

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	15-030
Project Title	Strengthening scientific capacity of conservation NGOs working with the CBD
Country(ies)	Bolivia, Botswana, Lebanon, Nepal, Palau, Russia (and other BirdLife Partners in the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa, Asia and Pacific)
UK Organisation	BirdLife International
Collaborator(s)	n/a
Project Leader	Leon Bennun
Report date	31st October 2007
Report No.	HYR 2
Project website	www.birdlife.org and under development

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

14th – 18th May: a regional workshop (for the Pacific region) was hosted in Koror, Palau, by the host country coordinator, Tiare Holme (Palau Conservation Society). Some 30 people participated in total, including representatives from eight national conservation NGOs. The UK team were unable to support the workshop for family reasons, but the meeting had input from BirdLife's Director and Chief Executive, Mike Rands, and from three staff from BirdLife's Pacific Secretariat. A presentation was given on the work of PCS including on developing an Important Bird Area inventory and follow-on advocacy strategy (=PCS's Demonstration Project).

20th June: a Darwin Workshop, for new projects, was attended in London by UK team member, Alison Stattersfield. This provided a timely opportunity to meet key Darwin Secretariat staff and exchange experiences with fellow Darwin Project Leaders/Coordinators, as well as to learn more about the Darwin Initiative firsthand, most usefully on aspects relating to reporting, project management and evaluation.

25th – 29th June: a regional workshop (for the Americas region) was attended in Monterrey, Mexico, by host country coordinator, Bennett Hennesey (Armonia/Bolivia) and UK team member, Stuart Butchart. Some 50 people participated in total, including representatives from 16 national conservation NGOs. A joint presentation on initiating conservation action for the most threatened bird species (relating to Armonia's Demonstration Project) was given by Bennett and Stuart (=regional 'training the trainers' toolkit). The presentation and follow-up discussions covered an update on evaluating threat status and a new BirdLife Initiative focused on preventing extinctions (and its application to four Americas species).

9th – 13th July: a CBD meeting, the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI-2) was attended in Paris by Alison Stattersfield. This was helpful in improving our understanding of how the project might directly support the needs of host-country Governments. Of particular relevance was: items relating to the 'Guidance for the development, implementation and evaluation of NBSAPs' and 'Lessons learned from the preparation of the second edition of the GBO and proposals on the scope and focus of the third edition'; the resulting recommendation on the 'Status of national reporting and proposals on the scope and format of the third edition of the GBO'; and a side event at which a GEF UNDP/UNEP Project to finance Fourth National Reports was presented.

18th August – 8th September: the second internship was undertaken by Lukes Isechal (Palau Conservation Society) at the BirdLife International Global Office in Cambridge. For this we

organised a training programme relevant to PCS's Demonstration Project, including identification of marine IBAs, monitoring State-Pressure-Response and the use of GIS to map boundaries, and also provided input to the drafting of a 'Directory of IBAs in Palau'.

10th – 28th September: the third internship was undertaken by Kabelo Senyatso (BirdLife Botswana) at the BirdLife International Global Office in Cambridge. During his time here, we worked together (also with RSPB) to 'Africanise' guidelines for establishing Common Bird Monitoring, based on work already underway in Europe, and building on his experiences of gathering data on 'Birds of Concern' in Botswana (=BB's Demonstration Project).

15th – 19th October (included here because it follows on from previous activity): a regional workshop (for the African region) was attended in Nairobi, Kenya, by host country coordinator, Kabelo Senyatso and UK team members, Leon Bennun and Stuart Butchart. Some 80 people participated in total, including representatives from 23 national conservation NGOs. A joint presentation on Common Bird Monitoring was given by Kabelo and Stuart (=regional 'training the trainers' toolkit), who then facilitated a session to assess capacity to undertake such monitoring (as a precursor to establishing a couple of national pilot projects; further details in the end of year report).

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.

We had intended to hold the second (Pacific) internship in April followed by attendance at a regional workshop in Palau the following month. However, this wasn't possible and thus we delayed this internship to August, and allocated some budget to support an additional Pacific workshop held in association with the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in Alotau, Papua New Guinea (22nd – 26th October). There are no significant budgetary or timetable implications; if anything, we believe that this revised course of action will increase our impact (further details in the end of year report). Of more concern, is the very recent resignation of one of our host country coordinators, Soumar Dakdouk from SPNL (who stood in for our original candidate; see further comments below. We are currently reviewing how to handle this most effectively and do not anticipate any major difficulties with implementing project activities as outlined in the original framework

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

We will contact the Darwin Secretariat regarding the latter point above, once we have a revised plan in place.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: not yet

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: none anticipated

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No, thank you

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. See below

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 email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**

Response to annual report review

The CVs for replacement co-ordinators Soumar Dakdouk (Lebanon) and Natalia Nikolaeva (Russia) have been sent to the Darwin Secretariat (see email 25/06/07).

With regard to the SPNL co-ordinator, the following clarification was sent to the Darwin Secretariat (also email of 25/06/07):

The reviewer posed the question "There has been a necessary change of the SPNL co-ordinator from one situated in Lebanon to one based in the US, but how effective will their contribution be to the project implementation if co-ordinated from outside the host country?"? This was because in the half-year report I said that "The Project Coordinator for Lebanon was changed because of difficulties owing to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was not possible for Sawsan Medhi to leave the Lebanon at the time of the Inaugural Workshop but luckily another SPNL staff member, Soumar Dakdouk, was in the US and able to step in. As a result, SPNL have decided to that Soumar should continue to coordinate their involvement to the project, despite the current political difficulties." For the record, Soumar returned to the Lebanon soon after the Inaugural Darwin Workshop and continues her work based in Beirut where she is a very active staff member of SPNL.

Within the last week, however, we have learnt of Soumar's resignation from SPNL and are therefore in the process of reviewing the situation.

The final point made by the reviewer to be addressed in this report relates to electronic communication. He/she asks "Will it also be possible to improve poor internet access where necessary in the host country partner premises". We have discussed this issue with our IT Manager who provides support to our regional offices and country programmes. He advises us that poor internet access may be the result of (1) poor technical know-how; (2) lack of funds; and (3) inadequate in-country infra-structure. While we might be able to help to address the first two, the latter is out of our control. We will review the situation and report back again in the end of year report.