

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

## Half Year Report Form

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| <b>Project Title</b>    | <b>Community-driven conservation and ecotourism in the Mara ecosystem, Kenya.</b> |
| <b>Country</b>          | Kenya   |
| <b>Organisation</b>     | DICE, University of Kent  |
| <b>Project Ref. No.</b> | 162/10/003  |
| <b>Report date</b>      | 31 October 2003   |

### **1. Outline progress over the last 6 months 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).**

The project officer has visited Kenya twice in the past six months, and the wildlife conflict monitoring co-ordinator from the local community has been employed continuously. A full year of monitoring was completed in October, and analysis is underway for presentation at community dissemination workshops in November/December 2003 at which conflict mitigation plans will be finalised.

In partnership with Friends of Conservation (FoC), a local NGO, detailed wildlife monitoring has been undertaken over approximately two years by trained community scouts. The results of this monitoring are being mapped and analysed to provide a more detailed picture of wildlife distributions, hotspots and corridors that will be the basis for community wildlife management and tourism.

Earlier monitoring reports, together with the community vision for tourism in the area and the feasibility report by an external consultant were circulated as planned to potential private sector tourism partners. As a result, a potential developer has submitted a proposal to the community for a joint venture partnership. The developer spent a few days in the area in August 2003, and Darwin staff facilitated a meeting with two community groups to present ideas and interest from both sides. A timetable of follow-up meetings amongst the community groups has been agreed, and a response to the operator, with further joint discussions, will take place over the coming months.

In addition, a different operator organised an experimental walking safari through the area over three days for a large group of overseas clients. The Darwin project facilitated contact with the relevant community groups, who were able to direct the expedition to agreed campsites, and were given a large donation towards their efforts at community-based natural resource management. This event provided the community with hands-on experience of dealing with tour groups and the kinds of activities they may wish to pursue, and may well be repeated in the future.

Throughout the period, our partnership with FoC has grown, and a joint review of our projects in the area, and the potential for future integration, was undertaken in October 2003. Prior to that, a joint proposal for follow-on funding to cement and extend the community scout programme and secure sustainable support from the tourism sector was submitted to the Darwin Initiative in July 2003 but was unsuccessful. However, we were subsequently invited to submit an extended version of this proposal in the full Round 12 of Darwin applications in October 2003.

The DICE/Darwin project portfolio in the Greater Mara continues to receive considerable interest and publicity. Presentations have been given by current and past project staff at meetings and workshops in UK, Sri Lanka and Kenya, including a high level ministerial meeting in Kenya aimed at stimulating the development of new environment, wildlife and land use policies for the country. The project leader Professor Nigel Leader-Williams was guest speaker at the recent Darwin Initiative annual seminar in London, where the Mara projects were presented as a model of integrated capacity-building, research and

conservation action across the boundaries between protected areas and surrounding community land.

Furthermore, the Environment Minister, Mr Elliot Morley, paid a two-day visit to the Mara to experience first-hand the work of the DICE/Darwin projects there. Following this visit, in his message to the Darwin Initiative annual seminar participants, Mr Morley said, "I was recently privileged to visit this project in the Mara region of Kenya. As a result of this visit I am even more impressed at the commitment and enthusiasm of project staff that has made the Darwin Initiative the success it is today."

**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 effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Due to heavy rains in August and problems obtaining a suitable builder, there has been a delay in completion of the community wildlife and conflict monitoring centre. However, it is expected that this will be completed by January 2004, at which time a final joint workshop with FoC and communities will be convened to formally open and hand over the centre, and to close this phase of the DICE/Darwin Mara project. This short delay will not affect the outcomes of the project in any way.

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

None at this time

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Project Manager, Email: [stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk](mailto:stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk)