

## Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	162/11/016
<b>Project Title</b>	Institutional strengthening and capacity building for Guyana's Protected Areas System
<b>Country</b>	Guyana, South America
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Environmental Protection Agency (Guyana)
<b>Report date</b>	October 2004
<b>Report No.</b>	Half Year Report 3
<b>Project website</b>	n/a

**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)**

**Training Workshops:**

Planning for Biodiversity Rapid Assessment – A focus on Shell Beach (April 2004) 5 persons trained.

Management Planning Process for Protected Areas (August 2004) 19 persons attended and trained.

Techniques in Community Resource Evaluation (CRE) – A focus on Shell Beach (September 2004) 18 persons trained, including 12 Community members from the Shell Beach area.

Training manuals and workshop reports were prepared and distributed to participants and partner organisations. All workshops/ training had good discussion from the broad stakeholder representation and the skills and techniques imparted, while being used principally for the Shell Beach Protected Area Process, were also applied to other areas in Guyana. The Management Planning for Protected Areas (August 2004) in particular took on a broad focus examining other sites in Guyana in addition to Shell Beach (Kaieteur National Park). All training and workshops used evaluations to assess the relevancy and usefulness of knowledge and skills gained in the deliverables.

**Field Activities:**

Biodiversity Assessment of Shell Beach (follow-up to the Biodiversity Assessment training in April): Carried out in August and September 2004, the Darwin Project supported a Technical Team to conduct a Rapid Biological Assessment of the proposed Shell Beach Protected Area. The somewhat delayed start in conducting the assessment was due to poor weather conditions earlier in the year. Preliminary results from the assessment thus far indicate interesting findings in species type and distribution and significant changes over the last 10 years in the biodiversity of the area. At the end of October the final report will be submitted by the technical team and be the basis of a Technical Dossier that will be submitted to the Government for the establishment of Shell Beach as an official Protected Area.

Community Consultations – Shell Beach. In March 2004, the Darwin Project supported a Training Workshop for Community Environmental Workers (CEWs) in partnership with GMTCS. The main focus of this workshop was to provide the CEWs with an overview of protected areas education and awareness tools and knowledge specifically as it relates to the Shell Beach Protected Area process, identifying the roles and responsibilities of key organisations and the stage at which the process is at the moment. Subsequent to the workshop, the CEWs followed up the workshop by using collateral materials prepared under the Darwin Project (Brochure, Question & Answer Sheet, Poster) in the field. In July 2004 the Darwin Project supported two Community Consultation Forums at Shell Beach with representatives from the local communities and Government, NGOs and other key actors in the Shell Beach Protected Area process. The forums also provided the opportunity for participants to raise issues and questions as it relates to Protected Areas and the Shell Beach efforts.

Feasibility Study on Sustainable Livelihood Options – Shell Beach. The feasibility study for sustainable livelihoods at Shell Beach was originally scheduled for August-September 2004. FFI was made aware that Jemma Roberts, MSc student of the DICE, University of Kent at Canterbury had just completed a MSc research project at Shell Beach to investigate the potential for community-based eco-tourism

development. The results from Robert's work has identified conservation-research exhibitions as not only a more viable option from an economic point of view but also a more locally acceptable form of local income generation. FFI will follow this recommendation up in a feasibility study in collaboration with Iwokrama Research Centre, EPA and GMTCS in January 2005.

**Other: Technical Assistant to EPA.** A technical assistant has been recruited to the EPA, supported by Darwin as agreed through correspondence with the Darwin Secretariat. The Assistant has been involved in the planning and executing of Darwin deliverables and has participated in field exercises for the Biodiversity Assessment and is benefiting from protected areas training. The addition of this person has seen a remarkable improvement in timely reporting on deliverables and expenditure from EPA—previously a problem (raised in previous reports).

**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.**

GMTCS has been experiencing internal problems between central and field based staff which had caused some confusion and tension at local community level. Internally, GMTCS Board and staff have managed to resolve the critical organisational issues and there is a noted improvement in its operation as well as in stakeholder relations. However, the unease of local communities over GMTCS staffing issues caused delays in carrying out community consultations and in turn prevented a full CRE assessment from being made as partners did not want to be seen “pushing” a process without resolving local issues first. Local support of the PA process is now restored at Shell Beach.

There were some delays to the GMTCS-WWF Shell Beach project (which runs parallel and complimentary to the Darwin), which directly affected on-the-ground community consultation activities to the Darwin. This project is now on-track again. FFI has a MoU with WWF and is in regular contact with them too.

EPA, our main project partner being slow at submitting reports while at times not sufficiently involving itself in the planning and execution of deliverables due to heavy workloads. The situation has improved since the hiring of the EPA Technical Assistant.

The unexpected early rainy season from November 2003 lasting until February 2004 made it difficult to conduct any field-based activities and as such, biodiversity assessments had to run later than originally scheduled. This deliverable was also affected by the time it took for the Darwin Secretariat to approve the carry-over of funds and activities to 31 August (in turn due to 5 month delay by DEFRA to pay at start of project).

In May 2004, Kerstin Swahn undertook a mid-project evaluation trip and met with all partners: EPA, GMTCS, plus WWF. The aforementioned issues were raised and discussed at length in order to find solutions so that Darwin deliverables would not be compromised or so at a minimum. However, as stated, some deliverables have been delayed by a month or two, whereas one will need to take place early next year (the feasibility study for research exhibitions).

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

Kerstin Swahn, FFI Americas Regional Co-ordinator, has been in frequent contact with the Darwin Secretariat over changes to the Darwin deliverables between 1 April and 31 August. However, the inability to start the research exhibition feasibility study (livelihoods) on time has not been raised as this is a very recent development.

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:** yes, in March – July 2004

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:** yes, in March – July 2004

**3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No.**