

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	EIDPO16
Project Title	<i>The North Rupununi Adaptive Management Plan: assessing the impacts and building capacity</i>
Country(ies)	<i>Guyana</i>
UK Organisation (s)	<i>Royal Holloway, University of London, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, The Open University</i>
Collaborator(s)	<i>University of Guyana</i>
Project Leader	<i>Dr. Jay Mistry, Dr. Matthew Simpson, Dr. Andrea Berardi, Mr Calvin Bernard</i>
Report date	<i>31st October 2007</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR 1</i>
Project website	<i>www.nrwetlands.org.gy</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).

Progress to date is reported against each of the major project activities:

1. *Community wetland monitoring and Sustainable Livelihoods action planning and implementation*
 - Initial evaluation and adaptation of training course material completed in May 2007
 - Community course training programme commenced in June 2007 and is on-going
2. *Environmental Officer / Ranger Wetland Monitoring and Management Planning and Implementation*
 - Initial evaluation and adaptation of training course material to be completed in November 2007
 - Course training programme to commence November 2007
3. *Primary School Teacher and Student Wetland Biodiversity Education*
 - Education materials developed and completed in September 2007
 - First draft published and trialed in October 2007
4. *University of Guyana Sustainable Management of Wetland Biodiversity postgraduate education*
 - Course outline completed in June 2007
 - Course materials still in development (see section 2 below)
5. *NRAMP Impact Assessment Report*
 - Stakeholder workshops completed in September 2007 and reports available
 - Participatory Video assessment completed in September 2007
6. *Publications, presentations and exhibitions*
 - North Rupununi Wetlands website launched October 2007 (see section 2 below)
 - Press releases in Guyana promoting project and stakeholder workshop in May and September 2007
 - Radio and TV broadcasts in Guyana
 - Wetland Stakeholder Bulletin published in September 2007
 - Project presentation at National Amerindian Celebrations in September 2007

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.

In order to achieve the Postgraduate Course Output and International Fellowship was secured for Mr Calvin Bernard of the University of Guyana at the Open University from the 11th June to the 31st August 2007. The position supplied him with state-of-art resources (library, computing, training and internet access), a stipend and close support from the UK partners. The project is still waiting for this

output to be delivered and there is a concern among project partners that progress to date has not been achieved. Mr Bernard has indicated that there were serious personal circumstances which hindered work on this output. Project partners will be monitoring this situation over the next couple of months to determine when this output will be delivered.

It was hoped at the start of the project that Earthwatch expeditions could be used to support on-going monitoring and training in the Rupununi. However to date, PhD level individuals within the partner organizations have had other work priorities which has led to a reluctance to take on the management of an Earthwatch project. Project partners are still pursuing this idea and discussing options for supporting staff so they have sufficient time to facilitate an Earthwatch expedition.

The project partners are still pursuing the concept of a Wetland Visitor Centre in the Rupununi. Unfortunately the project partnership has been unsuccessful in securing significant funds for the centre. The project partnership and the communities of the North Rupununi have identified the location of the centre in Kwatamang. There are existing buildings that can be used for this purpose. The project partnership is still pursuing funding but during the lifetime of the Darwin funding the centre will be developed with a number of mobile exhibits rather than a full visitor centre with the range of facilities originally hoped for. There is still a commitment from the communities and tourist operators in the area to develop this tourist resource so the project partnership will continue to develop this idea.

There have been delays in developing the community wetland website through lack of human and infrastructural capacity within Guyana. There are significant problems within Guyana in hosting, maintaining internet connection and establishing websites. Although there have been problems establishing the website it is hoped that it will be in place by November 2008 according to the original timetable. Website development duties have been reassigned to individuals with greater technical capacity.

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

No, this has not been required

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: **no/yes, in..... (month/yr)**

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: **no/yes, in.....(month/yr)**

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

Since Dr. Graham Watkins left the Iwokrama International Centre, the project partnership has struggled to maintain successful line management of staff within key project partner organizations. At the commencement of the current project it was obvious that Iwokrama International Centre was unable to deliver the project outputs with their current project and financial management structure. As a result the key in-country implementing organization was switched to the University of Guyana, as agreed by the Darwin Secretariat. Iwokrama International Centre remains a partner on the project and is expected to input into the development of project outputs and key decisions. The University of Guyana has provided a significant improvement in terms of financial management but project and line management of staff remains a serious issue and threatens the delivery of project outputs. This often manifests itself in activities occurring without adequate recording of information. It is difficult to assess whether activities have been completed on time without seeing full records and write ups. Ultimately the responsibility for producing this documentation is the line managers within the partner organizations.

To rectify this situation UK partner staff have developed a strategy involving more frequent visits to Guyana to assist in management and implementation of the project. Dr. Mistry visited Guyana in September and Dr. Simpson will travel in November to keep the momentum of the project going. It should be stated that project staff are still undertaking project activities but without developed and enforced workplans they are often struggling to prioritise and deliver outputs. Hands on training of senior staff in project management, appraisal processes and line management is being undertaken during visits by UK staff to promote the successful delivery of the project.

Please send your **completed form email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**