

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2008)

Project Ref. No.	14012
Project Title	Imbovane: Exploring South African Biodiversity and Change Outreach Project
Country(ies)	United Kingdom and South Africa
UK Organisation	University of Sheffield
Collaborator(s)	BIOME Group of the University of Sheffield and DST-NRF Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology, Stellenbosch University
Project Leader	Professor Kevin J. Gaston
Report date	31 October 2008
Report No.	HYR 3
Project website	www.sun.ac.za/iimbovane

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 2008: Schools follow on visits

Schools follow-on visits were held in March 2008, slightly earlier than originally planned.

May 2008: Solicitation of new school partners

A business plan has been developed which has been used to solicit new funding partners for the next phase of the project. Plans are in place to extend the project into more schools across the Western Cape, with schools opting for different levels of participation. A test-run of materials produced by the project team for implementation of the project in additional schools was held at a potential new partner school in Cape Town. The feedback from this has been incorporated into further development of the materials which will be made available to schools participating in the next phase of the project.

June 2008: Teacher training workshop on interactions

This workshop was brought forward and held in January 2008 during the last week of the school holidays, due to the South African school calendar. It is reported on in the 2007–8 Annual Report.

August (Dec) 2008: Analyses written up, 2 press releases and television coverage solicited, 2 papers submitted to international scientific journals

The ant database set up at the start of the project has been populated with data on an ongoing basis. All of the data collected by the project, including ant species data and temperature/vegetation data have been entered and are available in a data management system at C•I•B. In addition, a database has been set up to store information relevant to the ant reference collections.

The simple electronic, image-based ant identification keys used by teachers and learners that were produced early on in the project have been refined into one comprehensive key to the species encountered over the life of the project.

Data analyses have been ongoing at different levels. At a simple level, learners have been able to explore the data and relate them to the site maps and vegetation data and temperature data that were collected at the same time as the ant sampling. Project scientists have also been analysing the complete data sets in various ways; scientific publications have been submitted and more are in preparation.

At the Ecological Society of America conference (Milwaukee, USA, Aug 2008) Ms Mahood co-hosted a session "Projects Linking Science Research and the Community" with the USA-based Discover Life's "Ant Hunt!" project. At the annual meeting of the British Ecological Society (London, Sept 2008), Dr Braschler presented a paper examining ant diversity patterns and how environmental factors and disturbance influence ant diversity, comparing the ant diversity of this plant diversity hotspot (the Cape Floristic Region) to that of a range of ecosystems worldwide.

August 2008: Hand-over workshop to South African implementing team

A workshop involving team members from the UK and C•I•B was held during the week of 8th Sept. during which work was started on the final report, further work done on project outputs, and plans for the future discussed. A formal hand-over and celebration of successes and the next project phase, involving participants and stakeholders, was held on 11th Sept in Stellenbosch. Nearly 100 people attended, including representatives from Western Cape Education Authority, teachers and learners from participating schools, and other local dignitaries. Press releases have been sent out in South Africa and the UK.

September (Dec) 2008: Completion of final report

Work was started on the final report during the workshop in Stellenbosch in Sept. 08. We plan to submit it soon after the official end of the project in December 2008

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.

We requested an extension of the project end-date by three months, to 31 December 2008, with no additional costs, but with virement of funds between budget headings.

The project has been very successful, and we were particularly encouraged by the latest annual project review. The short extension will allow us to enhance our outputs and maximise our outcomes, but within the framework of the existing grant, to promote the project and its findings. In addition to scientific outputs, we are exploring the potential for promoting the valuable educational and outreach lessons learned from the project, and investigating the possibilities for additional publicity via the media.

In addition to funding attendance at a conference at which scientific findings from the project were presented, the virement of funds has allowed us to employ a professional editor to lay out the limbovane manual (which is currently being finalised by project staff) in order to improve substantially the quality of the final product. The manual is a major output of the project and is designed to assist teachers to implement an outcomes-based science education programme in their schools by providing guidance for lessons as well as detailed information on biodiversity and ants. It is a vital component of the expansion phase of the project.

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

Yes, these changes were discussed and approved by the Darwin Secretariat, and we were granted an extension to the end of December 2008.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/YES, in...July 08..... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/YES, in... July 08.....(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 email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at 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**