



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	21-019
Project Title	Strengthening marine protected areas and marine ecotourism benefits in Sudan
Country(ies)	North Sudan, Red Sea State
Lead Organisation	Equipe Cousteau
Collaborator(s)	Rebecca Klaus, Nigel Hussey, Steve Kessel, Abdel Rahman El Mahdi, Noémie Stroh
Project Leader	<i>Tarik CHEKCHAK</i>
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	<i>21 October 2014 - HYR1</i>
Project website	http://www.cousteau.org/projects/protect-sharks-and-rays-of-the-red-sea/

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).

The project was supposed to start in May 2014 but it is only starting now and has thus suffered from a 5 month delay. Drs. Hussey and Kessel visited Sudan for a field mission between the 1st and 20th May 2014 but were not able to undertake fieldwork because of unexpected issues with the Sudanese security (please refer to section 2 for detailed explanations). Some sensitive field equipment has been successfully shipped to Sudan (VEMCO batteries for the acoustic bottom monitors).

A change request form has been submitted to Darwin on the 13th of October 2014 requesting an extra 6 months of no-cost extension with the possibility of a budget allocation from DI of:

- 112 500 £ the first fiscal year (instead of 150 000 £)
- 93 750 £ the second fiscal year (instead 75 000 £)
- 93 750 £ the third fiscal year (instead 75 000 £)

The first Advance Claim requesting 84 375 £ has also been sent on the 13th October.

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.

In late April 2014, our key focal point in Sudan, Brigadier Mohammed Younis, Abdeslam, died suddenly of a stroke just before the beginning of our scientific field mission. It was a shock and very depressing news for all project partners. All team members have worked closely with Mohammed for many years and he has played a pivotal role in the creation of the marine protected areas in Sudan and in generating the support for this Darwin project.

Because Mohammed was our key focal contact in the country, his sudden departure left the team with a rather challenging situation. At the outset, Mohammed assisted the team to obtain the original MoU for this project, but he also obtained the indispensable security permits each time we undertook fieldwork.

The full impact of Mohammed Younis's passing became apparent a month afterward, when Dr Hussey and Dr Kessel visited Sudan for our field Darwin mission on sharks. Our new contact in the Wildlife General Conservation Administration (WCGA), who has taken over Mohammed

Younis's role, did everything possible to assist the team to obtain the necessary security permits. Unfortunately, although the team were given verbal reassurances that the security paperwork was forthcoming, they instead spent 2 weeks in meetings in Khartoum discussing the paperwork and were unable to undertake fieldwork. Since that time we have been working on resolving this security matter. Although progress over the summer period was slow because of Ramadan and summer holidays, the situation is now slowly resolving itself.

Our other local partner, the NGO Sudia has signed a new agreement (MoU) with the WCGA and has taken responsibility for pursuing the required paperwork in advance of our next field mission. Importantly, we have also completed and submitted a Technical Agreement to the Security (HAC) in Sudan as requested in the Khartoum meetings and are currently waiting for its final approval. The team is now confident that with SUDIA on the ground in Sudan negotiating these hurdles and the signing of a new MoU between Sudia and the WCGA, that these issues with security will soon be resolved ensuring the project can move forward smoothly over the next three years.

Our main issue is that we now have only 6 months to deliver on project objectives what was initially planned for year 1. It is for this reason that we have requested a no-cost extension. Between Q1 and Q4, we planned telemetry fieldwork, capital investment training activities and workshops involving Sudanese authorities and stakeholders. While some of these activities can be delivered in 6 months, especially the capital investments, others will require more time if they are to be successful.

A recent phone conference involving all project partners clarified the following points:

Community support and stakeholders engagement:

- Sudia could deliver most of the socio economic activities planned for Year 1 before the end of April 2014 (DEFRA fiscal year), as well as the initial community-visioning workshop with all stakeholders (activity 1.1). We feel it will not be sensible to hold the annual stakeholder workshop (activity 4.4) to update stakeholders on Darwin Initiative project findings given that we will have limited data/information to report due to the problems detailed above. It would be more sensible to delay this meeting until mid 2015. We need to have sufficient data and information, and thus field work done, before sharing and exchanging with the stakeholders about the results. Sudia estimate that it is possible to establish the 2 x Community-based Microfinance Committees (CB-MFCs), one in Dungonab and the other in Mohammed Qol (activity 3.4).

Science and capacity building:

- Our scientific partners of the University of Windsor consider that it is feasible to undertake fieldwork in March 2014, thus before the end of the fiscal year. This 3 week mission (activity 2.1) would be followed by the stakeholders workshop (activity 1.1). The best season to conduct fieldwork on sharks and manta rays is between the end of March and early June, consequently March is possible but not necessarily ideal.

If the no-cost extension is not approved, the following activities would be impacted because of limited time available to achieve these:

- 2.3 Training of Sudanese partners in telemetry field methods for elasmobranchs (x 3), telemetry array maintenance and data download and organisation. Only one workshop could be delivered in March.
- 2.6 Data compilation, analysis and reporting of DAS monitoring surveys.
- 2.7 Training of WCGA Officers / students in SCUBA diving.
- 2.8 Training of Sudanese partners in coral reef monitoring survey methods (Cousteau Divers, Reef Check) and field surveys to implement monitoring.
- 2.10 Preparation of geodatabase to consolidate existing and new monitoring datasets (e.g. DAS data, telemetry data, coral reef monitoring etc), and satellite derived environmental characteristics (e.g. sea surface temperature, chlorophyll) providing the basis for spatial planning and re-zoning of DMNP.

3.2 Prepare business plans for nature-based ecotourism livelihood opportunities that are both equitable and gender balanced
4.4 Annual Stakeholder Workshops held with a broad group of stakeholders to keep them up to date on Darwin Initiative project findings (x3)
Nevertheless, all activities could be delivered with a 6 month no-cost extension.
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: Yes
Formal change request submitted: Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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?
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 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**