



Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species.

**Building Capacity in Wetland Biodiversity Conservation in Estonia,
Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia: Project No.162/10/008**

**Final Report
(August 2004)**

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1. Darwin Project Information

Project Reference No.	162/10/008
Project title	Building Capacity in Wetland Biodiversity Conservation in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia
Country	U.K. & 5 participating countries
UK Contractor	Eurosite
Partner Organisation (s)	English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage, National Trust (England, Wales + N.I.), R.S.P.B., Wildlife Trusts - (Staffordshire W.T.)
Darwin Grant Value	£160,200
Start/End date	01.06.01 – 01.06.04
Project website	http://www.eurosite-nature.org
Author(s), date	E.T.Idle (Project Leader), 01.08.04

2. Project Background/Rationale

2.i. Location and circumstances.

EUROSITE is the network of organisations and managers involved with the management of the natural heritage of Europe. It fulfils its objectives through a range of programmes including Site Twinning, Conservation workshops, Information exchange (Electronic and hard copy/newsletters and reports), advice help lines, and special, geographically-orientated projects e.g. Central and Eastern Europe. Through its various programmes and a Strategic Needs analysis (see 2.iii. below) *EUROSITE* was able to identify a number of countries where capacity building in Management Planning was needed. It was clear from experience of other workshops that the selection of the participants of workshops was/is important and that middle-ranking staff are the best investment for the future. However this does not mean that senior staff should be ignored. They require particular attention so as to provide institutional support and direction. This is a particularly difficult aspect of work in Central and Eastern Europe, where a “Top-down/Central control” approach still prevails and fundamental issues of lack of accountability and low esteem and low respect for environmental matters are common. Consequently the leadership required by workers in the field of biodiversity conservation frequently, though not always, comes from the small but growing NGO movement.

Changes in the cultural approaches characteristic of these countries is often slow and well beyond the scope of a relatively small project concerned with Management Planning on Protected Areas. However by working with the future leaders of biodiversity conservation allied to the changes which will follow accession to EU for four of the countries, it is possible to begin a “bottom-up” process of improvement. It is also possible to make a small contribution towards changes in the “top-down” approach by assisting and influencing Government Ministers and Departments. This requires a number of conditions e.g. longer term projects which allow time for

understanding and respect to develop, products and procedures which are helpful to the country as they see it and U.K. facilitators who have experience and knowledge of how to work with bureaucracies. Some conditions cannot be “controlled” from outside the country e.g. consistency, continuity and quality of senior staff in Ministries of Environment.

The choice of wetlands as the focus for the project was based on:-

- the needs identified within the proposed participating countries,
- the biodiversity urgency for wetland action as expressed in national Biodiversity Strategies
- the need to avoid overlap with other projects.

The project was located in different parts of the U.K. for workshops, and within the participating countries for the site visits by the U.K. facilitators

2.ii. What was the problem?

All Central & Eastern European Countries and Baltic States have Protected Area programmes of different forms e.g. National Parks, Nature Reserves, Protected Landscape Areas and others. They are all signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity and in most cases have written Biodiversity Strategies. Unfortunately very few have action plans, or where they have been prepared have implemented action plans which translate strategy into action and make a difference 'on the ground'. Furthermore until the advent of the European Habitats Directive no legal requirement existed to ensure that common concerted action was taken. In Central and Eastern Europe understanding of ecosystem function and change, species distribution and theoretical ecological management is high, but it is not used effectively within the framework of Management Plans or the various biodiversity action plans. A second increasingly important factor is that of local people or stakeholders seeking a role in the management of Protected Areas and in any Management Plans prepared for them, even in Central and Eastern Europe. However nature conservationists are often poorly equipped to deal with these pressures or to make use of them, so that the preparation of Management Plans has followed a traditional and somewhat isolated and introverted process. The apparently simple process of identifying biodiversity management objectives and the involvement or engagement of stakeholders in Protected Areas, is much more difficult than appears at first sight. Recognition of the need and provision of support and guidance for the development of management planning processes involving stakeholders is needed. It is best provided via a “learning-by-doing” process. All the countries included within this project welcomed the help and ideas they received, but naturally wish to adapt them to their own circumstances. The project was conceived with the longer-term aim in mind of leading to the institutional adoption of improved processes of management planning, stakeholder involvement, monitoring and plan approval.

2.iii Need, demand and commitment?

A strategic analysis of needs in Central and Eastern Europe was carried out by *EUROSITE* in 1997 – 1998. Virtually all 12 countries that were consulted, identified management and management planning as a critical requirement. Most countries also identified community involvement as a major need. This information helped *EUROSITE* develop a coherent programme of action with key nature conservation organisations, based on the need to develop nature conservation management capacity. Moreover the accession of 4 of the 5 participating countries to the European Union created a greater urgency related to their need to conform to the

European Bird and Habitat Directives. All of the participants in the project were/are involved in the biodiversity management of at least one Protected Area in their country. Their commitment to the project throughout its length was ensured by dealing with the real problems of biodiversity management which they encountered in their daily work and the production of Management Plans which they could implement, at least in part.

3. Project Summary

- The long-term objective of the project was to advance the delivery of ‘on the ground’ wetland biodiversity conservation in Central European & Baltic States. This was to be achieved by developing capacity among key individuals from these countries, in management planning, stakeholder management, communication and recording & monitoring programmes.

The project was divided into 3 phases over the 3 years of the project:-

- ❖ Working together – 2001/2002
- ❖ Learning together – 2002/2003
- ❖ Reviewing together – 2003/2004

Each year consisted of :-

- ❖ a U.K. workshop
- ❖ followed by a country visit by the U.K. facilitator/partner
- ❖ a second U.K. workshop

This gave the project a total of six workshops and 15 country visits by U.K. facilitators.

A report was produced for each workshop, detailing information presented and lessons learned - see Appendix 2

A mission report was produced by each U.K. facilitator following their country visit – see Appendix 3.

This was fully in line with the project plan and logical framework - see Appendix 1

- The ECTF review of the project issued on 06.02.04 stressed several times the need for an “exit strategy” for the project. By the time the comments were received, such a plan had been developed through the revision of the *EUROSITE* Management Planning Toolkit and its translation, adaptation and adoption in the participating countries. In addition the parent organisations of at least one of the participants from each country, accepted the role of focal point and disseminator of the new Guidance. All this work is now under way using some of the funds remaining within the project budget. It is also partly funded from within the countries themselves. This is a significant step in ensuring that the project has a long-term impact on wetland and other biodiversity management in Central and Eastern Europe. However further steps will be necessary if the best use is to be made of the project. The numbers of participants has been relatively small and by itself the project will not be sufficient to “institutionalise” the benefits good Management Planning Guidance. The provision of written guidance is necessary but is only 1 step towards the adoption of a different and participative Management Plan preparation process. These matters are considered in more detail in section 14, page 19, on possible follow-up.

The ECTF recommendation that more innovative ways be found to make available the results of the project has been acted on. The *EUROSITE* Web site provides copies of all of the Workshop reports and will carry a copy of the new

Management Planning Guidance when it is confirmed by *EUROSITE* at its Annual Assembly in September 2004.

No other significant changes were made to the original objectives of the plan though some changes were made to the operational plan as a result of experience. These were changes to the personnel invited to attend workshops because of work and other pressures. Two participants were changed from Estonia, one from Russia and one from Latvia. In the case of Poland one participant was added after the second workshop. All of these changes brought improvements and a satisfying stability to the project.

The ECTF review commented on the transferability of skills to new participants as the project progressed. In practice this appeared to present few problems, partly because of the style of learning that was adopted from the start. All participants were actively involved in workshops and mentoring by U.K. facilitators. The only slight difficulty was the limited English of 2 of the participants, but even this was overcome by the informal working style, support of colleagues and the summarising of lessons learned from each stage of workshops – see workshop reports.

Because of the late start of the project, due to formal confirmation of the Darwin grant application being given in June 2001, approval was given, to allow the final workshop to be carried over to May 2004 i.e. beyond the planned end-date of the project. This allowed the final workshop to be held in Latvia and avoided the problems of winter conditions which would have limited field visits.

- The project contributed to the following Articles of the Convention on Biological Diversity (See section 5.iii. page 8 of this report) :-
 - ❖ Article 6 “General measures” where Management Plan Approval systems and monitoring programmes operate in some countries.
 - ❖ Article 7 “Identification & Monitoring”. Monitoring is included as an integral part of Management Plans and the Guidance produced as a result of the project.
 - ❖ Article 8 “In-situ Conservation”,
 - ❖ Article 10 “Sustainable Use”. Relevant to very large Protected Areas e.g. Russia.
 - ❖ Article 13 “Public Awareness”. Stakeholder involvement/management is integral to Management Plan preparation and the Guidance produced as a result of the project.
 - ❖ Article 17 “Information exchange”. The Management Plans and the lessons learned from the process of preparation are available on Eurosite Website and as “hard copy”.
- The project met all of its planned objectives and all planned activities were completed. All 5 countries produced at least 1 Management Plan which included species action plans. The crucial principles of identification of objectives, stakeholder involvement, monitoring and approval systems were all appropriately built into the new plans.

Selected verbatim comments from participants at the end of the final workshop were:-

- ❖ *“I’ve got now new skills identify key elements of planning (stakeholders etc.)”*. Ivan Mizin – Ugra National Park, Russia.
- ❖ *“Using my experience from the project I am planning to publish an article about it and prepare materials to Moscow centre of Environmental Education. The project must not be stopped!”* Natalya Shpilenok - Ugra.
- ❖ *“Full project results are not yet seen”*. Valdimarts Slautskins - Latvia.

- ❖ *“What was special about this project was opportunity to see how theory is used in every-day work in different countries”. Janis Kuze - Latvia.*
- ❖ *“The project change my thinking about Management Planning. I now understand it as a dynamic never-ending process. Igor Szakowski – Poland.*
- ❖ *“New fruitful contacts and connections. Getting new experience and methods for using in daily work.” Dmitry Katz – Russia.*

Biodiversity conservation issues in Russia are significantly different and greater than in the other four countries (and U.K.), partly because of its vast size but also because of major cultural differences and the impact of accession to the European Union of the other four. This meant that in all of the workshops the Russian contribution tended towards a more strategic approach than the more detailed practical planning which the other four countries undertook. This added a very useful strategic theme to the project encouraging the other countries to think on a bigger scale. The Russian participants all confirmed the value of the project to them and its use in beginning the process of “institutionalising” its results in Russia. (see comments above).

In addition to the planned results the following significant results were achieved:-

- ❖ Production and testing of new guidance on Management Planning. (See Appendix 4). Finance for this was from savings within the overall budget approved by the Darwin Secretariat
- ❖ Translation of the Guidance into the languages of the five participating countries.
- ❖ The Guidance will be modified to meet the particular circumstances of each country, partly at their own expense, and then re-translated into English for U.K. learning and benefit.
- ❖ The partnerships established as a result of the project have led to additional funding for on-going training/liaison between the RSPB and Poland, and the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Lithuania. Further work between Scottish Natural Heritage and Estonia is at the planning stage.

4. Scientific, Training, and Technical Assessment.

- The project concentrated on capacity building through a “learning-by-doing” process and work on real problems and issues. U.K. facilitators were “partnered” with a participating country with whom they acted as mentor in the Management Plan preparation process in both the U.K. workshops and the visits to individual countries.

Estonia with Scottish Natural Heritage (Mike Shepherd & Paul Brookes).

Latvia with the National Trust (Adrian Colston).

Lithuania with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (Mike Deegan).

Poland with RSPB (Ken Shaw).

Russia with (Tim Bines).

Individuals from the 5 countries were selected and invited to participate in the project on the basis of Eurosite knowledge and contacts with conservation organisations, and contacts of U.K. facilitators. Generally this worked satisfactorily, though in the case of Estonia, two of the participants in the first workshop were too junior and had to be changed. Work demands and tension between two of the Russian participants after the third workshop meant that a change was necessary.

Contacts between the participants and appropriate Ministries within their own countries varied and in the cases of Estonia and Lithuania were more distant than the other three. However in all countries the next steps of disseminating the results of the project and widening its use is progressing well, though they would all benefit from a continuation of U.K. input and support.

5. Project Impacts

- **Evidence of impact.** In the first workshop at the start of the project, participants provided a list of their expectations which was used subsequently as a continuing guide and checklist against which to measure progress and to use as part of the development of the project to meet its objectives. The full list is given in the report of Workshop 1, but a selection is given below:-
 - ❖ To identify the essential/ obligatory elements of a Management Plan.
 - ❖ To identify the advantages and disadvantages of a participatory approach.
 - ❖ To learn about planning as a process.
 - ❖ To learn to manage expectations - be realistic!
 - ❖ To learn how to involve and activate local landowners.
 - ❖ To find examples of situations where there is a conflict between managers and other interests.
 - ❖ What are the barriers to management planning?
 - ❖ To gain reassurance for management planning.
 - ❖ Monitoring and evaluation.

A principal impact has been the participants' experience and discovery of answers to their expectations, through the process of preparing their own Management Plans.

- **Achievement of purpose.** The Management Plans and the presentations and comments of the individuals who participated in the project (see comments in section 2 of this report) indicate that all of them benefited personally. This tended to be confirmed by the U.K. facilitators. Moreover the enthusiastic willingness to accept responsibility for disseminating and championing of the results in the form of the Management Planning Guidance occurred in all five countries. The wider institutional impact is less certain, largely because of size and complexity in the case of Russia and the need for further work with existing management structures within all five countries. One unexpected impact has been the translation of an early draft of the Management Planning Guidance into Croat, using funds provided to *EUROSITE* by the Dutch government. In addition it is likely that the Guidance will be used by the project leader E T Idle in Slovenia where Management Plans and procedures (initiation, approval and monitoring) for Natura 2000 sites are being prepared.

- **Project Contribution to Articles under the Convention on Biological Diversity**

Article No./Title	Project %	Contribution to the Article
6. General Measures for Conservation & Sustainable Use	10%	In large Protected Areas Management Plans must relate to issues of sustainable use. The project contributed to the production of Guidelines to be used in each country, particularly Russia.
7. Identification and Monitoring	10%	Monitoring methodologies and questions are incorporated into both Management Plans and the revised Guidance. They focus on a problem-solving/ result led approach.
8. In-situ Conservation	45%	The Management Plans produced address the crucial issues of Identifying objectives, Stakeholder involvement, Monitoring, Work programmes, Financial control, and organisational procedures.
10. Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity	10%	The contribution of individual Protected Areas to National Biodiversity Strategies is included in the simplified process for identifying objectives and targets.
13. Public Education and Awareness	15%	Awareness of stakeholders has been raised because of their engagement in the Management Plan preparation process. Wider knowledge has resulted from the extensive information coverage of the project in the participating countries, elsewhere in Europe as a result of <i>EUROSITE</i> coverage and in the U.K. following articles by facilitators.
17. Exchange of Information	10%	Exchanges between participating countries and U.K. and elsewhere in Europe have grown and continue.
Total %	100%	

- **Improved local capacity.** Evidence of the commitment and capacity of project participants to continue using the skills and knowledge they have gained comes from the way they are following up in their day-to-day work. Examples are as follows:-
 - ❖ **Estonia.** Veljo Volke and Marika Kose are supervising the translation and adaptation/adoption of the Management Planning Guidance for national use. They have applied for grant support from the Estonian National Fund for a programme of familiarisation and use in other Natura 2000 sites in Estonia. They are applying Management Planning principles to their own Natura 2000 sites at Tagamoisa and Haardemiste and engaging with local and national stakeholders.
 - ❖ **Latvia.** Ivars Kabucis and Valdimarts Slautskins are supervising the translation and adaptation of the Management Planning Guidance for use in Latvia. The Latvian Fund for Nature will disseminate copies of the Guidance within the country and include it on their Website. They will also promote acceptance of the Guidance by the central committee responsible for the approval of

Management Plans in Latvia. The Management Plans which were produced during the project are being used at Adazi Military Training area and Kemer National Park

❖ **Lithuania.** Tomas Tukaciauskas (Lithuanian Fund for Nature) is beginning the translation of the Guidance and investigating how to proceed with its adoption. Darius Stoncius is actively using the Management Plan at Cepkulia National Park with high level committees.

❖ **Poland.** Igor Szakowski (European Union for Coastal Conservation) is using the Management Plan for the Oder Delta as the basis for discussions with local stakeholders e.g. graziers, fishing authorities, local authorities and landowners. He will also present the results of the Darwin Project to the *EUROSITE* Annual Assembly in Poland in September 2004.

Pawel Pawlaczyk (Member of the Polish Committee for Management Planning) is supervising the translation/adaptation and adoption of the Management Planning Guidance in Poland and seeking to involve others of his Committee in the process.

❖ **Russia.** Alexey Blagovidov (IUCN, Moscow) is supervising the translation of the Guidance and investigating with the Deputy Minister (Ministry of Natural resources) how best to use it within the context of the particular issues in Russia.

Alexander Gorbunov (Astrakhan Biosphere Reserve) is seeking to use his Management Plan principles for the identification and management of major stakeholders. He is also considering how to use the principles in future cross border projects with Kazakstan and in the River Volga watershed.

Yuri Bouivolov (Biodiversity Centre, Moscow) Published a paper in 'The Involvement of Stakeholders in the conservation of cultural landscapes in Pleshevozero NP' Moscow 2003 (Book) and has prepared a presentation entitled 'Training course in Management Planning' (floppy disc).

Dmitry Katz (Director, Russian North National Park). Has amended the Management Plan for the National Park "Russia North" and produced presentations and publications concerning PA's management processing. He is developing a new strategy and system for working with stakeholders including the preparation of a special programme for coordination of activities of the regional and federal organisations and services in the park territory together with a revised monitoring programme and implementation of a new approach to staff management.

- **Collaboration** between the U.K. participants and local partners has been most successful between Poland and RSPB where additional exchange and training visits have been arranged and work on other sites and species is being considered. Extended visits have also been made by Scottish Natural Heritage to Estonia and The National Trust to Latvia. The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is now developing ideas for a continuing partnership with Lithuania via *EUROSITE* and further work in Russia in conjunction with IUCN is being considered.
- **Who has benefited?** In all five countries the respective Ministries of Environment have been made aware of the project and local communities and local authorities have been involved in the preparation of Management Plans as stakeholders. One of the major successes of the project has been to demonstrate to participants the importance of local communities and to learn

skills that are necessary for positive engagement with these people. As already commented, these skills are not common among scientists concerned with biodiversity conservation.

- As well as clear individual benefits from the project there have been positive results for the parent organisations of the participants and the stakeholders associated with the sites for which Management Plans were prepared. These benefits were transferred to the sites themselves through a more robust and supported site management. Indicators of this came largely from the experiences and comments of the participants several of whom revised their approach to Management Planning during and as a result of the project.

6. Project Outputs

Code	Total to date	Detail
Training Outputs		
1a	Number of people to submit PhD thesis	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
1b	Number of PhD qualifications obtained	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
2	Number of Masters qualifications obtained	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs
3	Number of other qualifications obtained	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
4a	Number of undergraduate students receiving training	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
4b	Number of training weeks provided to undergraduate students	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
4c	Number of postgraduate students receiving training (not 1-3 above)	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
4d	Number of training weeks for postgraduate students	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
5	Number of people receiving other forms of long-term (>1yr) training not leading to formal qualification(i.e not categories 1-4 above)	16 + a further 5 who participated in parts of the project. Target was 15 per year
6a	Number of people receiving other forms of short-term education/training (i.e not categories 1-5 above)	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
6b	Number of training weeks not leading to formal qualification	6 x 16 = 96 weeks; + 7 weeks for temporary participants; + mentoring 18 weeks Total = 121 weeks
7	Number of types of training materials produced for use by host country(s)	Workshop reports & summaries. U.K. monitoring procedures. Revised Management Planning Guidance.
Research Outputs		
8	Number of weeks spent by UK project staff on project work in host country(s)	23 weeks Target was 15 weeks.
9	Number of species/habitat management plans (or	9 Management Plans covering habitats and species were produced.

Code	Total to date	Detail
	action plans) produced for Governments, public authorities or other implementing agencies in the host country (s)	
10	Number of formal documents produced to assist work related to species identification, classification and recording.	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
11a	Number of papers published or accepted for publication in peer reviewed journals	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
11b	Number of papers published or accepted for publication elsewhere	> 5 in U.K. and participating countries.
12a	Number of computer-based databases established (containing species/generic information) and handed over to host country	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
12b	Number of computer-based databases enhanced (containing species/genetic information) and handed over to host country	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
13a	Number of species reference collections established and handed over to host country(s)	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
13b	Number of species reference collections enhanced and handed over to host country(s)	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.

Dissemination Outputs

14a	Number of conferences/seminars/workshops organised to present/disseminate findings from the Darwin Project work.	6 Target was 5.
14b	Number of conferences/seminars/ workshops attended at which findings from Darwin project work will be presented/ disseminated.	None additional to 14a
15a	Number of national press releases or publicity articles in host country(s)	4 Target was 1 per country/year
15b	Number of local press releases or publicity articles in host country(s)	5 Target was 1 per country/year
15c	Number of national press releases or publicity articles in UK	2 Target was 1/year
15d	Number of local press releases or publicity articles in UK	4 Target was 2/year
16a	Number of issues of newsletters produced in the host country(s)	3
16b	Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the host country(s)	Average of 500/country
16c	Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the UK	2500
17a	Number of dissemination networks established	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
17b	Number of dissemination networks enhanced or extended	
18a	Number of national TV programmes/features in host country(s)	1 None had been planned
18b	Number of national TV programme/features in the UK	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
18c	Number of local TV programme/features in host country	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
18d	Number of local TV programme features in the UK	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
19a	Number of national radio interviews/features in host country(s)	1- None had been planned
19b	Number of national radio interviews/features in the UK	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
19c	Number of local radio interviews/features in host country (s)	10 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
19d	Number of local radio interviews/features in the UK	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.

Physical Outputs

20	Estimated value (£s) of physical assets handed over to host country(s)	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
21	Number of permanent educational/training/research facilities or organisation established	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
22	Number of permanent field plots established	0 – none were planned in the original list of outputs.
23	Value of additional resources raised for project	£15000 in the form of resources provided by U.K. facilitator organisations re training visits and staff time.

7. Project Expenditure

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Expenditure notes

1. Dr Bines retired from English Nature at the end of the 2nd year of the project. The salary payment which had been foregone by English Nature was paid to Dr Bines in the 3rd year.
2. Scottish Natural Heritage made no claim for the salaries of the 2 staff involved.
3. Mr P Eckersley ended his secondment to *EUROSITE* at the end of 2001. Thereafter workshop reports were prepared by Dr Bines and appropriate sums deducted from the *EUROSITE* budget.

4. Because of the late approval and start of the project the first workshop was not held until November 2001. This meant that 3 workshops were held in 2002 to catch up with the planned programme. This is reflected in the figures. To avoid the problems of weather and winter darkness which would have arisen if the final workshop in Latvia had taken place before the end-date of the project, approval was given to extend the project to May 2004.
5. On the basis of the ECTF review recommendation Darwin Secretariat approved expenditure to revise the *EUROSITE* Management Planning Toolkit. A further amount has been committed to the translation, adaptation and adoption/dissemination of the Revised Guidance in the 5 participating countries.
6. 10% of the final year budget is held by the Darwin Secretariat pending completion of a satisfactory final report.

8. Project Operation and Partnerships

- All of the participants in the project were involved with local stakeholders and their own networks e.g. some government departments and statutory authorities. In the Oder Delta in Poland, this meant local farmers and graziers, the local vojvoidship, fishermen and water authority. One workshop/visit involved discussion/training seminar on Management Planning principles with other staff from NGOs and other NGOs.
In Russia local rayons and oblasts were involved in Management Planning as well as hunters and local communities.
In Latvia partnerships were formed with the Ministry of Defence at Adazi Military Training Area.
In Estonia contacts were made with NGOs working towards implementation of the Habitats Directive.
In Lithuania the Management Planning experience gained from the project and the revised Guidance were used with the Central Committee which approves Management Plans.

The total number of partners is difficult to estimate but the result has been that the work of the Darwin Initiative is fairly widely know in 4 of the 5 countries and is actively growing in Russia. These results exceeded expectations and largely grew out of the style and method adopted in the project.

- The main problems were:-
 - ❖ Selecting the right individuals to participate and dealing with disagreements among themselves, particularly the Russians. Radical changes were made to the Estonian participation soon after the first workshop, with the help of contacts known to the Project leader.
 - ❖ Dealing with somewhat “relaxed” approach to communication held by several of the participants. This was dealt with largely through other members of the country groups, though occasionally firm instructions were needed.
 - ❖ The differences between the Russians and the rest of the group were marked by a cliquishness which resulted in friction particularly during field visits, exacerbated by the difficulties with English of one of the Russians. This was dealt with by informing them that their behaviour was not acceptable. Notwithstanding these problems the Russian results of the project are good.
 - ❖ Dealing with potential currency conversions for 5 different countries which would have led to loss of some funds and additional supervisory time. This was overcome by ensuring that 95% of costs were paid in pounds Sterling and

English Nature acting as banker to the project. This arrangement worked extremely well at no cost to the project.

- The 2 main international partners were *EUROSITE* and IUCN.
- Local partnerships have continued in all of the sites associated with the project. Some of these began before the project started but they have been undoubtedly strengthened through the skills and knowledge gained by the participants. In most cases the Protected Areas for which they prepared Management Plans are essential to national biodiversity programmes.

More community engagement is required. This will mean that biodiversity conservationists will need to expand their range of skills, understanding and approaches to accommodate local participation. In Central and Eastern Europe the voluntary sector has a crucial part to play.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation, Lesson learning

- Monitoring and evaluation were built in to each stage of the workshops in 3 main ways:-
 - ❖ The participants' expectations from the project were listed at the start of the first workshop (see Workshop 1 report) and referred back to at subsequent stages of the project. Workshop programmes were modified in the light of feed-back.
 - ❖ At each stage of workshops summaries were made of "Lessons learned" and "Improvements to make". These are listed in each Workshop report.
 - ❖ Mission summaries of country visits were made by U.K. facilitators (See Appendix 3 – Mission reports) and lessons considered by the facilitators as a team.

Monitoring followed the outline provided in the logical framework augmented by personal comments from participants. Some are listed in section 3 of this report. The value of the project was demonstrated in:-

- ❖ The production of improved Management Plans,
- ❖ The acquisition of skills as demonstrated in the presentation of the Management Plans and strategies, and
- ❖ Follow-up work to extend the use of the principles learned within the project.
- The main problems and steps taken to overcome them have been dealt with in section eight of this report.
- The U.K. facilitator team evaluated progress at the beginning of each workshop i.e. four or five times throughout the project. The ECTF review was the only external evaluation. Their comments on this final report are anticipated with interest.
- Key lessons from this project:-
 - ❖ To overcome the difficulty of selecting suitable "key" individuals an inception phase could usefully be adopted or introduced. Although the majority of participants were recommended by reliable people in their countries, a preparatory period in which contacts were made by the project leader or one of the facilitators would help to select the most able participants.
 - ❖ One or two participants commented that the project was too long, though when put to the others all agreed that this was not so. One of the strengths of the project was that it was not a "hit-and-run" affair. However there were still understandable difficulties in maintaining continuity between workshops and

visits because of other work commitments from both participants and facilitators. An increase in country visits would help overcome this difficulty but would probably mean an increase in funding to cover the costs of facilitator time. The project has awakened interest within the U.K. nature conservation community so that facilitator organisations should be more willing to release staff to become involved. In that event selecting the appropriate facilitators will be an issue to address.

- ❖ One of the greatest difficulties is how to move the results of the project (and all projects!) into “normal business”. This raises issues of organisational management and resistance to/promotion of change. This is a major cultural problem particularly in Central and Eastern Europe countries, though not confined to them! One U.K. facilitator commented that “Organisational development is the key issue in this part of Europe.” The implications of this for concerns about the legacy of the Darwin Initiative is that practical nature conservation projects need an element which build on and develops from knowledge and contact with Ministries and more senior people. This implies a degree of continuity of knowledge and contact so that in selecting projects the Darwin Steering Committee might consider the background knowledge of the proposers of the project, if they do not already do so.
- ❖ Generally Central and Eastern Europe do not need a great deal in the way of technical biodiversity expertise, though there may be some exceptions to this in former Soviet Union countries in Asia. Indeed several of the U.K. facilitators commented that they had learned a great deal from the countries they partnered so that any hidden arrogance was quickly dispelled. For these countries, projects need to concentrate on practical “learning-by-doing” work, which is oriented more towards helping to solve problems than traditional training courses. This brings greater ownership of the project by participants.
- ❖ Workshops to address problems need to be structured informally and be concerned with practical issues. These are usually the real problems on the ground rather than those which are traditionally regarded as “scientific”. One Russian participant asked, “How do I decide which stakeholders to involve in my Protected Area when I have a major industrial complex within 1000km and on the edge of the River Volga?” A Polish participant asked, “How do I deal with a major stakeholder who seems to be permanently drunk?” A Lithuanian participant asked, “How do I get the scientists on the Central Committee to see that we must engage with local people in deciding the objectives for the Protected Area?” These kinds of issues suggest that Darwin Initiative projects should be oriented somewhat less towards academic work and draw in organisations which are involved in the practice of biodiversity conservation in the U.K. and Europe. They are more likely to be suitable mentors for their counterparts in other countries.

10. Actions taken in response to annual report reviews

Only 1 ECTF review report was received. Its application has been discussed in section 1 and all comments acted upon and discussed with collaborators.

- ❖ The *EUROSITE* website carries reports of the project workshops and will have a copy of the new Planning Guidance when it is approved by the *EUROSITE* Council.
- ❖ Additional work on the legacy of the project has begun through the implementation of the Management Plans that have been produced and wider strategies. Work to use the new Management Planning Guidance is continuing.

- ❖ Further work is necessary to transfer the skills learned from the project to others within partner countries.

11. Darwin Identity

The Darwin Initiative logo was used on all workshop reports. It also features on the *EUROSITE* web page and in the *EUROSITE* page on the English Nature Conservation Land Management magazine. Although no precise figures are available, circulation of these publications it is likely to be > 2500.

- Darwin Fellows or Scholars have played no part in the project, which is practical rather than academic in thrust.
- The Darwin Identity is well understood among the participants of the project. It is difficult to say how far beyond them understanding percolates within their organisations. The *EUROSITE* Web page displays the Darwin Initiative logo and provides a brief summary of its objectives. Some of the British Embassies in the participant countries have begun to be aware of and understand the objectives of the Darwin Initiative, though others appear to be disinterested.
- The project was distinct in its own right but related to other work already going on. The movement within the European Union towards a more effective and inclusive management of Protected Areas via the European Birds and Habitats Directive, provided an important and helpful context for the project. Several participating countries are in the process of revising their procedures for Management Planning so that the results of the project are very timely.

12. Leverage

- Additional funding was provided:-
 - ❖ By RSPB for training visits to U.K. by Polish partners.
 - ❖ By SNH by foregoing the salary claim for staff time.
 - ❖ By EN in acting as banker throughout the project, at no cost.
 - ❖ All partner countries have contributed to the completion of translation of the Revised Guidance.
 - ❖ Time spent by U.K. facilitators exceeded time allocated.
- The 4th workshop included a specific session run by the Fund-raising officer for the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (See workshop report – Appendix 2). No additional attempts were made to obtain funds from other international donors.

13. Sustainability and Legacy

- The Management Plans and the strategies produced during the project are likely to endure and be used. So too will the change in the approach to Management Planning, which should result in a more robust and publicly supported Protected Area framework. Judging by the comments received at the final workshop it is likely that participants and facilitators will keep in touch. Some have already indicated steps they are taking to encourage this. One hurdle to overcome with this is the inertia of the facilitators' parent organisations in the U.K. and the problem of funding continuing visits.
- The legacy of the project could be improved by a series of visits to each of the participating countries to assist the process of embedding or institutionalising the results. Further suggestions are made in the next section.

In the longer term some method of providing organisational management skills for nature conservation managers would be a useful way of improving the context

in which projects such as this must operate. It may be that the Darwin Initiative could help nature conservation agencies and major NGOs to provide opportunities for on-going training of middle-ranking staff within their existing programmes. In most Central and Eastern European countries no such on-going training exists.

14. Post-Project Follow up Activities

The outputs of the project exceeded the original plan and embedding the results into the work of the participating countries has begun. However resistance to new ways of working on Management Plans cannot be underestimated even for small countries like the Baltic States. In the case of Russia the scale of the problem is much greater though once they have put their minds to it Russians will “deliver” and often more than expected! There is therefore an urgent need for support and encouragement in follow-up activities as a natural next step for the Darwin Initiative.

- ❖ To increase the “critical mass” of Protected Area staff in each country using the skills successfully developed in the project.
- ❖ To assist with higher level acceptance of the Guidance as a central tool for Management Planning within the five countries.
- ❖ To assist with the establishment of procedures for Management Plan initiation, preparation, approval and monitoring.
- ❖ To maintain the “community” and information exchange, which has developed within the membership of the Darwin project.
- ❖ To widen the recognition and use of the Management Planning techniques used within the project to a wider range of countries and organisations in Europe and possibly beyond.

At the end of the final workshop all participants were asked for their thoughts about commitment to possible continuation. All were keen to do so and added specific areas which they thought should be focussed on. These are included in the previous section. In addition in all 5 countries work is continuing with the translation, adaptation and adoption of the revised Guidance. An extension of the project would enhance the prospect of adoption.

15. Value for money

At a cost of around £50,000/year the project has succeeded in developing a different and more inclusive way of Management Planning in five countries and with around 15 – 20 individuals. In this sense the overall goal of the project to increase capacity in Management Planning for wetlands has been very good value for money.

- The project has produced a series of Management Plans which are of direct value to the participants, and the development of wider strategies which in the case of Russia are likely to make a steady contribution to change within that country.
- All U.K. facilitators have contributed a great deal more than originally planned for and have indicated their wish to continue the initiative that has started.
- The profile of the Darwin Initiative has been raised considerably in the partner countries and also among the nature conservation community – as opposed to the academic community - in the U.K.
- Savings made on travel and other costs have been channelled into supplementary work which has strengthened the impact and legacy of the project through a publication.

Appendix 1 - Eurosite Logical framework.

Project summary	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Important assumptions
<p>Goal To help Central European and Baltic States with the conservation of wetland biodiversity</p>	<p>Evidence of start of implementation of management plans, communication programmes, preparation of materials, monitoring, and the wider application of management planning principles. Connection with the wider European nature conservation community.</p>	<p>Assessment during and after the project of the value of the results in assisting conservation of wetland biodiversity conservation. Adjustments will be made where necessary as a result of the assessments. Working processes will also be assessed for their helpfulness towards the overall goal.</p>	<p>Political support for biodiversity conservation is real and continuing</p> <p>Process of 'cascading' learning and information within host countries works effectively.</p>
<p>Purpose The development of the capacity of key individuals in key nature management organisations (expertise & implementation) on wetland habitat & species management, communication with stakeholders, and management monitoring & recording systems.</p>	<p>Completion of the overall project with 15 participants from Central Europe and Baltic States. Assessment of improvements in their understanding and expertise.</p>	<p>Throughout the workshops, continuous assessment will be made of the participants progress. Modifications will be made in the light of the assessments.</p>	<p>Participants prove that they have the personal capacities to amalgamate the scientific, communication and administrative skills for which they were selected.</p>
<p>Outputs Habitat & Species Management Plans, Stakeholder Communication programmes, monitoring and recording systems and learning materials.</p>	<p>Production of 5 Management Plans of 'approved' quality. Production of 5 communication programmes and a start of their effective use. Production & start of monitoring programmes related to management objectives. Production of learning, materials of wider 'in-country' use.</p>	<p>The project quality controller will assess the quality of outputs assisted by the UK Team and the participants themselves during workshops.</p>	<p>Participants will devote time and effort to implementing plans and lessons learned.</p>
<p>Activities UK workshops & 'in-country' mentoring visits dealing with 'real' issues and problems on management, stakeholders & monitoring. Translation & production of learning materials.</p>	<p>Effective workshops managed to high quality within budget and timescale and with attendance of target individuals</p>	<p>Feedback and questionnaires on the usefulness of workshop and country visit activities will continue throughout the project</p>	<p>Liaison with and participation of Government Departments and Institutes.</p>

Appendix 2 – Workshop reports.

Reports of the 6 workshops undertaken during the project are appended separately as both hard copy and on CD.

Appendix 3 – Facilitator Mission reports.

Reports of the visits made by U.K. facilitators during the project are appended in both hard copy and on CD.

Appendix 4 – Management Planning Guidance

The Management Planning Guidance is appended as hard copy and CD

Appendix 5 – Management Plans

Management Plans presented in Microsoft Powerpoint are appended as CD

Appendix 6 – Publicity materials

3 examples are provided in hard copy.