

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref No	17-013
Project Title	Building capacity and resilience in the conservation sector in Tajikistan
Country(ies)	Tajikistan
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International
Collaborator(s)	International Centre for Protected Landscapes (UK), University of Central Asia, National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Professional Development (Tajikistan)
Project Leader	<i>Alex Diment</i>
Report date	<i>October 2010</i>
Report No.	<i>HYR 2</i>
Project website	<i>www.fauna-flora.org/explore/Tajikistan/</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).

All project partnership agreements are now signed, and partnerships are proceeding as planned. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) has continued to provide key inputs from the partners to ensure delivery is on course, and is also taking ownership of key elements of the evaluation of the training's impact.

Four out of six of the planned modules have now been developed and materials completed and translated. In-country workshops and consultations were run for all four modules to ensure that training is relevant to the local situation. Through the host-country partners, 32 local specialists were identified, and 18 of these have attended workshops and consultations to assist UK experts to ensure that training will address local needs and be relevant to Tajikistan. Following these workshops, two national trainers were selected for each of the four modules. These trainers have agreed Terms of Reference which formalise their role in the delivery of training, outline further inputs by the project to build their competence, and also encourage future engagement with the Training Programme.

Delivery of the four modules that have been developed is scheduled for Q7, in October and November 2010. International experts have been identified for the remaining two modules, and development of these modules is now underway. In-country workshops are planned for Q7, and delivery of these modules is scheduled during Q8, ensuring that the project remains on schedule as outlined in the first Annual Report. Over 200 written applications have been received to attend training, with around 15 trainees now selected for each module. Early challenges in communication with Khorog for selection of trainees have now been largely resolved, by working closely with the host-country partners existing arrangements.

Locations for the delivery of the modules are now planned and agreed. In consultation with the PSC, the course locations are intended to be mostly in or near national parks and reserves, and to be residential for trainees. In addition to cost savings, this ensures easy access to field-sites, allows trainees to concentrate fully on the training, and maximises the valuable informal interactions between trainees from a range of sectors and backgrounds.

An agreement has been developed with UNDP and GTZ to provide training to personnel involved with existing projects, on a fee-paying basis. This is the first step towards course sustainability, and demonstrates the perceived value of the courses, even in these early stages.

The five postgraduate students (Darwin Scholars) have now been selected through a competitive and transparent selection procedure, and all five have commenced their research. Mentoring linkages with several international experts has been established, and will continue for the next two years. The Darwin Scholars will also attend the training module most relevant to their studies.

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.

Several problems have been experienced with international flights. Volcanic ash disruptions in April forced the rescheduling of two specialist workshops. Five flights booked with Air Baltic, one of only two international airlines that fly to Tajikistan, were cancelled at short notice when the airline unexpectedly ceased flights to the region. This also caused administrative and scheduling problems, and may lead to higher-than-anticipated costs of flights for international experts. This also led to a delay in the delivery of one module until March next year; however this is still within the planned schedule for year 2. Costs for flights should still be within the agreed reforecast budget, though there may be a minor overspend in Year 2.

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

Change of project leader status was submitted and approved in September 2010.

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

The new project leader, Alex Diment, was engaged by FFI in August 2010, and the change of project leader status was approved by LTS in September. A handover process commenced to orient Dr. Diment, including a joint country visit to introduce him and build on existing relationships with all the key partners and stakeholders.

Planned co-financing has not been secured to date, and this may prove challenging for delivery of certain elements in Q7 and Q8, and in Year 3. Discussions have continued with host-country partners and locally based donor organisations to address this need, but funding is yet to be confirmed. A concept raised in these discussions is to develop a project follow-up for two further years, to ensure uptake of skills and training delivery by local trainers, and to embed the courses appropriately into the University of Central Asia's ongoing activities. This also addresses concerns, which we share, outlined in the review of the first Annual Report.

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

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

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**