



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	EIDCF017
Darwin Project Title	Developing multi-sector strategies for marine resource use, management and conservation
Country (ies)	Turks and Caicos Islands
Award holding Organisation	Marine Conservation Society
Partner Organisations	Department for Environment and Maritime Affairs (DEMA) Amanyara Resort
Grant Value	XXX
Start/end date	01.04.2012 to 30.04.2013
Author(s), date	10 th June 2013

1. Challenge Fund Background

There is documented evidence of declines in the abundance of fishery target species in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI - **21° 45'N, 71° 35'W**) over recent decades, while fisheries and MPAs present management, research and governance challenges to TCI Government. These challenges have been compounded by unprecedented growth in the tourism sector over the same time period, leading to increased stress on TCI's marine resources.

Characteristic of the UKOTs, insufficient resources are available to TCI authorities to effectively manage both extractive and recreational use of marine biodiversity. This, coupled with a limited effective understanding and communication of marine resource management and science, has led to conflict between resource users and regulators and some non-compliance with existing regulations, particularly within the fishing sector. Despite significant dependence on TCI marine biodiversity across sectors, there has not been a multi-sector initiative to enhance management of marine resource use in TCI.

This project was led by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) working with DEMA and Amanyara, and was coordinated in the field by Project Officer Amdeep Sanghera. Amdeep liaised closely with stakeholders across government, tourism and fishing sectors throughout the TCI to identify priority marine resource use issues. This liaison, along with the project's stakeholder workshops, has allowed the project partners to identify priority marine resource management issues, and identified potential collaborative, cross-sectoral approaches to address priority issues

2. Challenge Fund Activities

Starting in April 2012, MCS Turks and Caicos Islands Turtle Project Officer Amdeep Sanghera spent 2 working days per week liaising with stakeholders using a mixed-methods approach, including informal discussions, semi-structured interviews and communal meetings. His recorded discussions with stakeholders focused on 4 key questions:

1. What were the stakeholders' main connections with the marine environment?
2. What are the main conservation issues regarding management of the marine environment?
3. What are the solutions to these issues?
4. What role can the individual stakeholders play?

Using these methods, Amdeep was able to conduct face-to-face interviews with over 60 stakeholders in Providenciales and Grand Turk, as well as in North, Middle and South Caicos.

These stakeholders represented a suite of sectors in TCI, including fishermen and fish processing plants, Government, tourism, catering, recreation and education sectors. The marine conservation/management issues identified by the stakeholders are summarised below.

Marine conservation issues identified during individual stakeholder interviews	Workshops that identified issues as priority for further discussion
Lionfish population explosion	Provo 1; South Caicos;
Decline in conch, lobster and reef finfish	Provo 1; Provo 2; South Caicos
Marine Pollution	Provo 1; Provo 2; Grand Turk
Lack of environmental education	Provo1; Provo 2; South Caicos; Grand Turk
Inadequate legislation/ poor consultation	
Effects of development: dredging & conch	Provo 1;
Illegal fishing in Marine Parks	Provo 2; Grand Turk
Lack of fisheries research and data	South Caicos
DEMA management & enforcement	Provo 1; Provo 2; South Caicos; Grand Turk
Lack of/ poor maintenance of moorings in MPA	
Mass import of fish from abroad	
No local fish certification scheme	Provo 1;
Lost fish traps – ghost fishing	Provo 1;
Damaging watersports activities	
Fishing by immigrant workers	
Inconsistent sourcing of local seafood	Provo 1;
Perceived bonefish decline	
Lack of fisher involvement in stewardship	
Lack of renewable energy	
Habitat loss: use of bleach/storms	Provo 1; Provo 2; South Caicos;
Loss of fishing heritage: sector decline	
Low prices for fishers at the plants	South Caicos.
Inadequate fish storage for fishers	
Poaching in TCI waters by foreign fishers	
Lack of recreational use of MPAs by Belongers	

Analysis of themes identified during these interviews led to the design of a series of 'focus-group' workshops involving small groups of invited and representative participants to identify and explore priority marine conservation problems, suggested solutions, and stakeholder roles in addressing these marine conservation problems.

The workshops were conducted in March 2013, with two held in Providenciales, and one in each of South Caicos and Grand Turk. The discussions at these workshops were recorded and are undergoing analysis and consideration in order to inform the development of a proposal to be submitted to the next round of Darwin Plus. The priority issues discussed at the workshops are summarised in the table above, and an example of the content of the discussions during the workshops is summarised in Annex I.

Project Manager Dr Peter Richardson visited TCI for two weeks in October 2012 to discuss and review project progress with Amdeep and the project partners. Peter visited TCI again in March 2013 for two weeks to assist with the stakeholder workshops and discuss the provisional workshop findings with the project partners.

3. Outcome & Impact of Challenge Fund

This scoping study confirmed that the stakeholder-led approach we have already used to address management of the traditional turtle fishery has great potential to tackle many of the conservation threats currently facing the TCIs' marine resources. The grant allowed the project team to access a much wider scope of cross-sectoral stakeholder input and opinion on a broad suite of issues than had been gathered during our previous, turtle conservation-focused stakeholder engagement exercises. Consequently, the study has identified several key conservation issues we could possibly address in a Darwin Plus funded project. These relate to fisheries research and management, marine protected area management, marine pollution and environmental education, with some issues considered important throughout the TCI, and some that are island-specific.

Stakeholders suggested novel project work to address the identified priority issues, and outlined their potential role in any future cross-sectoral collaboration. The wealth and breadth of stakeholder opinion collected through this project is currently informing ongoing discussions and deliberations between project partners about what can be realistically achieved with Darwin Plus funding, and how additional project support can be facilitated from some of the stakeholder participants.

The scoping study was implemented largely to the original plan. The only difficulties encountered during this project involved the complications arising from the Project Officer working part-time for two-days per week on this Challenge Fund project, while he spent the rest of the week working for project partner the Amanyara Resort. In contrast to when he was working full-time for MCS as the Turks and Caicos Islands Project Officer, working part-time allowed much less time and flexibility in arranging meetings with stakeholders whose schedule was unpredictable and depended on how busy they were with their professional work (e.g. stakeholders from the fisheries or tourism sectors). Consequently, we did not interview as many people as we would have liked, but we still managed to interview several people from each of the target sectors. In addition, and as described in the interim report, the unforeseen personal circumstances of one of the project partner staff (i.e. maternity leave) meant that we had to delay the workshops, which consequently led to the project ending later than anticipated. This has also delayed the development of a project strategy, but we will be working on this throughout the summer in time for the autumn round of the Darwin Plus Fund.

4. Lessons

The main lesson learned from this study is that there is significant good-will and enthusiasm amongst private sector stakeholder groups to support the conservation remit of DEMA through collaborative actions. However, there is a clear need for support from the Marine Conservation Society and Darwin Plus to support the establishment of cross-sectoral partnerships and mechanisms to address priority marine conservation issues. There are a suite of marine conservation issues that stakeholders identified as individually important to them, and these include several key issues that were collectively deemed priority issues during the workshops. Through collaborative stakeholder work, the proposal arising from this scoping study will likely develop strategies to address issues within the following broad themes:

- DEMA capacity and marine protected area management
- Fisheries management and local market development
- Mitigation against marine pollution
- Marine environmental education

MCS currently has extensive in-house experience and skills relating to each of these conservation areas, and there is an obvious requirement for the expertise and facilitation skills that MCS can provide in the work areas we will be proposing to Darwin Plus. DEMA probably does not have the capacity to second a project officer to work full-time on this project, so the MCS proposal to Darwin Plus will include costs for a full-time project officer, probably with local part-time assistance, for two years to facilitate and support the establishment of sustainable cross-sectoral stakeholder collaboration in further novel project work there.

The project partners will finalise discussions regarding possible cross-sectoral strategies to support DEMA in Summer 2013, and submit a collaborative funding application to the autumn round of the Darwin Plus Fund.

5. Project Expenditure

Item	Budget for whole project*	Actual Expenditure	Variance* * as a %	Comments
Travel Costs	XXX	XXX	+10.30%	Costs were under-estimated in the original budget.
Subsistence costs	XXX	XXX	-8.40%	
Overhead costs	XXX	XXX	0	
Operating Costs	XXX	XXX	-14.00%	The workshops cost less than anticipated.
Capital Costs	XXX	XXX		
Other	XXX	XXX		NB: Salary costs were originally budgeted under the 'Other' section, but have been moved to salaries – see below.
Salaries Project Officer Amdeep Sanghera	XXX	XXX	18.50%	Project Officer was originally budgeted as a consultant, but MCS was legally bound to re-register him onto payroll due to his previous employment with us doing very similar work, resulting in increased employment costs. In addition, due to some unforeseen delays, the Project Officer was employed for an additional month more than budgeted.
TOTAL	XXX	XXX	-1%	

* 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

N/A

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.	X
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.	
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.	X
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.	X
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	X
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	X
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	