

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports but will contact you individually should any questions arise

Project Ref. No.	14-038
Project Title	Ha Long Bay Environmental Awareness Programme
Country(ies)	Vietnam
UK Organisation	Fauna and Flora International (FFI)
Collaborator(s)	Ha Long Bay Management Department (HLBMD)
Report date	October 31, 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	<i>www.ecoboat.org</i>

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).

Output 2 (Operations) At the end of March 2006, the EcoBoat Project was poised to launch operations. Six months later, we are a well-established feature of the Ha Long Bay scene. We have gained substantial experience in delivering our programme and demonstrated the validity of the concept. We have recorded 32 days of delivering experiential environmental education to young people during voyages on Ha Long Bay. 700 students and teachers -- 112 “international” and 588 from secondary schools on the margins of the Bay – have joined us on the EcoBoat. Our teaching team has grown steadily in professionalism and confidence, and has been ably backed by crew and support staff aboard the EcoBoat.

The EcoBoat Project website launched in July 2006, the harbinger of an intensive marketing campaign to induce international schools in East Asia to include the EcoBoat in their school trips programs. By direct mail, e-mail, visits and appearances at schools conferences, we have spread awareness of the EcoBoat project and are filling the “trips” pipeline. To build up our stable of fee-paying international clients, and hence the sustainability of the project beyond the current Darwin grant, we will continue to emphasize marketing.

International schools’ response has been strongly positive. Typically, we are told that the EcoBoat’s mix of hands-on activity and high quality science or geography teaching is unique in the region and much needed. We work with teachers to deliver lessons that are integrated with the client’s curriculum and use the teaching opportunities found throughout the World Heritage Site. There is a high level of economic development activity on two sides of Ha Long Bay; thus the Bay is replete with human impacts that prompt our student guests to reflect thoughtfully on the complex task of achieving community consensus on preservation of environmental values.

Output 1 (Development of Educational Materials) Concurrently, EcoBoat staff are hard at work extending and refining our menu of lessons, with valuable assistance from staff of our counterpart agency, the Ha Long Bay Management Department, from the provincial Department of Education, and from the Institute of Marine Environment and Resources. In discussions with HLBMD, we have committed to complete a full set of lesson plans in Vietnamese by 31 March 2007; these will be adapted by the Education Department and introduced into the curriculum of local secondary schools. They will also provide building blocks for the draft of an EcoBoat *User’s Guide to Ha Long Bay*, planned for

publication in both Vietnamese and English by the end of 2007.

Output 3 (Establishment of a Successor PVO) At the end of September, in “strategic” discussions with the HLBMD, our counterpart confirmed its disposition to see responsibility for the EcoBoat project and ancillary community education activities passed to an independent, voluntary organization (see discussion in our first annual report), aiming, in the apt phrase of our reviewer, “to give the project a ‘public face’ which is associated with but different from FFI and HLBMD.” This sort of organization is rare in Vietnam and currently unknown in Quang Ninh province; building it will be our greatest challenge and will require a careful and considered approach, working within the constraints of the current system and seeking to broaden them out.. Current work focuses on identifying existing models and precedents and exposing partners to them. To the extent we can find adaptable precedents, we can reduce the number of reviews and administrative permissions that must be obtained to establish the successor entity. We plan to begin recruitment of a community Board of Advisors for the project in January, and to have it in place by the end of March.

Ancillary Activity. The project has responded to requests for capacity building assistance from our counterparts at HLBMD, chiefly by providing advice and modest support to (1) its efforts to develop a cadre of staff able to interact with foreign organizations and experts at a professional level and (2) to define its training and equipment needs for a capability to identify onshore sources of pollution and thus support environmental law enforcement activities.

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.

Our work on EcoBoat educational materials flagged while we sought to fill the position of Environmental Education Director. We were determined to find the right person for this key job, and succeeded in August after a six month search. Dr. Giap has quickly brought coherence, leadership and vision to our curriculum development effort.

We have been slowed by the procedural requirements of Vietnam’s top down, highly bureaucratic administrative tradition. It’s a fact of life here, more so in Quang Ninh than in the capital or in the southern provinces. We have adjusted by hiring an additional administrative staffer and giving more attention to the task of keeping HLBMD informed in detail of our activities. To push forward the work of establishing a locally rooted successor organization for the project, we must persuade HLBMD to relax curbs on our ability to interact laterally with personnel of other agencies and bodies.

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

No, we believe that they can be resolved – or managed – locally and will not require changes to the original agreement.

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. Our response is integrated into replies above.

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 . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**