

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2009)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	17-013
<b>Project Title</b>	Building capacity and resilience in the conservation sector in Tajikistan
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Tajikistan
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Fauna & Flora International
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	International Centre for Protected Landscapes (UK), University of Central Asia, National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Professional Development (Tajikistan)
<b>Project Leader</b>	Liesje Birchenough
<b>Report date</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2009
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 1
<b>Project website</b>	

## **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).**

The project started in mid April 2009. All financial and logistical arrangements were set up and effective systems are now in place. An in-country project assistant was successfully recruited in July. Draft memorandums of understandings have been circulated to host country partners and are currently being reviewed.

An inception visit to Tajikistan took place in May where a planning and implementation workshop was held with the main host-country project partners to plan and align on project activities and responsibilities for the years ahead. This involved separate and joint meetings with representatives from the University of Central Asia, Institute of Professional Development in Khorog, and the National Academy of Sciences in Dushanbe. A meeting was also held with the CBD focal point representative in Tajikistan, the Director of the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre in Dushanbe.

An initial meeting also occurred with the UK partner representative from the International Centre for Protected Landscapes (ICPL), Charles Falzon, who provided advice and technical input on the development of the training courses and programme structure. During July, a training needs questionnaire was developed as well as initial criteria for the selection of trainers, trainees and post-graduate students. A review of the Tajikistan Fourth annual report submitted to the Convention for Biological Diversity in May 2009 was undertaken to ensure that Tajikistan's current biodiversity priorities and the thematic scope for training, as outlined in the proposal, were still aligned. A preliminary stakeholder assessment was conducted to assist in the identification of the target sectors for the training programme.

An initial participatory Training Needs Assessment was conducted during August and September. A Training Needs Questionnaire was circulated to representatives within our target sector of in-post conservation practitioners and professionals from the government and NGO sectors as well as to representatives from academic and scientific institutions. 70 responses were received.

A participatory Training Needs workshop was held in September. This involved 17 stakeholders from key target groups from the government, NGO and academic sectors and feedback and analysis was given on the responses received from the training needs questionnaire. The

workshop was also used as an opportunity to obtain consensus on the priority training themes as identified from the questionnaire, and to prioritize modules for delivery. Modular subthemes were also outlined and schedules for implementation were discussed.

A first project steering committee was held comprising of representatives of the main host country partners. Clear terms of reference were outlined for future meetings and explanations given on how project progress will be monitored against indicators, was demonstrated and reported.

**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.**

Due to the onset of a variety of projects shortly prior to and since the Darwin was awarded, the Eurasia team undertook a review of the project portfolio and re-organised team responsibilities to take advantage of opportunities for enhancing learning and sharing between projects and for a more appropriate fit of team skills and experiences. A change of leader request was made to the Darwin Secretariat, which was refused.

The changes to staffing and a slower than anticipated start up, primarily due to complications in getting a local programme and logistics organised, as well as recruiting a project assistant, has resulted in a 1 month un-anticipated delay to project implementation.

Consequently, the needs assessment was conducted in quarter (Q) 2 rather than Q1. This has resulted in the UK experts beginning to develop the outline course modules in Q3. Some of this delayed time could be regained as modules can be developed concurrently, and this component was originally programmed to occur over Q3-Q5. However, it is likely that the in-country workshops to ensure modules are relevant to Tajikistan situation, may extend into Q2 of Year 2. This is likely to have a knock on effect on a proportion of the travel and subsistence costs and expert staff cost expenditure in Year 1, being carried over into Year 2.

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

A change request was submitted to the Darwin Secretariat for a change of project leader in August 2009 which was refused. No changes have been made to the original agreement.

The knock-on effects to the delay in timetabled activity and budget is currently being assessed as part of the 6 month review, along with consideration of refusal in change of project leader, and once the full scale of impact is considered, this will be communicated with the Darwin Secretariat by 20<sup>th</sup> November and any subsequent changes requested and submitted for consideration.

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

Yes - Change of project leader request submitted, in **August 2009** and decision given in **October 2009**

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:** No

**3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No**