

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	23 November 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
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).

- The GTA is now working full time in the Molecular Biology Laboratory at Hull University. Different preservation methods have been attempted and of these liquid nitrogen appears the best. In addition, various tissues have been analysed and of these, tentacles appear to give the best DNA. Different methods of extraction have been tested (HOTSHOT, Phynol chloroform and DNAeay Kit) Of these, the kit gives the best result. The PCR reaction has been optimised and this involved the development of new primers.
- Good PCR products have been obtained with high quality DNA that has be sequenced for the CO1 gene. At this time sequences from 5 different species collected from different localities have been performed
- Data analysis of the sequence result are currently being performed to begin to build phylogenetic trees. In addition, more samples will be collected shortly to further expand the phylogeny
- The Darwin Fellow continues to set up and develop the new biotechnology laboratory in Ismailia and work is now progressing toward further extraction and analysis of sea cucumber samples.
- Almost 50% of the current samples have been extracted and are now ready for bioassay
- With approval from the Marine Science Department, the Fellow is now also supervising an undergraduate student from Suez Canal University in the field of marine biotechnology
- The fellow is also supervising and international PhD student from the Arabic Republic of Yemen to work on medicinal marine plants (sea grasses and mangroves). He is also helping a PhD student registered at Cairo University on Glucoaminoglycans in sea cucumbers.
- An application to the Leverhume Trust in relation to this work is almost ready for submission

- The Biotechnology Laboratory will be officially opened on 3 December.

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.

- There has been some delay in agreeing a venue for the final workshop. It is hoped that the Suez Canal University will give us gratis use of their facility in Sharm El-Sheikh. However, the Chancellor is currently considering this.
- It is hoped that this can be resolved during the official opening of the biotechnology laboratory
- Due to this delay, the timing of the final workshop is likely to be put back, in order to give time for the necessary advertising etc.

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

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: No

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no

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.**