



***The Atelopus Initiative: conserving endangered
Tropical Andean amphibians***

First Annual Report 2004-2005

April 30, 2005

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Annual Report

1. Darwin Project Information

Project Ref. Number	268
	<i>The Atelopus Initiative: conserving endangered Tropical Andean amphibians</i>
Country(ies)	<i>Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela</i>
UK Contractor	<i>Conservation International U.K.</i>
Partner Organisation(s)	THE ATELOPUS INITIATIVE is a multi-national partnership of herpetologists from the following institutions: Conservation International, The Natural History Museum, IUCN, NatureServe, and many US, European and Andean institutions.
Darwin Grant Value	<i>£ 186,695</i>
Start/End dates	<i>April 1, 2004 – March 31, 2007</i>
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and report number (1,2,3..)	<i>April 1, 2004 – March 31, 2005 Report #2, the annual report (#1 was the semi-annual)</i>
Project website	<i>www.andescbc.org/atelopus/</i>
Author(s), date	<i>Ariadne Angulo, José Vicente Rodríguez, Patricio Jarrin, Robert Bensted-Smith, 30 April 2005</i>

2. Project Background

CI, NatureServe and IUCN convened the Tropical Andes Amphibian Assessment in Ecuador during late 2003 with 50 herpetologists from institutions across the region. These experts established the IUCN status for amphibians and formulated The Atelopus Initiative. This Initiative aims to address the amphibian extinction crisis by boosting research and conservation of endangered Tropical Andean amphibians in the Tropical Andes hotspot region (within the Andean nations of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela).

3. Project Purpose and Outputs

As stated in the project proposal, the multinational ATELOPUS INITIATIVE will address the amphibian extinction crisis head on, using capacity building and training towards gathering information and enacting conservation actions in the Tropical Andes. We will establish regional conservation priorities for amphibians and associated biodiversity for the next decade and beyond. The Project has three objectives:

- 1) To develop a Regional Amphibian Research and Conservation Strategy, in order to prioritize activities, and formulate effective and cost-efficient research and conservation action.
- 2) To increase institutional capacity, including training individuals and providing the taxonomic tools necessary to collect scientific data on the status of amphibians across the region.
- 3) To forge an alliance of national and regional research and conservation institutions within the Tropical Andes, in order to combat the precipitous decline of amphibians and avoid imminent extinctions.

As stated in the project's logical framework, the project outputs are:

- 1) Strengthening institutional and individual capacity to coordinate and implement the Atelopus Initiative.
- 2) Regional training programme and field tools to assist monitoring.
- 3) Improve knowledge through targeted fieldwork.
- 4) Species and site conservation Action Plans produced.
- 5) Formulate 10-year research and conservation programme for amphibians in the region.
- 6) Increased public awareness of the amphibian crisis and the need to intensify conservation efforts.

We are currently re-scheduling one of the training courses that was programmed to be carried out in February 2005, given the civil unrest affecting the area where the course was expected to be held, just days prior to the scheduled event. We are considering mid-2005 as the next date for this course, contingent on finding a suitable and safe location and choosing the appropriate season in terms of amphibian activity. These changes are operational and have not been discussed with the Secretariat, although the Darwin Initiative has been appraised of the circumstances in the last claim form submission.

Publishing of the field manual (scheduled for October 2004) and the genus *Atelopus* mini field guide have also had to be delayed, because all publications have many regional contributors (thus ensuring widespread participation and allowing for representation across the region), and some contributors have not been able to conclude the chapters they have been working on. It is, however, fundamental that these chapters be included in the final publication, and we envision that the final products will be available for publication in August 2005.

The changes in the timetable of these activities were not discussed with the Secretariat as they have occurred recently, and it was the Atelopus Initiative's hope that the delays be minimal.

4. Progress

Pre-project

The Global Amphibian Assessment held a workshop in the Tropical Andean Region in August 2003. During this workshop a consensus amid participants identified the necessity to address amphibian declines in the region. It was this first step which would eventually lead to the Atelopus Initiative. The Atelopus Initiative formally started activities on July 1, 2004, as the Darwin Initiative award was announced later than planned.

Progress against timetable

- 1) Website development for the Atelopus Initiative. Completed. The website was launched in September 2004 rather than April 2004, given delays in award announcement and project set-up. It is available in both Spanish and English (English version now being updated), hosted at www.andescbc.org/atelopus. In addition to existing information (aim and objectives of the Atelopus Initiative, projected outputs, participating institutions, sponsors and contacts), it is used to post news, e.g. upcoming training courses, research grants information, etc.
- 2) Establishment of the Tropical Andes Amphibian Network. In progress. The Tropical Andes Amphibian Network was first established September 2004 (rather than June 2004 due to delays in award announcement and project set-up) following the first Atelopus Initiative workshop, held from 21 to 25 August, 2004, at Villa de Leyva, Colombia. An initial regional directory was created with workshop participants, and this was followed by the establishment of an electronic network (red_atelopus@yahoo.com) of amphibian specialists. This network currently serves 76 members and is still growing, and operates as a forum for the exchange of information, thus enhancing communications and collaborations between researchers in the region.
- 3) Publish Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA) results and regional strategy for amphibian research and conservation¹. In progress. The GAA has been completed, and results have been widely publicised internationally, starting October 2004, including an article published in Science (Stuart, S.N., J. S. Chanson, N. A. Cox, B. E. Young, A. S. L. Rodrigues, D. L. Fischman and R. W. Waller. 2004. Status and trends of amphibian declines and extinctions worldwide. Science 306: 1783-1786) and the Global Amphibian Assessment webpage (www.globalamphibians.org). We are postponing the publication of a regional version of the GAA, which is the part of this activity to be financed by Darwin Initiative, in order to include new data being generated by the Project. A regional strategy for amphibian research and conservation was discussed and developed at the first Atelopus Initiative workshop, and will act as a first guideline for the Project and related matters over the next three years. It is to be included in the field manual, scheduled to be published in August 2005.
- 4) Produce a regional survey and monitoring protocol booklet. In progress. Development of this product was initiated at the first Atelopus Initiative workshop. Several guidelines were agreed upon and used as an initial platform towards developing the field guide in survey and monitoring techniques, which is currently being developed, and is relatively near completion with four out of the eight chapters concluded and the remaining chapters at various stages of development. We expect this field manual to be completed for publication in August 2005 rather than the original projection of October 2004 due to delays in chapter submission contributed by collaborating scientists. Once concluded, it will be made readily available to undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as established researchers in the region who plan to undertake research with Darwin Initiative funds.
- 5) Bi-annual newsletter. In progress. The Atelopus Initiative published an article with information on the Project and updates on developments in the December 2004 issue of *Froglog*, the Declining Amphibians Populations Task Force (DAPTF) e-newsletter (enclosed with this report). The second update

¹ Conservation International participated in the GAA international awareness campaign that took place in late 2004. This campaign was financed through counterpart funding; the regional dissemination part of this awareness building campaign is to be funded by the Darwin Initiative.

on the Project's developments is currently being revised and edited prior to making it available as an electronic bulletin.

- 6) Training 90 herpetology students in survey and monitoring techniques. In progress. The first *Atelopus* Initiative course on standard inventory and monitoring techniques was successfully held between 25 February and 4 March 2005 in Peru. The course was attended by 37 participants, 8 instructors and 7 support staff from 6 different countries and 22 different institutions. We had 37 participants instead of 45 (what would have corresponded to the number expected to attend a single course), because the location where the first course was held did not have a carrying capacity for 45 people, and also because there were three last minute cancellations by intended participants. Unfortunately, the course scheduled to be held in Colombia had to be postponed due to last minute civil unrest, which would have posed a safety risk to participants in the event. We are currently searching for other available locations, where we can safely host the course.
- 7) Mini field guide on the highly endangered genus *Atelopus*. In progress. This illustrated guide is currently in preparation. It seeks to provide information on taxonomy, morphology, geographical distribution, habitat, natural history, threats and conservation measures on existing *Atelopus* species. It involves active collaboration with scientists from all over the region and is projected to be published in June 2005 (expected publication of field identification guides ranging from March 05 to March 06) and freely distributed to all interested parties.
- 8) The *Atelopus* Initiative has also played important roles in a) the development of the electronic Neotropical Herpetology Bulletin, b) supporting the publication of a small book on the frogs of Ecuador, and c) the identification and publication of a new species of endangered frog from the genus *Atelopus* in Colombia (manuscript is under revision).

Achievements

The *Atelopus* Initiative has achieved progress on a number of important fronts, namely:

The establishment of internet-based resources such as a regional network, with a listserv currently serving 76 subscribed members, and the development of the *Atelopus* Initiative's webpage, where basic information about the Project as well as events, news and postings can be found. Both resources have helped in the dissemination of information. Further aids to disseminate information have come from press notes and electronic bulletins covering the Project's events.

The establishment of a regional committee comprised of national coordinators for each of the Tropical Andean nations.

The development of a field manual with survey and monitoring protocols which will be used to evaluate amphibians across the region and will be freely available to all interested parties. One of the main objectives of the First *Atelopus* Initiative's workshop was to develop such a manual; although points of consensus achieved were of a general nature, they were nevertheless useful as guidelines for further development of the field document, which is relatively near completion. This document, once it is available in the form of a finished product, should have a significant impact in a) raising general interest, b) providing a very useful tool for researchers in remote areas and/or with limited resources and c) increasing the number of research proposals focusing on Tropical Andean amphibians. A further illustrated guide for the highly endangered genus *Atelopus* is currently in elaboration and involving active collaborations with scientists from all over the region; this guide is projected to be published in June 2005 with an output of 50,000 copies.

The Project has already carried out its first week-long field training course (February 25-March 4, 2005, Peru), with 37 participating students from four different countries.

Participants were trained in standard amphibian survey and monitoring techniques and had first hand experience with studies in some of the complex systems of the region, as they were requested to elaborate a proposal and carry it out in the course's time frame. Positive results of the course have been a) the enhancement of regional networks among young researchers, b) the potential for collaboration both within and between countries and c) an increased interest in the problem of declining amphibian populations and conducting field work on the region's amphibians. The effectiveness of the course was measured through evaluation sheets provided to students, where 85.4% rated the course as being good or excellent.

Difficulties

The main difficulties encountered during the year are as follows:

The Project started 3 months later than the original April start-date envisaged in the proposal, as the Darwin Initiative award was announced later than planned. Implementation of project activities was rescheduled to comply with the proposed timetable; thus, all scheduled activities are still being carried through, only a little later. Certain events have involved fewer participants than originally planned. One of the reasons is that in the proposal we had underestimated the costs of participation and also of field work. We are adapting to this constraint, by having slightly smaller events, adjusting research schedules and putting in additional counterpart funds. These adjustments do not alter substantively the project, but may affect some quantitative outputs (e.g. number of person-weeks of fieldwork). We will advise Darwin Initiative of any revised projections of outputs as soon as possible.

Other difficulties encountered involve collaborative efforts, in which contributors are willing to participate in the development of working documents, such as the development of a field manual with survey and monitoring protocols, but for various reasons are not able to meet deadlines or produce part of the documents originally agreed upon. This is likely due to the fact that collaborators are not being paid for their Atelopus Initiative-related work, so some would prioritise other activities that do provide income. The temporary solutions have been to 1) have staff on the Project's budget attempt to develop those sections which others have been unable to do and 2) extend deadlines. To resolve this we are considering financial incentives from other funding sources, or incentives in kind such as copies of the manual.

Another point relates to the fact that most researchers find it difficult to agree on a limited number of sampling and evaluation methods to be standardized across the region. Related discussions conducted during the first workshop have resulted in general areas of consensus, although not the specific methodologies we were looking for. We have taken a broader approach on the issue of specific methodologies, accepting a greater diversity of methods but still emphasizing the necessity that they be used in a consistent fashion by researchers across the region.

Adjustments to project design

The basic design of the project remains the same. One small, technical adjustment we have made is to prioritise longer term research activities over shorter term ones. For this purpose, the Atelopus Initiative has established four research programs (assessment of conservation status of endangered and data-deficient species, inventories, monitoring of species and communities, and the building of databases of disease spread for each host country), which address the region's needs to generate information essential for conservation decisions and actions.

5. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

NOT APPLICABLE

Timetable for the next reporting period, 2005-2006	
Date	Activities
April 05- March 06	<i>Additional fundraising ventures to aid the Atelopus Initiative (AI) achieve its goals and where possible enhance outputs</i>
April 05- March 06	<i>Identification tools and guides prepared for key groups of amphibians: the genus Atelopus; selection and work on certain Bufonidae; Centrolenidae; Dendrobatidae: Hylidae; Leptodactylidae and Caeciliidae</i>
May-July 05	<i>Call for project proposals for AI-funded research grants and ensuing evaluation and selection processes</i>
June-July 05/March 06	<i>Training of ca 90-120 herpetology students in survey and monitoring techniques over three field courses</i>
Aug-Nov. 05	<i>Publication of a regional survey and monitoring protocol booklet (website, printout)</i>
Aug 05- March 06	<i>Evaluation of 11 threatened and/or data deficient species, 11 inventories in data deficient areas or areas under land change pressures, fifteen (15) monitoring field seasons and 40% of database development</i>
Aug 05-Dec 05	<i>Data collation</i>
Sept 05 /April 06	<i>Biannual e-newsletter with >500 circulation</i>
Sept 05/April 06	<i>Darwin term and annual reports</i>
Dec 05-Mar 06	<i>Preliminary designing of some threatened species action plans according to existing data and data compiled from first AI-funded projects</i>
Dec 05-Mar 06	<i>Development of a Tropical Andes Database for first results deriving from AI research funds</i>

6. Partnerships

The Atelopus Initiative has established close links with established research and/or conservation institutions across the region, among these: Universidad de Los Andes (Venezuela), Fondo de Acción Ambiental (Colombia), Instituto de Ciencias Naturales (Colombia), Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Colombia), Universidad de Los Andes (Colombia), Universidad del Tolima (Colombia), Universidad del Valle (Colombia), Universidad Industrial de Santander (Colombia), Escuela Politécnica Nacional (Ecuador), Universidad San Francisco de Quito (Ecuador), Museo Ecuatoriano de Ciencias Naturales (Ecuador), Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (Peru), Universidad Nacional San Agustín de Arequipa (Peru), Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad del Cusco (Peru), Universidad Técnica de Cajamarca (Peru), Colección de Nacional de Fauna (Bolivia).

Furthermore, the Atelopus Initiative has established promising links with other NGOs which also endeavour in biodiversity research and conservation in Colombia (ProAves), Peru (INIBICO); Bolivia (Puma, The Nature Conservancy); Ecuador (Ecociencia, Fundación Ecológica Arcoiris) and Venezuela (Provita). INIBICO, for example, is a local NGO operating in northeastern Peru and searching for sustainable alternatives involving amphibians. The Atelopus Initiative and INIBICO collaborated in hosting the first Atelopus Initiative training course in Peru. In addition,

some of the course participants belonged to other NGOs (CIMA- Cordillera Azul (Peru), Asociación Cutivireni (Peru), and Fundación Natura (Ecuador)).

The Atelopus Initiative is collaborating with the "Initiative for Threatened Species", led by Conservation International and co-financed by various agencies, in order to increase investments across the region in low-cost research, conservation action and publications, and increase involvement at national levels.

The Project has also played an active role in the development of the Neotropical Herpetology Bulletin; an electronic resource initiated, designed and managed by the Atelopus Initiative's national coordinator for Ecuador.

7. Impact and Sustainability

The Atelopus Initiative is establishing itself among Tropical Andean nations as the first region-wide project addressing amphibian research and conservation with an integrative approach between both fields. The first year has been dedicated to generating primary field guidelines and tools in the form of working protocols as well as capacity building through region-wide training courses and also increasing the outreach of the Project through its website and listserv. Evidence for increasing interest and capacity for biodiversity stems from a growing subscription to the listserv, numerous applications to participate in field courses geared towards inventorying and monitoring amphibians in the region, as well as sporadic communications requesting information on the Atelopus Initiative and its research funding mechanisms. The exit strategy currently in place involves the development of vitally needed field tools, increased knowledge, enhanced capacity within the region, and the design of a 10-year Regional Amphibian Research and Conservation Strategy. In the course of time, the Project will have accumulated information and knowledge and, together with the region's experts, it will be possible to envision a clear direction for amphibian research and conservation, thus ensuring that the Atelopus Initiative's legacy will continue.

8. Post-Project Follow up Activities (max 300 words)

NOT APPLICABLE

9. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

Project Implementation Timetable:

Deviations from the Project Implementation Timetable are described in section 4 above. The actual outputs are the same as those specified in the project implementation timetable and the project output schedule, with the following observations:

The Tropical Andes Amphibian Network currently has 76 members and is growing, but has not yet reached the projected 200 members.

A Regional workshop was held in August 2004 in Villa de Leyva, Colombia, attended by 35 participants from nine different countries. There were 35 instead of 50 participants, due to a last-minute postponement of a second workshop which was going to be held immediately after at the same location, and which had shared participants.

An article on the Atelopus Initiative and updates on its achievements was first published in the December 2004 issue of Froglog. More recent activities are being reported in the e-newsletter, which is currently being revised and edited before widespread dissemination in May 2005.

Training of 37 students in field techniques in the first week-long course held in Peru, a further similar number of participants is expected to attend the second course to be held in mid 2005 (postponed from a February 2005 schedule given civil unrest in the

region (southwestern Colombia). With limited resources, we decided to reduce student numbers slightly and invest more in high quality instruction. It was also easier to obtain affordable facilities for the smaller group.

Project Outputs Schedule:

So far one 6-day field course (not 5-day, as originally stated) has been undertaken (courses scheduled to run between July 2004 and July 2006); the second course was postponed until mid-2005 due to civil unrest.

Preliminary proposals of 50 key amphibian areas were provided during the Atelopus Initiative's first workshop in August 2004, slightly ahead of the originally proposed date of September 2004.

International media coverage of Global Amphibian Assessment results started October 2004 (versus projected date of July 2004); regional aspect of assessment to be published with Darwin Initiative funds when newer Atelopus Initiative data becomes available

Additional Outputs:

Elaboration of a large scale project proposal for a Global Environment Facility grant addressing the links between climate change and declining amphibian populations. The proposal for the project design phase will be presented to the World Bank (proposed GEF implementing agency) in May 2005.

Binational research and monitoring project for the Ecuador-Peru border: In the course of the first Atelopus Initiative workshop, a team of Ecuadorian and Peruvian researchers met to discuss the possibility of developing a binational proposal for research (inventory and establishment of a continuous monitoring effort) and conservation efforts at either side of the border. This collaboration is now underway, and the Atelopus Initiative envisions being one of several (at least three) partners to collaborate and sponsor this effort through field work research grants, in addition to seeking additional sources of funding.

Attendance and participation of 12 regional representatives in a focused workshop on captive breeding *and ex situ* conservation of *Atelopus* (27-30 January 2005 at Atlanta Botanical Garden) brought about to exchange knowledge and technical skills at a site where *Atelopus* species are being bred.

The Atelopus Initiative has played a key role in stimulating the different CI in-country programs to support the publication of a small book on the frogs of Ecuador

Activities were disseminated widely through the Atelopus Initiative's webpage (www.andescbc.org/atelopus/), its listserv (red_atelopus@yahoo.com), Conservation International's regional network, regional (REDESMA, Bolivia) and international (Mountain Forum, www.mtnforum.org) electronic bulletins, press notes in an established newspaper (El Tiempo, Colombia), and in an institutional (Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales, Peru) bulletin. Audiences targeted were primarily those with a specific interest in amphibians, biodiversity conservation, and/or mountain environments.

Dissemination activities should be continued across the region upon project completion through a large-scale regional proposal currently being requested to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for research and conservation of Andean amphibians.

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

Code No.	Quantity	Description
4A	26	One field course held 25 February-4 March, 2005, near Tarapoto, Peru, in standard amphibian survey and monitoring protocols. Participants from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru; instructors from Colombia, Ecuador, Germany, Peru and the United States.
4B	1 training week	
4C	(60 hours)	
4D	11	
	1 training week	
	(60 hours)	
14A	1	One workshop held 21-25 August, 2004, in Villa de Leyva, Colombia, to establish regional network, develop regional survey and monitoring field protocol, and 3-year amphibian research and conservation strategy.
15A	2	Press releases covering the Colombia workshop and the Peru field course.
16A	2	One AI e-newsletter (under final revision) and an article on the AI published on the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force (DAPTF) newsletter, <i>Froglog</i> .
16B	Web-based	
16C	Web-based	

Table 2: Publications

Type *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
(e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	(title, author, year)	(name, city)	(e.g. contact address, website)	
*Froglog No. 66 (Electronic Newsletter, attached)	The Atelopus Initiative: Conserving Endangered Tropical Andean Amphibians. Angulo, A., P. Salaman and J.V. Rodríguez. 2004.	DAPTF, Milton Keynes	E-mail: daptf@open.ac.uk Website: www.open.ac.uk/daptf/index.htm	Free

10. Project Expenditure

Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period (Defra Financial Year 01 April to 31 March)

Item	Budget (please indicate which document you refer to if other than your project schedule) (£)	Expenditure (£)	Balance (£)
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The Atelopus Initiative started activities in July 2004, the fourth month of the financial year. The under-spending by £12,345 is largely a reflection of the fact that there were only 9 months of activities. The details are as follows:

Travel and Subsistence – 73% of expected expenditure: Given the postponement of the second Atelopus Initiative training course, costs of travel and subsistence for this event have been deferred until the course is held.

Printing – 0% of expected expenditure: No printing costs were incurred as yet because of the delays in finalizing the field protocols booklet and the illustrated mini-field guide on Atelopus. Printing of these documents expected to occur June-August 2005.

Conferences, seminars, etc. – 113% of expected expenditure: This item applies to the first Atelopus Initiative workshop of amphibian specialists, held in July 2004. Expenditure was marginally greater given some participants' last-minute confirmations to attend the workshop, which increased the prices of initially projected airfare costs.

Others – 79% of expected expenditure: In this item are included subsistence, regional awareness campaign, the amphibian specialist group and overheads. The regional awareness campaign still hasn't been carried out and has been re-scheduled for 2005/06.

Salaries – 86% of expected expenditure: As mentioned above, because the Atelopus Initiative's activities were started in July 1 2004, contracting of Initiative's personnel was delayed, so there is still one trimestral payment to be effected.

11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

Progress against the indicators in column 2 of the logical framework have been monitored and it is summarized in column 3 of Annex 1. We are currently working on an additional set of indicators for the Atelopus Initiative.

The Atelopus Initiative's organizing committee meets on a regular basis to discuss and monitor project progress. Furthermore, both dissemination and working documents are passed on to qualified colleagues and/or specialists for their critical review before making them available to the regional network. In the case of working documents such as some of the chapters for the field manual, other researchers are invited to participate as co-authors, thus increasing quality control of products, as all parties involved are appraised of the project's purpose. Progress reports, newsletters and website updates are all used in keeping track of project development.

In the case of the Atelopus Initiative's first training course, participants were provided with evaluation sheets at the end of the event and asked to assess several aspects of the course (organization, instructors, content, logistics, overall), in addition to providing suggestions on how to improve future courses organized by the Project.

The Atelopus Initiative's first year has brought about important lessons, all of which can be built into future endeavours, namely:

- The first year of implementation has provided us with more realistic estimates of the costs of amphibian research activities of collaboration between scientists in the region.
- Rewarding collaborators either financially or in kind will a) increase the probabilities of obtaining high quality products in a timely fashion and b) make national coordinators feel more involved with the Atelopus Initiative
- It is important to diversify expertise in addressing amphibian declines given the magnitude and complexity of the phenomenon; making the effort interdisciplinary rather than focused on a given group of experts
- Back-up plans for scheduled events should be a regular part of organization, given the sometimes unstable social situations that may arise at a moment's notice
- We must ensure that lines of communications are open and fluent to avoid any communication breakdowns

12. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum)

■ I agree for ECTF and the Darwin Secretariat to publish the content of this section

The extinction crisis facing the world's amphibians is at its most severe in the Andean region. This is the region with the greatest diversity, highest endemism and most precipitous declines. Hundreds of species are threatened; some are already presumed extinct. The Atelopus Initiative, named after the most threatened group of frogs, is mobilizing the region's research and conservation community to confront the crisis. With the support of the Darwin Initiative, it is effectively working to integrate researchers and conservationists, both within Tropical Andean countries and between them. The network of regional amphibian specialists is established and growing with members from all over the region and beyond. Particularly encouraging is the fact that amphibians are now firmly "on the map" in national agendas, from governmental offices to academic departments and institutes and independent NGOs, and most importantly, in the mind of the general public. Evidence for this is the success of a recent exhibition about amphibians by the Catholic University of Quito, which attracted tens of thousands of visitors and was extended by popular demand. The Atelopus Initiative, led by Conservation International, has a key role in building regional capacity to assess the status of the amphibians, study the causes of their decline, and take remedial action. We are training and motivating young scientists and we are developing important research tools, such as the field protocol

manual on amphibian inventory and monitoring techniques and the *Atelopus* mini field guide, both of which will be freely available to all interested parties in the region. With governments and research institutions, we are actively promoting the cause of amphibian research and conservation at all levels in all five Tropical Andean countries: Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela. The *Atelopus* Initiative is still in its early stages, but is already having a conspicuous impact and establishing the basis for a major regional campaign to save the most diverse array of frogs in the world.

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2003/2004

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2003-Mar 2004	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Goal: To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to achieve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conservation of biological diversity, • The sustainable use of its components, and • The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources 			
<p>Purpose <i>(insert original project purpose statement)</i></p> <p>To increase capacity, cooperation and knowledge so as to provide the regional capacity necessary to manage current declines and avoid future amphibian extinctions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increased capacity to implement regional strategy for monitoring and conserving amphibians 2) Regional committee and network established with increased collaboration and communication 3) Increased knowledge to reduce Data Deficient species by 80% and accurately re-evaluate all species 	<p><i>(report impacts and achievements resulting from the project against purpose indicators – if any)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Development of a 3-year strategy for amphibian research and conservation to be used as a guideline for the implementation of research and action plans; the training of individuals on standard amphibian inventory and monitoring techniques; the development of identification tools as an aid to field workers; establishment of strategic research programs to channel financial resources in the most efficient manner 2) Establishment of the Atelopus Initiative's national coordinators for each of the five Tropical Andean countries, establishment of an open electronic network for amphibian specialists in the region, increased 	<p><i>(report any lessons learned resulting from the project & highlight key actions planning for next period)</i></p> <p>Lessons learned involve being realistic when matching expected outputs with available funding</p> <p>Key actions for the next period ensuing from the difficulties encountered and lessons learned will involve a substantial amount of effort dedicated to international fundraising and lobbying for endangered amphibians in the region</p>

		<p>connections among young researchers through first field training course</p> <p>3) Field work on data deficient species has not been commenced at the time this report was written. The first call for amphibian research projects is scheduled for May-July 2005</p>	
Outputs			
1) Strengthening institutional and individual capacity to coordinate and implement initiative.	Initiative website; publish Regional Amphibian Assessment results; collate database of specimens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website developed and operational • Global Amphibian Assessment results published, results for the Neotropics published, amphibian research and conservation strategy to be published August 2005 • Field work still not undertaken to collate specimen database 	<p>Lessons learned involve keeping fluent communications between Initiative's organizing committee and website developers to ensure that website updates are posted as promptly as possible</p> <p>Key action for the next period: Website enhancement and update.</p>
2) Regional training programme & field tools to assist monitoring.	Protocol booklet; taxonomic guides; total 360 person weeks of training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field protocol manual in process of development (8 chapters, four are completed and the other four are at different stages 	Lessons learned include rewarding collaborators either financially or in kind to increase the probabilities of obtaining high quality products in a timely fashion; standardizing level of instruction for all instructors

		<p>of development)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini field guide for <i>Atelopus</i> species in compilation • Preliminary identification of key areas for amphibians across the region • One week of intensive training attended by 37 participants (2,220 hours) 	<p>participating in training courses</p> <p>Key actions for next period: Completion of field protocol manual and <i>Atelopus</i> mini field guide and their ensuing publication, planning and undertaking of second training course.</p>
3) Improve knowledge through targeted fieldwork.	Reports on 800 person fieldwork weeks undertaking target surveys.	No fieldwork scheduled yet with Initiative funds according to the Project timetable	<p>Lessons learned involve being realistic when matching expected outputs with available funding and qualified human resources available to undertake field work</p> <p>Key action for the next period: Placement of research grants to drive field work; re-evaluation of number of person fieldwork weeks</p>
4) Species and site conservation Action Plans produced.	100 spp. Action Plans; status re-evaluation; publish Darwin Report I.	No action plans scheduled yet with Initiative funds according to the Project timetable	<p>Lessons learned involve being realistic when matching expected outputs with available funding and qualified human resources available to undertake field work</p> <p>Key action for the next period: Re-evaluate projected number of Action Plans to be carried out, definition of these contingent on results of field work conducted in the region.</p>

5) Formulate 10-year research and conservation programme for amphibians in the region.	Publish Darwin Report II: Amphibian Research & Conservation Strategy.	No action plans scheduled yet with Initiative funds according to the project timetable	
6) Increased public awareness of the amphibian crisis and the need to intensify conservation efforts.	Publicity campaign, news release, website, biannual e-newsletter, and poster campaign	Article on the Atelopus Initiative in DAPTF's December 2004 <i>Froglog</i> issue, press releases on the reasons prompting the first workshop and first training course, e-newsletter in final stages of revision	

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² We have noticed that in the original project document there are some minor discrepancies in dates between project outputs and the project implementation timetable. Where these occur, we have used the project outputs table dates, with the implementation timetable dates used as a backup.