

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Black Rhino Conservation and Ecotourism Impacts in North-western Namibia.
Country	Namibia
Organisation	DICE
Project Ref. No.	11/005
Report date	<i>October 2002</i>

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

The workplan and methodologies for the project have been drafted. The Steering Committee met on 23 September 2002 and reached consensus on the key outputs, as well as on inputs from partners relating to methodologies and collaborative programmes.

Liaison with NGO and Ministry of Environment and Tourism partners has been implemented following individual meetings, and with conservancies following quarterly planning meetings held from July to October.

The co-ordination and implementation of the five yearly Save the Rhino Trust census, to collect demographic data on the black rhino, was started in August and will be ongoing until May 2003. This also involves on-the-job training of SRT, MET and conservancy field-staff, as part of the key requirements of ensuring efficient monitoring and of continually evaluating population performance.

Ecological data collection is also ongoing and conducted to provide field-staff with training in data collection protocols. The first draft of a spatially explicit, black rhino habitat suitability model has been developed, to classify terrestrial habitats based on the predicted ecological needs of black rhinos. Ground truthing of this model will commence in November 2002.

The mapping of tourist entry points is ongoing to begin the assessment of the possible impact of tourists on rhino. Liaison and meetings have been attended as part of the Directorate of Tourism's North-western Namibia Tourism Plan, which outlines development options in the area.

A radio interview with a local station in Kent was recorded prior to leaving for Namibia. The BBC Really Wildshow visited the project in September with Nick Baker to produce a 15min slot on the rhino project, which will be screened April 2003. Local press releases in Namibia and the UK are planned again for later this year.

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?

The tourism project manager has not yet been appointed. The initial plan was for this post to be held by a candidate from an NGO operating in the area. Following consultations with in-country partners, this changed to a Ministry of Environment and Tourism candidate. As a result, the MET will nominate a candidate from an existing MET post or through a new appointment. This will ensure a clearer exit

strategy that better guarantees long-term sustainability of future tourism planning activities. Consultations are ongoing to ensure the candidate is nominated within the next 6 months so that sufficient time is available for the candidate to be involved in data collection.

As the candidate's MSc training will not begin until 2003, this delay is not foreseen to have any impacts on the project activities, other than a delay in the timetable to fill the post until early next year. Consequently, this has not been discussed with the Department.

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

The Darwin Initiative stickers provided for the project vehicle are made of very poor quality, paper-based material. They only last for a few weeks in the conditions under which the project is implemented, before their condition deteriorates to the point where taking them off is the preferred option. Recommend plastic based stickers.

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