

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	162/13/004
Project Title	Developing a model for the conservation of Croatia's grassland biodiversity
Country(ies)	Croatia
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
Collaborator(s)	Žumberak-Samoborsko Gorje Nature Park (ŽSGNP) and the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER)
Report date	31 October 2004
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR -1
Project website	www.ppzsg.org/darwin

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 project started 4½ months ago (17th of May, 2004). The Darwin co-ordinator and trainer (Dr Antonia Eastwood) and the Darwin Scholar (Zrinka Mesić) have been successfully recruited. The financial and logistical arrangements have also been arranged and are now in place. A memorandum of understanding has been agreed and signed by all project partners. An induction week for UK partners (including the project leader) took place in July and included meetings with all park staff.

The project was launched at the Ministry of Culture (Croatia) on July the 16th, with project partners present. The in-country project launch and press release resulted in an interview with Croatia Radio and an interview on Croatia TV ("Good Morning Croatia"). These were broadcast on the 6th and 10th of August respectively. There has also been a UK press release and the project has been publicised on both the FFI and ŽSGNP websites. A project laptop has been purchased as have a number of books (field guides, habitat management and monitoring reference books). Fieldwork equipment has been ordered with a local blacksmith.

A preliminary survey of biodiversity and agricultural practices was conducted during the months of July-September. Additional expertise by IGER in August resulted in the development of draft grassland surveying recording sheets and a semi-structured interview format for local farmers. This surveying will be continued in the next field season (Spring 2005).

In preparation for the management planning workshop in October 2004 a stakeholder assessment was conducted followed by consultations (in the format of semi-structured interviews). A whole range of stakeholders have already been consulted including local farmers, small businesses, NGOs, researchers, county representatives in agriculture, rural development and tourism, hunting societies, mayors, the ministries etc.

The Darwin Scholar received 9 weeks of training and mentoring (participatory management planning and surveying) during in-country field work. The Darwin Scholar, in turn, trained other park staff in stakeholder consultation and participation. The Conservation manager received 2 weeks training and mentoring in participatory-management planning and biodiversity/agri-environmental surveying.

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.

As a consequence of the late start of the project a number of problems were encountered which have had an impact on the project timetable and budget. The short field season left for biodiversity surveying has meant that the training workshop in field surveying has had to be postponed till next spring, May 2005 (£875). The delayed recruitment of the Darwin Scholar (July 2004) has also meant that a planned workshop attendance in June 2004 has had to be postponed till next year, June 2005 (£940) and salary costs reallocated to the 2nd year (£1500). The delayed start of the project should not, however, have an impact on the overall project implementation and final outputs.

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

All the above issues have been discussed and approved with the Darwin Secretariat resulting in a change in the original agreement.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat:

Postponement of field surveying workshop **yes, in June 2004 (month/yr)**

Postponement of workshop attendance **yes, in June 2004 (month/yr)**

Reallocation of staff costs **yes, in August 2004 (month/yr)**

Changes to the project schedule/workplan:

Postponement of field surveying workshop **yes, from July 2004 to May 2005 (month/yr)**

Postponement of workshop attendance **yes, from June 2004 to June 2005 (month/yr)**

Reallocation of staff costs **yes, from 2004-2005 to 2005-2006 (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?

No

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.**