

Darwin Initiative – Final Report

(To be completed with reference to the Reporting Guidance Notes for Project Leaders
(<http://darwin.defra.gov.uk/resources/reporting/>) -

it is expected that this report will be a **maximum** of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes)

Darwin project information

Project Reference	15/037
Project Title	Distance Learning for Biodiversity conservation in Small Island Developing States
Host country(ies)	Pacific Island States (Partner is Fiji-based)
UK Contract Holder Institution	International Centre for Protected Landscapes
UK Partner Institution(s)	
Host Country Partner Institution(s)	University of the South Pacific
Darwin Grant Value	£209,500
Start/End dates of Project	May 2006 - March 2009 – with no-cost extension granted to September 2009
Project Leader Name	Dr. Elizabeth Hughes
Project Website	www.protected-landscapes.org/South_Pacific_Programme
Report Author(s) and date	Dr. Elizabeth Hughes, Gareth Roberts and Professor W. Aalbersberg

1 Project Background

The project aimed to build the capacity of the University of the South Pacific in Fiji to develop and deliver a Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) programme across the region that provides the vocational education, training and skills upgrading needed for conservation practitioners to address the environmental issues facing small islands. In doing so, the project will, over time, assist South Pacific Island States in meeting their commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The project has led to the development of a scheme of learning at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, comprising distance learning modules and residential courses, including integration and accreditation of a key regional training course in community conservation originally established through another Darwin project.

2 Project support to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The project has focussed on addressing Article 12 of the CBD by helping to strengthen the capacity of countries in the South Pacific region to raise awareness and understanding of biodiversity issues so that the people in these small island states are better able to manage in a sustainable way, the natural resources on which their livelihoods ultimately depend.

One of the key aims of the project was to build the capacity of the Institute of Applied Sciences at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji to deliver vocational education and training in order to help Fiji and other SIDS in the region to meet CBD commitments. It is evident that a number of staff responsible for CBD work in these countries have already participated directly in the programme, either as DL students, short course trainees or contributors.

Evidence to indicate that the host country institutions are continuing to build their capacity to meet CBD commitments comes from the excellent networking between conservation organisations and institutions that are now to be found in the region. Throughout the programme period, the host country institutions (USP and SPREP) convened various events, contributed to research and published evidence of how the CBD activities were being delivered. It would not be appropriate to claim credit for these on the Darwin Initiative solely but it is fair to say that the Darwin Initiative has been instrumental in helping to establish networks of participating individuals and institutions. There is evidence of turnover of staff within the region, as staff exchange or change jobs as part of their career and skills development, of more attention being given to environmental matters in the media, in government circles generally, and in the active participation of communities in the conservation effort. Local communities are increasingly taking lead roles in local projects aimed at safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity, and monitoring and policing their local areas¹. Local people are also realising key conservation posts in these countries. The project feeds into all of these activities.

3 Project Partnerships

The key partners in this project are the International Centre for Protected Landscapes in the UK and the Institute of Applied Sciences of the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. This partnership was initially developed through the former Darwin Initiative project 162/8/009 (Biodiversity Conservation Training – Pacific Island States) and the very existence of the current project is itself a reflection of the continued commitment of this partnership. In 2001 the IAS established the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable development (PACE–SD) to work with relevant sections of the University, regional and international organisations, regional governments and NGOs to promote environmentally sustainable development in the Pacific through teaching, training and research-based capacity building. The primary focus of this project was to build the capacity of this Centre to deliver high quality and accessible biodiversity conservation training across the region.

In addition to the core project ‘team’ at ICPL and USP, another partner in the project is the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

SPREP is the Pacific region’s major inter-governmental organization charged with protecting and managing the environment and natural resources. Its mandate is to promote cooperation in the Pacific islands region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve the environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations.

SPREP was a core partner in the former Darwin project and remains engaged in the current project activities, particularly in respect of promoting the training opportunities for conservation practitioners.

Other conservation and development organisations in the region have also been engaged for the purpose of this project, particularly with a view to their continued support for the key project outcome (the DFL programme) – their support is seen as critical to its future sustainability. They include: the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI), the National Trust of Fiji, Birdlife International, WWF, and the IUCN Regional Office in Suva, Fiji.

The project also benefited in earlier years from the support of colleagues at the UK-based NGO Wild Resources Ltd. Wild Resources (WR) is engaged in applied ecological research on products harvested from tropical and temperate forests in particular, and provides training and facilitation in the development of new support tools and services for wild product management around the world. With WR’s support we have been able to incorporate in our materials,

¹ The experience of the Locally Managed Marine Areas in many of the Pacific Islands is an example of good practice in the integrating communities into the effort of conserving and enhancing biodiversity in the region

cutting-edge approaches and methodologies, particularly in respect of the sustainable development of natural resource-based enterprise.

Inevitably, while the commitment to these partnerships remains strong in principle, the last eighteen months have raised considerable concerns that the current global financial crisis threatens the capacity of USP to deliver the outcomes of this project. In particular, the Institute of Applied Sciences (our partner at USP) for example has lost both academic and administrative staff during the latter part of this project. ICPL too has struggled with capacity issues during this difficult time. A further concern is the likely impact of financial constraints on the ability of regional organisations to send staff for training and education.

4 Project Achievements

4.1 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity, sustainable use or equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits

This project has sought to provide participants with the tools - i.e. the knowledge, skills and approaches, specifically tailored to the environmental and cultural context of the South Pacific region - to enable them, to be more informed and effective in their work. Thus the direct impact of this project on biodiversity, sustainable use and equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits, will be revealed in the medium to long term, through the application of the vocational education and training that are its focus. The project period itself has been, in effect, a development period.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the project has already helped to build co-operation in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development in the South Pacific region by bringing together a number of regional NGOs as both contributors and participants. The Pacific Islands Community Conservation Course has helped in particular to develop and refine methodologies for national reporting on conservation and in stakeholder capacity building. Other achievements have included identifying and sharing good practice experience and the sharing data sources and biodiversity monitoring techniques.

In terms of social impacts of the project, these too are primarily for future evaluation, pending the application in due course of the skills and expertise of current and future participants. What cannot be overstated, however, is the social impact of biodiversity conservation in the South Pacific region. In Fiji, for example an estimated 300,000 people living in coastal villages derive their livelihoods from marine resources. Rights to exploit these resources are customary, based on a long established system of local marine tenure of *iqoliqolis* or traditional fishing grounds that are under the control of the communities adjacent to them. Most governments in the Region are finding it difficult (because of lack of resources and weak governance) to monitor the biodiversity losses incurred through these systems. In addition, technological advancements in fishing gear, facilitated by speed boats and ever increasing demand for fish has encouraged poaching. Many participants of the education and training courses delivered through this project are working concurrently with communities, trying to address these issues on the ground and are challenging greater investment by governments and others whose responsibility it is both to deliver services to communities and to deliver CBD targets. Several participants in the project have stated in response to evaluation questionnaires that the training they have received through this project has helped them to engage better with communities and to assist local people in identifying and dealing more effectively with conservation issues.

4.2 Outcomes: achievement of the project purpose and outcomes

The project purpose was to assist small island developing states to address the decline in biodiversity and habitat loss through providing vocational education and training in community-based conservation and sustainable development using the distance and flexible learning (DFL) model.

The focus of the project has been on the development of distance learning modules and short courses for the establishment of a DFL programme to run through the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (Institute of Applied Sciences) at USP, for candidates from the South Pacific Island States (particularly community conservation practitioners and trainers).

Distance Learning materials have been developed and a short course previously established by the partnership – the Pacific Islands Community Conservation Course - has been updated, refined, and importantly accredited through USP. Two other residential short courses have also been incorporated within the menu of modules / courses that make up the programme. Candidates thus have access to a range of learning opportunities as a direct result of this project (see CD Rom for DL materials; PICCC info and programme leaflet).

While the programme development has been to good effect, the project has been subject to a number of delays and undermined to a degree in its implementation by institutional constraints at the University of the South Pacific – including, for example, slower than expected validation procedures and in the latter part of the project, a moratorium on the approval of new courses (due to institutional re-structuring and financial issues); and the institutional impact of the global economic crisis. Staff numbers at USP are reduced and support structures for the running of the DFL programme appear to be increasingly limited.

Notwithstanding these issues, a wider and more flexible approach to the education programme than had originally been anticipated, has been prepared. Candidates from across the region have begun to follow some of the modules/courses and thereby the project has begun in a small way to build the regional skills and expertise necessary to address the critical issues relating to conservation and sustainable development. The example in the Box over page, from a student in the latest cohort illustrates this point. The Report is an example of project work due to be completed by Ms Eliala Fihaki of the Department of the Environment of the Government of Tuvalu in February 2010 in fulfilment of Part II of the PICCC in 2009-10. The Course helped this candidate to develop skills and expertise needed to undertake the project and help the Government of Tuvalu deliver its responsibilities under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Background

In 2002 Tuvalu ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity which was established in the World Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992. Under Article Six of the Convention, Tuvalu along with other signatory states, has an obligation to produce a Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan. Tuvalu is the last nation among Pacific Island states to begin work on producing this document.

Tuvalu is a small island state located in the Central Pacific 5-11⁰S, 176-179⁰E, comprising nine atolls and low islands (Nanumea, Niutao, Niulakita, Nanumaga, Nui, Vaitupu, Nukufetau, Funafuti and Nukulaelae) with a total land area of only 26 sq km. The present population was estimated to be 11,636 (July 2005) and is growing at an annual rate of 1.47 percent per annum. This figure excludes the ex-patriot community that is domiciled mainly in Australia, New Zealand and Kiribati. Nearly 50% of the population is located on Funafuti, on Fongafale motu (the main settlement area). It has a land area of about 1.9 sq. km with an estimated population of 4, 418, giving a population density of 2, 325 persons/ sq. km.²

Tuvalu experiences a hot, humid tropical maritime climate, between the inter-tropical and South Pacific convergence zones, and has near constant temperatures throughout the year. Easterly trade winds prevail except in the wet season when winds blow from the west or north. There is a significant seasonal variability in precipitation with a May to October dry season and a November to April wet season. The average annual rainfall is 3,000 mm but rainfall can exceed 4,000 mm per annum at times, and in some years Tuvalu experiences droughts because of its location near the Pacific equatorial dry zone. Dry periods are more severe in the northern than the southern islands, notably in the months of August-October. There are frequent thunderstorms in the wet season. As the average elevation in Tuvalu is one metre above mean sea level (MSL), with the highest being less than 5 metres MSL, the islands are highly vulnerable to cyclones and tsunamis. Tuvalu is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to critically assess the processes adopted and procedures followed in producing the Tuvalu National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The study objectives are;

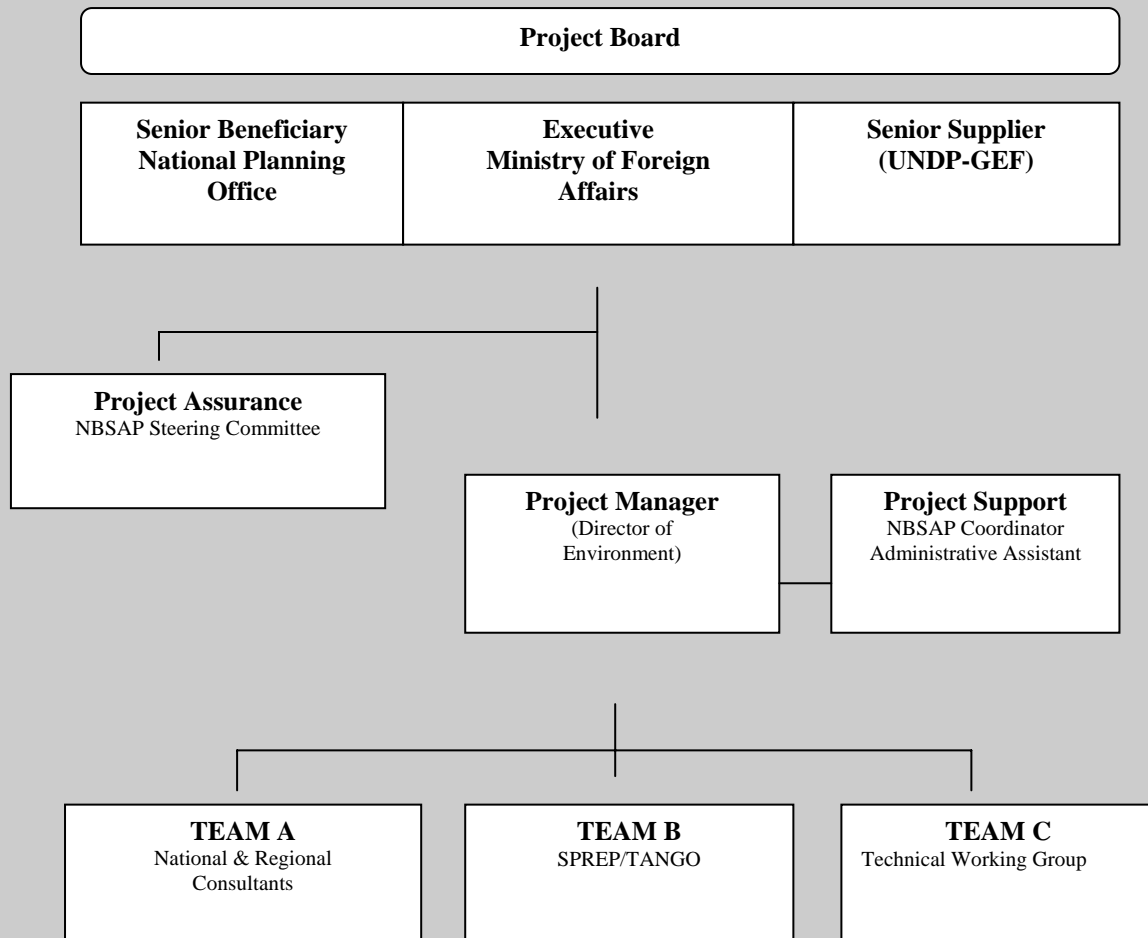
1. To examine the processes, approaches involved in the production of Tuvalu NBSAP document
2. To identify the lessons learned of the NBSAP processes/approaches
3. To explore ways of improving the NBSAP processes.
4. To evaluate the CBD Guidelines and compare these with the approach taken in Tuvalu.
5. To help inform best practice in the implementation of strategic Action Plans produced in the NBSAP document.

The NBSAP Project

In February 2009 a project was established to help execute the mandate of Article 6 of the CBD. This work was supported with funding secured from the Global Environment Facility, implemented through the United Nation Development Program- Multi Country Office (Fiji) and executed under the Tuvalu Environment Department. Project funding was for two years and it is expected that the Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan will be completed within this time frame.

The organizational structure and procedure adopted in the project are set out in the diagrams below. The project Steering Committee (Project Board) is an overarching body that includes various government sectors, but also includes representatives of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and major resource user associations. There is also a Planning Committee, a sub-committee, with a few members of the Steering committee involved. The Planning committee contributes more to the daily operations of the project than the overarching committee

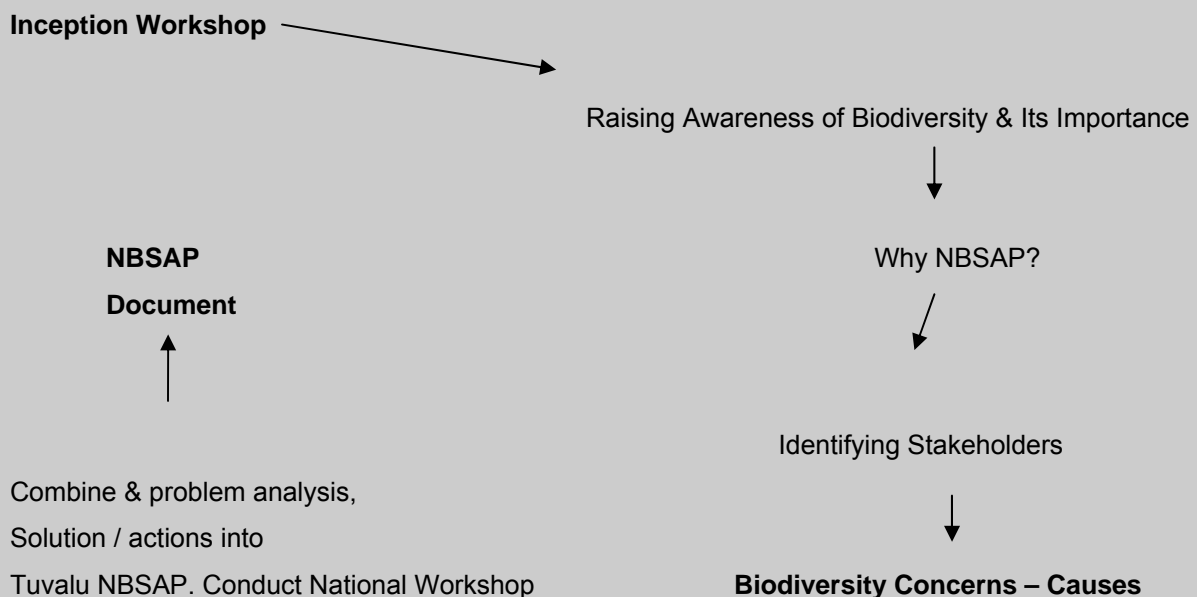
Diagram 1: NBSAP Project Organisation structure.

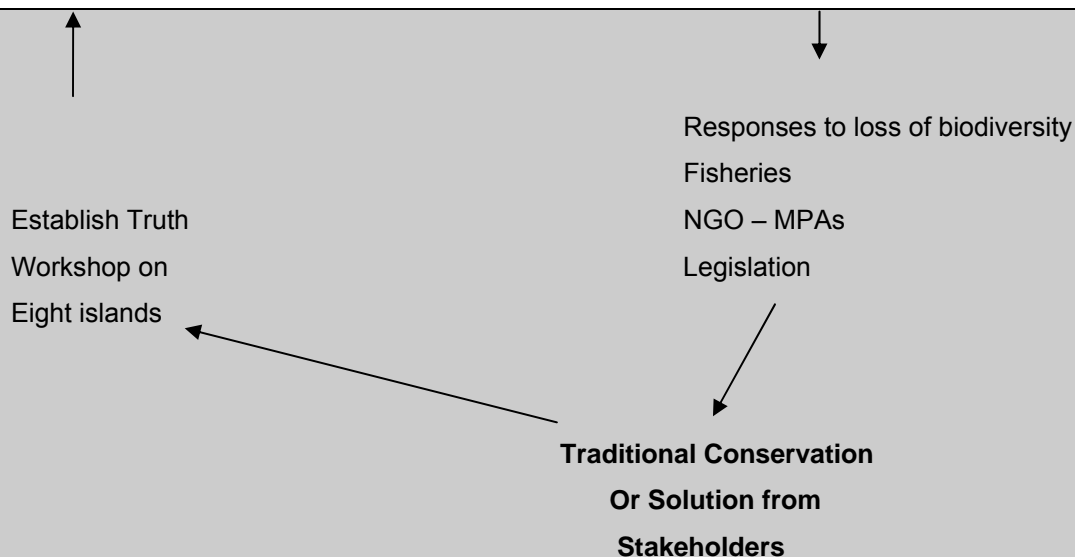


Source: Tuvalu NBSAP project document

The NBSAP Project during its Inception workshop set out a skeleton diagram explaining how it was envisaged that the processes would precede towards the development of the NBSAP.

Diagram 2: The NBSAP Process





(Adopted from NBSAP Coordinator's presentation on the NBSAP process)

After the Inception Workshop it is planned to tour all the island communities of Tuvalu conducting participatory consultations workshop. These consultations would be an important step in the manifestation of what has been termed the 'establish Truth' step, as shown in the above diagram 2. The workshops focused on collecting information on species stocks; agriculture biodiversity; invasive species; threats to biodiversity and help identify possible solutions to deal with these problems. These meetings served as a forum to establish relationship with the communities; raise awareness of biodiversity loss and empowering the people to take ownership of the project in the build up to producing the Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan.

The tour was completed within a period of 4-5 months (May-September, 2009). The project initially planned for the consultations to take place within three months beginning in April and finishes by June, 2009. A National Workshop was scheduled for the month of August, 2009 and then produced the Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan.

The schedule of developments towards the development of the BSAP has been revised with the National Workshop now due to take place in February, 2010 follow the review process with a view to producing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan by March 2010.

4.3 Outputs (and activities)

The menu of modules and courses that comprise the DFL programme at USP is complete (see list below). This enables various combinations of distance learning modules and / or short residential courses to be undertaken, to enable students in the South Pacific region to pursue post graduate certificate, diploma or (ultimately) masters' level programmes through alternative (residential and/or distance learning) channels . Elements now include:

- Foundations of Protected Area Management (distance learning – single unit)
- Tools and Skills for Protected Area Management (distance learning – single unit)
- Management and Business Planning for Conservation Areas (distance learning – single unit)
- The Science behind Protected Areas (residential short course – single unit)
- Pacific Islands Community Conservation Course – PICCC (residential course – single unit)
- Species Management in the South Pacific (residential short course – single unit; in partnership also with the Durrell Foundation)

Candidates complete two single units to qualify for a PG Certificate. To receive a PG Diploma they must complete four single units. The masters' programme will comprise the PG Diploma plus a dissertation. Students cannot combine the DL module on Tools and Skills for Protected Area Management and the PICCC.

While the number of DL modules created is less than that stated in the original project plan, this is due to re-structuring and merging of modules as a result of discussions between the partners, rather than through omission.

Importantly, the way the programme has been structured enables for continuing development and addition of further elements (especially optional modules) as colleagues at USP deem appropriate.

In terms of programme development then, which was the main focus of this project, the primary output identified in the logical framework was achieved and an exciting and innovative range of linked distance and flexible learning courses have been opened up through USP, focusing in particular on the key conservation challenges facing the South Pacific region. However, progress in University approval and validation, and embedding the courses in the University curriculum has been very slow. As a result, student numbers within the project period have not been as great as had been anticipated and none have graduated to date. One residential course - the Pacific Islands Community Conservation Course, which was originally established through another Darwin Project but which has been refined, accredited and integrated as part of this wider USP programme - has become very popular with both employers and participants, and attracts large numbers of applicants from across the region. This reflects a continuing challenge and a real dilemma for distance learning. While it offers opportunities that many people – especially in-post practitioners – might not otherwise be able to access, there is no question that many people in the South Pacific, just as elsewhere in the world, more readily accept and are more comfortable with face-to-face learning.

A problem has also arisen in relation to the capacity of USP colleagues to tutor distance learning students – some of whom are clearly struggling with the coursework. Notwithstanding that USP is (like most higher education institutions) suffering in the current financial climate, the UK partner recommends that the University should devote more resources to providing mentoring and support for these distance learners during their studies. We believe it will significantly increase the success rate. The Flexible Learning Centre of the University should support academic staff in doing this.

In terms of “rolling out” the products for delivery in other island regions it was anticipated that this would be accomplished through USP involvement in the Small Island States University Consortium for Sustainable Development. This was formally launched recently after several years of discussion but there are still issues in sharing of courses. The distance learning modules are included as part of USP's contribution of courses. Universities in the Caribbean, Indian and Mediterranean are involved. Efforts have also been made to share the courses regionally, especially through the UN EDULINK initiative for education for sustainable development, which USP manages. The courses have been discussed and favourably received at EDULINK meetings.

4.4 Project standard measures and publications

See Annexes 4 and 5

4.5 Technical and Scientific achievements and co-operation

The whole project focused on the development and delivery of vocational education and training materials. From this perspective it was all about technical co-operation to support more effective biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the region. Information given in previous sections of this Report and the CDs that accompany it, represent the outcome of this co-operation.

The Pacific Islands Community Conservation Course (PICCC) has proved particularly popular with students and their employers in providing the basic technical and scientific skills needed to deliver biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the region. The box below provides a brief description of how this course provides technical and scientific training and fosters co-operation.

The PICCC is offered biannually in two parts. Part I aims to develop the knowledge and skills of the students in conservation management, Part II focuses on the design and delivery of a conservation project which allows the students to demonstrate the practical application of the range of skills and knowledge they have of community based conservation. This approach has been effective and should be recorded as an achievement. Bringing the students together at the USP on two occasions also helps to foster co-operation between the island states as students get to know each other and the personnel in key NGOs in the region. This approach has helped develop camaraderie and is conducive to fostering long term co-operation between students many of whom are expected to realise key posts in their respective Governments or with environmental NGOs in the Pacific region. There is already evidence that former students of the PICCC are sponsoring and encouraging new recruits to enlist on the course.

Part I of the PICCC has been convened as a series of themed workshops run over a period 3-4 weeks in each of the years the programme has been run. The objectives of these workshops has broadly been:

- To describe the major biodiversity and conservation conventions, their inter-linkages and their relevance to the Pacific Island countries
- To explain the various approaches to conservation management, including the role of protected area systems in protecting biological and cultural diversity and in supporting communities
- To gain experience in using a range of field techniques that are useful in successful management of Protected and Conservation Areas;
- To justify the need for enterprise planning; describe the basic themes and processes of business planning as well as carry out a range of basic business skills
- To enhance a range of interpersonal and communication skills including how to generate public support and understanding the roles of partners in education programmes
- To understand and gain skills in strategic planning and to understand the roles and functions of a range of planning tools.

4.6 Capacity building

The project sought to build capacity of USP for delivery of vocational education and training in biodiversity conservation for the region through the DFL model. Indirectly, through that education and training, the project also sought to build the skills capacity of conservation organisations – be they governments or NGO in the region - to deliver effective biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

During the early stages of the project, the portents for the former – institutional capacity building at USP – were good. However, it has to be said that while technical capacity has been built through the development of materials and the implementation of courses as planned, it appears that institutional capacity has been severely impacted by the economic crisis and at the time of writing, this remains of concern to the UK partner in terms of the future sustainability and growth of the programme (see under 4.7 below). Similarly, institutional re-structuring at USP has led to a moratorium on the approval of new courses (2008/2009), which has clearly impacted negatively on the approval of modules, courses and programmes that are the focus of this project. All that said, we understand that USP has now emerged from its financial crisis in good health and, as described in the next section, has been earmarked to play a major capacity building role in large upcoming regional environment projects. This is happening for the first time and is in large part due to the suite of courses on offer that have been developed under this project.

In reference to the capacity building of conservation organisations in the region through up-skilling of conservation practitioners, as with the evaluation of other impacts of the project, evidence for this will only be quantifiable in the years to come.

4.7 Sustainability and Legacy

The aim of the UK partner in this project was always to reach the point where the University of the South Pacific is able to sustain the delivery of this DFL conservation programme in the region, without its (ICPL's) support. The systems and educational resources should now be in place for this to be the case. However, as referenced in 4.6 above, it has been clear over the last year of the project that the future sustainability of the programme is very much subject to the financial constraints and institutional priorities at USP. For example, both academic and administrative staffing at the institution have been reduced and a moratorium has been placed on new course approval. Clearly, it must also be recognised that the global economic crisis affects the conservation sector as it does others – we are aware that both government and non-government organisations are reducing staff numbers and training budgets are being cut. These issues were broadly covered in our project assumptions (See logframe analysis in Annex 2).

Despite these concerns, two major regional environment projects have made USP the sole provider of capacity building activities under these projects. Consultants who made these recommendations were very impressed by the feedback especially from the PICCC and other modules developed under this project. One initiative is the Coral Triangle Initiative which has funding in the hundreds of millions of dollars for coral reef and coastal management in the Western Pacific. The European Union and USP are finalising a eight million Euro project for climate change adaptation in which learning about community-based resource management will play a major role. USP already under the AUS\$150,000,000 climate change initiative has been supported for hire five new senior staff in the units that have been involved in the Darwin project. These staff and finances should help complete and expand the outputs expected under this Darwin grant.

The difficult issue of financial sustainability aside, the legacy that is expected to most endure as a result of this project is the likelihood that most if not all of the students participating in the education and training courses will remain in the region and will be active in the design and implementation of effective conservation programmes according to the guidelines extolled in the teaching materials and short courses, essentially that conservation programmes best serve both biodiversity and communities when:

- they take a long-term strategic view;
- they are designed and implemented in partnership with the full range of stakeholders and when programmes, plans or projects are established collaboratively with all stakeholders from the outset;
- their governance systems are robust, well designed and agreed between partners at all levels;
- they have the support and commitment of government as well as local leaders and decision-making bodies;
- legal mechanisms - including customary law - are used to support or enhance activities;
- they provide clear benefits to communities, and recognise and support community values and aspirations;
- they incorporate mutual learning between communities and conservation partners and enable local people to build the skills, knowledge and ability to fulfil community aspirations for conservation and sustainable development in the long-term a sense of community ownership is established;
- relevant local, traditional and scientific information is used throughout the life-cycle of programmes, and made accessible to and shared with local stakeholders;
- local stakeholders are engaged in all aspects of programme reporting, monitoring and evaluation;
- they do not raise unrealistic expectations which can be damaging for ongoing programme success and community engagement.

5 Lessons learned, dissemination and communication

A project such as this is heavily dependent on wider institutional (University) structures, priorities, decisions, functions and capacities. Any or all of these can impact upon the role of staff in project activities, and circumstances can change significantly over the course of three years. Together with the effect of the global economic crisis on USP which has been a challenge for colleagues at the institution over the last 18 months in particular, institutional issues such as re-structuring and a moratorium on course approvals since 2008 have clearly impacted negatively upon the pace of development of this project. The situation is definitely improving and from hereon, it is to be hoped that the University will continue to be supportive in maintaining this important programme into the future.

A clear challenge that has presented itself in terms of implementation of the DFL programme has been the difficulty candidates to date have experienced in following the distance learning modules. In response to this, the modules have this year been peer reviewed by the Head of the Flexible Learning Unit at USP and have been confirmed as being of an appropriate academic standard, with reasonable demands on the students. However, general weaknesses evident to coursework assessors include for example, a lack of critical thinking and poor academic writing - in particular inability to construct essays. Candidates seem to require a very high level of both academic and motivational support. While this may reflect many local circumstances, including local learning cultures and education systems, it clearly remains a real challenge for USP colleagues in terms of the future sustainability and effectiveness of the courses.

Communications across the South Pacific region remain challenging. By virtue of their profession, community conservation practitioners in the region often do not have regular or reliable access to the internet. Electronic communication can thus be slow and inefficient. Air travel between the South Pacific island states is convoluted and expensive such that 'gatherings' of participants for workshops or other such events is simply too costly.

Cost aside, the moral debate relating to carbon emissions from air travel both within the region (between island states) and between the UK and the region have also featured increasingly over the period of the project. In line with its environmental management system, ICPL has sought to reduce its carbon footprint over the project period. However, it is clear that future initiatives of this kind need to seriously question the legitimacy of international air travel and to find an appropriate balance between the needs of the project and those of the wider environment.

The key achievement of the project remains the development of the DFL programme in conservation management, including a combination of distance learning modules and residential courses. Significantly, the programme has been designed in such a way as to enable the addition of further elements as they become available, such that the Darwin Initiative Project has in effect provided a really solid foundation for an evolving menu of modules and courses that can be adapted to meet regional and indeed individual needs. The University of the South Pacific continues to promote both elements through its usual channels. They also receive promotion through the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

ICPL will direct appropriate candidates to the programme and will continue to promote it within its wider global network.

5.1 Darwin identity

The Darwin name and logo has been used on all training materials, and at all development and dissemination workshops associated with the project. It has been emphasised in all published outputs (journal paper, newspaper articles, leaflets) and in all oral exposition of the project work (conferences, courses and workshops). Two project posters have been produced, incorporating the Darwin logo and have been displayed at a number of events in the South Pacific region and in the UK. They are on permanent display at ICPL and the Institute of Applied Sciences, USP. One poster, which is available electronically is included on the CD Rom.

6 Monitoring and evaluation

Within this project there are several means by which monitoring and evaluation of the project can be carried out:

- (1) assessing the appropriateness and value of the training developed and delivered through the project, through use of participant questionnaires
- (2) Peer review of the programme
- (3) Review of teaching materials for updating and upgrading

(1) Participant evaluation of courses/ modules has been undertaken during the final year of the project. In the case of PICCC, for example, a post-course evaluation questionnaire was returned by 12 of 15 participants, with an overwhelmingly positive result:

PICCC evaluation, 2009 course (12 of 15 participants completed the evaluation):

Overall	excellent	very good	good	fair	poor
Course content	9	2	1		
Course delivery / facilitators	10	2			
Course logistics	8	1	1	2	
Course materials	7	5			
Usefulness for my job	11	1			

Specific reference was made by respondents to the value of training in respect of: business management and project management skills; biodiversity and protected landscape area management, survival tips, and interviews to camera. Several participants also commented on the value of the interaction between facilitators and students; the importance of sharing of experiences and knowledge with colleagues from across the Pacific region; and the confidence gained through meeting people from other countries and presenting ideas to them. The course also provided several students with insights into new ways of delivering their work.

In the case of the distance learning programme, the exercise was less effective. The questionnaire, circulated electronically to all students by the UK partner (see CD Rom), failed to generate any meaningful response (two responses only, both broadly positive but identifying practical and logistic difficulties in undertaking DL coursework). It is suggested that colleagues at USP should pursue this further as the programme continues.

(2) As a result of concerns raised over student progress in the DL programme, a **peer review** of the distance learning modules took place this year by colleagues in the region (as was anticipated in the 2009 Annual Report). The modules were reported to be of an appropriate academic standard.

(3) **Review** of modules – the need for updating and upgrading of teaching materials varies from one module to another. The first module of the programme has already been updated once. Post project, this will be the responsibility of USP and will be ongoing as a normal institutional procedure.

Possible reasons for poor student progress in respect the DL modules:

The following have been identified as contributing factors to students' failure to make good progress in the distance learning element of this programme:

- heavy work load and/or family commitments (time and energy)
- Lack of study facilities
- Difficulty of adapting to distance learning mode of study (application)
- Insufficient mentoring and support

Some of these issues are of course cultural or may reflect local education standards etc. and are therefore beyond the capacity of the USP partners to address. However some action can be taken which might improve the chances of successful completion of the DL modules by students.

It is recommended that USP colleagues should consider:

- making greater resources available for more effective **student mentoring** and also **monitoring** of student progress. The latter should include distribution of regular **evaluation questionnaires**
- improving **facilities to allow students to share experiences** and keep in touch with each other
- communicating with students' **employers** to encourage at least a small allocation of work time and provision of facilities for study. This might include, for example, arrangements for students to align their project assignments to the work programmes of their employers
- adopting more rigorous **selection** criteria to ensure that candidates are chosen who have the self- discipline and personal skills to succeed in distance learning
- developing a bespoke **foundation course** to ensure basic grounding in key issues and concepts. It is suggested that this foundation course might also embrace an introduction to business management.

6.1 Actions taken in response to annual report reviews

The Annual Report of 2009 identified actions taken in respect of previous reviews. The 2009 Review suggested that the project team should:

1. Evaluate how the project approach might have been adapted to minimize the difficulty for participants
2. Carry out a participatory assessment of the programme thus far
3. Comment on the expected sustainability of the distance learning programme at this time

These points have been addressed in Section 6 above (points 1 and 2) and Section 4.5 (point 3) respectively.

7 Finance and administration

7.1 Project expenditure

Item	Budget (please indicate which document you refer to if other than your project application or annual grant offer letter)	Expenditure	Variance
Rent, rates, heating, overheads etc			
Office costs (eg postage, telephone, stationery)			
Travel and subsistence			
Printing			
Conferences, seminars, etc			
Capital items/equipment (specify)			
Others (specify)	<i>Trainee project costs</i> <i>Trainee fees</i> <i>Audit</i>	<i>Trainee fees and project costs</i>	
Salaries (specify by individual)	<i>Dr Elizabeth Hughes</i> <i>Mr Charlie Falzon</i> <i>Prof William Aalbersberg</i> <i>Prof Kanyathu Koshy and latterly Dr. B. Tamata</i>	*	
TOTAL		*	

*£XXXX still to be claimed

7.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Additional funds have been in-kind in respect of academic and administrative support at the University of the South Pacific and by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (the latter especially in respect of its contribution to the Pacific Islands Community Conservation Course).

7.3 Value of DI funding

It is evident that the DFL programme would not exist were it not for the Darwin Funding, as has been confirmed by students.

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against final project log frame for the life of the project

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2008 – September 2009	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Goal: <i>To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but constrained in resources to achieve</i></p> <p><i>The conservation of biological diversity,</i></p> <p><i>The sustainable use of its components, and</i></p> <p><i>The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources</i></p>			<p><i>(do not fill not applicable)</i></p>
<p>Purpose</p> <p>Assist small island developing states to address decline in biodiversity and habitat loss through training of trainers in community-based conservation and sustainable development using the distance learning model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■Numbers of scheme-related SIDS conservation projects ■Duration of resources for sustainability of Pacific Training Centre and network ■Amount of leveraged funding for scaling-up of activity to global SIDS community 	<p>Evidence from course evaluations that the project purpose is being achieved through the delivery of the DFL education/training that is its focus. However delivery, uptake and completion of DL modules is slower than intended. Residential courses better received. Sustainability of teaching / training programmes is has been in some doubt due to Institutional issues and economic trends but situation now improving</p> <p>Project belated in up-scaling activity to global SIDS community but progressing through Consortium of Universities of SIDS. However, no funding leveraged for this.</p>	
<p>Output 1. One distance learning course in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development for SIDS</p>	<p>Distance and flexible learning programme established and running.</p>	<p>Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) Programme running through the University of the South Pacific at PG Certificate, Diploma and Masters' level.</p>	
<p>Activity 1.1 core and compulsory DFL materials completed</p>		<p>Achieved</p>	
<p>Activity 1.2 Optional DFL materials completed</p>		<p>Achieved. Expanding menu of modules/courses planned by USP beyond end of project.</p>	

Output 2. Ten conservation workers trained with DI bursaries by Year three	Enrolment numbers at University of South Pacific; participant numbers on residential courses	Achieved (in progress, if not complete) - See Annex 4
Activity 2.1. Certificate trainees complete June 2008		Not achieved
Activity 2.2. Second cohort of DL students to begin study September 2008		Second DL enrolment behind schedule but currently underway.
Activity 2.3 Diploma trainees complete, June 2009		6 PG certificates awarded (residential courses only).
Output 3. Project Reports and 2 published articles on training scheme	Project Reports submitted Articles only in the form of published course brochures	Project reports submitted as required.

ANNEX 2 Project's final logframe including criteria and indicators

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<p>Goal:</p> <p>To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to achieve</p> <p>the conservation of biological diversity,</p> <p>the sustainable use of its components, and</p> <p>the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources</p>			

<p>Purpose:</p> <p>Assist small island developing states to address decline in biodiversity and habitat loss through training of trainers in community-based conservation and sustainable development using the distance learning model.</p>	<p>Numbers of scheme-related SIDS conservation projects Duration of resources for sustainability of Pacific Training Centre and network Amount of leveraged funding for scaling-up of activity to global SIDS community</p>	<p>Project reports, trainee and employer feedback</p> <p>Project, SPREP and USP official reports and accounts</p> <p>Project-wide accounts (DI plus project partners and other agency funding)</p>	<p>Favourable climate among trainee employers for <i>de novo</i> conservation project activity. SPREP and USP continue support for DFL network Favourable climate for support of environmental action in wider SIDS stakeholder and donor communities</p>
<p>Outputs</p> <p>1 Distance learning course in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development for SIDS 10 conservation workers trained with DI bursaries by Year 3 (>20 with leveraged funding) 2 module development workshops and 2 trainee induction courses Project Reports & 2 published articles on training scheme</p>	<p>Distance and flexible learning programme established and running efficiently Annual numbers of conservation workers trained in-post, and scheme-related community beneficiaries Numbers of, and participants in, project workshops/course Number of project publications</p>	<p>USP/SPREP and project reports</p> <p>USP/SPREP and project reports plus trainee and employee feedback briefings</p> <p>USP/SPREP and project reports USP/SPREP and project reports</p>	<p>SPREP and USP continue support for programme and DFL network Favourable climate among SIDS conservation agencies for (subsidised) employee training Continuing stability and commitment of main project partners. Project principals work to schedule</p>

Activities	Activity Milestones	Assumptions
Project commences Core and compulsory DFL materials completed Programme Workshop 1 First cohort of trainees begin Certificate trainees complete Ancillary/optional DFL materials completed Programme Workshop 2 Second cohort of trainees begin study Diploma trainees complete Programme articles published Global SIDS training scheme funding secured	May 2006 June 2007 June 2007 September 2007 June 2008 June 2008 June 2008 September 2008 June 2009 July 2007, July 2008 January 2009	Political stability in primary host country (Fiji) Continuing stability and commitment of main project partners Host institution continues support for DFL network Favourable climate for support of environmental action in wider SIDS stakeholder community (portents are positive and favourable for all these assumptions)

Annex 3 Project contribution to Articles under the CBD

Project Contribution to Articles under the Convention on Biological Diversity

Article No./Title	Project %	Article Description
6. General Measures for Conservation & Sustainable Use		Develop national strategies that integrate conservation and sustainable use.
7. Identification and Monitoring		Identify and monitor components of biological diversity, particularly those requiring urgent conservation; identify processes and activities that have adverse effects; maintain and organise relevant data.
8. In-situ Conservation	10	Establish systems of protected areas with guidelines for selection and management; regulate biological resources, promote protection of habitats; manage areas adjacent to protected areas; restore degraded ecosystems and recovery of threatened species; control risks associated with organisms modified by biotechnology; control spread of alien species; ensure compatibility between sustainable use of resources and their conservation; protect traditional lifestyles and knowledge on biological resources.
9. Ex-situ Conservation		Adopt ex-situ measures to conserve and research components of biological diversity, preferably in country of origin; facilitate recovery of threatened species; regulate and manage collection of biological resources.
10. Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity	10	Integrate conservation and sustainable use in national decisions; protect sustainable customary uses; support local populations to implement remedial actions; encourage co-operation between governments and the private sector.
11. Incentive Measures		Establish economically and socially sound incentives to conserve and promote sustainable use of biological diversity.
12. Research and Training	70	Establish programmes for scientific and technical education in identification, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity components; promote research contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, particularly in developing countries (in accordance with SBSTTA recommendations).
13. Public Education and Awareness		Promote understanding of the importance of measures to conserve biological diversity and propagate these measures through the media; cooperate with other states and organisations in developing awareness programmes.
14. Impact Assessment and Minimizing Adverse Impacts		Introduce EIAs of appropriate projects and allow public participation; take into account environmental consequences of policies; exchange information on impacts beyond State boundaries and work to reduce hazards; promote emergency responses to hazards; examine mechanisms for re-dress of international damage.
15. Access to Genetic Resources		Whilst governments control access to their genetic resources they should also facilitate access of environmentally sound uses on mutually agreed terms; scientific research based on a country's genetic resources should ensure sharing in a fair and equitable way of results and benefits.

Article No./Title	Project %	Article Description
16. Access to and Transfer of Technology		Countries shall ensure access to technologies relevant to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity under fair and most favourable terms to the source countries (subject to patents and intellectual property rights) and ensure the private sector facilitates such assess and joint development of technologies.
17. Exchange of Information		Countries shall facilitate information exchange and repatriation including technical scientific and socio-economic research, information on training and surveying programmes and local knowledge
19. Bio-safety Protocol		Countries shall take legislative, administrative or policy measures to provide for the effective participation in biotechnological research activities and to ensure all practicable measures to promote and advance priority access on a fair and equitable basis, especially where they provide the genetic resources for such research.
Other Contribution	10	Smaller contributions (eg of 5%) or less should be summed and included here.
Total %	100%	Check % = total 100

Annex 4 Standard Measures

Code	Description	Totals (plus additional detail as required) <i>NB candidate numbers given below include those following any of the modules / courses included within the DFL programme. See Section 4.3.</i>
Training Measures		
1a	Number of people to submit PhD thesis	
1b	Number of PhD qualifications obtained	
2	Number of Masters qualifications obtained	
3	Number of other qualifications obtained	6
4a	Number of undergraduate students receiving training	50
4b	Number of training weeks provided to undergraduate students	10
4c	Number of postgraduate students receiving training (not 1-3 above)	20
4d	Number of training weeks for postgraduate students	10
5	Number of people receiving other forms of long-term (>1yr) training not leading to formal qualification(ie not categories 1-4 above)	
6a	Number of people receiving other forms of short-term education/training (ie not categories 1-5 above)	30
6b	Number of training weeks not leading to formal qualification	20
7	Number of types of training materials produced for use by host country(s)	3 DL Modules developed Revision & accreditation of PICCC Incorporation into programme of two further residential short courses.
Research Measures		
8	Number of weeks spent by UK project staff on project work in host country(s)	7
9	Number of species/habitat management plans (or action plans) produced for Governments, public authorities or other implementing agencies in the host country (s)	
10	Number of formal documents produced to assist work related to species identification, classification and recording.	
11a	Number of papers published or accepted for publication in peer reviewed journals	1
11b	Number of papers published or accepted for	

Code	Description	Totals (plus additional detail as required) NB candidate numbers given below include those following any of the modules / courses included within the DFL programme. See Section 4.3.
	publication elsewhere	
12a	Number of computer-based databases established (containing species/generic information) and handed over to host country	
12b	Number of computer-based databases enhanced (containing species/genetic information) and handed over to host country	
13a	Number of species reference collections established and handed over to host country(s)	
13b	Number of species reference collections enhanced and handed over to host country(s)	
Dissemination Measures		
14a	Number of conferences/seminars/workshops organised to present/disseminate findings from Darwin project work	1
14b	Number of conferences/seminars/ workshops attended at which findings from Darwin project work will be presented/ disseminated.	
15a	Number of national press releases or publicity articles in host country(s)	4
15b	Number of local press releases or publicity articles in host country(s)	4
15c	Number of national press releases or publicity articles in UK	1
15d	Number of local press releases or publicity articles in UK	
16a	Number of issues of newsletters produced in the host country(s)	
16b	Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the host country(s)	
16c	Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the UK	
17a	Number of dissemination networks established	South Pacific dissemination network strengthened
17b	Number of dissemination networks enhanced or extended	
18a	Number of national TV programmes/features in host country(s)	
18b	Number of national TV programme/features in the UK	
18c	Number of local TV programme/features in host country	

Code	Description	Totals (plus additional detail as required) <i>NB candidate numbers given below include those following any of the modules / courses included within the DFL programme. See Section 4.3.</i>
18d	Number of local TV programme features in the UK	
19a	Number of national radio interviews/features in host country(s)	
19b	Number of national radio interviews/features in the UK	
19c	Number of local radio interviews/features in host country (s)	
19d	Number of local radio interviews/features in the UK	
Physical Measures		
20	Estimated value (£s) of physical assets handed over to host country(s)	
21	Number of permanent educational/training/research facilities or organisation established	USP education and retaining resources strengthened
22	Number of permanent field plots established	
23	Value of additional resources raised for project	
Other Measures used by the project and not currently including in DI standard measures		

Annex 5 Publications

Type * (eg journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (title, author, year)	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (eg contact address, website)	Cost £
Journal – Landscape Research Extra 52 November 2009	Roberts, Gareth The fast disappearing landscapes of the Pacific region	Landscape Research Group	www.landscaperesearch.org	Available on-line

Annex 2 Darwin Contacts

Ref No	15/037
Project Title	Distance Learning for Biodiversity conservation in Small Island Developing States
UK Leader Details	
Name	Dr. Elizabeth Hughes
Role within Darwin Project	Co-ordinator; programme management; development of materials
Address	ICPL, 8E Science Park, Cefn Llan, Aberystwyth SY24 5BZ
Phone	
Fax	
Email	
Other UK Contact (if relevant)	
Name	
Role within Darwin Project	
Address	
Phone	
Fax	
Email	
Partner 1	
Name	Prof W. Aalbersberg
Organisation	University of the South Pacific
Role within Darwin Project	Regional co-ordinator; University validation of courses etc; student enrolment and implementation of teaching / training programmes; regional promotion.
Address	c/o Institute of Applied Sciences, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.
Fax	
Email	
Partner 2 (if relevant)	
Name	
Organisation	
Role within Darwin Project	
Address	
Fax	
Email	