



Darwin Initiative Overseas Territories Challenge Fund Final Report

This report should be completed and submitted within a month of agreed end date of project

Darwin Ref Number	EIDCF006
Darwin Project Title	Strengthening management of the British Indian Ocean Territory marine area
Country (ies)	UK/British Indian Ocean Territories (BIOT)
Award holding Organisation	Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
Partner Organisations	Marine Resources Assessment Group (MRAG)
Grant Value	£24,840
Start/end date	1/7/2010 – 31/10/2010
Author(s), date	Heather Koldewey and Matthew Gollock, 14/12/2010

1. Challenge Fund Background

The focal area for this project is the Chagos archipelago or British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). This project aimed to develop a strategy – through multi-stakeholder engagement – of how best to determine the benefits of the newly declared Chagos/BIOT marine protected area (MPA) for pelagic and migratory species.

On the 1st April 2010, the British government declared “a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the British Indian Ocean Territory [which] will include a “no-take” marine reserve where commercial fishing will be banned”. The MPA covers some quarter of a million square miles and its establishment doubles the global coverage of the world's oceans under protection. The British government recognised that “The territory offers great scope for research in all fields of oceanography, biodiversity and many aspects of climate change, which are core research issues for UK science”.

The consultation period on whether to establish a MPA in BIOT was opened in November 2009 by the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Three options for a possible MPA management framework were presented ranging from a full no take MPA to zoned uses that included fishing. As indicated in the Consultation Report, the majority of respondents to the FCO consultation preferred Option 1 – the creation of a full no-take MPA. As yet, the FCO has not confirmed the final MPA management framework, although no new licences are being issued for the commercial pelagic fishery. During the consultation, a number of important issues and uncertainties arose relating to the potential conservation benefits of pelagic MPAs to highly migratory species (such as species of tuna and elasmobranchs). Addressing these will contribute to protected area and fishery management in the wider Indian Ocean and to understanding the global benefits of large pelagic MPAs.

The Challenge Fund enabled a diverse range of interest groups and stakeholders to discuss and develop the best means of developing a strategic research programme to inform the MPA management framework for BIOT. A multi-disciplinary approach to addressing the knowledge gaps identified during the FCO consultation was required, and the workshop that was supported by the Challenge Fund included attendance from the science and conservation, fishing industry and fisheries management modellers, as well as UK government and Chagossians. The presence of scientists and managers from such a wide range of disciplines was used to develop a strategic research programme to deliver answers to key questions for strengthening management and conservation benefits for the pelagic area and migratory species resulting from the creation of the BIOT MPA.

2. Challenge Fund Activities

The main output of the Challenge Fund award was the workshop relating to the management of the MPA and associated proceedings. Regular meetings of the project team (Heather Koldewey, Matthew Gollock and Catherine Head from ZSL; Chris Mees, Robert Arthur and Tim Davies from MRAG Ltd) were held, both in person and through conference calls, throughout the planning stage and to prepare the workshop report.

The main activities included:

1. Workshop planning and development

In order to ensure the two day workshop was most productive, a period of remote consultation was carried out prior to the meeting. Robert Arthur (MRAG Ltd.) and Matthew Gollock (ZSL) developed a questionnaire – using the established Delphi method – that garnered the opinion of a range of stakeholders in relation to questions and statements that were developed in light of the available information relevant to fisheries, target and non-target species, and open-ocean ecosystem health in BIOT region, and moreover, how this links to the West Indian Ocean region as a whole. This Delphi process ran over two rounds, and had the aim of prioritising what would be discussed at the workshop, and by whom. This remote consultation enabled us to gather feedback from a broader audience than those that ultimately participated in the workshop. This approach also provided an initial prioritisation process for the topics that should be covered at the workshop, ensuring the most efficient use of people's time during the meeting itself.

2. Workshop organisation and logistics

In addition to the remote consultation, there were complex logistics for the workshop itself. This included sending out the invitations, briefing packs, organising travel and accommodation, catering and materials for the workshop and reconciling all expenses from all participants. The majority of this was carried out by Catherine Head (ZSL), with support from the project team where needed.

The list of participants for the workshop itself was developed during the project planning meetings from existing contacts and knowledge of the project team. The briefing pack materials were prepared by the project team, with signoff from Heather Koldewey and Chris Mees. The workshop was attended by 31 participants from seven countries.

3. Workshop implementation

Chris Mees and Heather Koldewey hosted the meeting, with support from Matthew Gollock and Robert Arthur. The workshop was chaired by Professor Jonathan Baillie, ZSL's Conservation Director. The workshop took place over two days and after a plenary session, participants split into four groups, each addressing specific issues relating to the BIOT MPA. These groups were chaired by Matthew Gollock, Tim Davies, Heather Koldewey and Chris Mees. At the end of the first day, and also after lunch on the second day, chairs reported back on the discussion of the sub-groups to all the participants. We then held an open discussion relating to future planning of research, management, and associated funding. This enabled us to consolidate and prioritise many of the actions that had been discussed and get firmer commitments from participants for future engagement. We also discussed potential collaborations and gained general feedback from the workshop, which was positive.

4. Workshop outputs

Overall, the project achieved what was proposed in the application. Each working group chair (Heather Koldewey, Matthew Gollock, Chris Mees, Tim Davies) prepared their report from their session. The project team then wrote allocated sections of the introduction and appendices. The report was circulated to all participants for comment at an early draft and final draft stage.

The Delphi questionnaire process did not achieve as many responses as we had hoped (26 responses from 98 invitees in the first round), but is not an unusually low response rate for any questionnaire-based approach.

During the workshop itself, there were some differences of opinion between delegates – mainly between those from the fisheries sector and conservation scientists – however, this was very much expected and did not escalate beyond the realm of ‘healthy debate’. Where no consensus could be achieved, these divergent opinions were reported accordingly in the workshop proceedings.

After discussion and review, there was no clearly identified peer reviewed paper that could be written as a specific output of the workshop. We had hoped that a paper based on the Delphi process might be possible, but there was no clear consensus on how valuable this process had been hence a paper was not justified. Instead, a series of collaborative projects were identified from which will likely result in publications in the future.

Main achievements

The synthesis of the workshop and opinion-gathering process is provided in the attached workshop report. This brings together the discussions in a concise document and also highlights the background to the workshop, the methodology applied to garner expert opinion both pre- and during the workshop, a draft research agenda for the region, and a directory of annexes that collate supplementary information. This report was prepared in consultation with all participants who contributed to and agreed the final results. A research agenda with short, medium and long-term priorities was developed and these are now being addressed as a result of the collaborations that emerged from the workshop.

Less tangible outputs were no less important. It became clear that this meeting was a first in bringing so many stakeholders in the BIOT region together, and participants generally felt that this was a positive step forward. There were a number of new linkages that were developed that will facilitate the implementation of the research strategy and agreements to share data. A number of participants who lead larger relevant research programmes agreed to integrate BIOT more closely as part of their programmes, mobilising additional knowledge for the region in a regional and international context.

3. Outcome & Impact of Challenge Fund

Following the workshop, Heather Koldewey and Chris Mees held a meeting with the FCO to discuss the outcomes of the workshop and establish their interest in further proposals emerging from the draft research strategy. The FCO representatives had participated in the workshop and felt it had been useful and were supportive of the resultant strategy. It is hoped that more research – particularly that which is most important for improved management of the BIOT MPA - can be implemented. All applications will need to be submitted at a concept stage to the FCO for approval.

The workshop highlighted that the immediate priority in the short-term was to conduct a desk-based study to compile existing information particularly that which is in hard copy or in archived files. We have therefore agreed to postpone submitting a funding application until the results of this desk-based study are completed and evaluated. As well as collating available data, the desk-based work will also involve carrying out some modelling analysis depending on what can be gathered from the initial data-mining. Some of this work is being completed by one of the project team members, Tim Davies, who has now started a related PhD at Imperial College London.

In conjunction with the desk-based research, we are also reviewing approaches to achieve the medium term strategy which would adopt a more field-based approach. We are building on the contacts and collaborations from the workshop and further developing the approaches to effectively monitor pelagic, migratory species. Through happy coincidence, ZSL will be hosting

a symposium on open-ocean/high seas MPAs in February 2011, and we will use this opportunity to further consult on monitoring techniques and to present some of the findings from the workshop.

4. Lessons

We were pleased with the organisation, running and outputs from workshop. We began the process of setting up the workshop with a robust plan of work and associated timeline, which was kept to and ensured the smooth running during the build-up and execution of the workshop. The project team met regularly during the planning and implementation stage which helped with agreeing and progressing action items to a tight timeline. We believe that one of the main lessons from this was the value of engaging the broad range of different stakeholder groups in the workshop. This enabled a much clearer understanding of all perspectives which resulted in a more robust set of workshop outputs and research strategy. It was important that differences in opinion were aired, and in the documentation from the workshop we reported these where no resolution was reached. This gives a context as the BIOT MPA management plan is developed and implemented in the context of the region and as an international model for large, pelagic MPAs.

5. Project Expenditure

Item	Budget for whole project*	Actual Expenditure	Variance** as a %	Comments
Travel Costs				
Subsistence costs				
Overhead costs				
Operating Costs				
Capital Costs				
Other				
Salaries (specify by individual)				
TOTAL				

* please indicate which document you refer to if other than your project application or annual grant offer letter

** please explain any variance of +/- >10%

6. Other comments not covered elsewhere

We are conscious of the fact that this project may not be a 'classic' scoping study, in that it was very much about gathering and sharing information and utilising expertise from existing workers/researchers, as opposed to carrying out a pilot research trip to the region of interest. However, considering the unusual situation in BIOT (as a military base) and the high costs and limited access to the area, Thus we would strongly support the funding of this approach as, as we indicated above, it is very rare such focussed meetings occur and the outputs of such gatherings can be invaluable.

Darwin Challenge Fund Reporting Guidelines

All Darwin projects are required to report on the work they have undertaken with Darwin funds and this offers you the opportunity to report on your achievements and lessons learnt and on any other issues you would like to raise. Your report should show how you have progressed against the activities outlined in your application, or clearly explain any changes and the reasons why these changes were necessary.

You are expected to prepare the report in conjunction with your partners and you are expected to submit a Final Report within 1 month of completion of the agreed dates for the award (**max 6 pages excluding annexes**).

We will acknowledge and read all reports submitted, but will only contact you about your report if there are specific concerns.

If you have any additional queries about reporting, please feel free to email or call on 0131 440 5181.

Checklist for submission

	Check
Is the report less than 5MB? If so, please email to Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk putting the project reference number in the Subject line.	Y
Is your report more than 5MB? If so, please advise Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk that the report will be sent by post on CD, putting the project reference number in the Subject line.	N
Have you included means of verification? You need not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	Y
Do you have hard copies of material you want to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number.	N
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Y
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Y
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	