

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	14012
<b>Project Title</b>	Iimbovane: Exploring South African Biodiversity and Change Outreach Project
<b>Country(ies)</b>	United Kingdom and South Africa
<b>UK Organisation</b>	University of Sheffield
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	BIOME Group of the University of Sheffield and DST-NRF Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology, Stellenbosch University
<b>Project Leader</b>	Professor Kevin J. Gaston
<b>Report date</b>	31 October 2007
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 2
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.sun.ac.za/iimbovane">www.sun.ac.za/iimbovane</a>

## 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).

### April 2007: Second teacher information workshop

The second teacher information workshop was held in January 2007 (earlier than originally planned) and was reported on in the 2006/2007 annual report.

### July 2007: Database populated; data from sampling analysed

The population of the database began in August 2007 and is ongoing. Much of the data was entered after the samples from the March 2007 sampling season were sorted and identified.

Data from three sampling seasons were analysed during May and June. Dr. Braschler presented preliminary results at the annual meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology in Port Elizabeth, South Africa (2–5 July 2007).

### August 2007: School implementation and follow on visits

Implementation visits to the 13 schools took place in February and March 2007 and were reported on in the 2006/2007 annual report. In August all schools were visited. Eleven schools received a stereo-microscope with a built in digital camera. The three new schools also received a laptop each. Data from the March 2007 field season was also handed over during the visits. Lessons on data handling and the importance of biodiversity were also given.

### September 2007: Electronic, image-based keys developed and tested

The electronic image-based key was developed and tested in mid-2006 and was reported on in the 2006/2007 annual report. In June the key was updated to include new species found during the October 2006 field season. The updated version was given to participating schools in electronic and hard copy in August.

### October 2007: Teacher training workshop on keys

Teacher training on working with keys took place during the teacher training workshops in January 2006 and 2007 and were reported on in the 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 annual reports, respectively.

### Additional information on progress

In April, a pamphlet on the Iimbovane project was produced to promote the project.

In June, the life science curriculum advisors of the provincial education authority attended an Iimbovane training workshop, at their request.

Ms. Kirsten Mahood presented Iimbovane as a case study for implementing environmental outreach at the World Environmental Education Conference, in Durban, South Africa (2–6 July 2007).

The annual progress and planning workshop was held in September in South Africa. Prof. S.L. Chown, Ms. K. Mahood and Ms. N. Kruger from the C-I-B and Prof. K.J. Gaston, Dr. B. Braschler and Dr. S. Shaw from the University of Sheffield attended the three day meeting. Main points of discussion were the hand-over workshop to the South African implementing team to be held in 2008 and papers to be submitted to international science journals. Both project PIs were very happy with the project's progress.

A new partnership with the South African National Survey of Arachnida (SANSA) has developed. Once ants are removed from pitfall traps, the by-catch of other groups will be sent to SANSA, where all Arachnida will be removed and identified. This partnership ensures that by-catch is not wasted.

**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.**

After a prolonged period of review the South African Journal of Science (SAJS) suggested we reformat our submitted manuscript as a news item for the journal. As the paper was originally meant to introduce the project to the SA science community, which by then had been informed about it in other ways (conferences etc.), we decided to withdraw the manuscript. We will write a new article based on results from the project which are now available to introduce the project to the international community via an international journal.

The SAJS paper co-authored by Ms. Mahood as part of the SAEON Summit (March 2006) was withdrawn by the lead author. Ms. Mahood was notified of the withdrawal by the journal in September 2007.

June 2007 saw a month-long strike by most teacher unions in South Africa. Although some Iimbovane activities were rescheduled the strike did not have a lasting impact on the project.

Teacher turnover at Fezekile Secondary School led to a lack of continuity for Iimbovane at this school. However, after meeting with school management in August continuity issues were resolved, with the Head of Department Life Sciences taking the lead at this school. The laptop provided to this school in 2006 was stolen (due to negligence on the teacher's part). The Curriculum Advisor and school are working to replace this item.

Teaching staff at Luhlaza Secondary School were reshuffled at the start of 2007, with two new teachers (without training) becoming involved in the project. Additionally, the principal of the school resigned resulting in a number of communication challenges at the school. Due to the lack of communication from the school the microscope was not delivered to the school in August. Communication issues were resolved in a meeting between Ms. Mahood and senior school management on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October and participation of the school will continue. The microscope will be delivered to the school in January 2008.

Due to a major change in the University of Sheffield's financial system, Stellenbosch University has experienced delays in payment from the University of Sheffield for project expenses. This has placed Stellenbosch University in a position where it cannot invoice the University of Sheffield again until the outstanding amounts are paid. This is placing a financial strain on the efficient operations of an outstanding project. Both the problems caused by Sheffield and the response at Stellenbosch are beyond the control of the project staff, who have worked to resolve the issues, and we hope the situation will be settled soon.

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

No, no changes to the original agreement were necessary.

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:** no

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:** no

**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.

No responses were requested.

**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 email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at [Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk) . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**