

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

## Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	14-021
<b>Project Title</b>	Large Carnivore Education Centre – Bulgaria
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Bulgaria
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Education 4 Conservation Ltd
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	
<b>Report date</b>	26 October 2006
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 2
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.education4conservation.org">www.education4conservation.org</a> <a href="http://www.balkani.org">www.balkani.org</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).**

Although building work on the Centre itself has been delayed (see below), it has not held up the scheduled planning and delivery of the education programmes, and in line with the log frame, the project has generated a lot of media attention. Two national television channels have broadcast programmes about the Centre, during which Elena Tsingarska highlighted the education work. In June, a group of German journalists visited the project, following which a number of articles were published in German newspapers. A team from one of Bulgaria's largest national newspapers, "Monitor", visited the project in July, and published an article later that month. The project also placed an advert about the Centre in the same paper.

Materials for the new education centre continue to be designed and developed, and some exhibition materials have been printed and produced in the last six months. This is an ongoing process, and the staff from Bulgaria will be attending the UK to visit additional education centres here, and also to revisit the Natural History Museum in London. Project staff from Bulgaria found their last visit there to be inspiring, and it generated lots of new ideas for their own exhibitions.

The project has declared a partnership with the National Park Pirin Directorate. Although the directorate have worked with the project in the past, now that the Large Carnivore Education Centre is being realised, they are keen to become more involved with the planning and organising of education activities at the Centre. This will mean a higher profile for the Centre in the region.

### **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.**

The building work on the Centre was delayed due to funding, but because of the dedication of the team, and the fact that there is already a well established base for the project in Vlahi, this hasn't stopped the education work and preparation of materials taking place. The completion of the building work is now scheduled for January/February 2007.

Sadly, the municipality has allowed a private company to build a hydro plant below the village of Vlahi, where the Centre is based, and as this is in a protected area, this may impact on the natural resources around the plant. The building of the hydro plant has also caused some considerable disruption, as the

road into Vlahi is along a mountain track, and the huge earth moving machines have caused this to be blocked and pitted with large holes. This whole situation has affected relations with the local municipality in Kresna, as the project staff have opposed the building of the plant. At this stage, we do not envisage this affecting the timescales and budget in relation to the Large Carnivore Education Centre, but there may well be some impact on local biodiversity, although it is still too early to see what exactly this will be. Project staff are liaising closely with the local mayor to find ways to improve the condition of the road so that visitors can attend the Centre.

An unexpected, but positive, development was obtaining a bear, which had to be housed in the zoo in Sofia whilst a new enclosure was built. The project team managed to raise the funding for this, and the bear was brought to his new enclosure in April. This will have a positive impact on the project in terms of attracting visitors to the Centre, and funding for keeping the bear is in place for the next five years.

There have been some staff changes at the project, but these haven't had any significant impact.

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

There have been no changes to the original agreement. None of the above developments have affected the design and preparation of education materials, training of staff, or media outputs.

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:** no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:** no/yes, in.....(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?**

**If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.**

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, [stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk](mailto:stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk) . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**