



Darwin Initiative Workshop
New Project Leaders Meeting
21st May 2009

PROCEEDINGS

Royal Institute of British Architects

Introduction

The Darwin Initiative workshop took place on 21st May 2009 at the Royal Institute of British Architects in London. It was opened by Eric Blencowe the Head of the International Biodiversity Policy Unit, which houses the Darwin Initiative Secretariat, at Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

This workshop was intended for Project Leaders and Administrators successful in the Darwin Initiative's Round 16 of project funding. The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Provide a wider understanding of the objectives of the Darwin Initiative;
2. Inform project staff of the administrative and monitoring and evaluation requirements of Darwin Initiative projects;
3. Share the experiences of current and previous Darwin Initiative funded Project Leaders in implementing DI funded projects;
4. Provide an opportunity for new Darwin Initiative funded project staff to network and establish relationships with the Darwin Initiative Secretariat and other DI funded project staff;
5. Answer any queries new Darwin Initiative project staff may have to enable them to deliver a strong DI project.

The following is a brief summary of the day's activities. For detailed information please refer to the presentations which are available on the Darwin Initiative website <http://darwin.Defra.gov.uk/workshop/>. The programme for the day is attached.

Summary of presentations

Session 1: The Darwin Initiative & its requirements

Presentation 1: An overview of the Darwin Initiative objectives and expectations in impact towards Biodiversity Conservation

Kerry ten Kate

Darwin Advisory Committee

Kerry ten Kate gave a brief overview of the background to the Initiative and its relevance to global initiatives for biodiversity conservation and to set the context for the rest of the day. Kerry highlighted the main objectives of the Darwin Initiative and outlined the criteria used for reviewing and deciding on project funding. Kerry also provided an introduction to the Darwin Advisory Committee and their role in the Darwin Initiative. Finally Kerry extended a warm welcome to the new Darwin Initiative Projects and their associated staff and wished them every luck on their new ventures.

Presentation 2: The Darwin Initiative Programme and its Individual Elements

Eric Blencowe

Darwin Secretariat

Eric provided an oversight of the importance of the Darwin Initiative in support of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and now, with their inclusion in 2008, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Eric discussed the different elements of the Darwin funding including main projects, post projects, scoping awards and fellowships. An important point discussed by Eric was on press releases and publicity materials produced by projects. Defra request that for UK press releases and publicity materials, both the Darwin Initiative **and** Defra are credited, and for international press & publicity materials, both the Darwin Initiative **and** the UK Government are credited.

Presentation 3: Overview of LTS International's input to the Darwin Initiative

Alex Forbes

LTS International

Alex provided a brief overview of the support LTS provides to Defra in delivery of the Darwin Initiative. His presentation centered on outlining the Darwin Initiative's monitoring and evaluation programme, in particular the two central elements comprising of performance monitoring and impact evaluation. He also highlighted that the M&E provides information on achievements, outcomes and impacts, which are used to promote the Darwin Initiative to the wider conservation community through its website, briefing notes, and the DI quarterly newsletter and Defra's wider communications.

Presentation 4: Project support, finances and administration

Lesley Brown & Eilidh Young

LTS International

Eilidh and Lesley went into the specific details of what information and reporting is required of projects and when. This covered the project reporting cycle and financial reporting cycle and their links. What is important for all new projects to remember is all project reports, under the Freedom of Information Act, are shared on the Darwin Initiative website so projects need to ensure LTS and Defra are aware of any sensitive material in reports. However, all reviews of annual and final project reports are confidential between the project and Defra. Eilidh and Lesley finally, provided detail on how to contact the Darwin Initiative and who is the best avenue for each issue.

Session 2: Best Practice in Delivering Darwin Initiative Projects

Presentation 5: Best Practices for project monitoring and evaluation

Dr. Jane Hill

York University

Project Leader: Developing Tools for reducing biodiversity losses in tropical agricultural landscapes (17-003)

Jane has been a project leader on a previous DI project 'Predictive tools for targeting conservation effort in Bornean Forest Reserves' and kindly shared with the group the approach her team took to monitoring and evaluating their progress. Under her previous project, Jane and the team used butterfly distribution and abundances to prioritise biological importance of forest reserves for maximizing biodiversity. Jane particularly recommended the use of end-of-project workshops, in addition to inception workshops, to promote stakeholder engagement with project findings. Jane is commencing a new project in this new round of DI funding and is keen to learn from both her previous projects and those that have had good experiences under the Darwin Initiative, in engaging policy makers.

Presentation 6: Cultivating a strong partnership

Dr. Brendan Godley

Exeter University

Project Leader: Darwin Marine Biodiversity Action Plan for Gabon (17-005)

Brendan has been a project leader of Darwin Initiative projects since 2002 and as a staff member on Darwin Initiative projects since 1998. Brendan was able therefore to discuss some of the lessons he has learnt in delivering strong Darwin Initiative projects to the benefit of the host country partners. Brendan provided the nine recommendations for cultivating a strong partnership in support of conservation of biodiversity: for example, building upon existing relationships and interests is more likely to lead to a successful project. Brendan also advocated the use of local graduate students to support the work and increase the feeling of ownership within host countries for the work.

Presentation 7: Overview of using publicity in support of DI projects

Elizabeth Wood

Marine Conservation Society

Project Leader: Managing coral reef fisheries for biodiversity, ecosystem and economic benefits (17-002) and Capacity Building to enhance marine protected area effectiveness (EIDPO25)

Elizabeth has been a project leader under the Darwin Initiative since 1995 and has used publicity to great effect in delivery of Darwin Initiative projects. Elizabeth provided an overview of the types of materials they used in their recent project in Malaysia which has successfully received funding for a post-project. This project, run in collaboration with Sabah Parks, worked to include the parks inhabitants in the decision making process to put in place no-take zones to support biodiversity conservation and livelihood protection. Some of the materials Elizabeth and team produced included t-shirts for all project staff, colouring books for children (which incidentally were very popular with the adults) and a promotional DVD of the project which was funded by the government of Sabah.

Presentation 7: The role of Defra's press office in the Darwin Initiative

Tony McDougal

Strategic Communications

Defra Press Office

Tony reminded participants of the high regard which Defra and its Ministers hold the Darwin Initiative. Defra therefore wishes, where possible, to make the achievements of the Darwin Initiative and its portfolio of projects more widely known within the UK. Tony provided an overview of the role and mandate of Defra's press office, their role in supporting Darwin Initiative projects. He informed participants that Defra can provide guidance on how to put together an effective press statement and offered to read over draft press statements prepared by projects. He also informed participants that his office can support projects in circulating their press releases with the wider print and audiovisual media, as well as providing ministerial quotes for press releases Darwin Initiative projects can contact Tom Briggs (contact details on the DI website) in the Press Office for support. He also reemphasized the request that all UK press releases and publicity materials acknowledge the financial support of both the Darwin Initiative **and** Defra. Lastly, he also requested any press releases are shared with the Defra press office.

Defra agreed to write to new project leaders providing them with contact details for press enquiries.

ANNEX 1: Programme of the New Project Leaders Workshop



Workshop for New Darwin Projects 21 May 2009

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
66 Portland Place
London W1B 1AD



Time	Activity	Speaker
9:30-10:00	Registration: tea and coffee	
10:00-10:10	Welcome and introduction by Defra	Eric Blencowe, Darwin Secretariat
10:10 -10:30	Presentation: Overview of the Darwin Initiative	Kerry ten Kate, Darwin Advisory Committee Member
10:30 -10:50	Presentation: The Darwin Initiative Programme and Defra	Eric Blencowe, Darwin Secretariat
10:50 – 11:20	Presentation: Overview of LTS International's input to the Darwin Initiative	Alex Forbes, LTS International
11:20 – 12:00	Presentation: Project support, finances and administration Q & A Session	Lesley Brown and Eilidh Young, LTS International
12:00 –13:00	Lunch	
13:00 -13:45	Title: Best practices for project M&E Presentation: Project Leader's experiences of M&E under the DI Q&A Session	Jane Hill, University of York
13:45 – 14:30	Title: Best Practice in Cultivating a strong partnership Presentation: Project Leader's experiences of creating a strong partnership under the DI Q&A Session	Brendan Godley, University of Exeter
14:30 – 15:00	Tea Break	
15:00 – 15:45	Overview of using publicity in support of DI projects Short Presentation: The role of Defra's press office in the Darwin Initiative Q&A Session	Elizabeth Wood, Marine Conservation Society Tony McDougal, Defra Press Office
15:45 – 16:00	Wrap up and concluding Remarks	Darwin Secretariat