

# 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**

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	14-058
<b>Project Title</b>	Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of the Nicaraguan Pacific North Region
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Nicaragua, UK
<b>UK Organisation</b>	The Society for Environmental Exploration / Frontier
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	MARENA (Ministry of Environmenta, Nicaragua, manager of Isla Juan Venado), UNAN-LEON (University of Leon, Nicaragua), LIDER (local NGO, co-manager of Volcan Cosiguina), SELVA (local NGO, co-manager of Estero Padre Ramos)
<b>Report date</b>	15/10/05
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 1
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.frontier.ac.uk">www.frontier.ac.uk</a>

**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).**

Project implementation timetable		
Date	Financial year	Key milestones
May 2005	Apr-Mar 2005/6	Meetings with project advisors and consultants
June 2005	Apr-Mar 2005/6	Project Manager and Project Co-ordinators meet with local and regional partners in Nicaragua. Workshop held for constructing and finalising training programme curricula. Meeting with CBD focal point.
July 2005	Apr-Mar 2005/6	Training programme written.
August 2005	Apr-Mar 2005/6	MARENA approves training programme.
September 2005	Apr-Mar 2005/6	Edexcel approves training programme as a BTEC accredited certificate course.
October 2005	Apr-Mar 2005/6	Training programme 1 initiated in Estero Padre Ramos. Monitoring programme initiated.

The first two quarters of the project have been dedicated to designing the framework and modules for the 190 hour capacity building and training programme. As such staff have laboured arduously to create a context-specific, solid training programme. Designing the optimal programme required meetings with project advisors and consultants as scheduled in the original project timetable as well as a number of project site visits by the Project Leader and Project Co-ordinators. Throughout the summer, the Project Leader alongside London Programme Officers and Edexcel liaisons laid the ground work for the creation of the BTEC course in Conservation Management. In June 2005, Paul Rubio, Project Leader, and Chris Poonian and Maggie Muurmans, Project Co-ordinators, returned to Nicaragua to continue course development and lesson plans. During this time, individual meetings and workshops were held with Frontier's local and regional counterparts in order to present the framework of the BTEC Certificate in Conservation Management, and to gain valuable feedback on the contents of the training course.

Potential participants for the course were identified; these included UNAN-Leon university students and park rangers and community stakeholders from within the three protected areas of Estero Padre Ramos, Isla Juan

Venado and Volcan Cosiguina. Jose Urteaga, Project Coordinator for Flora and Fauna International, was also met so as to discuss the roles of both organisations, which will help strengthen cooperative links between the two and avoid an overlap in future project activities. Initial discussions were held on the creation of the Pacific Northwest Monitoring Alliance which will focus on sea turtle conservation initiatives in the region and will assist in the standardizing of data collection and methodologies.

Throughout July and August course content was established, rigorously researched, structured, and then finalised. Course content has now been translated into both English and Spanish and compiled into documents and manuals to be used for future training programmes. The finalised version of the BTEC course was officially approved by Edexcel during this process. The curriculum combines theoretical learning with practical fieldwork and is comprised of four distinct units titled: Biodiversity Assessment, Conservation Management Strategies, Conservation and Society, and Funding Conservation Initiatives. Although sea turtle conservation remains a focus of the training programme, the evaluations have been designed to cover a spectrum of different subject areas, including the implementation of species monitoring programmes, data recording, eco-tourism and educational awareness campaigns. Many of the evaluations are interactive in nature (group work, question and answer sessions) so as to encourage the interchange of ideas between the participants and to provide a forum for the open discussion of those issues, which play a key role in the effective management of the protected areas.

In September, Natasha Calderwood replaced Chris Poonian as Project Coordinator to work alongside Maggie Muurmans and Paul Rubio. Enrique Sampson was also hired as Frontier's counterpart trainer. The team of four worked to practice and finish preparations for the first training programme, beginning in October. In late September, two introductory capacity building workshops were held with park guards and members of the communities of Salinas Grandes and Estero Padre Ramos. On October 10<sup>th</sup>, the first training programme began in Estero Padre Ramos. Participants include the Director of the protected area, five SELVA park rangers and one UNAN Biology student. The course has run extremely well so far, with everyone successfully completing the evaluations and taking an active part in discussions. Training typically lasts 10 hours per day. Working in conjunction with the Frontier-Nicaragua UK volunteer project, monitoring programmes of nesting sea turtles have also begun, and training is being provided on how to record data correctly (use of GPSs, temperature probes, data sheets) which will also feed back into the final species and habitat monitoring plans that are being prepared for each area.

Progress reports and monthly updates for the Frontier website are being carried out, and filming for the informational training DVD has also begun. The success of the Darwin funded project, Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of the Nicaraguan Pacific North Region, will be showcased through presentations and/or attendance at the following conferences: 9<sup>th</sup> Congress for the Conservation of Mesoamerican Biodiversity (Honduras), Ecology in an Era of Globalisation (Mexico), 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Sea Turtle Symposium (Greece).

**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.**

Mr. Chris Poonian, Project Co-ordinator, was forced to leave the project due to personal reasons in July 2005. Ms. Natasha Calderwood has now been hired for the position of Project Coordinator. Ms. Calderwood is an experienced Frontier staff member and brings a range of valuable experience to the post. The former Science Trainer, Ms. Mechtled Muurmans (Maggie), has also been promoted from her previous position to Project Coordinator. Ms. Muurmans and Ms. Calderwood will divide and share responsibility for the project according to their experiences and strengths. To ensure an adequate handover, Project Leader, Paul Rubio, travelled to Nicaragua for the month of September to work closely with Ms. Muurmans and Ms. Calderwood. To clarify, both Maggie Muurmans and Natasha Calderwood will now be spending 100% of their time on the project. However, both of their contracts were negotiated within the realm of the stipulated amounts for Mr. Poonian and Ms. Muurmans, as detailed on the original proposal. Therefore, the budget has not been affected. Natasha's contract is a short-term one - ending at the end of March 2006. Maggie will remain on the project until the project close in fall of 2006.

**Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?** The Darwin Secretariat has been informed of the staffing issue above and the issue has been discussed via email. No changes to the original agreement were necessary.

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:** YES in...9/2005..... (month/yr)

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? NO

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](mailto: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.**