

# Biodiversity Education and Action Around the Caspian Sea

## Project Partners Meeting 1-5 December 2008 – Alamy

### Draft Minutes

There were several objectives for our meeting:

- Review project progress in each of the partner countries.
- Review project finances and complete up to date financial report.
- Plan final phase of the project.
- Review methodologies for bird monitoring and recording with school and community groups

#### PRESENT

Richard, Pete (FSC), Tatiana/Irena (Kazakhstan), Oleg/Merjden (Turkmenistan), Chingiz/Lala (Azerbaijan), Yuri (Russia), Hamid (Iran).

#### PROGRESS REVIEW

#	Key activities	Kazakhstan	Iran	Russia	Azerbaijan	Turkmenistan
1	Posters	Completed in Russian and Kazak	Completed and loved by schools	Posters prepared but changes required by Min of Education. Now approved but awaiting print files (received) to reprint with corrections. 50% completed.	Posters ready, but many mistakes which led to lower quality reprint required	Printed but still in Iran due to customs issues. Ongoing negotiations to solve this issue. Some small changes to be made using stickers once arrived.
2	Teacher handbook	Completed in Russian and Kazak	Completed in Farsi, ongoing work to 'Iranise' it.	Awaiting approval of final text from Min of Education	Completed in Azeri	Completed in draft with edits, will be printed as soon as posters arrive.
3	Baseline questionnaire	Not completed	Not completed	Not completed	Not completed	Not completed
4	Teachers training (1)	Completed	Delayed due to need to agree with three provinces. Now ready	Delayed until posters ready. teachers are very positive	Completed with 12 schools and biology teachers.	Delayed until posters and handbook ready. Initial talks with Education Heads to select 10 schools

			to commence in Dec and Jan 2009.	about what they have seen so far.		completed.
5	School programme started	Schools are using posters and teachers handbook. 'Biodiversity Box' distributed to schools containing materials and space for schools to add more. Have combined work with other projects for added value – Agip poster contest for 25 schools.	Not yet.	Started despite lack of final posters and handbook - teachers are very positive about what they have seen so far.	Started – schools using role plays, art contests, env conferences as more student centred learning opportunities . Some partnership with BP Energy Training Centre to provide added learning opportunities	Not yet.
6	Website	See comments below	See comments below	See comments below	See comments below	See comments below
7	Keys	Text translated and layout being developed. No costings.	Text translated. No costings.	Finalising text translation.	Translation underway. Costings provided.	Translation underway. Costings not yet provided.
8	Monitoring groups established	Not yet established	Task allocated to Min of Env't.	Not yet established	Established	Not yet established
9	Teachers training (2)	Not yet, keys and website need completing first	Not yet, keys and website need completing first	Not yet, keys and website need completing first	Not yet, keys and website need completing first	Not yet, keys and website need completing first
10	Biodiversity monitoring	Commencing March 2009	Commencing March 2009	Commencing March 2009	Commencing March 2009	Commencing March 2009
11	Evaluation questionnaire	June 2009	June 2009	June 2009	June 2009	June 2009
12	Dissemination	March – June 2009	March – June 2009	March – June 2009	March – June 2009	March – June 2009

General comments:

Posters for each country were printed in Iran. This FSC accepts this as a poor decision as partners anticipated that it may be problematic.

Concern about keys and level of difficulty for children to identify birds. Some species not present in all countries, but agreed all should be present to give sense of overall Caspian Sea biodiversity. Also language needs to be as none technical as possible.

Lack of clarity how website will work.

Posters are having a real impact! They are a very popular resource.

Project promoted at COP1 meeting for CMS. Interest from regional UNEP office to support development of the website.

Trifold leaflet developed in 5 languages to promote the project.

### FINANCAL REVIEW

Good financial accounts were provided by all partners with some understandable exceptions.

There are problems with REC Caucuses regarding allocation of funds within the REC in general. This has had a knock-on effect to our project in that no financial accounts have been provided. Chingiz has provided full accounts for the money that have been sent directly to him by the FSC. In future all transfers to be made directly with Chingiz not the REC Caucuses. FSC to contact Acting Executive Director Nickolas Kabakhidze to request full accounts.

Hamid to provided selected scanned accounts to support finance report.

FSC Finance Manager to prepare project accounts and advise each partner on remaining monies owed. It was confirmed that there would be no additional funding from the Darwin Initiative despite the project extension.

#### **Actions:**

- **RD to contact REC Caucuses regarding financial reports.**
- **Hamid to provide selected scanned receipts to FSC.**
- **FSC Finance Manager to prepare full project accounts.**

### TRAINING ON BIOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

This day was delivered by Pete Boardman, Biodiversity Training Officer, FSC.

Pete started by outlining how biological recording works in the UK and the role of volunteers in this. Over 100,000 volunteers in the UK involved in some kind of biological recording. Examples include Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). BTO created general system for biological recording in 1966 in response to need from RSBP and other bodies to justify their work.

BTO system created territories that volunteers monitor in a regular basis to record bird species sighted. Records recorded and mapped. Result is now a comprehensive database of birds in the UK.

Pete then outlined how biological recording is undertaken today through the National Biodiversity Network. NBN has established a national database with over 30 million records – a small amount! Records are entered in two ways: from mainly volunteers via recording societies; and Local Records Centres whose primary function is to collect data to support the planning process.

Pete then went on to define the basics of creating accurate records:

- Who – name of recorder.

- When – date.
- What – bird species and number.
- Where – location.

These are the minimum requirements for a record. Additional information could include activities of bird at time of sighting. This minimum was compared with the current recording system established on the project website – location information is missing.

A long discussion was undertaken as to the best way for the project to record location information, with the three options being: no change, locating records via a grid system, locating records via grid reference. It was decided that the grid reference system should be used.

During the day a review of bird recording in each country was presented:

Iran – very poor recording and birds associated with use (hunting) or mythology (owls seen as a bad sign). Recent wildlife documentaries on TV are having a impact with some people now feeding rather than shooting birds. Efforts to promote monitoring difficult. South Caspian produced a simple key to four vulture species to be distributed via a national newspaper, but project rejected by ‘expert’ opinion that the general public cannot be trusted to provide reliable data. As such, records provided by citizens are not as yet valued.

Russia – formal systems existed during communist times but these have largely collapsed. Some recording does go on in state reserves and there are regional red books. No organised system to involve schools in monitoring but there are some examples of good practice in schools.

Azerbaijan – there are some schools/clubs involved in recording but this is not seen as ‘reliable’ or ‘believable’ data.

Kazakhstan – there is no known system and limited state funded data collection and information from state reserves. Some university students are interested in this area.

Turkmenistan – limited monitoring and limited to specific projects e.g. GEF funded project. There are some remnants from the Soviet era but data is unreliable. There are limited resources for such work. Work with schools is only just commencing.

#### **Action:**

- **Revised recording system to be adopted by all partners and key to be adapted accordingly.**

#### KEY

Ideas and suggestions about the bird identification key were presented and discussed from each partner. It was agreed that:

- Keys will include all 25 bird species even if they are not found in each country to give a sense of the overall picture of the Caspian Sea, and the sense that this is a regional project.
- Key design to be based on FSC format.
- Text needs to reflect revised recording system and Pete to provide suggested text.
- Keys do not all need to be the same and changes to reflect local print and information needs are allowed.

#### DELIVERY PLANNING

The final day was spent planning the remaining project tasks. RD commenced the day by providing an overview of the remaining project tasks and their dependencies (see flipchart in appendix 1).

#### **Baseline Survey**

This activity was previously reported to the Darwin Initiative as completed, but there is no evidence from the partners to this effect.

RD provided an overview of evaluation and monitoring and how this is being achieved in our project (see flipcharts in appendix 2). The project outputs and outcomes were discussed. A list of the project outputs are provided below. This was discussed together with suitable evidence for completion.

PROJECT OUTPUTS		
Year/Month	Standard output	Description (include numbers of people involved, publications produced, days/weeks etc.)
Year 1 - Months 3 and 12: Year 2 - Months 16 and 20 Year 2 - Months 15 And 23	Number of people receiving training and number weeks of training received.	15 - Development Team members 4 weeks <i>Input</i> - FSC Training 20 days/DT - 20 days time being trained. 500 - Teachers 1 week <i>Input</i> - DT training - 15 days / Teachers - 6 days being trained plus coaching The content of the training is described in Section 18
Year 1 - Months 2 and 11: Year 2 - Months 15 and 20. Year 1 - Month 10 Year 1 - Month 10	Number of different types of materials	250 pages of training materials for the Development Team <i>Input</i> - FSC 10 days 50 pages of training materials for Teachers workshops <i>Input</i> - DT 10 days 1250 copies of 5 biodiversity posters (total 6000 total) in 5 languages. The content of the posters will be agreed at the DT Workshop. They will be approximately 60cm x1 metre in full colour and likely themes are "What is Biodiversity?" "Why is Biodiversity important", "What are the threats to Caspian Biodiversity?" "What are the solutions?" "What about me - how can I help?" All using data and examples from around the Caspian. <i>Input</i> - FSC development 20 days / DT - 1.5 months development 2500 copies of a Teachers Guide for the posters in 5 languages (average 500 in each country) <i>Input</i> - FSC development 10 days / DT - 0.5 month 1 content managed web site with pages in five national languages with at least 100 pages in each language (each Biodiversity Group will have a page and there will also be summary and calculation pages) <i>Input</i> - FSC Development 30 days / DT 1 month
Year 1 - Months 1,3 and 12: Year 2 - Months 16 and 20: Year 3: Months 25 and 30: Year 4 - Month 35	Number weeks spent by UK team in host countries.	12 weeks to include training, coaching, monitoring and dissemination - as described under the input to each of the Project outputs in this table
Year 2 - Month 23	Number of field guides.	Identification Keys produced for specific Caspian species. 1 key produced in at least five languages for use by schools and communities. 5000 copies of the key will be produced (1000 in each national language) <i>Input</i> - DT - 2 months development time
Year 2 - Month 20	Number of computer data	1 content managed web site and database for use by schools and communities in each of the five Caspian countries - the web

	bases.	site <u>Input</u> - FSC - 2 months, DT - 2 months
Year 4 - Month 35  Throughout	Number of conferences organised  Number of conferences attended.	5 Dissemination Seminars - one in each Caspian country <u>Input</u> - DT - 0.5 month  20 - 2 conferences attended in each country for Years 2 and 3 of the project to disseminate learning and present the project. <u>Input</u> - DT 0.5 month
Throughout	Number of press releases in host countries.  Number of newsletters in host countries.  Number of national press releases in the UK.  Number of local press releases in UK.	20 - a minimum of 2 national press releases each year in 5 Caspian countries.  75 - a minimum of 5 in each Caspian country for 3 years.  5 by the FSC to national media  5 by the FSC to local media <u>Input</u> - FSC Management 1 day / DT - 0.5 month
From Year 1 Month 4	Number of newsletters.  Circulation of newsletters.  Number of newsletters in UK	5 - 2 newsletters a year after the 6 months - for circulation to project schools and other stakeholders.  2500 - on average - 500 in each country  50 to key environmental education stakeholders <u>Input</u> - FSC Management 3 days / DT 1 month
Year 3 - Month 20	Number of dissemination networks.	1 network established - of Schools with a commitment to continued monitoring and recording of biodiversity <u>Input</u> - DT- 2 months
Throughout from Month 6	Number of national TV reports in host countries.  Number of local TV reports in host country.	5 - potentially 1 in each Caspian country over the life of the project  10 - potentially 2 in each Caspian country over the life of the project <u>Input</u> - DT - 0.5 month
Throughout from Month 6	Number of national radio reports in host country.  Number of local radio reports in host country.  Number of national radio reports in UK.	10 - potentially 2 in each Caspian country over the life of the project  25 - potentially 5 in each Caspian country over the life of the project  2 - potentially 2 in Shropshire. <u>Input</u> - FSC 1 day / DT - 0.5 month
Year 1 - Month 3	Assets to hosts.	£5000 of computer resources
Throughout	Additional funds.	£27000

Please note in particular the requirements for dissemination events in each partner country and media coverage (TV, radio, press), as well as project newsletters (these could be part of existing newsletters).

Considerable time was spent discussing evidencing the project outcomes and how to evidence change. It was agreed that pre and post bird monitoring surveys was the most reliable way to achieve this, and that they should reflect the project outcomes.

The following project outcomes were confirmed:

- Improved quality and effectiveness of biodiversity education.
- Enhancement of school and community participation in biodiversity monitoring.
- Increased knowledge and data on Caspian Sea biodiversity.
- A sustainable biodiversity monitoring system.

Discussions took place on what to measure to evidence the successful achievement of the outcomes, and it was agreed to measure:

- Current biodiversity education activities.
- Barriers to effective education and biodiversity monitoring.
- Attitudes to the Caspian Sea.
- Knowledge and understanding about the Caspian Sea.

It was agreed that the pre and post biodiversity monitoring surveys be targeted at teachers and students.

It was agreed that Tatiana and Hamid will draft the pre-survey by 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and circulate for comments (in Russian and English). Comments are to be sent to Hamid and Tatiana by 20<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and a final draft completed by 5<sup>th</sup> January.

RD to provide guidelines on implementing the pre-survey.

#### **Action:**

- **Hamid and Tatiana to draft baseline survey by 10<sup>th</sup> December and circulate to all partners. RD to ensure translation into Russian.**
- **Comments on draft sent from all partners to Hamid and Tatiana by 20<sup>th</sup> December.**
- **Final draft completed and sent to all partners by 5<sup>th</sup> January. RD to provide guidelines on using the survey in schools.**

#### **Keys**

Agreed that:

- All keys will include the 25 agreed bird species.
- The format of the keys will be flexible to suit the needs of individual partners and printing costs, but basic information should include details of all the birds and how to create a biological record.
- Quotes for layout and printing costs to be sent to RD by 17<sup>th</sup> December. Once all quotes have been received Ken (FSC) will transfer money for printing.
- Keys need to be completed in time for next teacher training session.

#### **Action:**

- **Quotes for layout and printing of keys to be sent to RD by all partners by 17<sup>th</sup> December.**
- **RD to circulate revised key text from Pete to all partners.**
- **All partners to ensure keys are printed ready for next teacher training workshop.**

#### **Website**

Agreed that:

- Website needs to be in the language of each partner. Partners will be responsible for translating text with the exception of Russian, this will be done by the project translator. Partners will need to check the text on the website once uploaded to ensure it is accurate.
- Aim to have website to be ready for next teacher training workshop.
- RD/Hamid to discuss website changes with Sam and report to partners.

**Action:**

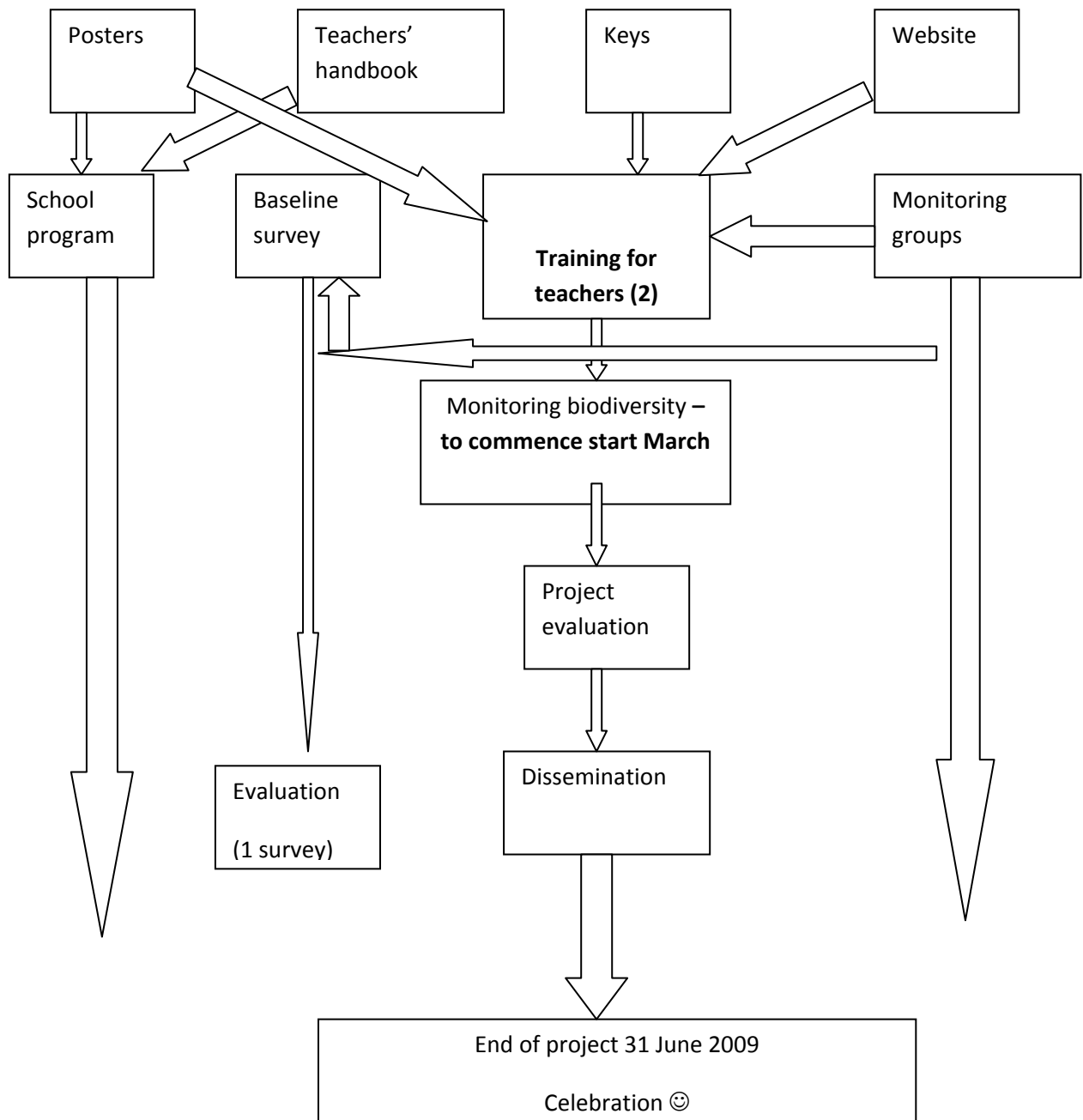
- **Hamid and RD to discuss changes with Sam.**
- **RD to prepare technical specification for Sam and receive revised delivery plan from Sam.**
- **Partners to provide text translations as required.**
- **Website to be completed by end February 2009.**

### **Delivery Time Scale**

The remaining project tasks are summarised in the table below, although it is noted that some partners have completed some of the tasks – see table above. It was agreed that the partners need to be flexible in deciding the detailed timescale for delivery themselves, but key dates must be adhered to. These are:

- 28<sup>th</sup> February – Poster, teacher handbook, keys and website completed. Second teacher training workshop completed and baseline survey completed. Monitoring groups identified and ready to start monitoring.
- 1<sup>st</sup> March – Bird monitoring to start in all partner countries.
- 30<sup>th</sup> June – All project activities completed and project documentation prepared for final report to Darwin Initiative.





### Future Team Meetings

It was agreed that the next project meeting would be in Turkmenistan. It will be a three day meeting and take place between 11-24 April 2009. All partners to inform RD of any dates during this period they are unavailable.

If available, a final project meeting will be held in late June for the Project Manager from each partner.

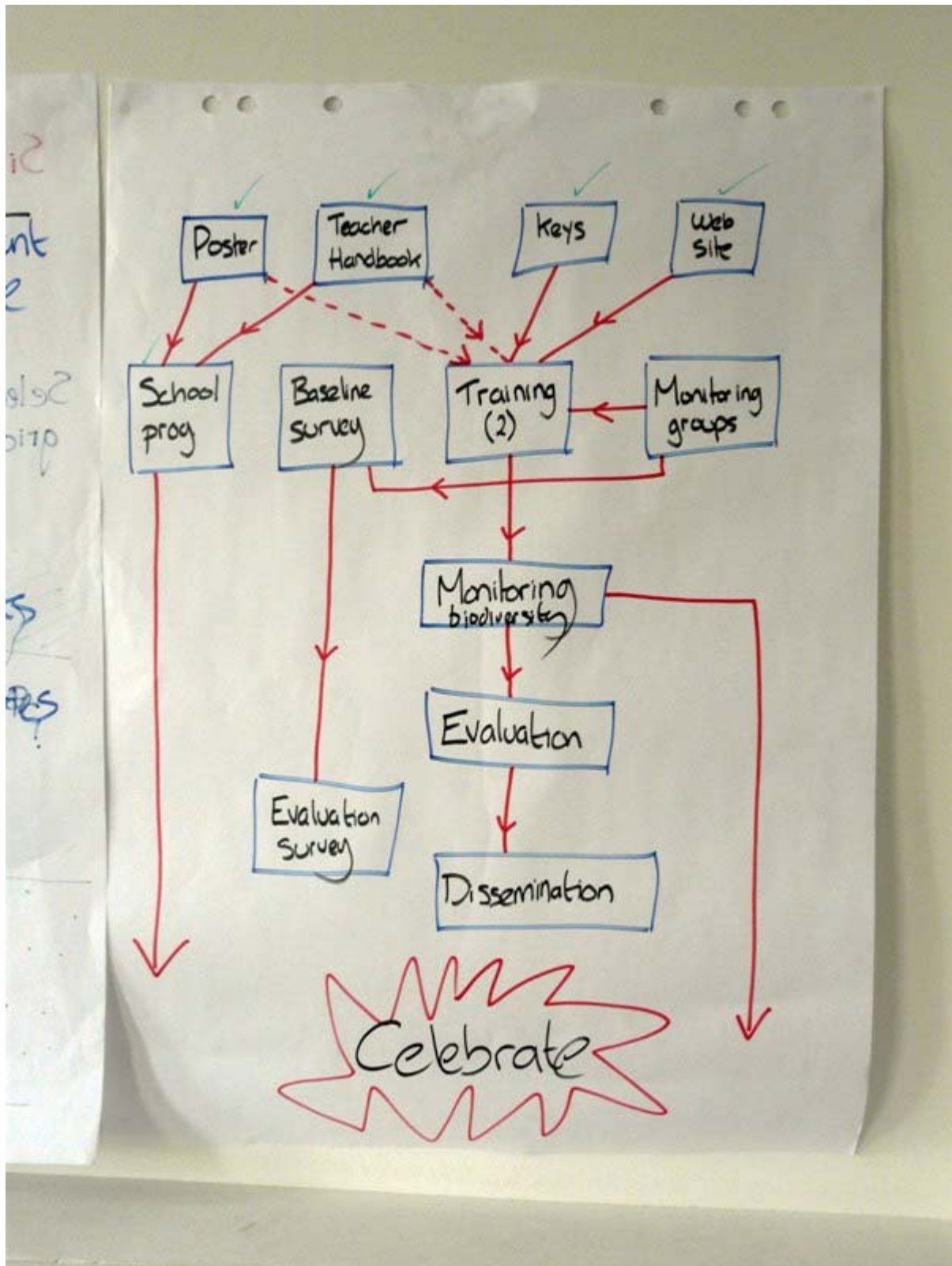
### MEETING REVIEW

An informal review of the meeting was held with the participants sharing their feedback. All agreed that the meeting was vital in re-establishing momentum after the project delays and felt the meeting made clear the remaining tasks and how they should proceed.

### TASKS



APPENDIX 1 - Project tasks



## Our Outcomes

- 1) Improved quality & effectiveness of biodiversity education
- 2) Enhancement of school + community participation in biodiversity monitoring
- 3) Increased knowledge & data on Caspian
- 4) Sustainable bio monitoring system.

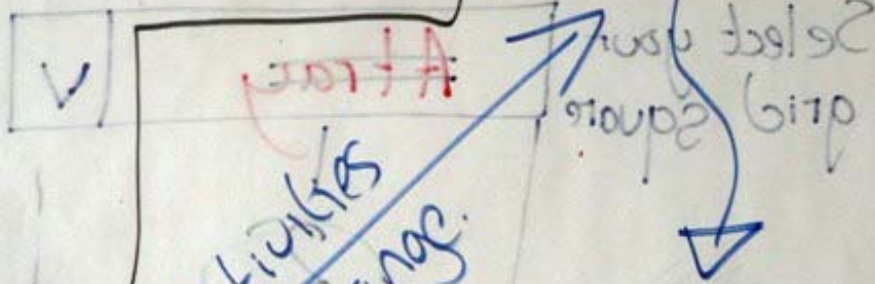
### Measure

- a) Current biodiversity education capabilities.
- b) barriers to effective education & monitoring.
- c) attitudes to Caspian Sea.
- d) knowledge/understanding about Caspian Sea.

Size of group to go?

How? cost!  
How? time!  
# schools?

A  
different  
future



Activities  
change.

- 1) outputs
- 2) outcomes

Now

EVIDENCE

No data

Name: Bakir Zehra

Outputs

→ physical

- handbook
- website
- training course

→ impact

e.g. # people, books, etc.

Outcomes

→ Change

- understanding
- attitudes
- behaviour
- knowledge

1) indirect

2) direct

- questionnaire
- focus group