

## **Annual Report**

### **1. Darwin Project Information**

Project title	Building capacity in wetland biodiversity conservation in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia.
Country(ies)	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia
Contractor	Eurosite
Project Reference No.	162 / 10 / 008
Grant Value	Total grant of £160,200 over 3 years
Start/Finishing dates	April 2001 – March 2004
Reporting period	April 2002 – March 2003

### **2. Project Background**

**Briefly describe the location and circumstances of the project and the problem that the project aims to tackle.**

❖ The project involves 2 workshops based in the U.K. in each of the 3 years of its duration, making a total of 6 workshops. Each year a U.K. facilitator will visit the country they are 'partnered' with, to review and comment on the realities of management plans in each country. Different aspects of management planning are dealt with in each of the 3 years:-

- Year 1 – Objectives, format and content of management plans, expectations and experience;
- Year 2 – Managing stakeholders and their implications for management planning;
- Year 3 – Monitoring, reporting and review.

### **3. Project Objectives**

**State the purpose and objectives (or purpose and outputs) of the project. Please include the Logical Framework for this project (as an appendix) if this formed part of the original proposal or has been developed since, and report against this.**

- ❖ To help key individuals from Poland, Russia and the Baltic States improve understanding and practical skills in the management of wetland habitats. The project is led by a consortium of the main UK conservation organisations (National Trust, RSPB, Scottish Natural Heritage, English Nature and the Wildlife Trusts) and EUROSITE.
- ❖ The project is phased over 3 years; Year 1: Management planning; Year 2: Stakeholder management: Communicating management plans; Year 3: Monitoring and maintaining links with managers of similar sites in Europe.

**Have the objectives or proposed operational plan been modified over the last year and have these changes been approved by the Darwin Secretariat?**

- ❖ Changes to the timing of first country visits and workshop 2 were made in agreement with the Secretariat following concerns from UK project facilitators over practicalities e.g. weather conditions. This has meant that during year 2, three workshops have been held in U.K., rather than two as originally planned.

#### **4. Progress**

**4.i. Please provide a brief history of the project to the beginning of this reporting period. (1 para.)**

- ❖ Following formal inception of the project in June 2001, an initial meeting of U.K. partners was held in July 2001. A group of partners from the participating countries was assembled using the Eurosite database and the first workshop was held at Loch Leven, Scotland in November 2001. (See report appended)

**4.ii. Summarise progress over the last year against the agreed baseline timetable for the period. Explain differences including any slippage or additional outputs and activities.**

- ❖ **The first visits** by U.K. facilitators to their 'partner' countries to take place during April and May 2002. This delay arose because of the difficulties with weather conditions in the participating countries during the winter months. The change was made with agreement from the Darwin Secretariat. (Mission reports from each U.K. partner are appended.) These visits widened the impact of the project through contact with more people within 'partner' countries.
- ❖ **The 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop** to crystallise the lessons learned re Management Planning took place on 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2002 at the National Trust Nature Reserve at Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire. (A report is appended). Some of the individuals from participating countries were changed as a result of experience from the previous workshop and country visits.
- ❖ **The 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop** to begin incorporating stakeholder management into the planning process was held in Somerset on 13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November 2002, and was hosted by English Nature. (A report is appended).
- ❖ **The 4<sup>th</sup> workshop** to follow up stakeholder management was held in Staffordshire on 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2003 and hosted by the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (A report is in preparation; a copy of the workshop programme is appended.)
- ❖ **The 2<sup>nd</sup> series of country visits** by U.K. partners has been arranged and will be completed during April and May 2003.
- ❖ **Arrangements for the 5<sup>th</sup> workshop** are well advanced. It will be held at Aviemore and hosted by Scottish Natural Heritage and RSPB (Scotland). It will begin phase 3 of the project dealing with monitoring and recording.

**4.iii. Provide an account of the project's research, training, and/or technical work during the last year. This should include discussion on selection criteria for participants, research and training methodologies as well as results. Please summarise techniques and results and, if necessary, provide more detailed information in appendices (this may include cross-references to attached publications).**

- ❖ The basic technique used throughout the project has been “learning by doing”. This has been achieved by working on ‘real’ problems experienced by each individual within a workshop environment. Emphasis is placed on very brief introductions followed by working together on management plans and country problems. Publication of the results is in the form of workshop reports which are widely circulated through the Eurosite network. The principles included within these reports can be developed into guidelines appropriate to the needs of participating countries, recognising that no single ‘blue-print’ will cover all circumstances. The workshops are supplemented by visits to 2 or 3 nature conservation sites in U.K. to illustrate the management planning issues dealt with in the ‘in-door’ sessions. These have been used to show how U.K. nature conservation organisations deal with similar problems and provide an easy and informal opportunity for exchange of knowledge and experience. The country visits have a 2-way benefit both for U.K. facilitators and participants by increasing understanding of the cultural differences between countries and widening the impact of the project within partner countries.
- ❖ Progress in addressing the objectives of management planning for protected areas has been good. It has revealed differences arising from scale when comparing smaller countries like, Estonia, with Russia. Each country group has produced a draft management plan and begun to use and develop simplified guidelines for use in their own country. In the case of Russia a more strategic approach has also been required because of the scale of the issues and problems.
- ❖ Visits to participating countries by U.K. partners have been effective in addressing and advising on problems ‘on the ground’. In Estonia a shaky start has been recovered with the change in country participants. Visits involved meetings with staff in Ministries of Environment and/or lectures and talks to nature conservation organisations.
- ❖ The second stage of the programme on Stakeholder Management was welcomed by all of the country participants.
- ❖ In the case of all workshops country participants have welcomed the opportunity to consider the problems and solutions encountered by managing organisations. Care needs to be taken to ensure that principles are learned, rather than detailed ‘nuts-and-bolts’ applications, which may not be appropriate in participating countries.
- ❖ Participants were selected as identified in the original application i.e. individuals from the 5 countries should be ‘promising’ people who are likely to become leaders within their own countries within 5 – 10 years.
- ❖ Each U.K. workshop has tried to identify ‘what is useful’ and ‘what could be improved’ in relation to the individual’s skill and competency in nature conservation management. Each workshop therefore produced check list of expectations and lessons learned, that can be used and disseminated ‘at home’. (See workshop programmes and reports).

#### **4.iv. Discuss any significant difficulties encountered during the year.**

- ❖ Difficulties have been:-
  - Because of the extended set-up period country visits have tended to clash with weather constraints so that it has not always been possible to synchronise workshops and visits as originally planned. However this does not seem to have created additional problems and the programme is now ‘on schedule’.

- Maintaining continuity of participants has been difficult so that in a few cases it has been necessary to accept replacements for the original participant.
- Changes in staff in Eurosite meant that clarifying responsibilities has caused delays.

**4.v. Has the design of the project been enhanced over the last year, e.g. refining methods, indicators for measuring achievements, exit strategies?**

- ❖ Early recognition of the differences between Russia and the other countries meant that we have tried to deal with both strategic and operational levels.
- ❖ U.K. facilitators have seen that U.K. solutions to problems do not readily translate to other countries, but that principles behind decisions and action do.
- ❖ The Eurosite network, including the project facilitator organisations in the U.K., has provided an important support service which should endure beyond the completion of the project.

**4.vi. Present a timetable (workplan) for the next reporting period.**

- ❖ Scotland workshop – June 2003 Monitoring and Recording and Management planning
- ❖ Country visits by U.K. partners October 2003 – March 2004.
- ❖ Final workshop – Latvia? Completion of Monitoring & recording; Review of overall programme, March 2004.

**5. Partnerships**

- **Describe collaboration between UK and host country partner(s) over the last year. Are there difficulties or unforeseen problems or advantages of these relationships?**
- ❖ Partnerships between U.K. facilitators and country participants have developed further than anticipated. For example extended visits to U.K. by Polish participants have been funded by RSPB and English Nature have become involved in more strategic work on management guidelines in Russia funded from other sources.
- ❖ Visits to partner countries by U.K. facilitators have generated a wider interest and knowledge of the Darwin Initiative in organisations in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. (GEF (Global Environment Facility), British Council and the DEFRA Environmental Assistance Fund.)
- ❖ Difficulties have arisen in Estonia where the participants in the original workshop did not fulfil their commitments so that changes were made with the assistance of contacts within that country. As a result a more effective Estonian group has participated in the project from Workshop 2.
- ❖ It now seems likely that a continuing relationship will be formed between the U.K. facilitators and country partners that will last beyond the completion of the project. This was foreseen within the original project plan with country partner organisations becoming members of Eurosite, the European nature management network.

- **Has the project been able to collaborate with similar projects in the host country or establish new links with / between local or international organisations involved in biodiversity conservation?**
- ❖ Connections with similar projects have been made in Russia, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland. In all countries U.K. facilitators have made contact with a wider range of organisations and people than the participants in the project. These are referred to within the country reports (copies appended).

## 6. Impact and Sustainability

- **Discuss the profile of the project within the country and what efforts have been made during the year to promote the work. What evidence is there for increasing interest and capacity for biodiversity resulting from the project? Are satisfactory exit strategies for the project in place?**
- ❖ Within the U.K. the project is now known as a result of press releases and organisation newsletters e.g. Eurosite's newsletters (electronic and hard copy) and English Nature's nature management magazine, ENACT (now named Conservation Land Management), National Trust's internal management newsletter.
- ❖ Within participating countries the project profile is quite high. Competing projects from other European and world sources mean that 'breaking into the consciousness' of decision makers takes time and persistence.
- ❖ An exit strategy is included within the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the project. It is planned to use the final workshop to identify the next steps, though at this stage it seems likely that a follow-up programme within each country would be useful to assist with dissemination of results.

## 7. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

- Please expand and complete Table 1. **Quantify** project outputs over the last year using the coding and format from the Darwin Initiative Standard Output Measures (see website for details) and give a brief description. Please list and report on appropriate Code Nos. only. The level of detail required is specified in the Guidance notes on Output Definitions which accompanies the List of Standard Output Measures.

**Table 1. Project Outputs (According to Standard Output Measures)**

Code No.	Quantity	Description of Outputs
6A: <i>Number of people to receive training</i>	<i>15 people to be trained per year</i>	13 – 16 people trained. Some problems with continuity and replacement meant that workshop 2 included only 13 country participants. Also replacements were found for 2 participants because of other commitments.
6B: <i>Number of training weeks to be provided</i>	<i>2 in each year 2001, 2002, 2003. Total 6 over the project.</i>	3 training weeks provided during the reporting period. (This gives a total of 4 weeks training i.e. on schedule)

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7: <i>Training materials produced.</i>	<i>Learning materials from workshop programmes</i>	Learning materials produced within workshops. (See workshop reports.)
8: <i>Weeks by project in host countries</i>	<i>5 in each year 2001- 2004. Total 15 over the project</i>	5 week visits by U.K. facilitators during the reporting period. A further 5 week visits are organised at the beginning of 2003/2004 and a final 5 visits are planned for later in the same period.
9: <i>Habitat/species management plans</i>	<i>5 management plans with selected species action plans subsumed within them.</i>	At least 5 management plans produced. In some cases 2 or 3 with species actions plans included e.g. Pond Turtle in Lithuania, Stellar's Eider duck in Estonia. Final plans will take account of stakeholder management issues and monitoring/recording which are part of phases 2 and 3.
14A: <i>Dissemination workshops</i>	<i>5 in 2002/2003</i>	Dissemination meetings held in all 5 countries including meetings with Ministries of Environment. NGO staff, University departments. (See country reports)
15A: <i>Number of national press releases in host country(ies)</i>	<i>1 per year per country</i>	Completed + press interviews. (See country reports)
15B: <i>Number of local press releases in host country(ies)</i>	<i>1 per year per country</i>	Completed.
15C: <i>Number of national press releases in UK</i>	<i>1 per year</i>	Completed. (Organised by the U.K. facilitator organisation)

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<p>15D:  <i>Number of local press releases in UK</i></p>	<p>2 per year</p>	<p>Completed. (Organised by the U.K. facilitator organisation)</p>
<p>16A:  <i>Number of newsletters to be produced</i></p>	<p>1 per year</p>	<p>Darwin Initiative included in 3 Eurosite Newsletters and report given at Eurosite Annual Assembly in Poland September 2002. The project has been referred to in 3 editions of English Nature's conservation land management magazine and within the Wildlife Trusts magazine</p>
<p>16B:  <i>Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the host country(ies)</i></p>	<p>50 per country</p>	<p>Numbers circulated – 80 organisations part of the Eurosite network in Europe.</p>
<p>16C:  <i>Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the UK</i></p>		<p>EN magazine circulation approx. 5000.  Numbers of others not known</p>
<p>17B:  <i>Dissemination networks enhanced</i></p>	<p>EUROSITE network of site managers enhanced through partnerships, twinning &amp; use of electronic information exchange system.</p>	<p>Grant of £500 for education equipment sent by RSPB to Czarnocin, Poland.  Eurosite Intranet reports to all network partners.  Partner contribution to improvements to Eurosite Management Planning Toolkit.</p>

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- **Explain differences in actual outputs against those agreed in the initial 'Project Implementation Timetable' and the 'Project Outputs Schedule', i.e. what outputs were not achieved or only partly achieved? Were additional outputs achieved?**

- ❖ The main difficulties have been in maintaining continuity among a few of the participants as a result of other commitments, disagreements with fellow countrymen and job changes.
  - ❖ The relatively late start to Phase 1 meant that only 1 workshop and 1 round of country visits could be accomplished in the first year. This has been rectified in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year with 3 workshops and 1 round of country visits organised.
  - ❖ The delay resulted in a budget underspend which was largely removed by the end of 2002/2003. This resulted from completing 3 workshop in 2002/2003 and arrangements made for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of country visits.
  - ❖ Additional outputs were achieved in training of additional staff members of participant organisations during country visits by U.K. facilitators. Also enduring partnerships are being established between U.K. facilitators and their country partner organisations, and the Eurosite network. (See earlier comments)
- **In Table 2, provide full details of all publications and material produced over the last year that can be publicly accessed, e.g. title, name of publisher, contact details, cost. Details will be recorded on the Darwin Monitoring Website Publications database which is currently being compiled. Mark (\*) all publications and other material that you have included with this report**

**Table 2: Publications**

Type * (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (title, author, year)	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. contact address, website)	Cost £
Workshop report	Workshop 1: Working Together, [Eckersley, P. <i>EUROSITE 2001</i> ]	N/A	<i>EUROSITE</i> information exchange programme (Intranet) <a href="mailto:e-news@eurosite-nature.org">e-news@eurosite-nature.org</a>	£800
Workshop report	Workshop 2: Learning Together [Whitmore, G. <i>EUROSITE 2002</i> ]	N/A	<i>EUROSITE</i> information exchange programme (Intranet) <a href="mailto:e-news@eurosite-nature.org">e-news@eurosite-nature.org</a>	£800
Workshop report	Workshop 3: Reviewing Together [Whitmore, G. <i>EUROSITE 2002</i> ]	N/A	<i>EUROSITE</i> information exchange programme (Intranet) <a href="mailto:e-news@eurosite-nature.org">e-news@eurosite-nature.org</a>	£800
Eurosite Newsletter	Circulated to the Eurosite network of approximately 80 nature conservation organisations throughout Europe, including Accession States and CIS	Eurosite (Electronically & hard copy)	<i>EUROSITE</i> information exchange programme (Intranet) <a href="mailto:e-news@eurosite-nature.org">e-news@eurosite-nature.org</a>	Part of ongoing costs.



- **Provide details of dissemination activities in the host country during the year. Will these activities be continued by the host country when the project finishes, and how will this be funded and implemented?**

**Estonia:** Liaised with Government officials, raising awareness of the Darwin project and informing them of our findings and recommendations from the visit.

**Lithuania:** Meeting with G. Jodinkas, Senior Specialist – Min.of Env., Lithuanian Fund for Nature booklet on Management Planning.

**Poland:** Site managers, local officials, University staff, teachers, local people, grazers,

**Russia:** Staff of the Biodiversity Conservation Centre in Moscow. Consideration of an auditing methodology suitable for National Parks and Zapovedniks.

## 8. Project Expenditure

- Please expand and complete Table 3.

**Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period**

Item	Budget	Expenditure
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- **Highlight any recently agreed changes to the budget and explain any variation in expenditure where this is +/- 10% of the budget**
- ❖ English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage declined to claim for salary costs because of the administrative costs involved.
- ❖ Costs for participants travel to U.K. have generally been lower than expected or planned for, due to always travelling so as to include Saturday nights.
- ❖ Underspend in 2002/2003 was used to make a deposit payment for Workshop 5 accommodation.

## **9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons**

- **Discuss methods employed to monitor and evaluate the project this year. How can you demonstrate that the outputs and outcomes of the project actually contribute to the project purpose? i.e. what indicators of achievements (both qualitative and quantitative) and how are you measuring these?**
- ❖ Each workshop includes evaluation sessions which address ‘what worked?’ and ‘what could be done better/improved?’ In addition the workshops deal with real working problems and management plans. Outputs are in the production of management plans which are useful in the participating countries. Outcomes are in the wider recognition in those countries of the range of benefits and values of management plans, and individual improvement in how to proceed with management planning as a process.
- ❖ Some of these outputs will not be achieved until the final stage of the project is completed
- **Are there lessons that you learned from this years work and can you build this learning into future plans?**
- ❖ One of the main lessons has been that the benefits have been considerable to participating individuals from partner countries and U.K. facilitators alike. Detailed practical applications, skills and competencies are essential in management planning, but there is also a need for wider skills in the management and culture of nature conservation organisations. The problems that the management planning participants face as they ‘re-enter’ their local circumstances, are how to begin implementing and applying the lessons and methods they have learned. It is likely that a longer and more extensive programme of training and mentoring will be needed to deal with these matters.
  
- **Author(s) / Date**

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