Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we <u>will not be able to confirm receipt of reports</u> but will contact you individually should any questions arise

Project Ref. No. 162/13/005

Project Title Community Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Awacachi Corridor,

NW Ecuador

Country(ies) Ecuador

UK Organisation Fauna & Flora International, Americas ProgrammeCollaborator(s) Sirua Foundation (formerly Awacachi Foundation)

Report date October 31, 2006

Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

Project website www.sirua.org

- 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).
- Butterfly farm management plan and additional document requested by the Regional Biodiversity Unit of the Ministry of the Environment submitted and approval for functioning of the facility granted.
- Zoo-sanitary permit for the functioning of the butterfly farm granted by the Agriculture Ministry.
- New nursery for the production of host plants for the butterfly farm established
- Sirua Foundation web page produced and contents being added. A new issue of the Newsletter has been produced (available at www.sirua.org)
- Sirua Foundation staff as received training as follows: Field Coordinator has attended to an international workshop in the cultivation, management and industrial uses of bamboo; Activities Coordinator attended an actualization course in constitutional law, human rights, administrative legal actions, environmental law, taxation and law and gender. Rangers and butterfly farm staff were trained by a botanist in identification in the filed of the host plants used by *Morpho cypris*. These identification skills will be useful to collect young plants to be grown in the nursery and in the surroundings of the breeding facility.
- Periodic revision sessions have been delivered to the Rangers in order to refresh the biological concepts and methodologies. Biological monitoring system is under revision. A new matrix focusing in 20 sp has been produced to improve the data collection by the rangers.
- First draft of the ranger field guide produced.
- Old cacao plantations recovered and the first new ones planted produced their first yield (1,700 pounds of fresh seeds). This production was around 30% of the normal capacity, and it was used for self consumption.
- A market study for Cacao derivates has been contracted and cooperation agreement signed with APROCANE has been extended to give support in the Cacao organic certification.
- The handing over of the chusquines (bamboo seedlings) started past month. To date 800 chusquines have been given to 4 families (200 each one) to start their bamboo plantations. Each family will plant 0.5 ha

- Four radio interviews were given to local radio in San Lorenzo, and one TV interview in a national channel. Also Sirua's field coordinator participated in a radio debate about use of water in the Canton, highlighting the importance of the Awacachi corridor for the protection of water resources.
- In collaboration with RARE it has been possible to publicize the corridor through radio notes and to promote the conservation of nature within the inhabitants of the San Lorenzo Municipality.
- Sirua in conjunction with the San Lorenzo Municipality and other 2 local NGOs submitted a proposal to PRODERENA (EU funds) and it has been approved. This proposal concentrates mainly in reforestation, protection of catchments areas, and security in protected areas in the Cantón.
- Training in Environmental Education was given to 3 school teachers from different schools of San Lorenzo so they can create awareness in conservation within their pupils. A small group of students has been conformed to work in environmental issues

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.

- It was planned during the period covered by this report to plant around 12 hectares of native bamboo. To date only 2 hectares have been planted due to two main reasons: first, bamboo mother plants have not been producing as fast as expected. According to the information given the mother plants could be maintained in the plastic sacs without affecting the production of chusquines. In our nursery it has been evidenced that this is not the case. Plants planted in the ground have been producing much more chusqines than the ones maintained in sacs. For this reason currently all are planted in the ground and we expect that the production of seedlings increase in the next months. Second, during this year the dry season lasted until last month, delaying the best time to establish new plantations. We expect to speed up the planting process in the following months.
- The beginning of the production in the butterfly farm has been delay due to the necessity of fulfilling new requirements in terms of operations management plan, inspections visits to the facility and sanitary permits. All these requirements have been fulfilled.
- As explained in past reports levels of insecurity are rising in the area, affecting the amount of time and effort needed to implement certain activities, mainly the ones related with alternative income. Also this insecurity is affecting in some cases negatively the relationships between communities and the Foundation, needing extra work and resources to clarify misunderstanding or misinformation.
- Mining is increasing as a treat for the majority of Protected Areas in Ecuador. Special attention has been put to this during the past six months repelling immediately any kind of illegal attempt to mine in the area of the corridor. While gold price continues high, mining will continue to be an important treat to the corridor, so additional resources need to be invested in awareness and extra work in the communities to complement legal actions to repel mining activities in the area.

Unexpected development:

The present year is an electoral one. Normally, during the election period is a habit that local politician make promises of free land (usually the one from the corridor) in order to gain votes. Surprising this year the situation has been different until now no promises of this kind have been made. We attributed this to the constant work carried out by Sirua staff in the area.

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

Discussed with the DI Secretariat:	no
Changes to the project schedule/work plan:	no