

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports but will contact you individually should any questions arise

Project Ref. No.	EIDPO8/10-027
Project Title	Darwin Initiative for the Sustainable Use of Sea Cucumber in Egypt and the Red Sea
Country(ies)	Egypt
UK Organisation	University of Hull
Collaborator(s)	Suez Canal University, EEAA, GAFR
Report date	2 December 2005
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR 1</i>
Project website	<i>In Development</i>

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

- Please note that submission of this, first half year report, was delayed slightly so that outcomes of the first Scientific Committee meeting (9-15 November) could be reported.
- An initial meeting between the Project Coordinators took place in June 05. A number of issues were raised in relation to the logistics of the project and staffing. The Suez team needed time to report back to their Department before agreeing certain aspects of the project. The GTA post was advertised in August and filled in September.
- The meeting of the Scientific Committee (9-15 November) was later than anticipated, but it was felt important that as many members of the partnership as possible were present. The meeting reviewed the project outline and budget allocation. The EEAA in particular were keen to see some aspect of the mariculture continue and to see a lasting legacy in relation to the establishment of a biotechnology facility in Egypt.
- Alongside the SC meeting, meetings were also held with the USAID Life Project representative in Hurgada and Dr Soliman, President of the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (NIOF).
- The GTA is now working full time in the Molecular Biology Laboratory at Hull University. Based on meetings, an approach using DNA bar coding, will be used to examine inter-species differences in Red Sea Holothuria. In addition, micro-satellites will be developed when required to further explore the intra-species differences. The GTA is currently receiving training in these techniques using material collected during the original project.

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 an initial problem getting people together for the first Scientific Committee meeting which has put the project back 4-6 months. However, the meeting, together with follow up meetings with USAID and NIOF were very successful and have had very positive impacts on the project. Based on these

meetings the following outcomes have been agreed:

- Money from the budget will be diverted into the establishment of a Marine Biotechnology Laboratory in the Marine Sciences Department at Suez Canal University.
- The money for this will be saved from the Egyptian salaries. After negotiation, all Egyptian partners agreed to release the money set aside for their salaries to help fund the establishment of the Laboratory.
- In addition, only one Regional Meeting will now be held (rather than the originally proposed two). Additional funding for this meeting will be sought from PERSGA
- The Laboratory will be established with an initial £13, 000. However, we plan to raise in the region of £30, 000 worth of equipment for the laboratory from this.
- The money set aside for the Monitoring Programme will now be diverted towards the setting up of a mariculture system at the NIOF facility in Hurgada. Dr Soliman has agreed to make the facility and some of his staff available to the project and will help financially in the development of the facility. Dr Soliman will lead the mariculture aspect of the project.
- The SC have invited NIOF to become a project partner and this has been accepted.
- The monitoring of sea cucumber stocks will continue, and be expanded to include additional sites further to the south of Egypt. The funding for this will be provided through the USAID Life Project to a minimum of the equivalent originally outlined in the Darwin project.

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

- The Project Leader has spoken with the Darwin Secretariat about the changes to the scope and budget of the project, all of which were considered very positive and given approval. In addition, it was felt that any funds left from the original project could be transferred over to the second to further support the establishment of the laboratory and mariculture facilities.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: yes, in November 2005

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no – detailed changes to the workplan and schedule have not been presented

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

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 or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**