

## ***Darwin Initiative Annual Report***

Important note:

To be completed with reference to the Reporting Guidance Notes for Project Leaders – it is expected that this report will be about 10 pages in length – Submission deadline 30 April 2007

### **Darwin Project Information**

Project Ref Number	15/037
Project Title	Distance Learning for Biodiversity Conservation in Small Island Developing States
Country(ies)	South Pacific Island States
UK Contract Holder Institution	International Centre for Protected Landscapes
Host country Partner Institution(s)	Primarily the University of the South Pacific, Fiji. Also the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
Darwin Grant Value	£209,500
Start/End dates of Project	April 2006 – March 2009
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3..)	1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007
Project Leader Name	Dr. Elizabeth Hughes
Project website	<a href="http://www.protected-landscapes.org/South_Pacific_Programme.html">http://www.protected-landscapes.org/South_Pacific_Programme.html</a>
Author(s), date	Dr. Elizabeth Hughes / Prof. Bill Aalbersberg, 09.05.07

### **1. Project Background**

Small island developing states (SIDS) often have high levels of endemic biodiversity and many unique and specialised species of importance for human use (e.g. in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism). Much of this biodiversity is owned by local communities who are overwhelmingly reliant on natural resources for survival. However, with rapid population increases and rising material expectations there has been a disproportionate amount of habitat and species loss on small islands throughout the World.

The Asian Development Bank states that: “The natural wealth of Pacific SIDS underpins their formal and subsistence economies”, and that “the biodiversity of the Pacific region is recognised to be of global significance, yet the threats to its conservation are among the highest anywhere in the world”. The Bank also states that: “It is vital to the well-being of the Pacific people that their biological resources be sustainably managed”, yet, “the capacity to educate growing populations in the Pacific is generally weak and deteriorating” (ADB Pacific Region Environmental Strategy 2005-2009).

The South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme coordinates the efforts of 29 member governments in tackling environmental problems in the region. The SPREP Action Strategy identifies the urgent need for training of biodiversity conservators and environmental managers and, because of low staffing levels, remoteness and difficulties of communication in the region, also recommends that training be delivered “*using the distance and flexible learning (DFL) model*”.

This project to develop a DFL programme for the region has also grown out of an earlier Darwin Initiative short-course training scheme for the Pacific (162/8/009), that received excellent reviews from independent DI assessors, and recommendations to extend the training reach and impact of the programme by employing the distance-learning format.

The project aims to build the capacity of the University of the South Pacific in Fiji to develop and deliver a DFL programme across the region that provides the vocational education and training needed for conservation practitioners to address the environmental issues facing small islands. In doing so, the project will also assist SPREP member countries in meeting their commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),

The Project is also in line with other SIDS multi-lateral environmental agreements - including the Barbados Program of Action, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and Mauritius Strategy - all of which emphasise biodiversity conservation, environmental management and sustainable development in island nations with limited natural resources and skills bases. It is also fully congruent with the priorities of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas “Task Force on Island Conservation and Protected Areas” (TAFICOPA).

In its later stages, the project aims to investigate opportunities for - and encourage the wider application of the DFL programme in respect of other small island states across the world. This will be done in particular through dissemination of information via the SIDS University Consortium.

## **2. Project Partnerships**

The key partners in this project are the International Centre for Protected Landscapes in the UK and the Institute of Applied Sciences of the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. This partnership was initially developed through the former Darwin Initiative project 162/8/009 (Biodiversity Conservation Training – Pacific Island States) and the very existence of the current project is itself a reflection of the continued strength of this partnership. Both institutions have similar conservation philosophies and while focusing on the needs of the region, the partnership is undoubtedly one of mutual benefit.

In addition to the core project ‘team’ at ICPL and USP, another important partner in the project is the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

SPREP is the Pacific region’s major inter-governmental organisation charged with protecting and managing the environment and natural resources. Its mandate is to promote cooperation in the Pacific islands region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve the environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations.

SPREP was a core partner in the former Darwin project that established the Pacific Islands Community Conservation Course (PICCC) and remains instrumental in the ongoing delivery of this now well-established training course for conservation practitioners. SPREP will have an

important role to play in supporting and promoting the DFL programme, particularly once it is running, and it is therefore essential to engage with its members during the development phase.

Other conservation and development organisations in the region have also been engaged for the purpose of this project, particularly with a view to their continued support for the key project outcome (the DFL programme) – their support is seen as critical to its future sustainability. They include: the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPi), the National Trust of Fiji, Birdlife International, WWF, and the IUCN Regional Office which has recently been established in Suva, Fiji.

The project is also benefiting from the support of colleagues at the UK-based NGO Wild Resources Ltd. Wild Resources (WR) is engaged in applied ecological research on products harvested from tropical and temperate forests in particular, and provides training and facilitation in the development of new support tools and services for wild product management around the world. With WR's support we are able to incorporate in our materials, cutting-edge approaches and methodologies, particularly in respect of the sustainable development of natural resource-based enterprise.

### **3. Project progress**

#### **3.1 Progress in carrying out project activities**

The work scheme was agreed between the key partners during the initial months of the project and was discussed with stakeholder organisations (SPREP, WWF, National Trust of Fiji; FSPi; IUCN, Birdlife International) during an ICPL visit to USP October 2006. The structure and overall content of the modules was also agreed.

Since then research and writing for the development of core distance learning training modules has been underway according to the project schedule. Completion of two modules (equating to four as per the original application) is anticipated by June 07 as scheduled.

A second consultation process is scheduled for July 07, following core module completion.

Commencement of the planned certificate / diploma / masters programme has been postponed to February 2008, as required by the University of the South Pacific academic calendar. This will necessarily impact on the date of the induction course for the first cohort of students which will now take place in early 2008 (rather September 07 as scheduled) but still within the current (07/08) project period.

In March 07, members of the project team contributed to Phase 1 of the 2007 Pacific Islands Community Conservation Course (see also under 3.2).

#### **3.2 Progress towards Project Outputs**

The project outputs cited in the Logical Framework are as follows:

- 1 Distance & flexible learning course in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development for SIDS
- 10 conservation workers trained with DI bursaries by Year 3 (>20 with leveraged funding)
- 2 module development workshops and 2 trainee induction courses
- Project Reports & 2 published articles on training scheme

Progress during the first year has been broadly as planned with a strong focus on establishing the framework for the proposed DFL programme in terms of its structure, content and delivery

mechanisms. Considerable progress has also been made in writing the equivalent of four distance learning modules (revised following consultation, to two effectively 'double' modules). This development work is key to delivering the final project outputs.

The seminar/conference programmed for the first year of the project did not take place and the Darwin Secretariat was informed of this. The funds were rolled over to the final (08/09) year of the project. At the time of writing two events are under negotiation for the period 07/08:

- Side-event at the SPREP Conference in Papua New Guinea in October 07
- Co-hosting of expert seminar with IUCN Regional Office.

The partners have, however, collaborated in staging the fourth Pacific Islands Community Conservation Course. This course, which was an outcome of the previous Darwin project of the same partnership, aims to provide conservation practitioners with the capacity to facilitate communities to conserve and derive benefits from their natural resources, with a focus on marine ecosystems. It remains important in contributing to the current project in that:

- it helps to identify training needs and issues of concern
- it builds a portfolio of regional case studies (participants are required to undertake a 6 month field project in their own area)
- based at the Institute of Applied Sciences at USP in Fiji, from where will be run the DFL programme, the course serves to introduce trainees to the department and to the training ethos and thereby encourage participation in the DFL programme i.e. it serves as a promotional tool
- the PICCC will ultimately be integrated with the DFL programme as an accredited 'option' in lieu of one module

### 3.3 Standard Output Measures

**Table 1 Project Standard Output Measures**

Code No.	Description	Year 1 Total
Established codes		
8	4 person weeks spent by UK staff in host country	3 person weeks spent in Fiji in two visits: October/November 2006 for programme planning; consultation; and networking; and March/April 2007 for contribution to PICCC
15A	2 local press releases in UK (2006/7 and 2008/9)	1 press release in the Western Mail (national newspaper of Wales) Making Waves in the Pacific: Aberystwyth Centre helps conservation initiative in Fiji. 19 April 2006
15D	2 national press releases in host country (2006/7 and 2008/9)	USP website article about Darwin project only. Waiting for programme launch for further press releases for maximum benefit.
17B	1 dissemination network enhanced to provide for publicity	Network of local and regional organisations for consultation and support re. the DFL programme

	and feedback on DI distance learning scheme	established. PICCC trainee support engaged for feedback and as possible DFL candidates.
21	Distance learning secretariat established at Darwin Pacific Training Centre at USP, Fiji	Secretariat / management team for the DFL programme has been set up within USP
(NB Not in included original bid)		
6A	Trainees complete conservation course	12 trainees completed Part I (4 weeks training) of PICCC. Part II will take place in November 07. (see below)
6B	Training weeks to be provided	Members of the project team made a major contribution to a 4 week training course (PICCC). Their contribution helped to ensure (a) that the training continues to provide cutting edge concepts, skills and approaches; and (b) to secure interest of trainees and their feedback in relation to the developing DFL programme.

**Table 2 Publications**

Type *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
(eg journals, manual, CDs)	(title, author, year)	(name, city)	(eg contact address, website)	(if applicable)

### 3.3 Progress towards the project purpose and outcomes

The project purpose is stated as being to: *“assist small island developing states to address the decline in biodiversity and habitat loss through training of trainers in community-based conservation and sustainable development using the distance learning model”*

As is clear from foregoing paragraphs, the focus of the project to date has been on the development of distance learning modules for the establishment of a DFL programme to run through USP, for candidates from the South Pacific islands. By building the capacity of the Institute of Applied Sciences at USP to deliver a programme that will address these critical issues to a specific target group in the region (particularly community conservation practitioners and potential trainers), the project will in due course achieve its purpose.

The important assumptions for achieving the project purpose relate to continuing support from regional actors – specifically the key partners, USP and SPREP, and other conservation agencies and organisations in the region. The portents for this continuing support are good. What is not so clear, however, is whether the political instability in Fiji, that interrupted our previous Darwin Project in the region, might yet interfere again. To date this has not been the case, although there was another military *coup d'état* in late 2006.

Progress towards the project purpose is as expected at this stage in the process.

### **3.4 Progress towards impact on biodiversity, sustainable use or equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits**

While the DFL programme in preparation is specifically designed to impact positively on biodiversity, sustainable use & equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits in the South Pacific islands and other SIDS, its impacts will not really be evident until the programme has run through at least one cycle, and until students have increased their knowledge, acquired new conservation skills and implemented new approaches. The benefits are undoubtedly for the long term and will largely be felt beyond the life of this project.

Notwithstanding this, it is worth noting that feedback suggests that the PICCC – which has been accredited by USP and will be an optional component of the DFL programme – is already having an impact on biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use in the region. The post project Darwin Review and testimony from heads of several international NGOs confirms the impact.

## **4. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons**

The nature of the project has not thus far lent itself to monitoring and evaluation. Reference to the project outputs and indicators shows that these are not measurable until further into the project. June 07 will be the critical first marker. At that stage, the development of 2 core modules (equal to four of the original application) will be completed and the conservation network engaged to support the programme will be asked to review the materials. The outcome of that review process will represent an important evaluation of the development process.

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

N/A

## **6. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere**

No

## **7. Sustainability**

Promotion to date of the developing DFL programme has targeted:

- local, national and regional conservation NGOs for their engagement and support (see paragraph 2);
- USP for its academic support of the programme;
- PICCC participants for their potential interest in following the programme.

Wider promotion of the programme will begin shortly, particularly through USP marketing systems, in order to attract candidates from across the region for the first intake of the programme.

The PICCC formerly developed by a partnership of ICPL, USP and SPREP has been well supported by the conservation community in the South Pacific region and reflects the commitment of the partners to ensuring appropriate training provision for conservation practitioners in the region. With the support of the same organisations, we are confident that the DFL programme will be sustainable in the long term, particularly addressing as it does, issues that are widely recognised to be of critical import to the region.

ICPL's role is essentially one to support the development process. Once the DFL programme is running, we would argue that USP in partnership with the wider conservation community in the region, will be in a position to take it forward, as they have done with PICCC.

## **8. Dissemination**

Discussions have taken place during the year with the major International NGOs operating in the region (IUCN, WWF, WCS, Birdlife International, Conservation International) both to promote the project and to engage their support and active involvement in the development of the DFL programme (this is an ongoing activity). Their response has been very positive. We plan wider dissemination of information about the programme from later this year (September), prior to its launch. Thereafter, the programme will be promoted across the region through University channels as well as through SPREP and other conservation organisations.

In terms of an exit strategy, by the end of the project, ICPL will have supported the Institute of Applied Sciences through almost a complete cycle of the DFL programme (certainly at postgraduate Certificate and Diploma levels). This will stand our partners in good stead to continue without our support. By that time, the programme will also be mainstreamed into normal University procedures at USP and as such will be supported in the usual way for its academic programmes. We see no reason why it should not be sustained long into the future. Previous experience of working with the same partners is also indicative of their high level of commitment and capacity to sustain a project beyond the end of the Darwin Initiative period.

See also under points 3.4 and 6.

## **10. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes**

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

## Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2006/07

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2006 - March 2007	Actions required/planned for next period
<p><b>Goal:</b> <i>To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but constrained in resources to achieve</i></p> <p><i>The conservation of biological diversity,</i></p> <p><i>The sustainable use of its components, and</i></p> <p><i>The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources</i></p>		<p><i>Working partnership between ICPL and local partners consolidated; working together for the development of a vocational, distance and flexible learning programme targeting conservation practitioners in the region, to increase knowledge &amp; develop skills for biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource use and equitable sharing of benefits from natural resource management.</i></p>	<p><i>(do not fill not applicable)</i></p>
<p><b>Purpose</b> Assist small island developing states to address decline in biodiversity and habitat loss through training of trainers in community-based conservation and sustainable development using the distance learning model.</p>	<p>Numbers of scheme-related SIDS conservation projects</p> <p>Duration of resources for sustainability of Pacific Training Centre and network</p> <p>Amount of leveraged funding for scaling-up of activity to global SIDS community</p>	<p>Not evident until after project lifetime.</p> <p>Training facility established within Institute of Applied Sciences; Network established. Sustainability will not be evident until after the lifetime of the project.</p> <p>Final project report and after project lifetime.</p>	<p>Training facilities, resources and materials to be consolidated in preparation for DFL programme commencement, February 2008</p> <p>07/08 – work begins to lever funds and scale-up the project to global SIDS</p>



Output 1.		
1 Distance learning course in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development for SIDS	Distance and flexible learning programme established and running efficiently	DFL Programme development is well underway.
Activity 1.1: Core and compulsory DFL materials completed (June 07)		Progress is according to schedule. Two (formerly 4) core distance learning modules in preparation. These will be completed during the next period.
Activity 1.2: Programme Workshop 1 (June 07)		Postponed until November 07 due to change in schedule of programme commencement (see below). However, consultations on module development to date have been through individual meetings with stakeholders and electronic communication.
Activity 1.3: First cohort of trainees begin study (September 08) for Postgraduate certificate, diploma and masters'.		Postponed until February 08 to comply with USP academic session
Activity 1.4: Ancillary/optional DFL materials completed (June 08)		These modules will ultimately be offered through alternative modes – distance or residential study. Development to begin in July 07
Activity 1.5: Certificate trainees complete (June 08)		Now scheduled for December 08
Activity 1.6: Second cohort of trainees begin study (September 08)		Now scheduled for February 09 to comply with USPL academic session
Activity 1.7: Global SIDS training scheme funding secured		Consultations with potential funders and other institutions for opening the scheme to other SIDS to begin in next period.
Output 2.	Number of conservation workers trained in-post and scheme-related	Programme still in development phase. No students following DFL programme until February 2008. Action for next period includes opening

10 conservation workers trained with DI bursaries by Year 3 (>20 with leveraged funding)	beneficiaries	admissions procedures for first intake of students, launching and running the programme
Activities 2.1 – 2.3: As Activities 1.3, 1.5, 1.6		No action so far (except promotion of DFL programme among network and PICCC trainees); Action for next period is wider promotion of the programme, admission of first cohort of students and launch of programme
Output 3. 2 module development workshops and 2 trainee induction courses	Numbers of, and participants in, project workshops/courses	First module development workshop and first induction course scheduled for project period 07/08
Activity 3.1 Programme Workshop One		To be prepared and delivered by June/July 07
Activity 3.2 Programme Induction Course One		Action pre-programme commencement, February 08
Output 4. Project Reports and 2 published articles on the training scheme	Number of project publications	6 month and annual reports produced as required for Year One. To continue. One article on the training scheme to be produced and disseminated by July 07.
Activity4.1 Programme articles published		Scheduled for July 07 & 08. The first of these now to be done for the SPREP five-yearly conference to take place in Papua New Guinea in October 07.

## Annex 2 Project's full current logframe

<i>Project summary</i>	<i>Measurable Indicators</i>	<i>Means of verification</i>	<i>Important Assumptions</i>
<p><i>Goal:</i> <i>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 the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.</i></p>			

<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Assist small island developing states to address decline in biodiversity and habitat loss through training of trainers in community-based conservation and sustainable development using the distance learning model.</p>	<p>Numbers of scheme-related SIDS conservation projects</p> <p>Duration of resources for sustainability of Pacific Training Centre and network</p> <p>Amount of leveraged funding for scaling-up of activity to global SIDS community</p>	<p>Project reports, trainee and employer feedback</p> <p>Project, SPREP and USP official reports and accounts</p> <p>Project-wide accounts (DI plus project partners and other agency funding)</p>	<p>Favourable climate among trainee employers for <i>de novo</i> conservation project activity.</p> <p>SPREP and USP continue support for DFL network</p> <p>Favourable climate for support of environmental action in wider SIDS stakeholder and donor communities</p>
<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <p>1 Distance learning course in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development for SIDS</p> <p>10 conservation workers trained with DI bursaries by Year 3 (&gt;20 with leveraged funding)</p> <p>2 module development workshops and 2 trainee induction courses</p> <p>Project Reports &amp; 2 published articles on training scheme</p>	<p>Distance and flexible learning programme established and running efficiently</p> <p>Annual numbers of conservation workers trained in-post, and scheme-related community beneficiaries</p> <p>Numbers of, and participants in project workshops/courses</p> <p>Numbers of project publications</p>	<p>USP/SPREP and project reports</p> <p>USP/SPREP and project reports plus trainee and employee feedback briefings</p> <p>USP/SPREP and project reports</p> <p>USP/SPREP and project reports</p>	<p>SPREP and USP continue support for programme and DFL network</p> <p>Favourable climate among SIDS conservation agencies for (subsidised) employee training</p> <p>Continuing stability and commitment of main project partners.</p> <p>Project principals work to schedule</p>

Activities	Activity Milestones	Assumptions
Project commences	May 2006	Political stability in primary host country (Fiji)
Core and compulsory DFL materials completed	June 2007	Continuing stability and commitment of main project partners
Programme Workshop 1	June 2007	
First cohort of trainees begin study	September 2007	Host institution continues support for DFL network
Certificate trainees complete	June 2008	
Ancillary/optional DFL materials completed	June 2008	Favourable climate for support of environmental action in wider SIDS stakeholder community
Programme Workshop 2	June 2008	
Second cohort of trainees begin study	September 2008	
Diploma trainees complete	June 2009	
Programme articles published	July 2007, July 2008	
Global SIDS training scheme funding secured	January 2009	

**Annex 3 onwards – supplementary material (optional)**

### ***Checklist for submission***

	Check
<b>Is the report less than 5MB?</b> If so, please email to <a href="mailto:Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk">Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk</a> putting the project number in the Subject line.	
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<b>Do you have hard copies of material you want to submit with the report?</b> If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number.	
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table?	
Do not include claim forms or communications for Defra with this report.	