

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Annual Report

1. Darwin Project Information

Project title	Building capacity in wetland biodiversity conservation in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia.
Country(ies)	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia
Contractor	Eurosite
Project Reference No.	162 / 10 / 008
Grant Value	Total grant of £160,200 over 3 years
Start/Finishing dates	April 2001 – March 2004
Reporting period	April 2001 – March 2002

2. Project Background

- Briefly describe the location and circumstances of the project and the problem that the project aims to tackle.

The project involves 2 workshops based in the U.K. in each of the 3 years of its duration, making a total of 6 workshops. Between each a U.K. facilitator will visit the country they are ‘partnered’ with to review and comment on the realities of management plans in each country. In addition each of the 3 years concentrates on a different aspect of management planning. Year 1 – Objectives, format and content of management plans, expectations and experience; Year 2 – Managing stakeholders and their implications for management planning; Year 3 – Monitoring, reporting and review.

The sharing of appropriate knowledge and conservation management skills between European partners with the objective of maintaining and improving the quality of European wetland habitats.

3. Project Objectives

- State the purpose and objectives (or purpose and outputs) of the project. Please include the Logical Framework for this project (as an appendix) if this formed part of the original proposal or has been developed since, and report against this.

To help key individuals from Poland, Russia and the Baltic States improve understanding and practical skills in the management of wetland habitats. The project is lead by a consortium of leading UK conservation organisations (*National Trust, RSPB, Scottish Natural Heritage, English Nature and the Wildlife Trusts*) and *EUROSITE*.

The project is phased over 3 years; Year 1: Management planning; Year 2: Stakeholder management: Communicating management plans; Year 3: Monitoring and maintaining links with managers of similar sites in Europe.

- Have the objectives or proposed operational plan been modified over the last year and have these changes been approved by the Darwin Secretariat?

Changes to timing of first country visits and workshop 2 were made in agreement with the Department following concerns over practicalities from UK project participants. Visits planned for March to May 2002 took place in June (12th-16th) 2002 at the National Trust Centre at Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire.

International travel costs from Baltic States and Russia higher than anticipated because estimates were made from UK to Baltic States, Poland & Russia, rather than the reverse.

The Wildlife Trusts representative left to work for another organisation, but was successfully replaced by Mr Mike Deegan from Shropshire Wildlife Trust. There have been no implications for the project

4. Progress

- Please provide a brief history of the project to the beginning of this reporting period. (1 Para.)

Following formal inception of the project in June 2001, an initial meeting of U.K. partners was held in July 2001. A group of partners from the participating countries was assembled using the Eurosite database and the first workshop was held at Loch Leven, Scotland in November 2001. (See report appended)

Because of the difficulties with weather conditions in the participating countries during the winter months, the first visits by U.K. partners took place between March and May 2001, with agreement from Darwin. (Mission reports from each U.K. partners are appended.)

The 2nd workshop to crystallise the lessons learned took place at Wicken Fen in Cambridgeshire. Some of the individuals from participating countries were change as a result of previous experience. (A report is appended).

The 3rd workshop (1st in the 2nd year of the project) was held in Somerset, England hosted by English Nature. Site visits included Somerset Levels and Bridgewater Bay.

The workshop concentrated on stakeholder management in relation to management planning, drawing on experience from all U.K. facilitator organisations and country participants.

The 4th workshop is planned to take place in March 2003 in the West Midlands and hosted by the Wildlife Trusts. It will deal further with stakeholder management and include visits to sites where this has been a major issue e.g. Fenns & Whixalls Moss.

The 2nd visit by U.K. facilitators to their partner country will take place between March and May 2003 in the light of the particularly severe weather conditions in Northern Europe this year.

- Summarise progress over the last year against the agreed baseline timetable for the period. Explain differences including any slippage or additional outputs and activities.
- Progress in addressing the objectives of management planning for protected areas has been good. It has revealed the differences arising from scale in comparing smaller countries like, Estonia, with Russia. Each country group has produced a draft management plan and begun to use and develop simplified guidelines for use

in their own country. In the case of Russia a more strategic approach has also been required because of the scale of the issues and problems.

- Visits to participating countries by U.K. partners have been effective in addressing and advising on problems ‘on the ground’. In Estonia a shaky start has been recovered with the change in country participants. Visits involved meetings with staff in Ministries of Environment and/or lectures and talks to nature conservation organisations.
- The second stage of the programme on Stakeholder Management has been welcomed by all of the country participants.
- In the case of all workshops country participants have welcomed the opportunity to consider the problems and solutions encountered by managing organisations. Care needs to be taken to ensure that principles are learned rather than detailed applications which may not suit participating countries.
- Provide an account of the project’s research, training, and/or technical work during the last year. This should include discussion on selection criteria for participants, research and training methodologies as well as results. Please **summarise** techniques and results and, if necessary, provide more detailed information in appendices (this may include cross-references to attached publications)
- Participants were selected as identified in the original application i.e. individuals from the 5 countries should be ‘promising’ people who are likely to become leaders within their own countries within 5 – 10 years.
- Each U.K. workshop has tried to identify ‘what is useful’ and ‘what could be improved’ in relation to the individual’s skill and competency in nature conservation management. Each workshop therefore produced check list of expectations and lessons learned, that can be used and disseminated ‘at home’. (See workshop programmes and reports).
- Discuss any significant difficulties encountered during the year.

Difficulties have been:-

- Because of the extended set-up period country visits have tended to clash with weather constraints so that it has not always been possible to synchronise workshops and visits as originally planned. However this does not seem to have created additional problems.
- Maintaining continuity of participants has been difficult so that sometimes it has been necessary to accept replacements for the original participant.
- Changes in staff in Eurosite meant that clarifying responsibilities has caused difficulties.
- Has the design of the project been enhanced over the last year, e.g. refining methods, indicators for measuring achievements, exit strategies?
- Early recognition of the differences Russia represented meant that we have tried to deal with both Strategic and operational levels.
- U.K. facilitators have seen that U.K. solutions to problems do not readily translate to other countries, but that principles behind decisions and action do.

- The Eurosite network, including the project facilitator organisations in the U.K., has provided an important support service which should endure beyond the completion of the project.

- Present a timetable (work plan) for the next reporting period.

- West Midlands workshop – March 2003 Stakeholder Management.

Country visits by U.K. partners March – May 2003

- Scotland workshop – June 2003 Monitoring and Recording and Management planning

Country visits by U.K. partners August – October.

- Final workshop – Latvia? Completion of Monitoring & recording; Review of overall programme

5. Partnerships

- Describe collaboration between UK and host country partner(s) over the last year. Are there difficulties or unforeseen problems or advantages of these relationships?
- As reported earlier partnerships have mostly been good. Occasionally there have been disagreements between partners. The relationships established between U.K. Facilitators and their country partners are likely to endure.

- Has the project been able to collaborate with similar projects in the host country or establish new links with / between local or international organisations involved in biodiversity conservation?
- Yes.

6. Impact and Sustainability

- Discuss the profile of the project within the country and what efforts have been made during the year to promote the work. What evidence is there for increasing interest and capacity for biodiversity resulting from the project? Are satisfactory exit strategies for the project in place?
- The project has had an impact in each of the 5 countries as a result of the visits made by U.K. facilitators and the talks and lectures they have given. The relative scale of impact has been varied between the smaller Baltic States and the larger Poland and Russia. It is clear that for projects to have a lasting impact they need to be of 3-year duration and address structural and cultural circumstances in each country. Partners have used the skills they have learned in management planning for protected areas they are responsible for.
- Exit strategies have been defined within the original application, but the project has not yet reached the stage where they will be initiated.

7. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

- Please expand and complete Table 1. **Quantify** project outputs over the last year using the coding and format from the Darwin Initiative Standard Output Measures (see website for details) and give a brief description. Please list and report on appropriate Code Nos. only. The level of detail required is specified in the Guidance notes on Output Definitions which accompanies the List of Standard Output Measures.

Table 1. Project Outputs (According to Standard Output Measures)

Code	Quantity	Description	Outputs
6A	<i>Number of people to receive training</i>	<i>15 people to be trained per year</i>	Year 1: 3 people trained; Difficulties in finding suitable participants for the selected workshop dates. Year 2: 13 people trained; as in year 1 + problems with continuity & replacement.
6B	<i>Number of training weeks to be provided</i>	<i>2 in each year 2001, 2002, 2003. Total 6 over the project.</i>	Training weeks completed (or will be by the end of 2002/2003).
7	<i>Training materials produced.</i>	<i>Learning materials from the workshop programmes</i>	Learning materials produced within workshops. See workshop reports.
8	<i>Weeks by project in host countries</i>	<i>5 in each year 2001-2004. Total 15 over the project</i>	10 week visits by U.K. facilitators 2001/2003. On target for 15 by end of 2004 At least 5 management plans produced. In some cases 2 or 3 with species actions plans included e.g. Pond Turtle in Lithuania, Stellar's Eider duck in Estonia.
9	<i>Habitat/species management plans</i>	<i>5 management plans with selected species action plans subsumed within them.</i>	
14A	<i>Dissemination workshops</i>	<i>5 in 2003</i>	Dissemination meetings held in all 5 countries including meetings with Ministries of Environment. NGO staff, University departments.
15A	<i>Number of national press releases in host country(ies)</i>	<i>1 per year per country</i>	Completed + press interviews.
15B	<i>Number of local press releases in host country(ies)</i>	<i>1 per year per country</i>	Completed.
15C	<i>Number of national press releases in UK</i>	<i>1 per year</i>	Completed
		<i>2 per year</i>	

	<i>Number of local press releases in UK</i>		
15			
D			
16	<i>Number of newsletters to be produced</i>	<i>1 per year</i>	Darwin Initiative included in 3 Eurosite Newsletters and report given at Eurosite Annual Assembly in Poland September 2003
16	<i>Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the host country(ies)</i>	<i>50 per country</i>	Numbers circulated – 80 organisations part of the Eurosite network in Europe.
B	<i>Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the UK</i>	<i>200</i>	
16			Completed.
C			
17	<i>Dissemination networks enhanced</i>	<i>EUROSITE network of site managers enhanced through partnerships, twinning & use of electronic information exchange system.</i>	Grant of £500 for education equipment sent by RSPB to Czarnocin, Poland. Eurosite Intranet reports to all network partners. Partner contribution to improvements to Eurosite Management Planning Toolkit.
B			

- Explain differences in actual outputs against those agreed in the initial ‘Project Implementation Timetable’ and the ‘Project Outputs Schedule’, i.e. what outputs were not achieved or only partly achieved? Were additional outputs achieved?

The main difficulties have been in maintaining continuity among a few of the participants as a result of other commitments, disagreements with fellow countrymen and job changes.

The relatively late start to phase 1 meant that only 1 workshop and 1 round of country visits could be accomplished in the first year. This has been rectified in the 2nd year with 3 workshops and 1 round of country visits.

This delay resulted in an apparent underspend which will be largely removed by the end of 2003 following the 3rd U.K. workshop in 2003 and arrangements made for the 2nd round of country visits.

Additional outputs were achieved in training of additional staff members of participant organisations during country visits by U.K. facilitators. Also enduring partnerships are being established between U.K. facilitators and their country partner organisations, and the Eurosite network.

- In Table 2, provide full details of all publications and material produced over the last year that can be publicly accessed, e.g. title, name of publisher, contact details, cost. Details will be recorded on the Darwin Monitoring Website Publications database which is currently being compiled. Mark (*) all publications and other material that you have included with this report

Table 2: Publications

Type * (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (title, author, year)	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. contact address, website)	Cost £
Workshop report	Workshop 1: Working Together, [Eckersley, P. <i>EUROSITE</i> 2001]	NA	<i>EUROSITE</i> information exchange programme (Intranet)	NA
Workshop report	Workshop 2: Learning Together [Whitmore, G. <i>EUROSITE</i> 2002]	NA	<i>EUROSITE</i> information exchange programme (Intranet)	NA
Eurosite Newsletter	Circulated to the Eurosite network of approximately 80 nature conservation organisations throughout Europe, including Accession States and CIS		Eurosite ?	

- Provide details of dissemination activities in the host country during the year. Will these activities be continued by the host country when the project finishes, and how will this be funded and implemented?

Estonia: Liaised with Government officials, raising awareness of the Darwin project and informing them of our findings and recommendations from the visit.

Lithuania: Meeting with G. Jodinkas, Senior Specialist – Min. Of Env.

Lithuanian Fund for Nature booklet on Management Planning.

Poland: Site managers, local officials, University staff, teachers, local people, grazers,

Russia: Staff of the Biodiversity Conservation Centre in Moscow.

Consideration of auditing methodology suitable for National Parks and Zapovedniks.

8. Project Expenditure

- Please expand and complete Table 3.

Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period

Item	Budget (£)	Expenditure (£)	Comments
Salaries (specify)			
Mr. E.T. Idle			
Dr. Tim Bines			Expenditure not claimed by English Nature
Dr. L. Bardsley			
Mr. P. Brooks			Expenditure not claimed by Scottish Natural Heritage
Dr. M. Shepherd			
Mr. A. Colston			
Mr. K. Shaw			
Mr. P. Eckersley			Salaries claims updated by the end of 2003.
TOTAL			
Rent ,rates heating lighting etc			
Office administration costs			
(printing)			
Capital items/equipment			
Others			
(travel and subsistence)			
TOTAL			

- Highlight any recently agreed changes to the budget and explain any variation in expenditure where this is +/- 10% of the budget
- Expenditure during the first year of the project was below target for 3 main reasons, the later start of the project meant that a 2nd workshop had to be carried over into year 2, U.K. facilitators either did not claim or presented reduced salaries claims. These issues have been addressed during the 2nd year as explained earlier in this report. DEFRA, Darwin Initiative has been kept informed of these modifications.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

- Discuss methods employed to monitor and evaluate the project this year. How can you demonstrate that the outputs and outcomes of the project actually contribute to the project purpose? i.e. what indicators of achievements (both qualitative and quantitative) and how are you measuring these?
- Each workshop includes evaluation sessions which address ‘what worked?’ and ‘what could be done better/improved?’ In addition the workshops deal with real working problems and management plans. Outcomes are in the production of management plans which are useful in the participating countries, wider recognition in those countries of the range of benefits and values of management plans, and individual improvement in how to proceed with management planning as a process.
- Some of these outputs will not be achieved until the final stage of the project is completed

- Are there lessons that you learned from this years work and can you build this learning into future plans?
- One of the main lessons has been that the benefits to participating individuals both from partner countries and U.K. facilitators have been considerable. Detailed practical applications, skills and competencies are essential but there is also a need for wider skills in the management and culture of nature conservation organisations. The problems that the Management planning participants face as they ‘re-entry’ their local circumstances are how to begin implementing and applying the lessons and methods they have learned. Some of these points will be dealt with in the 2nd half of the project. It is likely that a longer and more extensive programme of training will be needed to deal with these matters. This project will not be able to tackle this issue.

10. Author(s) / Date

E.T.Idle and Gavin Whitmore

30.01.03