



Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Annual Report

Project Reference No. 162/8/251

Data rescue and compilation (CD-ROM) for assessment of plankton biodiversity and biovariability in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

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1. Darwin Project Information

Project title	Data rescue and compilation (CD-ROM) for assessment of plankton biodiversity and biovariability in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.
Country(ies)	UK, Ukraine, Kenya, Panama
Contractor	Plymouth Marine Laboratory, UK
Project Reference No.	162/8/251
Grant Value	£160,992
Start/Finishing dates	1 April 1999 – March 2002
Reporting period	1 April 2000 – 30 March 2001

2. Project Background

The leading oceanographic institutes of Ukraine, Panama and Kenya hold extensive and very valuable information on species diversity and spatial-temporal variability of the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of various oceans of the world. To date, this information (of about 2000 oceanographic stations) has been practically inaccessible to scientists outside Ukraine, Panama and Kenya. This archived material can be made available through establishment of scientific links between Western Europe and developing countries, which will enable these data to be evaluated, jointly analysed and made available to the international oceanographic scientific community.

The importance of the proposed studies is related to global change, environment protection problem, and involvement in training and education in new information technology. The reduction of biodiversity in the major ecosystems of the world, caused by anthropogenic impact, is responsible for many international efforts to conserve global biodiversity. Research into the basic properties of biodiversity patterns in different regions and ecosystems has become a major aim in many international and national programmes.

3. Project Objectives

- a) A co-operation between Institutes, which are widely acknowledged as the leading oceanographic centres of their respective countries in long-term studies of the tropical ocean, to rescue and compile the oceanographic data sets and release them on CD-ROM. The CD-ROM will be made widely available to scientists all over the world.
- b) The processing and analysis of the above data should focus international attention to investigate biodiversity and biovariability of the tropical zones of the world's oceans.
- c) To provide assistance (i.e. institutional capacity building) to local Institutes which need support because of insufficient financial resources (MHI & IBSS, Ukraine) and because of a lack of expertise (STRI, Panama & KMFRI, Kenya).
- d) To provide training in Britain (on-the-job training and workshops) for scientists from participating Institutes.
- e) To improve the information base at the genus and species levels, and to focus on providing data from the archives in Ukraine, Panama and Kenya for evaluation, modern analysis and for long term study which may have wider impact.

New tools will be developed for historical information presentation, analysis and dissemination (CD-ROM, Internet).

The results will be presented in three forms: 1) CD-ROM disks manufactured for dissemination among scientists and Institutes all over the world, 2) a series of joint scientific papers with the analysis of biodiversity and biovariability patterns evaluated from the created data bank, 3) preparation of web pages for online access of data through the internet and placing them in PML (UK) web site (<http://www.pml.ac.uk/diocean>).

The objectives and operational plan have not been modified.

4. Progress

- Selection and rescue of archived data, from the three countries, was achieved in the first year of the programme.
- All these data were transferred to computer format by May 2000 and the construction of the data inventories and database on CD-ROM were completed by March 2001. The design and development of the web site and tools for online data dissemination were started late in 2000 and a pilot web site established.
- Preparation of papers for submission to Oceanography Society Meeting/Oceanology International Americas 2001, Miami, USA, 3-5 April.
- The construction of the pilot web site and the draft version of the database involved collating all data from participants, checking and evaluating contributions through a constant flow of e-mails between UK, Ukraine, Kenya and Panama.
- Our major difficulty over the first and second reporting years was the problems encountered in Ukraine when our Ukrainian PI (Dr S. A. Piontkovski) was charged initially with sending classified data to the West

and then with currency irregularities (New Scientist, 15 April 2000, pp. 30-33, http://www.geocities.com/sep_case/index_old.html)

On February 11, 2000, the (EU) INTAS commission visited Ukraine and discussed with the Prosecutor in Sevastopol the case of Dr Piontkovski and others and clarified the situation. It finally transpired that Dr Piontkovski has acted correctly within the framework of current rules. It was only the final intervention of INTAS, which resolved this situation.

The problems outlined above delayed and finally cancelled the visit by Dr Piontkovski to KMFRI and our colleague's visit to PML from Kenya was postponed until April 2001.

- The project's objectives, methods and achievements to date are as given in the submitted programme.
- The work plan for the next reporting period (April 2001 – March 2002) includes;
 - a) Submit papers to the Oceanography Society Meeting/Oceanology International Americas 2001, Miami, USA, 3-5 April.
 - b) Training for scientist from participating countries in a one week training programme in web design and content at PML, UK in April 2001.
 - c) Continuing the design and development of the web site until September 2001.
 - d) Preparation of publications until March 2002.
 - e) Dissemination of data on CD-ROM and through the WWW until March 2002.

5. Partnerships

- Collaboration between UK and host country partner(s) over the last year was very effective through e-mail.

There were still residual problems and difficulties with the UK FCO over entry of Dr Piontkovski (IBSS, Sevastopol, Ukraine, presently residing in USA) into the UK. Even though I discussed the problems with the Secretariat and with the UK Embassy in Kiev (sent a number of faxes to Ambassador Roland Smith) he was refused entry into UK by default. The Embassy in Kiev kept on asking him to wait and return to the Embassy for a decision prior to receiving a visa. (I mention this in the light of the discussions held at the Darwin Initiative Seminar, 10 May 2001, with the Rt. Hon Michael Meacher MP where he stated that the Embassies abroad would attempt to assist all participants of the DI to fulfil their commitments). This delay went on for about 10 days, after which Dr Piontkovski left Ukraine (Kiev) for the USA, after successful application for an entry visa, within 24hrs to the US Embassy.

To continue our work together, he applied for a visa for 6 month entry into the country on 10 Oct., 2000 but the UK Embassy in New York requested further information from him concerning his duties and project schedule. All requested information was mailed on the 24 Oct. I kept DETR informed about these problems and sought their assistance to resolve this situation.

These unforeseen difficulties arose from problems concerning the implication of the DI Project in Ukraine, see last Report and web site.

A number of visits to and from UK were postponed or cancelled but these have not impacted on the objectives of the project.

- The project has been linked with two INTAS projects, one in the Indian Ocean and the other in the Caspian, Aral and Mediterranean Seas and with the NATO Black Sea Ecosystem Processes and Forecasting/Operational Database Management System (SfP-ODBMS Black Sea).

6. Impact and Sustainability

- The project within and outside UK has been promoted within the scientific press, unfortunately, in the majority of cases linked with our problems in Ukraine.
- The Darwin project has and will be supported by the INTAS Project No. 95-UA-80 “Dissemination of data on environmental characteristics using innovative (CD-ROM) Data Management; Tools for protection of biodiversity in the endangered areas of the World’s Tropical Ocean”, completed in August 2000 and by the new INTAS Project No 59 (2001) (co-ordinator R. Williams) “Dissemination of data on environmental characteristics using a CD-ROM based data management system for the Atlantic Ocean and the enclosed seas (Mediterranean Sea, Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea”. The results from these two INTAS project will enhance the database built under the Darwin Initiative.
- The DI project has not been out of the news in Ukraine and our colleagues are still being monitored by the SBU (former KGB). A few of the team members in Ukraine are involved in the development of the UNDP Caspian Environment Programme and in the NATO Black Sea Ecosystem Processes and Forecasting/Operational Database Management System (SfP-ODBMS Black Sea) <http://sfp1.ims.metu.edu.tr/>.

7. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

Measurable outputs (Code number):

- a) CD-ROM (with Darwin Initiative logo) manufactured for the dissemination among scientists and Institutes through the world.
 - Draft CD produced 2001.
- b) Series of joint scientific papers and Conference presentations with the analysis of biodiversity and biovariability patterns evaluated from the created data bank.
 - Ms prepared for publication and two Conference submissions prepared.
- c) Prepare Web site for Darwin Initiative activities, placed on PML Web-server
 - Web site prepared and placed on server.
- d) Established data dissemination network between UK, Ukraine, Kenya and Panama (17A – 3).
 - Successfully achieved.
- e) Enhanced/extended data dissemination network between UK and Ukraine (17B – 1).
 - Successfully achieved with transfer of initial data to create draft CD-ROM.

- f) Proposed TV, radio and newspaper interviews planned for UK, Ukraine, Kenya and Panama (18C-3, 18D-1, 19C-3, 19D-1).
 - Radio/newspaper/scientific newspapers all published articles about the DI consortium. To date no TV interviews.
- g) Transfer of capital items, software and expertise to host countries (20 - £4,000).
 - Achieved.
- h) Matching funds and contributions in kind from participating Institutes for extra overheads, computer facilities, and extra staff costs (23 – £190,008).
 - Matching funds put in place.
- Actual outputs agreed in the initial ‘Project Implementation Timetable’ and the ‘Project Outputs Schedule’ were achieved with the exception of the cancellation of the visit to Kenya.

Publications

No publications for the year under report.

Two submissions (platform and poster) were prepared for the Oceanography Society Meeting/Oceanology International Americas 2001, Miami, USA, 3-5 April.

A further ms was prepared and submitted to Marine Ecology Progress Series (ms under review).

The web site will be active and the CD-ROM will be disseminated in year 2001-2002. Further funding has already been obtained from INTAS to extend the objectives of the project for a further 2 years.

8. Project Expenditure

Project expenditure during the reporting period

PML Finance (Kathryn Harding) has been in contact with Sylvia Smith over expenditure and how it is reported

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

- A constant dialogue was kept up throughout the year through e-mail to all co-ordinators in the three countries covered by the project. The established targets outlined in the programme were monitored and reports were sent in to the project leader. The web site was established by Dr Mishonov (Ukraine) and inputs to the site were co-ordinated by the Ukrainian Leader Dr Piontkovski. Inputs from Panama, Kenya and Ukraine were first checked and corrected (an ongoing project) prior to mounting on the web site.
- The data contributions were evaluated during the training week held in UK in April 2001.
- The main output of this project is the collation of data from the 3 countries involved and presenting the data in a form, which can be utilised by the scientific community. The preparation of the draft CD-ROM (see web site (<http://www.pml.ac.uk/diocean>)) already indicates that the project is achieving its purpose

- There are certainly lessons to be learned. After the problems with our Ukrainian colleagues, in the first and second year of this project, concerning the sensitivity of movement of data from the country of origin certain guide lines needed to be set out.
- The Ukrainian Authorities require an Act of Expertise for the CD-ROM, which must be signed by a special commission prior to release. Thus will involve a board of 6 persons to ascertain that the CD (or any other product mailed abroad) does not contain information restricted by the Ukrainian Authorities for dissemination, which can cause harm to the state.
- As project leader, I have to supply proof and certify that all materials used to create the CD have been already disseminated, previously published or legally received from all sources. This, I assume, should apply to all FSU countries and for all international research programmes and this process should be built into all future projects.

10. Author(s) / Date

No published work in the reported year.