



Community Action for Sustainable Use and Conservation of Coral Reefs

Annual Report 1

1st April 2005 – 31st March 2006



**MARINE CONSERVATION
SOCIETY**

Darwin Initiative

Annual Report

1. Darwin Project Information

Project Ref. Number	14-007
Project Title	Community Action for Sustainable Use and Conservation of Coral Reefs
Country(ies)	Sabah, Malaysia
UK Contractor	Marine Conservation Society
Partner Organisation(s)	Sabah Parks
Darwin Grant Value	£140K
Start/End dates	April 2005 – April 2008
Reporting period	1 st April 2005 – 31 st March 2006 Annual Report No 1
Project website	www.sempornaislandsproject.com
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2. Project Background

Community Action for Sustainable Use and Conservation of Coral Reefs is being implemented in the Tun Sakaran Marine Park (TSMP) in Sabah, Malaysia. The TSMP was gazetted in June 2004 following a previous project between Sabah Parks and the Marine Conservation Society funded by the EU Global Environment Fund.

Management of the site presents a radical new challenge because it is not only the largest MPA in Sabah, but the only one where local people live within the park boundaries, use the resources and in some case, own land and have 'Native Customary Rights'. The main challenge is to tackle the legacy of many years of unregulated, and destructive fishing and to encourage alternative livelihoods which take pressure off the reefs.

3. Project Purpose and Outputs

Purpose

Coral reef biodiversity protected and programme for sustainable use of reef resources established through implementation of integrated strategies devised jointly by reef managers, local communities and other stakeholders.

Outputs

- Biodiversity conservation (no-take) zones in place and enforcement operating.

- Species and habitats 'at risk' and requiring special protection identified. Measures in place to protect 'at risk' species and habitats, and enforcement operating.
- Resource use carried out under permit and according to agreed strategy.
- Mariculture and Sea Ranching Programme developed and operational.
- Reef biodiversity monitoring programme established and functioning.
- Socio-economic monitoring programme established and functioning.
- Interactive Environmental Management and Information Planning System (EMIPS) installed and Sabah Parks staff trained in its operation.

Modifications

The outputs and operational plan remain the same.

4. Progress

a) Brief history

Following 2 months of planning and the preparation of information and awareness materials (briefing documents, posters, interactive materials etc), the first field activities took place in June and July 2005. These comprised a 3-day local community workshop at the Sabah Parks HQ in Semporna (the mainland town adjacent to the Park) and a 4-day Boatshow (marine roadshow, visiting settlements in the TSMP). All the major topics were discussed (biodiversity conservation, resource use etc) and feedback from these consultation exercises was assessed and incorporated into discussion documents and additional awareness materials.

A second Workshop and Boatshow were held in September-October 2005, and a third Boatshow in Feb 2006, leading to further development of the proposed strategies for biodiversity conservation, resource use, enforcement and monitoring. The draft proposals were then discussed and refined at a Stakeholder Meeting at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment in Kota Kinabalu in February 2006, and the next step will be to present them to the Sabah Parks Board of Trustees for implementation.

Reef monitoring and training was carried out in November 2005, and socio-economic monitoring began in October 2005. The latter included a study of marine resource use by 'gleaning', gathering of fishery data and planning for a community census. Education and awareness activities have taken place during the Boatshows, alongside the discussions about options and strategies for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use. A project DVD has been made as part of this effort.

The sea ranching programme has included a seminar at Universiti Malaysia Sabah and continued technical assistance to local communities engaged in rearing juvenile giant clams in ocean nurseries. Work has gone into the EMIPS planning but the workshop has been deferred because of the need to first complete all the groundwork for the regulations.

b) Progress against the agreed baseline timetable and logical framework.

Progress has followed the baseline timetable and logical framework (Annex 1) with the following differences:

Additional outputs and activities:

- i. 20-min DVD completed in February 2006 in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment who agreed to provide funding to cover technical production. The project developed the story line and script and facilitated production in 4 languages (English version enclosed).
- ii. Children's and adult interactive activities developed for use during community meetings to enhance understanding and communication (examples attached).

- iii. Survey of 'reef gleaning' in association with the local community on Pulau Selakan. The idea for this activity came up during the first Workshop, in response to discussions about resource use (see section 11 and attached report).
- iv. Development of permit application forms for activities and developments in TSMP. This was done to increase the capacity of Sabah Parks to track and monitor activities in the TSMP that might have an impact on biodiversity conservation and resources.
- v. Sponsored training of 4 Sabah Parks staff in open water diving, in order that they could play a more effective role in reef monitoring.
- vi. Employment of a *Bajau Laut Liaison Officer* as part of the project team (half-time post for 6 months initially). He is from the Bajau Laut (sea gypsy) community and was selected for his excellent communication skills and interest in environmental issues. His main role is to assist with the education and awareness programme, and in collection of socio-economic data (see section 11).

Slippage:

- i. Trials on sea ranching have been carried out, but the programme to culture larvae and juveniles is behind schedule because building of the hatchery (scheduled to start in March 2005 and take 3 months) was repeatedly delayed due to problems with the contractors doing the building. Solving this problem was beyond the control of the project. However, the building is now virtually complete, so culture and training will start in mid-2006.
- ii. The outline EMIPS programme has been developed, but training scheduled for Feb 2006 was deferred until later in 2006 because of the need to first complete all the groundwork for the regulations.

c) Project achievements

- i. *Involving the local community in management issues* is one of the key objectives of the project, and some time was spent in the initial months in deciding how best this could be achieved. The decision was made to use two different approaches in order to reach and involve as many people as possible. One strategy was to run workshops for local community and local authority representatives, and the other was to organise boatshows to reach out to people living on the islands. (See Reports of Boatshows and Workshops (also produced in Malay)).
- ii. *Preparation of strategy documents and other publications.* The strategy documents for biodiversity conservation, resource use and other management issues were prepared in the first instance by the project team and have progressed through a number of drafts (see Workshop reports) and have now reached the final draft stage (see attached *Action Plan and Proposed Regulations* – also produced in Malay).
- iii. *Training* has been carried out by all of the project team members, with Saini Suliansa taking the lead in socio-economic aspects and Irwan Mustapa in the reef biodiversity surveys. Techniques included small classroom sessions and one-to-one briefings (e.g. of the Bajau Laut Liaison Officer) together with sessions in the field where the trainee has followed and learnt the techniques 'on the job'.
- iv. *Field work* has concentrated on collection of socio-economic data and monitoring selected coral reef sites. Collection of socio-economic data has been through structured questionnaires developed by the project team and included in the Boatshow activities. The interviewers were SIDP and Sabah Parks staff and project daily-paid assistants who between them understood all the languages

used by the local communities (Bajau, Suluk and Malay). Monitoring of coral reef sites has used standard techniques to investigate coral cover and other benthic categories and presence and abundance of target species of fish and invertebrates (Reports are in preparation).

- v. *Education and awareness + dissemination.* This has been an important component of the project and the overall approach and materials developed are outlined in the Boatshow reports.

d) Significant difficulties?

There have been some frustrations due to the difficulty of getting feedback from senior Sabah Parks (SP) staff on discussion documents and policy issues. This is not due to any antagonism towards the project, but is a consequence of SP staff shortages, and significant amounts of time having to be spent on other work and frequent out-of-office/overseas meetings. Although the Park's network is expanding, the increasing work load is not being matched by appointment of new staff at senior level (due to government restrictions). We have discussed this difficulty with Sabah Parks HQ and now have a plan in place whereby they are available for short, informal meetings with our project officer in Kota Kinabalu to run through relevant topics on a regular basis.

Another issue that has caused a few complications has been the formation and internal politics of the Local Community Forum Committee. The LCF is one of the avenues through which the project communicates with the local community (particularly the land owners and people with Native Customary Rights). Semporna is famous for its 'local politics' and we have encountered this in the election of the LCF committee. This has been a complicated distraction which has made it more difficult to get on with the 'conservation business', but we are following a strictly non-partisan course and trying to make sure that the project objectives stay at the top of the agenda.

e) Project design

The overall design of the project remains much the same, but certain methods and approaches have been developed to make the project work more effectively (e.g. the Boatshows and the employment of a Bajau Laut Liaison Officer, as explained above).

f) Timetable for 2006-2007

See Annex 1

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

Not applicable

6. Partnerships

a) Collaboration between UK and host country partner(s)

Collaboration between the project and Sabah Parks (the main project partner) has been very good, apart from the slight difficulties mentioned in 4d in relation to getting feedback on discussion documents. Collaboration with the Sabah Parks Semporna Sub-Station have been particularly positive and productive, with the rangers and field staff participating actively in all of the project programmes and providing excellent logistical support. The Fisheries Department, Universiti Malaysia Sabah and WWF Malaysia have collaborated with the project mainly through workshops and stakeholder meetings and there has been regular interchange of ideas and information.

b) Collaboration with similar projects

- i. We have exchanged information with Darwin Project 13-009 (*Ethnobiology of proposed traditional use zones of Crocker Range Park*) because of common ground related to community-based management.
- ii. Our local Project Officer contributed to the proceeding of a workshop on the proposed Tun Mustapha Marine Park (TMMP) in Sabah, organised by WWF Malaysia and entitled '*A discussion to establish a communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) strategy for the TMMP*'.
- iii. We contributed to the '*Database on Fishery Regulations in the Asia Pacific Region*', a project organised by UNEP, WCMC and WCPA which will be made available in 2006.
- iv. We have established links with *Operation Wallacea*, who are working on similar management issues in the Wakatobi Marine Park in Indonesia. This was especially in relation to activities involving the Bajau Laut community.

7. Impact and Sustainability

We have used various methods to promote the project (community meetings, electronic communication, circulation of reports, documents, newsletters, leaflets etc and are satisfied that the profile of the project at government, local government and community level is good.

At government level we ensure that the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Environment is kept updated on progress and receives newsletters and reports of project activities. In December, the Ministry indicated its commitment and interest in the work by responding positively to our proposal and application for funds to produce a DVD outlining the aims and activities of the Darwin Project.

We have also been told by the Ministry that the project is providing a useful model for work in progress to produce a management plan for the proposed Tun Mustapha Marine Park in northern Sabah. This has a similar profile to the Tun Sakaran Marine Park, but with greater challenges, due to its size and even larger population.

In terms of the exit strategy, we are currently concentrating on capacity building and producing the tools to help Sabah Parks and local communities continue with the programme once the project ends. This includes production of regulations governing biodiversity conservation and resource use, and training park staff and local people in socio-economic and coral reef monitoring. We are also putting effort into promoting a

working partnership between Sabah Parks and the local community, because this will play an important part in ensuring the long term success of the project.

Over the next two years we will need to make sure that the surveillance and enforcement system is developed and becomes enshrined in the management system. If this is achieved, it will be a major step in ensuring then biodiversity conservation and sustainable use strategies are carried forward in the long term.

8. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

a) **Outputs:** the additional outputs and those not achieved are covered in Qu 4b.

b) Dissemination activities in the host country

The dissemination activities have fallen into several categories in terms of target audiences:

- i. Workshops for local community representatives (mainly the land owners and claimants of customary rights in the Park) and Local Authorities including the District Office, Fisheries Department and Police. At these meetings information and proposals for biodiversity conservation, resource use etc have been disseminated.
- ii. Boatshows (marine roadshows) for the wider local community i.e. the people who live in the Park and use its resources. Most of these people do not own land and some are stateless, or without Malaysian identity.
- iii. Stakeholder meeting for representatives from the State Government and other government departments, NGOs and academic institutions.
- iv. Seminar on sea-ranching co-organised with the Universiti Malaysia Sabah, attended by students, undergraduates, postgraduates and research staff.

A Local Community Forum has been formally established and has elected a representative from each island to sit on the Board of Trustees of the Tun Sakaran Marine Park. This should mean that information about management of the site continues to be disseminated and discussed.

c) Project outputs

Table 1.

Code No.	Description	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	TOTAL
3	Sabah Parks staff trained and passed accredited 'PADI open water diver' Course.	4			
6A	i) Part-time local (Malaysian) project staff trained in socio-economic data collection.	3			
	ii) Sabah Parks staff trained in reef monitoring.	4			
	iii) Local Community members trained in reef monitoring.	3			
6B	i) Each for 3 days	9 days			
	ii) Each for 2 days	8 days			

	iii) Each for 2 days	6 days
7	Training Manual for Reef Check monitoring produced in Bahasa Malaysia	1
	Posters in Bahasa Malaysia covering proposed zoning scheme, regulations, permits and other topics.	10
	Information leaflet produced in 4 languages (BM, Bajau, Suluk, English)	1
	20 minute project DVD in 4 languages	1
8	Weeks spent by UK project staff on work in host country	22
9	Action Plan and proposed regulations	1
14A	Seminar on Mariculture & Sea Ranching	1
15B	Press Release on first Boatshow and Workshop	1
16A	Newsletters	2
16B	Approx circulation in host country	400
	Approx circulation in UK	80
20	Reference books, survey equipment, LCD projector, DVD player & speakers	1,500
22	Monitoring sites established	14
23	Sabah Parks logistical support, Ministry sponsor of DVD, + various grants	30,450
	Additional outputs	
	Interactive educational & information-gathering materials for adults & children	4
	Permanent monitoring sites maintained	7

Table 2: Publications

Type *	Detail (title, author, year)	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. contact address, website)	Cost £
Newsletters (English version)	*SIDP News: Issues 1 & 2		On website: www.sempornaislandsproject.com	
Project DVD	*Semporna Islands Darwin Project	Videographics Productions, Sabah	MCS: contact details on website	£7.50

9. Project Expenditure

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

10. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

Monitoring and evaluation.

- a) The plans that have been developed during this year for biodiversity conservation zones, resource use and protection of 'at risk' species and habitats are all at the final stages of agreement and then will be translated into statutory regulations. This demonstrates that we are moving towards achieving the project purpose.
- b) Feedback from questionnaires circulated at the Workshops show that we have been achieving our aims of increasing awareness and understanding about conservation issues. They also show that people are in favour of action being taken.

Lessons learnt

We have found through our surveys that there is a good level of support at grassroots level for biodiversity protection and conservation. This has been made clear by responses gathered during the community consultation sessions. We have also learnt that introduction of restrictions will cause hardship because of current dependencies on marine resources, and that we will have to work hard to try and encourage alternative livelihoods. There will only be continued support for conservation measures if people have a secure means of making a living.

11. 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

We would like to highlight several activities, each of which evolved in response to need and have helped the project to progress. None of these had been planned in detail at the outset of the project and they illustrate the importance of a flexible approach which we believe is necessary to ensure that the project achieves its aims.

- a) **Boatshow programme:** as explained previously, the idea of the boatshows was to try and reach out to the thousands of people who live in the Park. This approach had not been tried before but proved to be a very good way of attracting people's attention and getting them to gather together for a few hours to learn about the project and its aims. The informality of the boatshows also helped to break down barriers and promote good relationships between the project staff and local community.
- b) **Reef Gleaning study:** The idea for this study arose at the first Local Community Workshop during discussions on resource use management and in response to an invitation by participants from Selakan Island. The group maintained that gleaning, a traditional way of harvesting marine resources, should be exempt from regulations on resource use because it was well-established and not having a detrimental impact. They proposed that a joint study should be carried out, so that they could prove this point. The project team fully agreed, and devised a questionnaire and arranged a 'field seminar' which also involved the local community setting up a 'demonstration gleaning expedition' to the nearby reef top. The whole exercise proved to be valuable for a number of reasons:
 - i. It consolidated relationships with the local community by encouraging debate and sharing of knowledge.
 - ii. It demonstrated that the project was seeking to answer people's concerns and to become actively engaged in issues that affected their livelihoods.
 - iii. It collected valuable data and made a permanent record of the large store of knowledge held by local people.
- c) **Appointment of Bajau Laut liaison officer:** As the project progressed the SIDP team recognised that it would be beneficial to have an additional staff member to deal with Bajau Laut matters. This decision was reached partly in recognition of the dependence of the Bajau Laut (sea gypsies) on harvesting natural resources, but also because of issues relating to language, literacy and culture. This is the first time in Malaysia that efforts have been made to communicate with this ethnic group in relation to their interactions with the natural environment.