



Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species Annual Report

01 February 2005 to 31 March 2006

1. Darwin Project Information

Project Reference Number	162 / 13 / 025
Project Title	<i>Pioneering Community-Based Conservation Sites in the Polillo Islands (PCBCSPI)</i>
Country	<i>Philippines</i>
UK Contractor	<i>Fauna and Flora International (FFI)</i>
Partner Organisation	<i>Polillo Islands Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PIBCFI)</i>
Darwin Grant Value	<i>£169,050.00</i>
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Reporting Period and Report Number	<i>01 February 2005 to 31 March 2006 (Report #1)</i>
Project Website	<i>Not yet available</i>
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2. Project Area and Background

The Polillo Archipelago in the Philippines is composed of 27 small islands and islets situated in Lamon Bay, 29 kilometers off the east coast of Luzon facing the Pacific Ocean. It forms part of Quezon Province in Region IVa or CALABARZON (Provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) and comprises a total of five municipalities, namely: Polillo, Burdeos, Panukulan, Patnanungan and Jomalig. This group of islands forms one of the most distinct sub-centres of endemism within the 'Greater Luzon Faunal Region' or 'Luzon Endemic Bird Area (EBA)'; one of the world's highest conservation priority areas in terms of both numbers of threatened species represented and degrees of threat. The Polillos support several endemic species and subspecies of birds, reptiles and invertebrates, as well important populations of various globally threatened species, including the Philippine cockatoo (*Cacatua haematuropygia*), Gray's monitor lizard (*Varanus olivaceus*) and Philippine jade vine (*Strongylodon macrobothrys*). This Polillo Islands have accordingly been recognised as a high conservation priority area all recent independent reviews on conservation priority areas of the Philippines.

The endemic taxa of the Polillos are severely threatened due to the recent destruction and loss of important habitats. Extensive logging from the 1950s to the 1980s reduced the forest cover of Polillo Islands to less than 16 percent of their total land areas. Most of the remaining forests in these islands are therefore secondary and fragmented. The Polillo 'community forest wardening scheme' or 'Polillo Ecology Stewardship Project (PESP)', initiated by FFI and local partners in 1998, with annual funding support from the North of England Zoological Society (NEZS, Chester Zoo), has effectively curbed the (formerly prevalent) poaching and commercial trade in wildlife for local pet markets. This has also helped to stem other illegal activities, though low scale timber poaching, slash-and-burn farming and other resource exploitation continue in some areas.

Prior to the initiation of this project, only three small areas were declared as critical watersheds in Polillo Islands, but even in these areas protection mechanisms exist only on paper as no defined management systems were instituted or other conservation measures implemented in these areas -

other than the aforementioned forest wardening scheme. The previously declared watersheds are the (1) Minasawa Watershed in Burdeos; (2) Sibulan Watershed in Polillo; and (3) Panukulan Watershed in Panukulan. Inadequacy of locally available resources, lack of capacity and technical expertise and absence of institutional arrangement to manage these watersheds and other biologically important areas further aggravates the ecological state of islands comprising the Polillo Archipelago

This project on Pioneering Community-Based Conservation Sites in Polillo Islands is an initiative in developing and implementing conservation approaches which gives more management responsibilities to local stakeholders. It aims to identify most important sites for biodiversity conservation and declare them as Local Conservation Areas (LCAs) through local legislative processes. The project envisions that local governments, communities and other relevant stakeholders are working together in ensuring the effective and sustainable management of conservation areas in the long-term.

The significance of a community-based strategy anchors on the tenet that the success in resource-focused programmes such as biodiversity conservation is more feasible if local governments and communities share responsibility in managing natural resources. There is no doubt that this project is both urgent and achievable given the practical experience and good local relationships developed over the past eight years under the auspices of the PESP and the commensurate development of both the 'Polillo Islands Biodiversity Conservation Programme (PIBCP)' and 'Polillo Islands Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc (PIBCFI)'; the latter having been formally registered in 2003 to facilitate development and implementation of the PIBCP and therefore also constituting the leading local implementer of this project.

3. Project Purpose and Outputs

The primary purpose of this project is to establish a network of protected sites in Polillo Islands with the active support and participation of relevant communities and other stakeholders in order to conserve endemic and globally threatened species and habitats in this region. This project also aims to establish a coherent network of new protected areas selected on the basis of their importance re. particular threatened endemic taxa and/or 'representativeness' in terms of the wide range of wildlife habitats present in these islands. As such, this project also constitutes the first ever attempt to establish a protected areas network based solely on biological importance and diversity of available habitats in the Philippines – itself arguably the world's single highest conservation priority country in EBA terms.

To achieve these goals, the project is working with Local Government Units (LGUs) to declare local conservation areas using the Philippines' Local Government Code (LGC) or Republic Act 7160 as the main policy framework. The Code mandates local governments to share the responsibility with the national government in environment and natural resources management of the country. It also devolved some responsibilities and authorities of the national government through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to LGUs, including certain forest management functions such as the establishment and management of forest tree parks, communal forests, micro-watersheds and other community-based forest management programmes.

The concept of 'Local Conservation Areas (LCAs)' (see below) is also an innovation developed by the project as an alternative conservation modality to the conventional and nationally driven (not to mention essentially ineffective) protected areas system of the Philippines. The concept of this LCA is therefore to enable the declaration of biologically important sites - especially those harbouring threatened endemic species and habitats - as 'municipal reserves', through local legislative processes by local (municipal) governments in consultation with relevant local communities and other concerned authorities and key stakeholders. The *modus operandi* is vastly less complicated, tedious and expensive compared to the procedures and requirements in establishing and managing protected areas, as mandated by the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) of the Philippines. Once declared, local stakeholders will manage these conservation areas through execution of partnership agreements that will also define the 'terms of reference (TORs)' and engagements of each of the involved parties and institutions. All such TORs (etc) will also be reflected, detailed and reinforced

in the management plans developed for each LCA, since all such management plans will be developed and implemented in close collaboration with the said stakeholders.

This project will have six major outputs, namely: 1) biological surveys completed and priority sites selected and mapped; 2) at least six top-priority areas agreed by a process of consultation with local communities, authorities and other key stakeholders; 3) management strategies and operational plans developed and agreed for protected sites; 4) local personnel trained in site management and monitoring, and essential management resources provided; 5) essential habitat and species restoration/recovery, enforcement, and other management interventions initiated in protected sites; and 6) heightened awareness and understanding amongst local communities and government of the need to conserve the biodiversity of the Polillos and the wider Philippines. These outputs remain valid and appropriate to the prevailing conditions at the project site, though we are actively striving to enable the development of up to ten (rather than *just* six) new protected sites! The project is currently on schedule to achieve this larger than stated objective, though local bureaucratic processes may ultimately preclude the legal designation of any additional areas within the time-frame of this project.

Other than attempting to establish several additional protected sites, no changes have been made to the project's original logical framework and operational plan, though various other (unforeseen) additional activities have also had to be accommodated within the evolving work plans to ensure compliance with local protocols re. expected project outputs.

4. Progress

The project commenced in February 2005 by setting up the project management structure, developing operational systems and procedures and preparing work plans. Other inception activities involved paying courtesy calls and conducting project orientations to local government agencies and other partners. In addition to the manager, the project has hired three Local Conservation Coordinators (LCCs) to ensure the implementation of various activities at the site level. The required national and international technical specialists are already on board in project implementation. The project has already established an office in Polillo Town and has secured the necessary equipment and materials for the implementation of the different activities.

The project pursued vigorous efforts to strengthen the on-site institutional partnership. To define the level of partnership between the project and local governments, strategic planning workshops were conducted in the municipal town halls of Polillo and Burdeos, and formal partnership agreements between the project and LGUs of Polillo, Burdeos and Panukulan are being finalized. Similarly, support from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was secured following project presentation to the DENR Regional Executive Director in Region IVa in August 2005.

Being the lead local implementer the PIBCFI has also applied for formal accreditation as an operational Non-Government Organisation (NGO) in Polillo, Burdeos and Panukulan Municipalities. This accreditation is a requirement under the Local Government Code of the Philippines for NGOs to operate and implement projects in particular local government areas. Presentation of outputs as against to the project's logical framework is included as **Annex 1** of this report. The progress of the project based on outputs is presented below.

Output 1. Priority sites selected and biological surveys and mapping completed.

This output requires 6 or more key wildlife habitats will be surveyed, mapped and entered onto computer database, though a total of 10 sites have now been identified (see below). However, aside from the biological and geophysical data, information on local socio-economic and cultural/political conditions pertaining to each of the proposed conservation areas and the larger municipalities is also needed. Although not included as a deliverable, the project therefore initiated a social survey adopting the Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) as the research method. Since the succeeding outputs of this

project will include the preparation of conservation site management plans the results of these surveys will assist determination of management options and alternative courses of action in addressing threats to the biodiversity.

This project will also endeavour to establish operational institutional arrangements to facilitate the future management of these conservation sites. For these reasons, an institutional capacity assessment was conducted to determine the level of management capacity of local governments and other stakeholders in pursuing conservation initiatives. Results of the capacity assessment will be used in developing and implementing capacity building interventions for local stakeholders.

Biological Surveys

As previously stated, it is hoped that this project may enable the enhanced future protection of at least 10, rather than 6 priority areas. Following careful consideration of all available data, consultations with researchers and other field workers experienced in the area, and recce visits to a number of possible (short-listed) sites, a total of ten sites were short-listed. Of these, only one site (i.e. Sibulan Watershed) had already been subject of several previous biological surveys, thus requiring extensive biodiversity surveys and mapping of the remaining nine sites; or three sites per year during this project. The first three priority sites surveyed this year were Mount Malulod in Barangay Tamulaya and Macnit in Barangay Languyin, both in the municipality of Polillo, and Barangay Aluyon in Burdeos. These sites have remnants patches of residual evergreen forest and fragmented secondary and riparian forests. Standard methods were used in surveying mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians in each site.

The high endemism of Polillo Islands was further confirmed during the survey with the result showing that of the 128 species of terrestrial vertebrates recorded in study sites, 53 are Philippine endemics, 11 southern Luzon endemics and nine are endemics only to Polillo Islands. Eleven amphibians out of the 17 recorded in the survey are known as endemic species and half of the 24 reptiles are also known as endemics. Out of the 65 birds recorded, 24 are endemics and mammals account for six endemic species out the 22 recorded during the survey.

Nearly all island endemics were observed in three survey sites, except the Polillo blue-backed parrot and McClung's krait. Four Polillo Island endemic birds and the Polillo green-scaled gecko were noted in all three sites. Numerous new island records included the Philippine scops owl and the island swiftlet and a possible new species of skink.

During the faunal survey, initial information on the flora was already collected but needs further fieldwork to determine ecologically and socio-economically important species. Five PESP forest ecological wardens, four local guides and a biology student participated and were provided hands-on training on standard survey methods.

Field studies and monitoring of the critically endangered Philippine cockatoos were continued in collaboration with researchers from the Katala Foundation Inc., and on-going studies of the ecology and behaviour of Gray's monitor lizard were also featured in a television documentary shown on Discovery and Animal Planet cable channels in February 2006.

Mapping and Spatial Information Gathering

Mapping and gathering of spatial information of the proposed conservation areas and the entire Polillo group of islands started during this reporting period. Information being generated and digitised includes topography, soil types, land classification and drainage systems in each municipality. Maps showing municipal and barangay boundaries relating to each of the proposed LCAs were also completed and work started on the proposed boundary delineations of the first three sites surveyed; the latter incorporating key wildlife habitats, salient topographical features, any existing land claims, etc.

Good progress was also made on the physical profiling of each area via ground validation to determine the extent of existing forest in the three proposed conservation areas in Polillo Municipality, namely Macnit-Malo, Sibulan, and Mt. Malulod. Initial map overlays based on these ground surveys also indicated that more forest remains Atulayan and Pamatdan Barangays, thus qualifying these areas to be included in the proposed Macnit-Malo conservation area. Community resource maps of five barangays in Polillo generated during community consultations were digitized.

Participatory Rapid Appraisal

PRA's involving at least 250 residents were conducted in five barangays in Polillo, namely: Tamulaya, Sibulan, Bañadero, Pinaglubayan and Languyin; and in two barangays in Burdeos, namely: Aluyon and Anibawan. Information collected related to trends and patterns of settlement, land use, demography, governance, socio-cultural changes and natural resource utilization and dependency. These assessments also involved stakeholder mapping and analysis, community resource mapping and situational analysis.

PRA results indicated that continued dependency of some communities on forest products, especially timber, poses an obvious threat to biodiversity conservation, especially where extraction is unregulated and excessive. This situation is aggravated by the low level of awareness of most local people re. environmental conservation related issues, including resource management. Land tenure issues are also of special concern because settlers are claiming rights in most of the proposed conservation areas.

Institutional Capacity Assessment

The institutional capacity assessment was undertaken with three principal objectives: 1) determine the level of capacity of local institutions to develop and implement biodiversity conservation initiatives; 2) ascertain the training needs of local partners; and 3) explore and define practical processes in formulating a comprehensive management plan for conservation priority areas in Polillo Islands. The results of this activity are expected to form the basis for developing training modules and courses for local stakeholder capability building and to determine available resources for implementation of management plans in each of the proposed conservation areas.

The following respondents in the first three municipalities, i.e. Polillo, Burdeos and Panukulan, were involved in these assessments: the Municipal Mayor; Municipal Agriculture Officer; Municipal Planning and Development Officer; and relevant members of the: Municipal Council Committee on Environment and Natural Resources of the Sangguniang Bayan; Polillo Water District (POLWADI) and the Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (MFARMC). Senior representatives of all relevant local barangay councils, national government agencies (e.g. DENR), other non-government organisations (NGOs) and people's organisations (POs) operating in the area, were also consulted.

Initial results revealed that stakeholders in these three municipalities are generally very receptive to the need for increased biodiversity conservation measures, but they lack the necessary capabilities and are thus ill-prepared or equipped to implement and sustain biodiversity conservation interventions. There is therefore an urgent need to develop relevant skills and increase local capacities if these LGUs are to assume the lead roles in managing conservation sites in their respective administrative jurisdictions. Whilst it is therefore proposed to provide all possible technical assistance to these LGUs during the lifetime of this project, defining of the terms of engagement of the involved agencies, and the strong linkages and accreditation forged by the PIBCFI during this project, are likely to prove essential to the longer-term interests of this project and best conservation management interests of the LCAs.

Output 2. At least 'six' priority areas agreed by a process of consultation with local communities, authorities and other key stakeholders.

Based on review of available biological data, including numerous and wide-ranging surveys conducted over the past decade, and consultations with other relevant researchers and local field personnel, an initial short-list of twelve possible priority sites was drawn-up. Selection criteria included: i) extent and quality of remaining native forest or other key wildlife habitats (e.g. wetlands); ii) the representativeness of these areas in terms of the range and diversity of available terrestrial habitats in these islands; iii) their importance *apropos* the occurrence and conservation management needs of various threatened and endemic taxa; iv) relative need in terms of existing threats; and, hence, also v) feasibility re. likely local support, accessibility, etc. Following further consultations with relevant LGUs, local community leaders and other stakeholders in each area, this short-list was reduced to ten areas. These included the Sibulan Watershed in Polillo Municipality and six other priority areas subsequently agreed with key local stakeholders to be declared as local conservation areas; i.e. 'Macnit-Lumpag' and 'Mount Malulod' in Polillo; 'Mount Lumimpad', 'Anibawan' and 'Aluyon' in Burdeos Municipality; and Litid in Panukulan Municipality. Other areas not yet surveyed, but short-listed in terms of their biological importance are: 'North Kalawakan' in Panukulan; and 'Inusukan' and the 'Rizal Wetlands' in Patnanungan and Jomalig Municipalities, respectively.

Initial activities leading toward the establishment of these LCAs included project presentation and joint implementation planning meetings with the LGUs of Polillo, Burdeos and Panukulan. Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) to these effects have also been drafted and endorsed to these LGUs, and development of the conceptual frameworks for the establishment and management of these LCAs are being prepared by the project.

Output 3. Management strategies and operational plans developed and agreed for protected sites

The development of management strategies and operational plans are scheduled to be completed in Year 2 of this project. The process is complicated, but all the more so considering the low existing capacities of the relevant LGUs and other local stakeholders. For these reasons, project personnel will also conduct seminars, workshops and short training courses on a range of topics including: 'basic ecology', 'environmental conservation' and 'natural resource laws and regulations'; the latter with a view to providing LGUs with the essential basic information on their roles and responsibilities in resource management.

These preliminary activities are intended to ensure that the Year 2 planning processes will be facilitated by greatly improved awareness of the salient issues amongst concerned agencies, and also supported by relevant legal arrangements and mechanisms, such as the signing of MOAs and formal accreditation of the PIBCFI. Essentially, all activities during Year 1 were therefore also geared towards the formulation, agreement and implementation of future operational strategies and plans; whilst the various surveys initiated by the project are intended to provide the information required to develop site-based management plans.

Output 4. Local personnel trained in site management and monitoring, and essential management resources provided

The training component emphasized in developing capability of Ecology Wardens and biology/forestry students for site management and biodiversity monitoring. At present, there are seven Eco-Wardens in Polillo and one in Patnanungan. An informal training needs assessment with these eight wardens was conducted to identify potential training courses that shall be implemented. As a matter of strategy, however, the project did not yet pursue the conduct of full-blown TNA because of the intention to recruit additional wardens from other municipalities. Moreover, the project is still working on the memorandums of agreement with LGUs to include the recruitment of more wardens and their subsequent deployment. One student from the University of the Philippines in Los Banos was trained by joining the biological survey and as an on-the-job trainee.

The project also enabled PIBCFI staff and consultants to attend a range of events and activities enhancing their knowledge and skills. In November 2005, PIBCFI Project Leader, J. C. T. Gonzalez, attended the 4th World Hornbills World Conference in South Africa, where he presented the results of his on-going studies of the endemic Polillo tarictic hornbill. In December 2005, two other PIBCFI staff and two teachers from Polillo attended the First Philippine Environmental Educators Conference, organized by the Center for Environmental Awareness and Education (CEAE) in Quezon City. The latter organization is also now planning a television documentary on the Polillo-Darwin project due to be filmed later this year. All key PIBCFI staff and most Polillo-Darwin consultants also attended the first-ever formal meeting of the 'FFI-Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Programme (PBCP)' local partners, convened in Cebu City in early December. This meeting was co-hosted by FFI and PIBCFI's 'sister' NGO, the 'Cebu Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc (CBCFI)'. The primary purpose of this meeting was to exchange experiences and share expertise with other FFI local partners from other regions and, where practicable, to promote closer involvement of different partners in each others projects. This meeting also enabled PIBCFI personnel and consultants to visit a similar 'community forest wardening scheme' managed by CBCFI and likewise co-sponsored by both relevant LGUs and North of England Zoological Society (NEZS, Chester Zoo). Just as the PIBCFI also manages the Polillo Islands Biodiversity Conservation Programme (PIBCP), CBCFI manages the island-wide 'Cebu Biodiversity Conservation Programme (CBCP)', which was also started with a Darwin Initiative grant awarded in 1999.

Output 5. Essential habitat and species restoration/recovery, enforcement, and other management interventions initiated in protected sites

A technical specialist was recruited to focus on this particular output, which will involve the creation of mixed, native species' tree nurseries in most or all of the five municipalities. Training will be provided for the development and maintenance of these nurseries by LGUs in partnership with local communities. The primary function of the nurseries will be to produce a wide variety of non-commercial, native tree species for 'habitat restoration' (as opposed to commercial 'reforestation') activities, though the possibility of also incorporating local livelihood opportunities will also be explored. Specific sites and implementation strategies will be jointly identified and implemented by the project with local partners during the second and third years. It is also proposed to link these activities with the recruitment and training of additional wardens in every LCA covered by the project for protection activities. The covering agreements with each LGU will therefore also include provisions for the recruitment of the new wardens by the each LGU and the training of these wardens by this project with the assistance of the existing PESP wardens in Polillo and Patnanungan. The preparation of the conceptual framework for these innovations is also underway.

Output 6. Heightened awareness and understanding amongst local communities and government of the need to conserve biodiversity in Polillo Islands and the wider Philippines

Initial results from the PRA and community visits, together with the experience gained during the first Polillo Teacher's Training Course in 2002 and diverse other recent projects, have illuminated the very low threshold of awareness of most Polillo residents on biodiversity conservation issues. To address this concern, the project has initiated an extended 'Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Programme' and created a Technical Working Group, composed of elementary, secondary and tertiary level Polillo teachers and project representatives. The TWG has been tasked to assess school-based and school-led IEC needs, including the need to incorporate biodiversity conservation issues in school curricula. The IEC Programme has or will include: a) production and distribution of various awareness materials (posters, leaflets, badges, etc.); b) production of high quality power-points (i.e. visually stunning and hopefully entertaining, as well as educational) and other audio-visual materials (e.g. DVD copies of relevant local television documentaries) for showing at local community and decision-maker workshops and seminars (also see 'Output 3' above); c) increased local media coverage of related programme activities (e.g. TV documentary produced in 2005 and another now scheduled in 2006; together with at least four others produced over the past 5 years); d) training of

more local teachers via 'trainers-training' courses; and e) production and distribution of related education and teaching materials. To these ends, the Darwin project also enabled the purchase of an LCD, two laptop computers, a screen and a portable generator, to facilitate local presentation of power-points and CD/DVD documentaries. To date, the project has delivered nine power point presentations and lectures to about 600 students (elementary to college, public and private) in five schools in Polillo Town the town proper of Polillo. Topics covered included basic ecology, biodiversity, conservation, state of environment, human role in environmental degradation and solid waste disposal. Two new posters featuring the Polillo Forest Frog and Threatened and Endemic Species of Polillo were produced in mid-2005. Two more posters and a series of label badges are now in the production stages, and project funding proposals are being developed or finalised for production of the proposed 'Polillo Biodiversity Conservation Handbook', a 'Polillo Biodiversity Conservation Video-CD' and 'Polillo Teacher Trainer's Training Course'.

The latter project is also intended to capitalise upon the first (2002) Polillo Teacher's Training Course by involving as many (c. >30) of the original course participants as possible in an initial 'Trainers Training Course', who will then assist training of a second group of up to 50 additional teachers. Unfortunately, this activity, which was originally scheduled for Year One, has had to be deferred to Year Two owing to various local communication and counterpart funding deadline problems. Nonetheless, a teacher's planning and training workshop attended by 60 teachers from all over the Polillo Municipality was organised in November 2005. The main objectives of the workshop were to reassess the training and teaching needs of teachers, and to formulate an action plan for IEC in schools.

These and other activities will also be facilitated by the recent (June 2005) establishment of the 'FFI-Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Education Programme (FFI-PBCEP)', which will enable substantive counterpart support via funding assistance provided via Education Departments in both Cincinnati (USA) and Chester (UK) Zoos. The latter has also provided crucial support for a range of new activities in the (now) annual Polillo Tarctic Festival, including new Polillo tarctic hornbill costumes, kite flying and other contests.

5. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

This is the first Annual Report for the project and actions in response to review of this report will be incorporated in the next annual reporting period.

6. Partnerships

The close collaboration between FFI and PIBCFI has been maintained at all levels during the development of this project, in which PIBCFI has assumed the lead role in local implementation, whereas FFI (especially the FFI-Philippines Programme) provides active support and technical assistance at all times, as well as sourcing additional (counterpart) funding and other, in kind assistance.

The continued assistance of the North of England Zoological Society (NEZS, Chester Zoo) was reflected in the eighth year of support for the Polillo Ecology Stewardship Project or forest wardening scheme, via their Conservation and Research Department, which also provided funding support for the Gray's monitor and Philippine cockatoo projects. Additional assistance was also provided by the Zoo's Education Department, which sponsored a variety of activities organised by PIBCFI as part of the town's annual Tarctic Festival; an event attended by senior FFI and Chester Zoo representatives, as well as all Polillo-Darwin project personnel. The Zoo also produced a outdoor play, entitled 'Turtles Can't Fly', based on a Philippine folk tale, and which was staged three times a day in the zoo's grounds throughout the summer months. The zoo's senior aquarium keeper also visited the Philippines in the last quarter, to conduct a preliminary investigation of possible further NEZS support for freshwater fish projects – particularly on Polillo.

Other support for the Gray's Monitor field study was also received from other longer-term FFI-Philippines Programme partners, especially Dallas, Los Angeles and Cincinnati Zoos; the latter providing the first of 3 years' core funding support for the new 'FFI-Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Education Programme (PBCEP)', which will also benefit this project. Close linkages with the Katala Foundation, based in Puerto Princessa City (Palawan Province), also yielded important dividends in that they were able to assume financial responsibility for the continuing operation of the Philippine cockatoo project on Patnanungan, and to extend this project to include studies of the two Polillo endemic races of *Tanygnathus* parrots, which are undoubtedly even more critically threatened than the cockatoo. It is hoped that the closer linkages forged between the PIBCFI and other FFI-PBCP local partner agencies during the first FFI Partners Meeting (see earlier text) will also result in the development of other, similarly collaborative initiatives in the Polillos and elsewhere. In addition to the establishment of partnership agreements with relevant LGUs and POs (see earlier text), the project has also established linkages with the Marine Aquarium Council in Burdeos, Ateneo's Institute of Social Order in Panukulan and the Integrated Sustainable Livelihood Assistance Project in Polillo. Similar collaboration is also being sought with the *Tanggol Kalkasan*, an environmental defense NGO, re. conduct of the (aforementioned) Environmental Laws Orientation and Training for local partners.

7. Impact and Sustainability

Key components of this project include close collaboration with relevant LGUs, local communities and other stakeholders, training of local personnel, and hence also transfer of technologies and expertise. By these means, and via increased awareness brought about by the IEC campaign, increased media coverage and other activities, it is also hoped to instill a strong sense of ownership of these resources. Sustainability will be further assured by transferring the responsibility of implementing site management plans to LGUs and other relevant stakeholders and to facilitate the integration of the various conservation strategies in their respective development plans. With the integration, future funding is expected to be provided from the annual Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) which all LGUs receive from the national budget. It is also for this reason that the PIBCFI, via this project, is strenuously pursuing the execution of the proposed MOAs with these LGUs since these such agreements will clearly define LGU responsibilities, including the provision of annual funding support. The official declaration of LCAs through issuance of local ordinances will also provide the legal basis for these LGUs to allocate funds for the continued management and protection of these areas, as well as providing some additional safeguards in the event of contrary developments being proposed for these areas in the future.

In these contexts, it is also important to note that this is a very important new project, but one that is part of a longer-term conservation programme in this region. Indeed, the PIBCFI was specifically established to facilitate development of the 'Polillo Islands Biodiversity Conservation Programme (PIBCP)', which has now been in continuous operation for over eight years. During this period, the Programme has successfully accommodated an increasing range of activities, and there is every expectation that it will continue to do so long after the conclusion of this project. Equally, it is expected that the PIBCFI will, with FFI-PBCP assistance, also continue to provide technical advice and such other support to the concerned parties in the Polillo Island to help ensure the longer-term protection and management of these areas.

9. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

Discrepancies between proposed and actual outputs in the Project Implementation Timetable mostly reflect improvements in the project design or practical realities on the ground. Most agreed activities require prior consultation with, and subsequent action by, the LGUs and other local partners, which are often difficult to arrange at short notice and/or invoke lengthy bureaucratic processes over which the lead implementing agencies may have little or no control. The delayed notification of approval of this project (in December 2004) also caused some problems re. recruitment of local personnel and technical consultants and timing of field work, though every effort is being exerted to make up any time lost during the early development phases of this project.

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

Code	Quantity	Description
4C	4-6	4 biology students trained in terrestrial surveys
	2-4	New municipal wardens trained (deferred to Years 2 & 3)
4D	8-10	12 weeks training on field surveys
6A	4-6	Existing wardens trained in site management, wildlife monitoring & habitat restoration (on-going).
	50	Teachers to receive Teacher's Training (deferred to Year 2)
	30	Teachers to undergo Trainer's Training (deferred to Year 2)
6B	4-6	Months training for new municipal wardens (deferred to Years 2 & 3)
	2	Weeks training for teachers (deferred to Year 2)
	3	Months field training for new wardens w/existing wardens (deferred to Years 2 & 3)
7	2	2 posters on Polillo Forest Frog and Polillo Threatened Species
	2	2 brochures
	4	7 power points produced thus far
	1	Full Teacher's Training brief (updating of existing brief deferred to Year 2)
	12	Other teaching aids (on-going - to be completed in Year 2 owing to deferment of Teachers Training)
	1	Warden's Training Manual
	1	Polillo Biodiversity Conservation Handbook (on-going; to be completed in Year 2)
8	> 4	Months over 3 years (in field) (on-going)
	30 months	Over 3 years (FFI Philippines Office) (on-going)
	4 weeks	FFI (2) and PIBCF (3) personnel interview/recruit Filipino project manager (PM), 3 municipal coordinators and 5 technical consultants.
9	2	>10 site management plans to be produced in Years 2 & 3
10	4	4 photo-guides on Polillo biodiversity produced thus far
11B	2	1 paper in press, 1 paper submitted; several unpublished reports also produced.
12A	2	Collation of existing data sets and gap analyses (on-going)
12B	2	1 Polillo biodiversity photo archive collated and digitised
14A	2	3 workshops/seminars with relevant LGUs and several more with other stakeholders in 3 Polillo municipalities to identify/agree first 2 priority sites and work plans
		1 teachers training needs assessment (workshop).
14B	1	1 International conference; 1 local conference and 1 workshop.
15A, B	1	Press releases
17A	1	1 dissemination network in local schools
18A,B	1	1 documentary film on the Gray's Monitor Lizard
19A, B	1	1 local TV and other media coverage facilitated
20	£2750	Initial equipping of PIBCFI office
	£1600	Procurement of equipment (computers, GPS, cameras, multi-media projector, printers, fax machine, office furniture and fixtures)
22	2	3 new protected sites agreed, surveyed and mapped.
		c. £20,000 raised in counterpart contributions

Generally, most of the expected project outputs were delivered during this reporting period, except for some of the key training components and conduct of floral assessments as part of the larger biodiversity surveys of each site. The latter is a potentially serious problem given a dearth of suitably qualified and experienced botanists in the country, though it is hoped that this may be resolved via on-going dialogues with the Botany Division of the Philippine National Museum which have recently offered their full support to this project.

The personnel training issues are more complex, if often compounded by conflicting commitments of key personnel. For example, the postponement of training of new forest wardens is directly attributable to the unforeseen difficulties of local government procedures, especially the inability of LGUs to allocate funds not already included in their annual budgets and, hence, the recruitment of any new wardens. Similar uncertainties prevail re. the expected recruitment and training of new foresters

and nursery staff, though it has to be said that any related habitat restoration requirements and/or local livelihood opportunities are clearly dependant on the findings and recommendations of the various site surveys. In other words, the originally proposed forestry/nursery training schedules were as unrealistic as they were well-intentioned.

Conversely, similar uncertainties about current teacher training requirements prompted the need for training needs assessments and, hence, delays in the production of relevant (counterpart) funding proposals; whereas unexpected delays in the preparation of the proposed biodiversity handbook were due to the lead author failing to deliver owing to other personal commitments. All of these problems have been addressed and are being resolved, whether by deferment to later and more realistic timeframes within the lifetime of this project or via substitution of relevant personnel.

The identification of (10) priority sites was completed, although some additional information is still being secured for management planning processes. It is hoped and expected that the final selection, all relevant consultation and surveys for the first six priority areas will be completed in Year 2; thereby enabling at least three additional sites to be added in Year 3. Development and implementation of site management plans is expected to be completed in the each successive year, meaning that we hope that the first six sites will become fully operational by the end of Year 3, with the additional sites in the following year; i.e. after the conclusion of this project. However, these timeframes are regularly reassessed and it is also hoped that local administrative processes may be accelerated following signing of the covering agreements and development of the relevant protocols, including signing of the covering agreements.

Dissemination of project activities took various forms, including: multi-media presentations to LGUs and other stakeholders, teachers and students, oral and poster presentations in conferences and workshops; erection of display booths during important events; costume parades, poster-making and kite flying contests for Polillo residents during fiesta celebrations; and organization of, or participation in, diverse other conferences, workshops, seminars, site visits, surveys and consultations. These sorts of activities will be sustained and expanded as new materials are produced, more workshops and training courses are conducted and project extends field operations to encompass the three remoter municipalities of Panukulan, Patnanungan and Jomalig.

10. Project Expenditure

An annual report was not requested by the Darwin Initiative for the first two months of this project, due to the delayed approval of funding. Therefore expenditure is presented in two tables below, for 01 February to 31 March 2005 (2004/5 financial year) and 01 April 2005 to 31 March 2006 (2005/6 financial year).

Table 2 (a) Project expenditure: 01 February to 31 March 2005 (2004/5 financial year)

Item	Budget	Expenditure	Balance

Table 2 (b) Project expenditure: 01 April 2005 to 31 March 2006 (2005/6 financial year)

Item	Budget	Expenditure	Balance

11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

Monitoring of project activities during the first year of implementation was accomplished via regular team meetings, reports and site validations. Progress *vis-à-vis* targets indicated in the logical framework was also evaluated and measured at the beginning of a 3 days strategic planning workshop involving all Philippine-based project personnel (staff and consultants) convened at the end of the last quarter.

Whilst this project has undoubtedly benefited and capitalised upon the good relations and substantive track record of the PIBCP and, hence, the strong collaborative alliance between the FFI-PBCP and PIBCFI, over the past 7 years, there is also no doubt that this project has (and will hopefully continue) to effect marked change in LGU and community perceptions as to the importance and urgency of biodiversity conservation issues in this region. As such, this project has not only markedly increased awareness amongst key stakeholders, but challenged inertia and prompted their more active involvement in addressing and resolving locally, nationally and internationally important issues and concerns that appeared on few local agendas prior to the commencement of this project. The fact that the UK Government is seemingly more aware and mindful of the importance of these issues is a powerful incentive – indeed perhaps more of an incentive to act than the merits of the salient issues, which are often poorly understood. The notion of the Polillo Islands being a globally important sub-centre of endemism is ‘hard to grasp’ if the underlying contexts are unfamiliar, but nonetheless important in terms of ‘ammunition’ to effect change and invoke local pride and ownership. The science is important to the scientists as a basis for rationalising decisions and recommendations, but local decision-makers are often more impressed by the simple fact that their constituency has been singled out for such attention; if sometimes also embarrassed that the salient facts and issues were previously unknown.

Nonetheless, change is invariably, and often frustratingly, slow. Even assuming the merits of the issues are not only sound, but persuasive, and that the relevant stakeholders are both receptive and supportive, local decision-making processes are often tortuously slow and/or complex, and oftentimes hampered by other social or political agendas. Best intentions, coupled with adequate resources and local know-how can indeed affect change, but the pace of change may be determined by local procedural niceties that take little or no account of predetermined timetables and output commitments. Any activities that require the active inputs, rather just the blessing or compliance, of the relevant authorities are subject to potential delays. This especially true if, as in this case, the relevant protocols and procedures are novel and, hence, unfamiliar and potentially challenging, to those authorities. Amongst the downsides to innovation are that it not only invokes new issues, but may prompt precautionary concerns about setting new precedents, and even pose unwitting challenges to relevant authorities who have little or knowledge of the relevant legislature (see earlier text re. the need for a workshop to advise local municipal authorities on legislation pertaining to protected areas, etc.).

As such, there is no doubt that bureaucratic processes and differing political priorities constitute the most difficult issues the project has to deal with. Close collaboration with relevant LGUs is not only desirable, but essential to the objectives of this project. However, the requisite legal formalities, such as the accreditation of the PIBCFI and approval of partnership agreements, intended to facilitate matters are instead proving to be additional hurdles that have to be overcome. The self-serving interests of some local leaders also take priority over environmental concerns. In one barangay, the chairman would rather encourage his constituents to plant coconuts than plant trees reasoning that people derive livelihood from them. At the level of the schools, teachers are excited to gain from the school-based, school-led program but many don't want to share the work to attain the objectives.