



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	21-018
Project Title	Conservation and sustainable use of marine turtles, Southwest Madagascar
Country(ies)	Madagascar
Lead Organisation	ReefDoctor
Collaborator(s)	
Project Leader	<i>Shane M. Abeare</i>
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website	<i>www.reefdoctor.org</i>

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) 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 to end September).

Output 1: 50% reduction in the baseline marine turtle exploitation rate and, potential, exit from the fisheries

1.1 Meetings and focus groups held with those involved in the marine turtle fishery...

(100% complete) Meetings and focus groups were held with the local marine turtle association FIMPAMIFA to discuss the Darwin Initiative Project.

1.2 Marine turtle protection team training on dina (local law) management and enforcement

(100% complete) Two workshops, attended by members of the local turtle fishermen's association (FIMPAMIFA), were held in each of the 6-targeted villages that focused specifically on issues related to the turtle fishery and strategies for implementing the newly created turtle fishery dina.

1.4 Biological monitoring of the marine turtle fishery...

(On-going) In Q1/Q2 a village network was created / formalized, where undersized turtles are reported to the "Tagging Team", whom are then dispatched to the location for data collection, tagging, and releasing. At present, the system is working well, and with every passing month, more-and-more turtles are being reported. In addition to the tagging system in-place, catch data are being collected from several key villages, which will later be used to evaluate any changes in turtle catch related to the implementation of Darwin Initiative Project.

Output 2: Protection of essential seagrass habitat

2.1 Development of the MoU agreement on intertidal land-use rights...

(50% complete) Meetings were held with fishermen that focus much of their activities in the intertidal zone to discuss the spatial requirements of the Darwin Initiative aquaculture projects, and how this could affect their respective activities. After all the fishermen's questions / concerns were addressed, the meeting ended on a positive note. The next step will be to formalize this progress in a written agreement during the next meeting to be held in Q3.

2.2 Formation and implementation of... indigenous law (dina) protecting 400ha of seagrass...

(40% complete) A conversation has been initiated in 3/6 targeted villages concerning the need to protect their seagrass resources. Meetings concluded on a positive note and the

formalisation of a written, local law should proceed effortlessly in Q3.

2.4 Periodic stakeholder meetings to facilitate a smooth social transition from capture fisheries to sea cucumber / seaweed farming and resolve any minor conflicts

(On-going) The process is on-going and still in the early stages, however, ReefDoctor aquaculture technicians are spending the majority of their time in the villages addressing any minor issues.

2.5 Seagrass surveys: data collection on species composition / diversity and density...

(On-going) During Q2, the methodologies that will be used to conduct the seagrass surveys has been studied and established. In Q3, the actual surveys will commence, which will provide the baseline data required for the establishment of the protected areas and for the evaluation of the impacts of aquaculture activities.

Output 3: Implementation of sea cucumber / seaweed farming projects

3.1 Meetings and focus groups held in the 6-targeted villages to implement Darwin initiative

(100% complete) In the first quarter, a series of meetings (2 meetings per village) were held in the 6-targeted villages of the Bay of Ranobe to: 1) introduce the Darwin Initiative Project, discuss the details of the project, and gauge the level of interest and 2) collect names and contact details of community members interested in receiving training and materials to start their own aquaculture project.

3.2 Selection of 10 community groups (1 group/enclosure) per year per target village...

(30% complete) Our strategy for the selection of groups and implementation of the projects has slightly changed, but this change will have no effect on the project outputs (i.e. number of households per year participating). Instead of selecting participants from all the 6 villages at once, then some months later returning to the village to build aquaculture infrastructure, we decided to conduct the selection in a village, then immediately build infrastructure in that village before moving on to the next village to repeat the same process. During Q2, the selection process has occurred in 2/6 of the villages.

3.3 Sea cucumber / seaweed farming workshops held; construction and stocking of sea...

(30% complete) As stated above, we have slightly modified our strategy in order to avoid a large time-gap between the selection of participants and construction of aquaculture infrastructure. During Q2, the construction and stocking of sea cucumber enclosures has occurred in 2/6 of the villages.

3.4 Continual technical and logistical support for maintenance of enclosures / cultivation lines...

(On-going) Since the outset, project technicians have maintained a presence in the villages, in conducting meetings, workshops, and the logistical support required to ensure a smooth start to the individual family-based projects.

3.5 Socio-economic surveys: changes in poverty level resulting from Darwin Initiative Project

(On-going) Socio-economic surveys will be conducted periodically to assess the financial impact of the Darwin Initiative Project on participating households.

Output 4: Optimisation of sea cucumber / seaweed farming productivity

4.1 Construction / stocking of experimental sea cucumber enclosures / seaweed cultivation...

(50% complete) During Q2, experimental seaweed cultivation lines were implemented, which are already producing some interesting results. Experimental sea cucumber enclosures are being built in Q3.

4.2 Continuous biological and environmental assessment of productivity

(On-going) Data on productivity are being collected on a continual basis.

2a. 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.

Due to the declining value of the Malagasy currency (Ariary), prices for some of the aquaculture materials have changed, particularly for imported materials. Additionally, the responsibility for the transport of aquaculture materials (fencing for enclosures and juveniles) was to be assumed, in large part, by the supplier (Indian Ocean Trepang, IOT). However, recent issues with their transport vehicle and staff have made transport of these materials problematic. In the near future, there appears to be no alternatives being offered by IOT.

Despite these issues, I believe that the project will be able to meet its targeted outputs on-time, given that we are able to make some adjustments to the original budget, and due to the fact that I have recently received positive feedback from a previously unsecured funding source. Budgetary adjustments will be needed to resolve the "transport issue", with the additional funding source being used to offset changing costs of materials. Combined, these solutions will allow for the project to stay on-track, without making any changes to annual award amounts. I would like to begin discussing these issues with LTS within the next week.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

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

None at this time.

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 can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**