

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Year 2. Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Aztecs and Axolotls: Integrating Tourism and Conservation at Xochimilco, Mexico City
Country	Mexico
Organisation	Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology
Project Ref. No.	162/11/018
Report date	19/11/2003

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

The project has developed well during the first half of the second year of funding and our projected targets have been exceeded.

Planned outputs.

Code 2 - The "Darwin Fellow", Alejandro Meléndez has completed his MSc studies (The Board of Examiners meeting takes place on 1st December) and is taking the project forward in the context of CIBAC. The guide-training ("Trajineros") workshop is going ahead as planned (3rd-9th December), with preparations well underway.

A guide booklet and fact sheet text are being prepared and will be ready in time to use in the Trajinero workshop. Interpretative displays are now under design and it is expected that displays will be produced in the spring simultaneously for exhibitions at CIBAC, and possibly at Chapultepec, Toronto and Chester zoos (accompanied by the sale of souvenirs – see below).

Code 6A, 6B A 1-week workshop (4th-10th Nov.), which successfully trained 15 local people in artisan handicraft production of souvenirs themed around the axolotl and Xochimilco. Lecturers and students from the Department of Design and Technology at UAM became involved at an early stage through their interest in "eco-regional design" - the process of combining design skills and techniques with key cultural and ecological elements to produce sustainable, ecologically-sound products that celebrate and promote the identity of local communities. In the six months leading up to the workshop this group, together with the project investigators collaborated in the exploration design and manifestation of many possible products and several prototypes, experimenting with different designs and materials. For the workshop, five designs were selected, and participants were trained in their manufacture. The workshop output was then offered for sale over the weekend, and nearly £100 raised, which was distributed to participants to provide them with a stake with which to purchase their materials for further souvenir production. The initial target of running a workshop for 4 local people over three days was therefore exceeded.

Code 14B – One poster presentation at ASIH conference, Manaus, Brazil, July 2003.

Code 11B – One article in 'Axolotl News' published September 2003.

Codes 15B, 19A - Publicity in Mexico has consisted of several articles in local newspapers and newsletters, plus an appearance of Dr Bride and Alejandro Meléndez on an hour-long popular national radio chat show.

Additional outputs:

Code 2. An additional DICE MSc dissertation project has derived from the project. Jeanne

McKay conducted her project 'Evaluation of captive breeding and sustainable use of axolotls', on matching resources supplied by DICE and UAM.

Code 17A - The souvenir production workshop participants established a network amongst themselves and this will be linked to the Darwin Initiative project team, which will monitor their future activities and the economic benefits that accrue.

Code 23 – Accommodation for project team in Mexico supplied by UAM, £353; Books and journals donated by British Herpetological Society, £65; flight and project support grant for MSc student from DICE, £500; time spent by UAM Design and Technology staff on workshop, £1120; time spent by UAM Design and Technology students on workshop, £245.

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 effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

No notable problems encountered

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

None

Completed forms to: Rose Clarkson, Darwin Initiative M&E Project Manager, John Muir Building, Kings Buildings, University of Edinburgh, Mayfield Rd., Edinburgh EH9 3JK, Scotland. Email: R.Clarkson@ed.ac.uk