

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Annual Report

1. Darwin Project Information

<i>Project title</i>	Identifying sites of global biodiversity conservation importance for the Fiji BSAP.
<i>Country(ies)</i>	Fiji
<i>Contractor</i>	BirdLife International
<i>Project Reference No.</i>	162/11/022
<i>Grant Value</i>	£131,064
<i>Start/Finishing dates</i>	August 2002 – September 2005
<i>Reporting period</i>	August 2002 – March 2003

2. Project Background

This project aims to assist Fiji in implementing the first project brief in its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, viz:

Fiji NBSAP Project Brief 1:

DEVELOPMENT OF SITES OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE SYSTEM

Objective: Establishment of a registration protocol and administration for Sites of National Significance.

Fiji's BSAP is coordinated by the Department of the Environment who have only one technical staff person and one secretary working on biodiversity and many other environmental issues. They lack the resources and technical capacity to undertake this work. Other Fiji institutions (including NGOs) working towards biodiversity conservation are either fully engaged on marine issues or lack the technical capacity to undertake this work.

BirdLife International has had significant success with assisting other biodiversity-rich developing nations in this type of work, notably through BirdLife's 'Important Bird Area' (IBA) process. This project has adapted BirdLife's scientifically robust IBA process for use in Fiji, notably by adding a significant element of community consultation and liaison. The project aims to produce a register of sites of global biodiversity importance for the whole Fiji nation, to link this register to the BSAP and other similar initiatives, and to address the cross-cutting issues of raising awareness, capacity-building and resource-raising for Fijian biodiversity conservation.

3. Project Objectives

Project purpose:

National registers identify sites of global importance for biodiversity conservation in Fiji (and other Pacific islands), and advocate site action through NBSAPs and follow-up projects.

Project objectives:

1. The technical capacity of Fiji institutions will be built through training, supervision, networking and the provision of resources
2. Sites of biodiversity importance are identified, published, communicated and advocated
3. National awareness is raised through presentations and written outputs for all levels from community to international
4. Resources are mobilised to enable extension to other Pacific nations and follow-up long-term site-based biodiversity conservation.

See also the project log-frame, included as Appendix I.

The objectives and operational plan have not been changed since the project start.

4. Progress

This first project Annual Report includes details of the entire project activities from its start in August 2002 to 1 April 2003.

The proposed Project Implementation Schedule, split into Milestones and Outputs, is given below, along with the achieved implementation:

PROJECT OUTPUTS Year 2002-2003			
Proposed date	Achieved date	Output ref. no.	Notes
September	December	15A	First press release in Fiji related to project work in Dec; another press release in April 2002 announced the project.
September	October	17A	Regional experts and institutions invited and actively participating in project – formalised through a Project Steering Committee meeting in December
September	October	17B	Regional networks enhanced – formalised through circulation of project fieldwork reports from November
September	October	8	UK project staff to region for training and research
November	April (2003)	18A	National TV feature in Fiji broadcast
November	December	19A	National radio feature in Fiji broadcast
January	ongoing	13A	Published and ‘grey’ literature archived in-country – this has been re-scheduled as an ongoing activity, integrated with the fieldwork, instead of an initial activity to be completed early in the project
January	November (2002)	6	Training of non-staff
February	ongoing	7	Training manual (x50) for site-selection assessment printed and put on web – as site-selection is proving contentious, and the project is learning from experience, this has been re-scheduled as an ongoing activity instead of an initial activity to be completed early in the project
February	ongoing	12A	Darwin/BirdLife database established in Fiji and started elsewhere – database initiated but not yet mainstreamed
February	April (2003)	12B	Fiji BSAP database enhanced – new data submitted from November, but BSAP implementation plan not changed until April
February	November	14A	Stakeholder conference takes place – first community stakeholder conference held in November; first national technical workshop held in April 2003
March	November	14B	Project results disseminated at 30 gatherings - results disseminated to both community gatherings and technical workshops from November

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE YEAR 2002/2003			
Proposed date	Achieved date	Key milestones	
September	October; December	Fiji Coordinator, Project Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee recruited and inducted.	Fiji Coordinator = October PSC = December TAC = interim TAC met in Dec
October	December	Technical Advisory Committee (including NBSAP rep) meet to research and agree site selection criteria	Interim TAC met in December. Full TAC meeting postponed until Nov 2003 to learn from project progress, and synergise with a regional BirdLife conference
January	January; November; April	Final Fiji staff recruited; project office established in Fiji; project launched at awareness seminar	Staff recruited and office established in January; project announced at conference in November but dedicated project launch postponed until April
March	November 2003	Technical Advisory Committee have six month meeting for project supervision, research, training	Postponed until November 2003 (see above)

March	Ongoing (April)	Collaborative staff secondments agreed; project personnel training, needs assessment, gender analysis; etc	No personnel available for secondment; personnel training needs assessment and gender analysis in April and ongoing
April	Started in October	National fieldwork and consultation programme begins in Fiji	It was decided that the team would benefit from learning in the field before desk-research
April	Started in October	UK experts join Fiji network fieldwork team for research and training in the field	To enable the above fieldwork

Progress against the proposed schedule has been mixed, but averaging ahead of schedule: a number of milestones and outputs have been achieved ahead of schedule, whilst others have been behind schedule. However, it was recognised from the start that this is an inevitable consequence of a project of this type in Fiji: some activities proceed on time, while others, however thorough their planning, take much longer than anticipated, whilst opportunities allow yet others to be completed early. The project's design is sufficiently flexible to be able to take advantage of opportunities when they arise and also not to get bogged down with proposed activities which come up against problems for various reasons. The project has an evolving work-plan to accommodate these changes in opportunities. At this stage, it is predicted that most, if not all, of the proposed outputs will be achieved but not necessarily to the original schedule. The quantity of some outputs has been revised downwards by the Project Steering Committee (see Section 6). However, the quality of the outputs has been good. The project would be happy to provide further details about specific activities and why they are ahead or behind schedule if necessary.

The project's research and training has started well. The research programme can be summarised as:

- Sites of potential biodiversity conservation interest on Viti Levu identified through expert consultation, literature review and examination of maps (towards the end of the fieldwork, this list will be reviewed at a larger experts workshop)
- Fieldwork has been conducted at eight sites, each for a week
- UK project staff, Dr Guy Dutson, trained staff on five of these fieldwork visits and local expert consultants, Dr Dick Watling and Dr Joerg Kretschmar, trained staff on two/one of these visits.
- Training in ornithological survey techniques and their applications has been provided to students at the University of the South Pacific (three lectures and one week of training in the field; also one-to-ones with non-Fijian students)
- Short technical training courses have been completed in the office and the field with researchers from the Wildlife Conservation Society in Fiji

The two full-time Darwin-funded project staff (Vilikesa Masibalavu and Betani Salusalu) participated in all of these research activities. They were trained by UK and consultant ornithologists and they in turn trained local Fijian scientists and local community representatives. Local Fijian scientists were selected by advertising the opportunity to all relevant Fijian institutions, and selecting personnel who are most likely to use these skills in their future work.

Research methods were an adaptation of BirdLife International's globally accepted Important Bird Area (IBA) process. Standard IBA methods were used to ensure global objectivity, but adaptations for the Fijian environment include:

- Inclusion of mammals (including introduced species) and herps in the survey aims
- Standardised rat-trapping to assess threats from rat predation
- Tape-recording bird calls to create a training CD or cassette

- Pre-fieldwork and post-fieldwork discussion with land-owning communities, including basic PRA needs-assessment with respect to forest conservation, awareness of bird and forest conservation issues, and presentation of results.
- Written reports posted to relevant national institutions and Fijian reports to local government and land-owners.

Training methods were chosen to meet the needs of the staff, counterparts from national institutions and local communities. In recognition of their limited technical experience and the Fijian cultural learning environment, field training was undertaken on a one-to-one or small group basis, and through verbal discussion and hands-on supervision. This has taken more of time than originally anticipated. Although labour-intensive, results are far better than lecturing to large audiences or expecting self-progression.

The following significant difficulties were encountered:

- Lack of co-finance, limiting resources for fieldwork and technical supervision
- Low levels of experience and technical skills amongst staff and counterparts
- Inadequate government resources to enable staff secondment or meaningful collaboration
- The reporting period coincided with the Fiji wet season (October-April) and many fieldwork visits were cancelled or their ineffective because of continuous rain.

These difficulties were predictable, and included in the log-frame ('Sufficient pre-existing NGO and government capacity', 'Suitable staff recruited' and 'No undue fieldwork constraints (eg weather)'. The Project Steering Committee has indicated that the project is doing well to overcome, circumvent or mitigate these difficulties. The impact on the project is that a lower quantity of certain outputs will be achieved, and the Project Steering Committee has adjusted the project work-plan and objectives accordingly.

The project design has been improved in the following ways:

- Adjusted methods, especially time spent training, as described above
- More time spent raising co-finance
- Closer liaison with other similar conservation projects (e.g. Wildlife Conservation Society)

A separate work-plan was drawn up for April, when the UK project manager will be in Fiji, and for the next four months when the project manager will be absent. The work-plan lists the sites to be visited on fieldwork but this schedule is very provisional as the project takes opportunities as they arise, and must accommodate changes and postponements:

- Sites to be visited for fieldwork (two technical trainees and two community guides will be taken on each fieldwork visit):
Nabukelevu 9-11 April03; 26-30 May03; Vaturu Dam Catchment 27April-1May03; Sovi Basin 5-16 May03; Dogotuki 7-11 July03; E Vanua Levu seabird islands 13-18 July03; Natewa 21-25 July03; Tomanivi + Wabu August03
- The following sites will be visited for one week each, in June and after August but no firm schedule has been arranged: Wainikoroiluva, Tuvatau, Nabukelevu, Wainikovu Creek, Naitauvoli, Monasavu + Rairaimatuku Plateau, Draunidakua, Balasere, Rewasau, Qaranibuluti + Nadarivatu.
- Awareness poster to be produced in June
- Progress to be reported and assessed at a Project Steering Committee meeting in June or July.

- The project Masters student will start designing his thesis in April but not start fieldwork until July, when he returns from a 2-month training course.
- The next national training and awareness workshop will be organised for 3-14 November 2003.
- Other activities will be scheduled around arising opportunities

5. Partnerships

The primary host country partner is the Institute of Applied Sciences at the University of the South Pacific. The relationship is proving to be very constructive; the highlights are co-organisation and funding of training and awareness conferences and workshops, cross-training on fieldwork methods, collaboration on fieldwork visits, and co-supervision of the project masters student. The difficulties are (inevitably) related to the resources and experience of the partner: they have limited staff time and resources for terrestrial conservation work. However they have just started a new terrestrial ecology research programme, PABITRA, enabling closer liaison.

The project has invested significant time in networking with other Fijian organisations, as follows:

- Department of the Environment – close support for terrestrial BSAP activities
- Ministry of Fijian Affairs – awareness and introductions through traditional government
- Ministry of Forestry – researching survey sites based on their data; reporting back on biodiversity value of these sites; training their staff
- National Trust of Fiji Islands – training their staff; advising on their programmes
- Wildlife Conservation Society South Pacific program – collaboration in fieldwork, research and awareness; training their staff
- Worldwide Fund for Nature Fiji program – collaboration in awareness and policy
- Conservation International and Maruia Society – collaborating for community-based conservation work in Sovi Basin

The project is also partnering with other technical research organisations, such as US Fish and Wildlife Service in Hawaii and Birds-Australia to ensure high scientific standards of our work.

6. Impact and Sustainability

One of the project's main objectives is awareness. Activities and outputs include:

- Collaboration (eg technical and organisational assistance) with national workshops and conferences (eg USP's 2-week PABITRA course; WCS's Heritage Trees Workshop)
- Participation in other national workshops and meetings
- Regular meetings with key government departments on one-to-one basis and through Project Steering Committee
- Presentations and discussions with local land-owning communities before and after all fieldwork visits
- Fieldwork reports sent to all key departments and institutions, and Fijian report sent to local communities
- Regular press releases; opportunistic radio and TV features
- News articles in international journals (e.g. Oryx, World Birdwatch)

The simultaneous start-up of this project and the Wildlife Conservation Society has initiated the only terrestrial conservation work currently being undertaken in Fiji. (All other significant conservation work is directed at marine issues.) There has been significant interest amongst many sectors of Fijian society, notably the students at USP, who for the first time can see jobs and careers in conservation. Capacity is being built through the participation of these and others in the project's fieldwork and educative awareness work.

The project still has 2.5 years to run, so has not reviewed its exit strategy. However, in May 2003, the project managed to lever significant resources from the EC, to run for four years from mid-2004, which will enable some ongoing activities.

7. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

Table 1. Project Outputs (According to Standard Output Measures)

<i>Code No.</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Description</i>
4C	23 x 1 week	BirdLife contributed lectures and field courses to the 2-week University
4D	14x1 week	PABITRA course = 2 Solomon Islanders, 3 ni-Vanuatu, 1 Cook Islander, 1 from Niue, 1 Samoan Post-grad students were also were given one-to-one training on week-long fieldwork visits.
5	5 months	Fijian staff (included as Code 5 as these individuals will total > 1 year by end of project)
6A 6B	14 x 1 week	Most of these people were given one-to-one training on week-long fieldwork visits. All were Fijians, with technical jobs (eg with government), recent graduates or local community representatives. Also 14 people on 4 training trips of 0.5-2 days length, and 5 days of training in technical office skills
8	18 weeks	
12B	1 CD data-base	PABITRA database (held at USP)
14A	3	Awareness presentations to govt depts
	10	Awareness presentations to local communities
14B	1	BirdLife presentation given
15B	3	In national-circulation newspapers
15D	2	Oryx; World Birdwatch
17B	3	Fiji BSAP scientific cttee; Fiji national Ramsar steering cttee; Fiji bird rarities committee
19A	1	National radio station interview
20	£4800	Capital equipment purchased in 2002/3 plus donated software
23	Approx £7000	In-kind contributions (transport, professional time, scientific facilities) from USP, National Trust and Environment Consultants Fiji. Professional time for committee and advisory meetings. E25k grant for calendar year 2003 from LNV/DGIS through BirdLife International.

The differences between the outputs proposed and those achieved have been explained above in the section on Progress.

Table 2: Publications

Type *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
(e.g. journal paper, book, manual, CD)	(e.g. title, authors, journal, year, pages)	(name, city)	(e.g. contact address, email address, website)	
No formal publications yet				
The project contributed to the following CD	Institute of Applied Science, USP (2002) Proceedings of APN/PABITRA joint analysis workshop.	Institute of Applied Science, USP, Suva	Morrison_c@usp.ac.fj	FOC

8. Project Expenditure

Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period

Item	Budget £	Expenditure £
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* = totals changed in agreement with Darwin in February 2003

The only other deviation was that the total for transport was £89.12 over-budget, and this has been taken from the capital items budget-line.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

Monitoring and evaluation follows the log-frame (Appendix I). The project has established a Project Steering Committee (PSC) composed of the Principal Environment Officer (Dept Env't), Acting Forest Conservator (Ministry of Forestry), Director of Institute of Applied Sciences (USP), Principal of Environment Consultants (Fiji), Director of Wildlife Conservation Society Pacific Program and the BirdLife Project Manager. Meetings were held in November 2002 and April 2003 (reporting on progress to 31 March). The minutes are included as Appendix II.

Most monitoring was aimed at quantifying Darwin standard outputs. The project indicators relating to the project purpose largely assess progress scheduled for later in the project, and cannot be measured at this stage. Initial indicators include:

- Dept of Environment BSAP manager acknowledging this project's technical contribution in letters and submissions to eg CITES and UNDP.
- Ministry of Fijian Affairs making statements against logging in sites identified and advocated by the project
- Several local communities consulting the project about development alternatives to logging

Lessons learned include:

- Adjust proposed outputs to actual conditions (this was discussed and targets agreed for the next 4 months by the PSC).
- The difficulty of using or renting vehicles from partner organisations has been a limiting factor. Accordingly, a vehicle has been written into the co-finance application to the EC (which was successful in May 2003).
- Closer management supervision when no UK staff are in country. This has been addressed by funding more time for UK staff, facilitating volunteer input (starting April 2003) and increasing frequency of Project Steering Committee meetings.

10. Author(s) / Date

Main author = Guy Dutson, with contributions from Lincoln Fishpool and Vilikesa Masibalavu.

5 May 2003.

APPENDIX I: Project Log-frame

<i>Project summary</i>	<i>Measurable indicators</i>	<i>Means of verification</i>	<i>Important assumptions</i>
<p>Goal</p> <p><i>To assist countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources with the conservation of biological diversity and implementation of the Biodiversity Convention</i></p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>National registers identify sites of global importance for biodiversity conservation in Fiji (and other Pacific islands), and advocate site action through NBSAPs and follow-up projects</p>	<p>Number of stakeholders and institutions participating</p> <p>Number of Pacific nationals trained</p> <p>Number and type of training</p> <p>Number of hits to website and printed copies of registers</p> <p>Number of follow-up proposals for site conservation</p> <p>NB - Project Steering Cttee to enumerate all indicators</p>	<p>Fiji government reports to CBD</p> <p>IUCN global reviews of bird conservation status</p> <p>Resources committed to biodiversity conservation</p> <p>MoUs and collaborative agreements</p> <p>Project reports</p> <p>Publication of national registers</p> <p>Distribution of printed registers</p> <p>Use of registers on website</p> <p>Government reports to CBD</p>	<p>Identification of globally important sites facilitates their conservation</p> <p>Biodiversity conservation is feasible at these sites</p> <p>Adequate community support for site conservation</p> <p>Adequate resources mobilised for follow-up proposals</p> <p>Fiji government maintains support for project and CBD</p> <p>Adequate government stability</p> <p>All institutions maintain cooperation</p> <p>Adequate technical capacity can be built in-country</p> <p>Awareness methods effective</p>
<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical capacity of national institutions is built - Biodiversity value and conservation potential of sites of possible importance are researched in field visits - Sites of global biodiversity importance are identified and communicated - National awareness raised - Resources are mobilised to enable long-term site-based biodiversity conservation <p>Activities</p> <p>Institutional collaboration Stakeholder consultation Technical supervision/advice Training courses & visits Data collation & repatriation Data synthesis / desk review Database and web design Targetted fieldwork visits Data analysis and reporting Production / dissemination of technical outputs Communication & advocacy Support for follow-up action</p>	<p>No. staff trained</p> <p>No. training weeks</p> <p>No. institutions benefiting</p> <p>No. literature items archived</p> <p>No. stakeholders consulted</p> <p>No. person-days fieldwork</p> <p>No. sites visited</p> <p>No. and type of publications and presentations</p> <p>No. participants at talks</p> <p>Amount of resources for follow-up proposals</p> <p>MEANS</p> <p>UK salaries</p> <p>Local salaries</p> <p>Per diems for local experts</p> <p>Fieldwork per diems</p> <p>Transport and staff costs</p> <p>Office equipment and running costs</p> <p>Publication & communication</p> <p>Training / presentations</p> <p>Project admin</p>	<p>Project reports</p> <p>External government reports (eg to CBD)</p> <p>External project reviews</p> <p>Agreements with collaborators</p> <p>Publications with dissemination reports</p> <p>Objective questionnaires</p> <p>Donor pledges</p> <p>Internal reports to Darwin</p> <p>Annual reports to governments</p> <p>Project newsletters and website</p> <p>External appraisal</p> <p>Equipment inventory, invoices and bank statements</p>	<p>Sufficient pre-existing NGO and government capacity</p> <p>Suitable staff recruited</p> <p>Assessment criteria can be modified for Fiji and pan-Pacific use</p> <p>Wide participation outwith lead partners</p> <p>Donor community supports project follow-up strategy</p> <p>Collaborative institutions maintain support</p> <p>Government stability</p> <p>Suitable staff recruited</p> <p>No undue fieldwork constraints (eg weather)</p>

APPENDIX II: Minutes of Project Steering Committee meetings