

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

## Half Year Report Form

<b>Project Title</b>	Institutional strengthening and capacity building for Guyana's Protected Area System
<b>Country</b>	Guyana
<b>Organisation</b>	Fauna & Flora International in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency, Guyana
<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	11/016
<b>Report date</b>	29.10.02

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

With final disbursement of funds in August 2002, the start to this project has been somewhat delayed, but after an initial inception visit by Evan Bowen-Jones (FFI Americas Regional Programme Manager) progress has been relatively fast.

The visit took place between August 12<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> and meetings were held with all major stakeholders involved in the ever-changing situation concerning National Protected Areas. Longer structured meetings were held with EPA aimed at fulfilling one of the first activities on the project schedule: a training needs assessment. However, it became clear that there are some key issues to overcome and a process to go through before clear needs for training and identification of trainees is possible (see section 2).

Additionally, Memoranda of Agreement were agreed and have now been signed between FFI and the key project partners: EPA (Government of Guyana's Environmental Protection Agency) and GMTCS (Guyanese Marine Turtle Conservation Society). Also, an in-country project officer – Shyam Nokta – a natural resources graduate previously working for Iwokrama has been employed to facilitate work in Guyana, benefit from training offered, and provide in-country continuity when FFI staff are not present.

### 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?

At the moment the situation regarding protected areas in Guyana is confused. EPA, although, *de facto* central management authority does not have dedicated team of people allocated to dealing with protected areas. Nor, due to the lack of a Minister for the Environment does it have a clear mandate to develop a national protected areas system. The protected areas secretariat (which already exists) is actually a technical advisory body, and has only met a couple of times – thus its role needs to be re-defined. There is a draft protected areas strategy – but this remains an internal EPA document and has not been through a process to engender wider buy-in.

To begin to resolve some of these issues, that are key to a successful project and national protected areas system EPA and FFI agreed to hold a national protected areas planning workshop over an extended period to replace the 2 separate workshops originally planned for August & October. This is now scheduled for the first week in December to allow sufficient preparation time.

The first two days will focus on agreeing generic mechanisms and principles for a centralised entity to

interact effectively with specific site management teams. This will involve all key stakeholders, including those from allied sectors such as forestry and Amerindian groups. A third day will then look at the specifics of how EPA and GMTCS can work together to achieve gazettelement for Shell Beach, and then how they can jointly work towards its management, in a smaller working group.

A secondary result of this third day will be the identification of specific individuals within EPA and GMTCS to be involved in training activities carried out during the rest of the project. This appears to be a more logical way of delivering these outputs given the political and institutional situation at present. An important bi-product of this process will also be national publicity of the event, and consequentially an increased awareness of the need to resolve some of the institutional uncertainties at cabinet level, where key decisions are required. The project team is assisting EPA with political lobbying on this issue. (I have flagged these issues to Sylvia Smith).

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

During the inception visit further discussions were held between FFI and Demerara Tobacco (one of British American Tobacco's subsidiaries). As a result of these discussions and the existing co-financing commitment of BAT UK through the FFI/BAT biodiversity partnership, Demerara Tobacco decided that it will provide in-country co-financing to the project over its 3 years totalling US\$50,000. This will be to pay for training and associated costs, plus awareness activities in Guyana. It will not, however, cover any international costs. We would therefore like to flag the possibility that costs associated with FFI personnel may be more heavily dependant on Darwin Initiative funding than in the original predicted budget. However, this will be off-set by lower logistical expenditure in Guyana. We hope that this would be acceptable to the Darwin Initiative given the fact that it is the Initiative's funding which has leveraged this BAT and Demerara Tobacco co-financing. (I have raised this issue with Sylvia Smith as well).

Completed forms to: Rose Clarkson, Darwin Initiative M&E Project Manager, John Muir Building, Kings Buildings, University of Edinburgh, Mayfield Rd., Edinburgh EH9 3JK, Scotland. Email: [R.Clarkson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:R.Clarkson@ed.ac.uk)