

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

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

Project Ref. No.	162/13/013
Project Title	Establishing biodiversity monitoring networks to inform Estonian coastal wetland management
Country(ies)	Estonia
UK Organisation	Earthwatch Institute (Europe) and University of Brighton
Collaborator(s)	NGO Läänerannik, Silma Nature Reserve and Matsalu National Park, West Estonia
Report date	31 st October 2005
Report No.	HYR 2
Project website	http://www.vormsi.ee/darwin

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).

Apr 05 – Convened first Darwin project workshop for Estonian biodiversity monitoring stakeholders, held at Matsalu National Park, Estonia. Mitchell and Joyce introduced the project to the 30 participants and, with Lotman, facilitated the discussions.

Jun 05 – Two monitoring stations set up/maintained at Silma Nature Reserve, including water level and soil moisture monitors, and 32 permanent vegetation plots

Jun 05 – 1st Earthwatch team fielded with 8 volunteers and one Estonian student

July 05 – 2nd Earthwatch team fielded with 4 volunteers and 5 students

Aug 05 – Four monitoring stations set-up/maintained at Vormsi island, and two set up at Matsalu National Park, including water level and soil moisture monitors, and a total of 112 permanent vegetation plots

Aug 05 – 3rd Earthwatch team fielded with 4 volunteers and 5 students

Stakeholder network sustained by email, web site updates, meetings and site visits:

- Lotman has ongoing email contact with stakeholders from Estonian workshop in April (and website is updated with materials from seminar); ongoing email contact with Baltic stakeholders from the Baltic Environmental Forum workshop in September.
- July 05: Mitchell, Joyce and Lotman met Merle Kuris in Tallinn, Estonia, who is a nature conservation specialist with the Baltic Environmental Forum, to discuss collaboration and stakeholder engagement within the Baltic States
- Sept 05: Burnside and Joyce presented results of the Darwin project at the Royal Geographical Society annual international conference, London

- Sept 05: Berg and Lotman participated in the British Ecological Society annual meeting at the University of Hertfordshire, UK
- Sept 05: Joyce and Lotman invited to take part in Baltic Environmental Forum expert meeting in Lithuania on grassland monitoring, involving all key the organisations in nature conservation monitoring in the Baltic States. Joyce presented the Darwin project to 20 Baltic stakeholders.
- Sept/Oct 05 –Berg and Lotman presented the Darwin project to 35 European scientists at a Coastal Ecology workshop in Hamburg, Germany.
- Oct 05 – Valker, one of the Selma Nature Reserve Management Staff, came to the UK for meetings at Brighton University and Eartwatch Oxford and made field visits arranged by, and with, Berg to talk to management staff at a number of coastal nature reserves.

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.

There have been problems with some data collection at the monitoring stations. In particular, soil measurements cannot be uploaded from the loggers onto computer due to software problems, so there is ongoing communication with the equipment provider to resolve this issue. There have also been delays in putting recent information rapidly onto the web site (e.g. from summer 2005) due to technical problems, but this is due to be rectified in November 2005. These issues have resulted in delays to the updating of the web site and data collection from monitoring stations, although it is not anticipated that they will substantially affect the budget.

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

No, because it is hoped that the problems will be rectified in the near future.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: No

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: No

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 team have responded positively to comments from the external review of the Year 1 Annual Report concerning developing the project outside Estonia and updating the project web site. The team contacted the Baltic Environmental Forum in order to widen the stakeholder network outside Estonia, and is now actively engaged with them via meetings and email. A meeting took place between Joyce and Lotman in September 2005 to review the web site and prioritise updates. Lotman is currently implementing this action.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**