

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2011)

Project Ref No	17-017
Project Title	Innovative Governance Models for Marine Protected Area Management in Ecuador
Country(ies)	Ecuador
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International
Collaborator(s)	Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano
Project Leader	Robert Bensted-Smith
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Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR3
Project website	-

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project

1. Governance system development:

Galera San Francisco Marine Reserve (GSFMR) has been the focus of most project work in this semester, as the Management Plan was completed and presented to the Ministry of Environment for final review and approval. Our project was especially influential in the zoning process and the governance chapter. The governance chapter required careful negotiation involving local leaders, the project and the Ministry's consultant, in order to retain the essence of the locally agreed participatory governance system while conforming with the Ministry's interpretation of the current legal framework. A satisfactory compromise was reached, which will hopefully satisfy all legal requirements. This negotiation will also inform our recommendations to the government about reform of legal instruments on MPA governance. In **Machalilla** National Park the Park director has continued to avoid calling meetings of the Management Committee (MC) and is selective in his contacts with stakeholder groups. The project is responding to this problem (see section 2 below).

At **Jambelí** two workshops with mangrove concession holders and authorities led to the proposal to establish a mangrove management forum or "platform", comprising the 15 concession holders and relevant authorities. The Union of Artisanal Fisheries Producer Organisations of the Province of El Oro (UOPPAO) have agreed to support the forum.

2. Adaptive resource management strategies:

At **GSFMR** the consensus-based zoning, with substantial No Take Zones, nearshore zones under community management, and recognition of preferential local access rights, was a big achievement. We must now shepherd it through review by the Ministry's lawyers.

FFI has held further discussions with the Nazca Institute to review monitoring of the response of lobster populations to protection measures in the south of the Reserve.

For **Jambelí** a meeting of FFI, FFLA, the National Institute for Fisheries, the Isleños Association (mangrove concession holder) and Technical University of Machala agreed to plan a collaborative programme to investigate effects of different management regimes on crab and cockle populations and associated biodiversity. FFI will need to raise additional funds for this, but we hope at least to get the work started before the end of the Darwin project.

3. National framework and capacity:

No workshop of the national MPA Network has been held in this semester, but draft statutes for the network have been passed to the Ministry of Environment for review. The Director of Marine and Coastal Coordination has requested a workshop in November to finalise the Network's operating mechanisms, followed in December by a course on conflict management for Park Directors.

FFLA implemented two one-day training courses on MPA governance for 92 students of the Marine Science Faculty of the Eloy Alfaro University of Manta.

4. National and international awareness:

Nationally the FFLA bulletin of July 2011 carried an article describing the experiences and challenges of the GSFMR management plan process.

Internationally Robert Bensted-Smith wrote an article for FFI magazine: Bensted-Smith R (2011). *What lies beneath: Hidden treasures off the Ecuador coast. Fauna & Flora, Issue 14, pp 17-21*. He also gave a presentation at the 2nd International Symposium on Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Arendal, Norway: Gravez V, Bensted-Smith R & Heylings P (2011). *Governance systems for marine protected areas in Ecuador*. A paper based on the presentation will be published in a book of Proceedings. Cost considerations, exacerbated by changes in travel plans, made us decide not to present at the marine conference in Aberdeen, but further international dissemination will follow in the final semester.

The interest generated by the project's March 2011 trip to share experiences with partners in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras, reported in our Year 2 Annual Report (Section 4.1.4), has gathered momentum in this semester. FFI and partners prepared a proposal for innovative approaches to MPA governance, zoning and access rights in the three Central American countries. Lessons learned from our Darwin Initiative work in Ecuador will feed into these diverse contexts and challenges and there will be networking across all four countries. This concept was included as a £150K component of FFI's global marine proposal to Arcadia Trust, for which negotiations are at an advanced stage (positive, subject to FFI raising matching funds). It also formed the basis of a proposal submitted to Darwin Initiative in October 2011. The enthusiasm and commitment of the Central American partners and stakeholders for this collaboration is tangible evidence that the results of our project in Ecuador are seen as significant for marine conservation and coastal community livelihoods across the region.

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.

SubSecretary for Marine and Coastal Management

At the end of September, the SubSecretary for Marine and Coastal Management was replaced. In the short term this was disruptive, because it came two weeks after the GSF Management Committee handed over the draft GSFMR management plan to the SubSecretary. However, the new leadership seems more dynamic and decisive and has restored the role of the Director for Marine and Coastal Coordination, who had cooperated especially well with us in the first half of the project before being assigned other duties. Two local fisheries leaders from GSFMR, Nazca, FFI, FFLA and other interested parties have already held a meeting with the director and the new SubSecretary, who promised to expedite the review and dispatch of the management plan to the Minister. Overall, the change is positive.

Machalilla

The obstacle of the Park director's unwillingness to involve or call meetings of the Management Committee, as described in Section 4.1.1 of our Year 2 report, persists. Fishermen, guides and community leaders have expressed frustration and the MC coordinator has stated his intention to call a meeting of the members to decide how to assert their right to participate, but no real action has been taken. To understand the reasons for inaction, the project is interviewing each of the 43 members of the MC. We have also met with the advisor to the new SubSecretary for Marine and Coastal Management, who has undertaken to follow up with the Park director, in order to understand the underlying issue (apparently related to a conflictive decision about tourism) and re-establish the participation forum. With the new ministerial leadership, we are hopeful that this problem at Machalilla could lead to positive steps, such as official directive that Park directors must involve MC's, definition of a mechanism to resolve conflicts between Park director and MC, and a streamlining of MC membership to focus on key stakeholder groups. The project budget remains unchanged.

This semester also saw the start-up of a new “Civil Society Challenge Fund” project of FFI and FFLA, aimed at strengthening civil society participation in development decision-making (not just marine). This complements the Darwin Initiative project and will help both to sustain the results of the Darwin project and to extend the empowerment and capacity building into other aspects of development, especially at GSF.

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

No. There are no new issues requiring discussion with LTS.

Discussed with LTS: **no**

Formal change request submitted: **no**

Received confirmation of change acceptance **no**

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

Yes No

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £0

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

No

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. There was no review this year.

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**