

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Transnational conservation planning in the Maputaland ecoregion of southern Africa
Country	Moçambique, South Africa and Swaziland
Organisation	Durrell Institute of Conservation & Ecology, University of Kent
Project Ref. No.	162/12/006
Report date	31 st October 2003

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months 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).

The project was initiated in June, with a two month visit by the Project Officer to Moçambique, South Africa and Swaziland to meet with stakeholders and other partners with conservation planning expertise. Meetings were held with representatives of each of the state conservation authorities, as well as the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park Authority, and all of these bodies expressed their support.

A meeting was held with a representative of Conservation International (CI) who explained plans to include Maputaland in the new Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany hotspot that CI will officially recognise in 2004. A workshop is planned for the beginning of 2004 to bring together relevant stakeholders and the Project Officer has been invited to attend.

A meeting was also held with the personnel from the Swaziland National Trust Commission to discuss the proposed “Swaziland Biodiversity Conservation and Participatory Development” project that is being developed for Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding. This GEF project aims to develop two biodiversity corridors and one of these falls within Maputaland, so it is expected that there will be great opportunities to share expertise and work together if funding is approved.

Meetings were also held with The Wildlands Trust, a South African NGO that is involved in several community-based ecotourism and sustainable use projects in Maputaland. The Trust is very keen to collaborate and it was decided to work together to trial the use of the conservation planning system in informing small-scale conservation planning exercises. This would involve using a broad-scale analysis to identify important areas, using local experts to identify which of these areas would have local community support, collecting relevant socio-economic data and then incorporating this information into the planning system that can be used to develop a land-use plan that can be applied on the ground.

Three workshops were held in Pietermaritzburg, Manzini and Maputo to produce lists of species and ecological processes that should be mapped and included in the Maputaland conservation planning system. This information has been combined with lists produced by several experts and will be sent to all the relevant experts once further information has been collected from other stakeholders. A key development has been the decision to include all large mammal species in the planning system, as these have direct financial value that can be measured from game auction data, and this information can be used to identify conservation areas that could be profitably established as game ranches.

The project web pages (<http://www.mosaic-conservation.org/maputaland>) were uploaded in August and contain information on project objectives and links with project partners. It also includes information on the landcover classification system that will be used in the mapping exercises. The website has been visited by 668 people since August and will be used to disseminate information from the project.

A workshop was also held at the University of Swaziland to produce a manuscript entitled “Conservation planning and viability: problems associated with identifying priority sites for Swaziland’s mammals using species list data.” This work was initiated as part of a British Council Link Programme project but the workshop allowed the authors to develop ideas, increase the sophistication of the analysis and produce a first draft of the manuscript. The final draft of this manuscript will be completed in December and submitted to the journal *Animal Conservation*.

An initial conservation planning analysis of the South African section of Maputaland was undertaken, based on existing landcover information. The conservation targets that were used in this analysis were produced during a workshop that was conducted together with KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife, the government body that is responsible for conservation in the province. This analysis will be finalised in the next two months and will then be used to identify where two local-scale conservation planning case studies will be undertaken. The analysis will also publicise and illustrate the value of this approach and will be included in a manuscript that will be submitted to the journal *Oryx*.

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?

A colleague who works for The Nature Conservancy has informed us that her organisation is developing some conservation planning software that aims to fulfil most of the functions of the ArcView GIS interface that was to be developed as part of this project. The Project Officer hopes to receive a copy of the TNC manual before December and will then be able to assess the extent of the overlap between the two sets of software. If there is a large degree of overlap then it probably best to adopt the TNC software, which would be completed in the next few months and would be automatically used by a large number of conservation planners in the United States, Asia and South America. This would allow the Project Officer to spend more time developing support material and publicising the value of conservation planning projects.

It proved very difficult to visit all of the stakeholders during the Project Officer’s two month trip to southern Africa, which suggests that future plans to hold large workshops and steering committee meetings might not be feasible. Investigations are currently being made as to whether some of these meetings could be done using phone links or by e-mail.

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

The project was initiated in June and there have been no other issues that related to Darwin’s management, monitoring, or financial procedures during that time.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Project Manager, Email: stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk