



Darwin Initiative Annual Report



Important note:

To be completed with reference to the Reporting Guidance Notes for Project Leaders – it is expected that this report will be about 10 pages in length, excluding annexes

Submission deadline 30 April 2009

Darwin Project Information

Project Ref Number	14-002
Project Title	Environmental educational programme promoting biodiversity conservation on Socotra, Yemen
Country(ies)	Yemen
UK Contract Holder Institution	Durham University (Geography)
Host country Partner Institution(s)	Socotra Conservation and Development Programme, Yemen, and the Soqotra Society for Heritage and History. <u>Changed to:</u> the NGO 'Development for isolated Peoples' from June 2008, but with renewed support from the Minister of Water and Environment.
Other Partner Institution(s)	
Darwin Grant Value	£186,440
Start/End dates of Project	July 2005 to September 2008. <u>Changed to:</u> end date of June 2009
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3..)	Final annual report: April 2008 to March 2009
Project Leader Name	Roderic Dutton
Project website	
Author(s) and main contributors, date	Roderic Dutton, Sue Christie, Len Pearce

1. Project Background

- *The project is located on the Yemeni island of Soqotra (350km by sea from Makullah), the main island of the Soqotra archipelago, as special as the Galapagos in terms of endemic species, and unique also in that the population (c.45,000) has an indigenous language (in addition to Arabic) and culture. The flora and fauna have been under research since the 1880s, with large grants to enhance the research process during the past 20 years including a major GEF grant and a previous Darwin grant. The research has resulted in a growing number of scientific books and peer reviewed papers almost all in English and effectively inaccessible to the education system on the island.*
- *Most of the children are now at school. At the same time life-security and economic diversification have been enhanced for many reasons, including year-round flights to/from Aden and Sana'a, making the need for conservation less obvious. Education has*

many advantages but a disadvantage is that it takes children from their parents during the most active parts of the day, thus they are not imbibing parental 'innate' understanding of the need for and means to achieve conservation.

- *The Government of Yemen is aware of the special nature of Soqatra and created the Socotra Conservation and Development Programme (SCDP), now headed by the Minister of Water and Environment, who is also Director of SCDP, to guide and oversee research and sustainable development on Soqatra. As reported previously, the SCDP collapsed in early 2008 when its main funder, the UNDP in Sana'a, decided to use its available funds for other purposes. This resulted in the loss of many key staff, and although, today, a skeleton staff is still working, the threat of permanent closure hangs of the programme.*

2. Project Partnerships

Our dominant partnership now is the NGO (Development for Isolated Peoples).

However, I am delighted to be able to report that we have been able to re-engage with my original counterpart, now Minister of Water and Environment - MoWE (and still in charge of the Socotra Conservation and Development Programme), H.E. AbdulRahman al-Eryani. He kindly invited Len to his house one evening recently in order to learn more about our current work and objectives. Len reported (email April 7th) that "He was very enthusiastic about the book", saying "this is excellent. I am very pleased to support anything like this which is done in Arabic". And he added: "this is just the kind of book we need for Socotra". He also said "the Arabic is very good" and offered to make a final reading / edit of the whole text in order to ensure that we were not inadvertently including any politically unacceptable phrase: "we don't want you to be hung because of one word".

The Minister suggested that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should formally receive the books on the island and then use the NGO, and maybe some other groups who work on Socotra in certain geographical areas, to distribute the books. There are about 8000 students on the island, and we could get to them through village distribution, but maybe each local education director would use some of his teachers to distribute in the villages where they work. We should publicly stress that we are aiming at the whole Soqotran community.

The President or the Prime Minister to write a foreword: AbdulRahman said he would lodge a copy of the final draft of the book with the President's office to try for a foreword written by the President. They would have to wait a few weeks, and if it had not re-appeared from the President's office, the Minister would withdraw it, and then get fairly quick attention from the Prime Minister. If neither of these ideas succeeds the Minister will be glad to write a foreword himself, but protocol means that he has to ask the President and the Prime Minister first.

We recognise that as we did not bid for a two-year post-project programme we are very unlikely be in a position to attempt to re-engage with MoE (see the project change form of December 2008). However, our active re-engagement with the Minister of Water and Environment and should result in copies of the book being found in schools, as well as everywhere else on the island and, we hope, on the mainland also.

3. Project progress

For reasons explained in the previous annual report it became impossible to continue with the original project objectives. Communications from Soqatra had stopped. The underlying reason for this became clear on February 17th 2008 when Paul Scholte (the international advisor to SCDP) sent, to me and many other people, a lengthy email, whose key passages were:

"Dear colleagues and friends, I am writing on behalf of the Socotra team, the Minister of Water and Environment, There has been a series of developments on Socotra that call for your

attention, and we need your immediate help. ... a few weeks ago, coinciding with the departure of the UNDP Resident Representative, we received clear confirmation that the UNDP Yemen is no longer interested in supporting and leading the Socotra Conservation and Development Programme. In practice this means that the contracts for all the EPA/SCDP team in the island and Sana'a (60 full-time staff plus 45 part-timers), as well as the Chief Technical Advisor [Paul Scholte himself] will end in July/August 2008, and will not be extended. Why? The UNDP Country Office team in Yemen feels that the ongoing Socotra Programme is an expensive exercise. Therefore they do not plan to extend it, but rather plan to scale it down to a handful of national staff (5-6), directly managed by the UNDP office, as a UNDP operation. ...”

This very unfortunate news, which Roderic communicated to Darwin, meant that SCDP could no longer support the Darwin project. Discussion between Roderic and Eilidh Young and Pat Hardcastle led to them suggesting that: “the best option would be to close the current project as planned by 30 June 2008, using the funding available to the project after 1 April 2008 (£26k) to “focus on capturing as many outcomes as possible while recognising where changes preclude any progress or result” and to contact the NGO with this objective in mind. Thus Roderic met the Director of the NGO (Len Pearce) when he was visiting Bristol in June 2008. They worked their way through all the original materials (electronic copies of which were left with Len), discussing how best they might be modified and then used by the NGO. The NGO’s primary task is to teach English but their text books do not use Soqotran materials. Thus, Len thought, the biodiversity and conservation materials produced by the Darwin work would be of real value to the NGO and, at the same time, inform young people, especially those from the main town of Hadiboh who are typically not very knowledgeable about such things, not only about the island's unique biodiversity (and its local, national and world importance) but also about the need for – and aspects of the means of – conserving and managing it. The materials, in English, would have been of most value to the 3rd and 4th year students (whose level of English is sufficient for them to appreciate the materials) and for the tour guide crash course that the NGO runs in June, which was proving to be very popular.

The end of June 2008 was the beginning of Len Pearce's summer vacation away from Soqotra. In practice, therefore, he was not able to show his colleagues the Darwin materials or to discuss their views about using them.

On the basis of the meeting in Bristol and of subsequent inputs from Sue Christie an 8-point set of suggestions was put to Darwin in early July:

1. Len will have the opportunity to go through all the materials more systematically in the coming weeks and be able to give a more informed set of thoughts by the end of July.
2. The NGO will be able to test run the materials in their present form in the first semester of the coming year (starting in September) so that all the staff will be able to reach a common set of conclusions about them.
3. Interim thoughts, expressed by email back to us in the UK, could result in some modification of the materials in an ad hoc fashion so that variants can be tested during the first semester.
4. In January 2009 (the break between the two semesters) they will be able to report comprehensively about the value of the materials and how, perhaps, they can be / should be modified to fit into the English courses.
5. The materials could then be systematically modified, as appropriate.
6. No doubt, ideas will emerge during the above for additional topics. These could be prepared, using photographs made available by the NGO.
7. Over a 2-3-year period a comprehensive package of materials, tried, tested and modified in the light of on-going experience, could be put together.

8. All this information could be fed back to the Ministry of Education to see if they would be interested to use the materials more widely (in either English or Arabic, or both) in other schools.

We believed that points 1-4 above could be entirely covered during the current financial year, using all or part of the remaining budget.

Points 5-6 might have been initiated during the current financial year, using part of the remaining budget.

Points 5-8 might have been undertaken during a longer-term new project that might also include other items (to be discussed and agreed).

The response from Pat Hardcastle of Darwin was: "I like your proposals very much, they seem to open the possibility for capturing what has been done so far and making sure it is used creatively. I suggest that you continue as provisionally agreed using the remaining budget with a focus on your Points 1 to 4 and including preliminary work on your Points 5 and 6 as becomes feasible and appropriate during the year. Depending on progress and the situation with the funding of the wider Darwin Initiative, we can consider a range of options, including applying for a post project or a new project. I think it is important to advise you that Darwin funding will be very tight and highly competitive. I think that while you are progressing the revised project, you should also try and identify alternative sources of funding for a future extension or new project." (21st July 2008).

Len Pearse returned to Soqatra at the end of September and the academic year started after the Ramadhan Eid holiday, around October 5th. He fully discussed everything with his colleagues but they were resistant to the idea of incorporating the Darwin materials into their English teaching programmes. They felt that it would risk distracting from, rather than adding to, their standard Headway course.

However, Len made two other suggestions:

Darwin materials in the NGO tourism English course: One of his colleagues (Roz Gill) would incorporate some of the Darwin materials into a tourism course (in English) that they would teach each summer (June / July) to a group of their mature students who wish to participate in the tourism industry.

Printing a booklet for use in every school on Soqatra: Len thought that the very best thing to do "*in relation to the excellent material you gathered and put together*", is for us in the UK to produce one book (exercise book size), in Arabic. "The book should have simple reading material, question and answer, true false questions, fill in the blank spaces, treasure hunts, etc and be both informative and also a work book all under the one cover, and aim at about the last level of primary school, so it could be used for that level and also the first couple of years of middle school". "*If we produced 10,000 of these books [A4 size; full colour], they would be taken up like wildfire by all the primary and early secondary teachers on the island. I am strongly persuaded this would be possible.*" Len's educational work is highly respected in Yemen and thus Len says: "*Hopefully we could get the booklet cleared in Sana'a, in late February, and have it shipped before the windy season [ie in Spring 2009], ready to go at the beginning of the next academic year, 2009/10. Even if permission was delayed or refused I would not give up until I had a "no" from the President! In the very unlikely eventuality of a "no" at that level we will distribute the booklet through the Environmental Protection Agency, which does all sorts of things in schools without going through the Sana'a curriculum department.*" "*This whole thing is justified on many grounds and from many angles*", was Len's final comment.

This became the contents of a revised project proposal form submitted to Darwin in December and approved. We were not requesting more money, just to draw on the currently available budget divided between the then current and the coming financial years; £16,741 and £8,453 respectively, totalling £25,194. End date to be June 2009.

In our previous project change form (September 2008) we suggested that “materials to inspire nature ... conservation drafted, tested by teachers and in use” will be achieved but on a much smaller scale. However, in this new project change form we were in fact returning much nearer to the original proposal because we hoped to impact on all schools, all teachers and all pupils on the island. We had every expectation that this would be achieved in partnership with the Ministry of Education, which would be ideal. But even if that route failed, we would be able to make the full school linkage via the Environmental Protection Agency on Soqatra.

For various reasons we felt unable to go ahead with the post-project application, but we felt that 10,000 copies of the book distributed throughout the island (and perhaps some on the mainland too) would go a very long way towards achieving the original Darwin objectives, and indeed, in important respects, exceed them.

3.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

See below

3.2 Progress towards Project Outputs

Progress with the book:

The book has been fully drafted in English, complete with very attractive and colourful cover, foreword (though awaiting the President’s foreword; see below) and acknowledgements. It has four sections (Soqatra: some background; People and nature; Habitats; Opportunities and challenges) and fifteen chapters: 1. Geography Location and size; Geology and origins; Climate and weather; Designations. 2. People history, tradition, heritage, culture, language. 3. Plants Roles of plants; native, alien, endemic; extinction; plants and people. 4. Animals, roles of animals in nature; vertebrates and invertebrates; animals and people; pests; some Soqotran animals. 5. Birds Bird ecology; adaptations of form to lifestyle; migration and distribution; specific birds and their characteristics and roles. 6. Land determiners of habitats; specific Soqotran habitats; plant and animal communities; habitat loss (mangrove). 7. Fresh water, water – crucial for life; percentage of fresh water; water pollution; freshwater on Soqatra; floods; wadis; karifs; caves. 8. Ocean biological community; commercial species; nursery areas; bycatch; overfishing; sustainable use of resources. 9. Dragon’s blood tree; biology and ecology; uses; shapes of trees. 10. Tayf trade, supply and demand, historical perspective, changes in product demand, sustainable use. 11. Domestic animals; domestic animals on Soqatra; overgrazing; traditional range management. 12. Environmental problems; waste, pollution, alien species, habitat destruction, species extinction, drought, desertification, population growth. 13. Energy renewable versus finite resources, renewable energy, fossil fuels, natural resources, pollution. 14. Climate change; climate and weather, climate change, global warming, greenhouse gasses, gradual versus threshold change, adaptation, amelioration, graphs. 15. Factors for change; erosion; development; urbanisation; deforestation; desertification; ecotourism; agricultural practice.

The book is fully illustrated with colour photographs.

It is A4 size and contains about 110 pages. It has comprehensively covered the first 6 of the 8 points listed above from July 2008.

The acknowledgements, foreword (not the President’s foreword) and contents list have been translated into Arabic, as have the first two chapters. This has been relatively slow as it has entailed devising the translation system and ensuring quality work (English text sent to Yemen; translated in Yemen; edited in Yemen; checked in the UK by an expert on Soqatra and its languages; checked by the Minister at MoWE; photographs added to the text; text and photographs placed in ‘Publisher’). The system is now being followed for all the remaining chapters. It is very encouraging that the Minister of Water and Environment think both the book and the Arabic are very good.

Progress with the tourism course: Roz Gill, Len's colleague, has now produced a new and revised Tourist Guide Training Manual in English. She and Len will be teaching the course over 60 hours from the last week of May until June 19th. Roz has incorporated nine pages from the original Darwin materials.

3.3 Standard Measures

Not applicable

Publications NONE

3.4 Progress towards the project purpose and outcomes

Operational plan changes:

The anticipated visit by Roderic Dutton to Sana'a and Soqatra in the summer of 2007 was rendered impossible by his severe illness. No other field visits were undertaken during the year. The collapse of the original project in the autumn and winter of 2007/8 (see below for explanation) led to discussions with Darwin and thence with the Director of 'Development for Isolated Peoples' in June 2008 and to a complete reshaping of the project objectives and timing – with project completion by June 2009. Very pleasingly, the NGO has played a vital role in bringing us back into excellent contact with the Minister of Water and Environment (see above) and, through him, with the EPA on Soqatra. As an addition to our operational plan, the Minister hopes to obtain a foreword to the book from either the President of Yemen or the Prime Minister, but, failing that, the Minister will provide a foreword himself. He now advises us not to seek recognition by the Ministry of Education for the book as having any kind of role in the school curriculum. We should present the book as a reference book – simply as a book – that can be read by anyone on the island anywhere, including in schools. The Minister believes that local MoE Directors should be able to support this without reference back to Sana'a, which could lead to very long delays.

Output changes

For the revised project there are two planned outputs: (a) a printed book, in Arabic, on biodiversity, environment and conservation on Soqatra, based on the extensive research previously undertaken and on the original Darwin materials produced for project 342. In practice the book is not aimed at any particular age group of children (as it does not have to relate in any way to the curriculum). The book will be of interest to older children and to all adults; (b) Contributions to a booklet and course on tourism to be delivered annually in English by the NGO to people from Soqatra wishing to have an involvement with the tourist industry, based on the original Darwin materials produced for project 342

3.5 Progress towards impact on biodiversity, sustainable use or equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits

The 100-page book has a much greater scope (within the context of environment, habitats, biodiversity and people) than the original Darwin materials that were produced to illustrate parts of the curriculum in Science, Mathematics, Arabic and Society. It is a very substantial introduction to Soqatra's unique biodiversity and habitats, and places appropriate stress on Soqatra's world importance. It should inform and inspire both children and adults on Soqatra. It is written in clear, simple language and is beautifully illustrated with many colour photographs. And the fact that we are printing 10,000 copies (for a population of 50,000 people) means that everyone will be aware of it and will have every chance of reading it (and studying the captioned photographs), both in and out of school. The book's distribution will be supported and promoted by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Ministry of Water and Environment. The foreword is worded so as to encourage some distribution of the book on the

mainland, and thus make Yemenis in general more aware of, and thus take greater pride in, Soqotra's unique features. There is no other book like it, in Arabic or in any other language, which will ensure its primacy for years to come.

The Tourist Guide Training Manual in English will inform all those people in Soqotra entering the tourist industry about Soqotra's unique endemic flora and fauna and about the need to conserve it. The tourist guides will realise that tourists will only come to Soqotra if they can see and learn about this biological heritage.

We hope that both the book and the manual will not only make local people more informed but also facilitate them entering more knowledgeably into debates about conserving the environment

4. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons

The complete revision of the original project was made possible by encouragement from Darwin and by the enthusiasm of the NGO. This has enabled the UK/NI team to produce a much more comprehensive book than originally planned, whilst keeping in mind all the first-hand information gained from talking at length, over a long time period, with officials on Soqotra and in Sana'a, in MoE, MoWE, SCDP and EPA, and from visiting schools on Soqotra and running series of workshops for teachers and local education officials there. Monitoring the text is being checked by Miranda Morris (who knows Soqotra extremely and speaks both Arabic and Soqotri) and by the Director and staff of the NGO who have many years of experience of teaching children on Soqotra. We are not able, due to shortage of time, to monitor the impact of the book or of the Tourism Guide Manual before the end of the project in June this year. However, we have every confidence that the NGO will not only assist with the distribution of the book but will also monitor and report on its impact once it has been distributed.

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

Not relevant. Change was dictated by the fact that our original partner, Socotra Conservation and Development Programme (SCDP), collapsed when its core UNDP funding terminated unexpectedly early last year. Detailed discussion with Darwin led to the acceptance of a project change form that focused on the production of the Book and the Tourist Guide Manual mentioned above.

6. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

The book is well on course and should be finished by the end of June this year, as planned. However, a very recent positive development, the active re-engagement of the Minister of Water and Environment (HE AbdulRahman al-Eryani) could cause a significant delay. The Minister is enthusiastic about the book, which is excellent, but he has suggested trying to obtain a foreword from the President of Yemen or, failing that, from the Prime Minister or, failing that, from the HE AbdulRahman himself. The value of obtaining such an endorsement is very high indeed. The problem is one of time. AbdulRahman says that protocol dictates that we have to approach the President and the Prime Minister first and only if they decide against signing a foreword can the Minister sign. This whole process will take an unpredictable number of weeks and may take us beyond the end of June deadline. What to do?

7. Sustainability

The sustainability of the impact of the book will be encouraged and facilitated by the involvement of the Minister of Water and Environment and by EPA on Soqotra. The NGO will

also play a role in sustainability of impact through its own engagement with the education authorities on Soqotra and through visits it makes to different schools. The fact that so many copies of the book are being published will also make it very widely known on Soqotra and, we hope, on the mainland as well.

The Tourist Guide Training Manual in English will inform all those people in Soqotra entering the tourist industry about Soqotra's unique endemic flora and fauna and about the need to conserve it. The tourist guides will realise that tourists will only come to Soqotra if they can see and learn about this biological heritage.

We hope that both the book and the manual will not only make local people more informed but also facilitate them entering more knowledgeably into debates about conserving the environment

8. Dissemination

There have been no dissemination activities in the past year. Dissemination of the book will only be possible when it is published. Dissemination will then be led by the EPA on the island together with the Ministry of Water and Environment (actively supported by the Minister) probably aided by local education directors. The NGO will actively keep an eye on this work. We hope that some copies of the book will be distributed on the mainland. The wording of the main foreword encourages this. The Tourist Guide Training Manual will be used in June/July each year by the NGO to train successive groups of tourism workers.

9. Project Expenditure

Table 1 Project expenditure during the reporting period (Defra Financial Year 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009)

Item	Budget (please indicate which document you refer to if other than your project schedule)	Expenditure	Balance
Rent, rates, heating, overheads etc			
Office costs (e.g. postage, telephone, stationery)			
Travel and subsistence			
Printing			
Conferences, seminars, etc			
Capital items/equipment			
Others (capacity building)			
Salaries (specify)			
TOTAL			

Highlight any agreed changes to the budget and explain any variation in expenditure where this is +/- 10% of the budget. Have these changes been discussed with and approved by LTS?

10. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

NONE

Annex 1: DARWIN INITIATIVE - APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO AMEND PROJECT OR BUDGET. December 2008

NOTE: The project, including its projected outputs, was radically changed, in response to equally radically changed circumstances in Yemen (see earlier sections of the report), by the terms of this approved project change form of December 2008, which superseded an approved change form of September 2008. . It is not possible usefully to compare the present projected outputs with those of the original logical framework.

Project Ref No	14-002 Darwin 342 Yemen/Soqotra
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Details of your request

How is this different to your original application?

Justification

What are the consequences of this request not being approved?

Project Leader	Roderic Dutton
Tel No	
Email	

Checklist for submission

	Check
Is the report less than 5MB? If so, please email to putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Is your report more than 5MB? If so, please advise Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk that the report will be send by post on CD, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Have you included means of verification? You need not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	
Do you have hard copies of material you want to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number.	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	