Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No. 162/10/027

Project Title Darwin Initiative for the Sustainable Use of Sea Cucumbers in Egypt

Country(ies) UK and Egypt
UK Organisation University of Hull

Collaborator(s) Suez Canal University, Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, Red Sea

Governorate

Report date 2 November 2004

Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

Project website

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

In relation to the stock assessment, work is continuing on the identification of the final species of sea cucumber through collaboration with Dr Yves Samyan. In addition, production of the field guide, the Fishery Management and Monitoring Plan, several scientific papers and MPhil thesis is on-going. In addition, Mr Mohammed Ismail's offer to continue to complete a PhD has been refused by his home University for internal reasons. Consequently he will now submit the work as an MPhil. The Darwin Secretariat has been informed of this. In addition, however, he will also complete a course and training in Remote Sensing and GIS in early 2005. This will provide the training agreed in the original proposal and should help in the reporting of his results in his MPhil.

In relation to the work on bioactive substances further purification and fractionation of active substances is continuing. A series of solvent systems including a mixture of different proportions of polar and non polar solvent have been tried to obtain the best solvent system suitable to separate the active fraction on thin layer chromatography. The active butanol faction was then separated by column chromatography into fractions and the fractions eluted from these tested for bioactivity. The active fractions are now being purified, separated and partially identified by HPLC and LC/ MS. Activity in specific peaks continues to be tested using the bioassays previously developed.

In relation to mariculture, spawning trials continued with *Actinopyga mauritiana* throughout the summer. In addition caged mesocosm experiments were set up in the field to assess the impact of sea cucumber removal on habitat quality together with laboratory based trials. Spawning has continued to be unsuccessful. However, following agreement from the Darwin Initiative Secretariat, a period of training in sea cucumber mariculture techniques, including spawning and fertilization methods, rearing of larvae etc, has been organised for Mr Wael Hefny in China. This training will take place in the first half of 2005.

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 affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

Problems continue to be encountered in the mariculture aspect of the project due to a lack of animals for broodstock and failure of spawning trials. In addition, other field based studies have been attacked by

fishermen in order to collect the animals being used in the studies. However, the agreement to allow Mr Hefny to travel to China for training in mariculture techniques will provide some positive output from this aspect of the project.

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: yes, in June and July 2004

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: yes, in early 2005

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

None

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any <u>planned</u> modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should <u>not</u> be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, <u>stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk</u>. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. <u>Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.</u>