities, which are still possible during this season.

The process of staff recruitment will be finalized with the final selection for the position of Program Officer Administration, Finance and Personnel.

The induction and training of the new staff is planned to be held in different internal workshops (team-building, as well as operational preparation) and through training programs. It will start with the review of the achievements of the HJP, which is seen as the most important basis for the start of the operational activities under the PCDP.