

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Annual Report

1. Darwin Project Information

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|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Project title</i> | School Green Land |
| <i>Country(ies)</i> | Kyrgyzstan |
| <i>Contractor</i> | “Field Studies Council” , |
| <i>Project Reference No.</i> | 162/11/024 |
| <i>Grant Value</i> | £121,275 |
| <i>Start/Finishing dates</i> | June 2002-June 2005 |
| <i>Reporting period</i> | 30 April 2003 |

2. Project Background

- *Briefly describe the location and circumstances of the project and the problem that the project aims to tackle.*

Kyrgyzstan has the richest biodiversity of all the Central Asian countries - 22 classes of ecosystems and 1% of all known species on Earth can be found on it's territory, although the country occupies only 0.13% of the Earth's land area.

But like many countries in transition, the biodiversity of Kyrgyzstan is under huge threat from social and economic pressures, especially in rural areas through over grazing, over use of pesticides and fertilisers and pollution of water sources. There is a need to raise awareness of rural and urban communities to the countries unique biodiversity heritage and to begin to establish different patterns of behaviour.

Schools are the appropriate centres that can be used to spread the ideas of biodiversity protection in local communities both directly to local people and through children. However, the level of effective biodiversity education is very low in Kyrgyzstan and this causes a low level of awareness and understudying of school students and local communities about the unique role of biodiversity and it's importance for sustainable development of Kyrgyzstan.

3. Project Objectives

- *State the purpose and objectives (or purpose and outputs) of the project. Please include the Logical Framework for this project (as an appendix) if this formed part of the original proposal or has been developed since, and report against this.*

The **purpose** of the project is to - Raise the awareness and understanding of school students and communities in Kyrgyzstan of the unique nature and value of Kyrgyzstan's biodiversity and the importance of protecting this as the country seeks to move towards sustainable development.

The **main objective** is to - Enhance the capacity of BIOM, other NGOs, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environment to be effective in raising awareness and

understanding of biodiversity and to communicate biodiversity in a way that can change behaviour.

The **specific objectives** of the project are:-

- (a) To raise awareness across the whole community of the critical importance of protecting Kyrgyzstan's biodiversity.
- (b) To increase understanding of the relationships between the environment, economy and society and that protecting biodiversity is a positive contribution towards reaching sustainable development
- (c) To stimulate new behaviours to reduce the loss of biodiversity.
- (d) To increase the effectiveness of biodiversity education for young people
- (e) To increase the effectiveness of biodiversity education for local communities
- (f) To raise the capacity of the teachers and those working with young people to deliver effective learning about the biodiversity of Kyrgyzstan.

- *Have the objectives or proposed operational plan been modified over the last year and have these changes been approved by the Darwin Secretariat?*

No, the objectives as well as the proposed operational plan have not been modified over the last year.

4. Progress

- *Please provide a brief history of the project to the beginning of this reporting period. (1 para.)*

On the first project step (April - July 2002) the Project Manager and assistant from BIOM team was appointed and trained by FSC during the Inception visit (8-14 July, 2002). This supported the planning of project activities, the development of the selection criteria for schools of Kyrgyzstan to be involved in the project, and selection criteria for Development Team.

The second project step (August-October 2002) included the selection of the Development Team, the development of the first project Newsletter and distribution of the information about project "School Green Land" among the schools of Kyrgyzstan, ecological NGOs and international organizations. We also undertook a five day Study/Training visit of the Development Team to the UK, which included an element of project planning and also the training, related to the development of schools based micro reserves, developing active student and teacher resources and working with local communities.

In the third project step (October 2002-January 2003) we focused on competition and process of selection of 25 project schools. As a result we had got 46 schools (from 126 schools, which applied) in the first list, and 25 schools in the second list after all short-listed schools was visited and assessed before a final selection by members of Development Team.

The fourth project step (February-March 2003) was devoted to workshops for 25 selected schools, which were delivered by 3 teams through 3 workshops. These were organized by Development Team with involvement of experts from FSC, Kyrgyz scientists and representatives from Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment. We trained 53 teachers and each produced a development management plans for their Micro Reserves.

- *Summarise progress over the last year against the agreed baseline timetable for the period. Explain differences including any slippage or additional outputs and activities.*

Our project has followed the agreed baseline timetable for the first year of project realisation.

a) The Inception Visit (8 – 14 July)

During the Inception visit to Kyrgyzstan, the FSC and BIOM worked on planning project activities for the first six months, and also visited a number of governmental and international organizations including the Ministry of Environment and Emergency Situations, the National Forest Service, The "Life" program (UNDP and governments of Sweden, Germany and Holland), UNDP, Counterpart Consortium (program of USAID), and the Swiss Cooperation Office. The purpose was to network the project and involve stakeholders. As a result, many of these organizations have given useful support to the project. For example, Counterpart Consortium, "Soros-Kyrgyzstan" Foundation and Konrad Adenauer Foundation have supported the distribution of the information about the project "School Green Lands" through the networks of their over 30 regional offices in Kyrgyzstan.

b) The Creation of our Team

We managed to select a strong Development Team for realization of the whole project. The team is made up of eight people from five NGOs including BIOM. All the team members have ecological experience and have worked with schools.

c) Involvement of volunteers

We managed to attract twelve volunteers. This group has been specially trained during a seminar organized by Development Team after the Study Visit to Great Britain. At the present moment volunteers support the project through activities such as assisting with administration of the project.

d) Advertising the Project

- Instead of the usual process of distributing information to schools, we used a PR company to support us. This meant that –
- The information about the project and competition was sent to all 2032 schools of Kyrgyzstan! This is the first time that information about a project has been distributed in this way.
- The information was presented in the format of an attractive full colour Newsletter, which included the description of the project, rules of competition for schools, and also the information about Darwin Foundation, FSC and BIOM. Thus, all schools of Kyrgyzstan received information about our organizations. In addition, the Newsletter included a questionnaire "How well do you know the biodiversity of Kyrgyzstan? ", which can be used by teachers as a lesson resource. Information about the project and biodiversity of Kyrgyzstan was distributed to all schools regardless of whether they are taking part in the project.
- To date six articles about the project have appeared in the mass-media, four in Kyrgyzstan and 2 in the UK. In addition, we have been interviewed in the Kyrgyz National TV-Radio Company and gave a brief presentation about the

project in a news program on “Osh-TV” - TV company in the south of Republic.

e) Study Visit to the UK 13-20 October 2002

The eight members of the BIOM Development Team visited the UK for 7 days, and spent time planning the development of the micro biodiversity areas in detail, and visiting examples of biodiversity education good practice in the UK. This included visits to Schools, Natural History Museum, CAT, London Ecology Centre, Bishops Wood Education Centre, Kew Gardens, Learning through Landscapes and DEFRA as well as more formal training workshops by FSC trainers, including Ken Webster. One of the major outcomes of the visit was to re-evaluate what a micro biodiversity reserve is and how it should be used in education. The main conclusion was that the project needed to ensure that the reserves were developed and used within the context of sustainable development. A full report of the visit is available.

f) Process of competition and selection of schools

- 126 schools applied to take part in the project – or just over 6% of schools in the country. This is a very high proportion, especially in relation to the commitments that schools have to make
- Also we have received the greater response from NGOs than was expected. After special meeting organized by BIOM for NGOs in order to inform them about the project, many NGOs have prepared support letters for schools, they work with that wanted to participate.
- As result of the competition we have strong a network of 25 schools. This was because the Development Team selected an excellent two-stage selection strategy. Of the 126 we selected a shortlist of 46 and we visited all of them in order to make a clear picture of all short listed schools and have a big choice for final selection of 25 project schools. This additional work for the Development Team was justified in terms of the quality of schools selected.
- One of the additional positive outputs is the strengthening of “BIOM”’s potential for working with schools of Kyrgyzstan. During the process of selection we accumulated information about different schools and now have a wide spectrum of ideas about educational programs and school needs. In addition, we have built up a valuable database of more than 100 active schools interested in biodiversity conservation. We shall continue to work with this network as closely as possible. For example we shall send them the project Newsletter and invite them to participate in other BIOM educational program

h) Workshops for selected schools

We ran three groups of workshops for the selected schools. The main outputs were –

- In addition to members of the Development Team a large number of experts were involved including, Jonathan Oldham from the FSC, an expert-climatologist Dr. Podrezov, an expert-ecologist Dr. Shukurov, an expert from Ministry of Education Dr. Subanova and a number of others. As a result teachers received high quality information, submitted to teachers. The average

score on the workshop evaluation sheets was 3,5-3,7/4 meaning "very good" and "excellent".

- During the seminars we managed to increase the project teachers' capacity and also the potential of people working in other biodiversity conservation projects who attended the workshop including the "West Tien-Shan Biodiversity project", supported by GEF and "Intergovernmental project on West Tien Shan Biodiversity Conservation", supported by TACIS.
- *Provide an account of the project's research, training, and/or technical work during the last year. This should include discussion on selection criteria for participants, research and training methodologies as well as results. Please summarise techniques and results and, if necessary, provide more detailed information in appendices (this may include cross-references to attached publications)*

These issues have been largely covered in the descriptions above where-

Training courses have been described

Selection of the Development Team has been described

Further details are available in the Workshop Reports.

- *Discuss any significant difficulties encountered during the year.*

There were no significant difficulties in project realization during the 1st year. The project has run very smoothly and followed the original work plan.

- *Has the design of the project been enhanced over the last year, e.g. refining methods, indicators for measuring achievements, exit strategies*

No enhancement to the project has taken place other than developments described above

- *Present a timetable (workplan) for the next reporting period.*

Workplan for next reporting period – 30 October 2003

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| May, 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing the work with management plans of school micro reserves and give the schools micro-grants for their creation • School/communities will begin to develop the reserves. This might involve some planting of new species, and some construction - for example of a pond or special area. The Reserve will be developed by the local teams that the schools will have established. • Developing and issuing of the project poster • Issuing of special Newsletter for teachers, devoted to Day of Biodiversity (funded by GEF) • Joint action with GEF and other partners, devoted to Day of Biodiversity (22 May) |
| June, 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing of the 3rd project Newsletter • Working on Teachers Handbook and Textbook for school students • Monitoring of school micro-reserve creation |
| July, 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on Teachers Handbook and Textbook for school students • Monitoring of school microreserve creation |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| August, 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of school micro-reserve creation • Issuing of 4th project Newsletter • Visit project leader James Hindson to Kyrgyzstan with the purpose of discussion of Teachers Handbook and Textbook for school students conceptions |
| September, 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of school micro-reserve creation • Teachers Handbook developed |
| October, 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft students materials developed • Issuing of 5th project Newsletter |

5. Partnerships

- *Describe collaboration between UK and host country partner(s) over the last year. Are there difficulties or unforeseen problems or advantages of these relationships?*

All project work was carried out by BIOM and the Development Team in close cooperation with FSC. The following visits were carried out

Inception visit by James Hindson to Kyrgyzstan from the 4th-8th July, 2002

Monitoring Visit by James Hindson on the 7th-8th March, 2003),

Training Visit by Jonathan Oldham from the 3rd-8th December, 2002

Study Visit of Development Team to UK from the 13th-20th October 2002.

There has also been regular correspondence through email.

So far no significant problems have occurred in the project. This has largely been as a result of the fact that partnership groundrules were worked out at the start of the project. BIOM and the FSC share a strong common philosophy of project management and also of approaches to education for sustainability that has strengthened the partnership. The partnership has also developed in other areas over the year with the FSC involving BIOM in a regional water saving competition the FSC is managing and also inviting BIOM to co author a publication for the Russian speaking world on Education for Sustainability.

- *Has the project been able to collaborate with similar projects in the host country or establish new links with / between local or international organisations involved in biodiversity conservation?*

The "School Green Land" project has been able to effectively collaborate with other projects, directed on biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan. These include the "West Tien Shan Biodiversity project", supported by GEF and "Intergovernmental project on West Tien-Shan Biodiversity Conservation", supported by TACIS. These projects are organizing jointly with the Darwin BIOM project, a Day of Biodiversity on the 22nd May in Bishkek.

One of elements of this Day is a special Newsletter which will include information about biodiversity of Kyrgyzstan and some practical advice for teachers on how they can celebrate this day in schools. The Newsletter will be developed by BIOM and supported by GEF financially. The Newsletter will be sent to all schools involved to "School Green Land" project, "West Tien Shan Biodiversity conservation" project and

to other schools in Kyrgyz republic, which are active in the field of ecological education.

We are really pleased with this high level of cooperation between the major biodiversity projects in the country.

6. Impact and Sustainability

- *Discuss the profile of the project within the country and what efforts have been made during the year to promote the work. What evidence is there for increasing interest and capacity for biodiversity resulting from the project? Are satisfactory exit strategies for the project in place?*

As described above, the project has a high profile and has been effectively publicised. The Ministry of Education, after being simply generally supportive at the start of the project, are now openly enthusiastic. Interest is also increasing from the Ministry of Environment. Links with other projects are exceptionally strong. Through the first newsletter all schools in the country have been made aware of the importance of biodiversity but as this is the end of only the first year of the project we have just started the process of collecting base line data from the schools in terms of biodiversity knowledge and understanding. The FSC is more than confident that in BIOM there is an expert and stable NGO, more than capable of developing the work of biodiversity education. The links made with the GEF and Tacis projects demonstrate this.

7. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

- *Please expand and complete Table 1. Quantify project outputs over the last year using the coding and format from the Darwin Initiative Standard Output Measures (see website for details) and give a brief description. Please list and report on appropriate Code Nos. only. The level of detail required is specified in the Guidance notes on Output Definitions which accompanies the List of Standard Output Measures.*

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

| Code No. | Quantity | Description |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 6A and B | 8 people | 1. Training for Development Team - so far 2 training weeks provided including UK Study Visit |
| 8 | 53 people | 2. School/Community leader training – so far three days provided 1. At least 250 pages of training materials in Russian and if possible Kyrgys, to support the training courses above. So far at least 100 pages provided. 2. Training materials for Teachers |
| 9 | 1 Project Manager and 12 volunteers | 1 member of staff for an average of one working month (22 days) a year for the time of the project. |
| 10 | 25 | Draft Management Plans developed |
| 16 A/B/C | 4 | Articles in Kyrgyzstan Press |
| | 2 | Articles in UK Press |
| | 1 | Television Interviews |
| | 1 | Radio Interview |
| 17A | 2 | Two Newsletters produced – one sent to all schools in the country and the other to those that applied for the the project and others related to a TACIS Project. |

- Explain differences in actual outputs against those agreed in the initial ‘Project Implementation Timetable’ and the ‘Project Outputs Schedule’, i.e. what outputs were not achieved or only partly achieved? Were additional outputs achieved?
- In Table 2, provide full details of all publications and material produced over the last year that can be publicly accessed, e.g. title, name of publisher, contact details, cost. Details will be recorded on the Darwin Monitoring Website Publications database which is currently being compiled. Mark (*) all publications and other material that you have included with this report.

Table 2: Publications

| Type * (e.g. journals, manual, CDs) | Detail (title, author, year) | Publishers (name, city) | Available from (e.g. contact address, website) | Cost |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| <i>Initial Newsletter</i> | <i>BIOM, 2002</i> | <i>BIOM</i> | <i>BIOM</i> | <i>free</i> |

- Provide details of dissemination activities in the host country during the year. Will these activities be continued by the host country when the project finishes, and how will this be funded and implemented?

The dissemination activities were described in the previous items. BIOM is going to continue working with project schools/communities both in the field of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

On one hand we plan to use the microreserves as well as educated teachers from 25 project schools in order to create the network of schools “For Biodiversity Conservation”. In this case project schools will become the Regional Educational Centres, which can conduct educational events for teachers of all regions of Kyrgyzstan, organise ecological actions and companies, work with communities, issuing of ecological publication etc. BIOM is going to support this network, develop and coordinate it’s activity.

On the other hand “Biodiversity Conservation” is now the first step in developing of ecological activity in project schools/communities, because BIOM plan to involve them into other projects (“Developing of Local Agendas-21 for School and Communities”, Energy and Water resources protection”, “Developing of Alternative Energy in Kyrgyzstan” etc) in order to get 25 Schools of Sustainable Development, which can become “Good examples” and help to make conditions for developing of Ecological Education in Kyrgyzstan.

8. Project Expenditure

- *Please expand and complete Table 3.*

Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period

| Item | Budget | Expenditure |
|------|--------|-------------|
|------|--------|-------------|

- *Highlight any recently agreed changes to the budget and explain any variation in expenditure where this is +/- 10% of the budget*

As previously explained the project started three months after the due date consequently one quarter of the budget amount will fall into the year 2003-2004. Our auditors are due in June at which point the Audit certificate will be provided.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

- *Discuss methods employed to monitor and evaluate the project this year. How can you demonstrate that the outputs and outcomes of the project actually contribute to the project purpose? i.e. what indicators of achievements (both qualitative and quantitative) and how are you measuring these?*

The focus of the first year of the project has been on supporting the development of BIOM and the selection of schools. The FSC has monitored the project through visits at key stages and through regular contact through email. BIOM are a well managed and professional NGO and have taken responsibility themselves to ensure that the project outcomes are met. They have been especially successful in ensuring that the schools were carefully selected.

- *Are there lessons that you learned from this years work and can you build this learning into future plans?*

There are no specific lessons that we have learned this year – the project has gone very smoothly and we have achieved all our planned objectives and outcomes – we have not changed our planning for the following year of the project.

10. Author(s) / Date

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James Hindson
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28.4.2003