

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2012)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	19-017
<b>Project Title</b>	Building capacity for participatory, ecosystem-based marine conservation in Central America
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Fauna and Flora International (FFI)
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	CoopeSoliDar R.L., FUNDENIC, RECOTURH, FFLA
<b>Project Leader</b>	<i>Robert Bensted-Smith</i>
<b>Report date</b>	<i>31 October 2012</i>
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	<i>HYR1</i>
<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).**

FFI and partners have prepared annual workplans and started implementing the proposed activities. The work on baseline status of indicators is in progress (Activity 0.1). Honduras has advanced most rapidly, as Recoturh has held meetings with communities adjacent to the Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge (CSWR), local governments, national authorities (Environment, Fisheries), the NGO that co-manages the Refuge (FUCSA), and other projects in the area around. Recoturh is helping community organisations, such as fishing associations, on the topics of enforcement, fishing and tourism, and is supporting these associations and the Fisheries Institute on a scheme for fishing licenses, that identifies who are the local fishermen, and on enforcement of regulations for existing No Take Zones. It has also reactivated an inter-institutional coordination body for marine conservation. The proposal to expand the Refuge is believed to be close to approval in the Congress, which would be a positive step requiring us to bring forward some project activities. In Nicaragua meetings have been held with communities to introduce the project and discuss a range of issues of interest to them, including tourism micro-enterprises, whale watching, dynamite fishing by outsiders, and responsible marine management. The project has also met with key institutions: Tola Municipality, Nicaraguan Institute of Fisheries, ministries of Natural Resources, Environment and Education, and Grupo Pellas and other tourism investors. In the case of Costa Rica, local conflicts, unrelated to the project, have led CoopeSoliDar RL to concentrate first on building relationships with the Tempisque Conservation Area (within which Coyote and Bejuco lie), the local Municipality, and also a network of municipalities in the area, prior to engaging the communities directly.

A methodology to work with communities to assess the current status of assets and livelihoods, and prioritise community livelihood objectives will be developed with project partners in a workshop in November 2012, in Honduras (Activity 2.1).

Regular telecommunication between project sites has been through multi-partner on-line meetings and the development of a blog for partner communication and sharing (Activity 4.3).

Three activities have started ahead of schedule. In particular, ecological dependence on external factors to the protected area has been discussed in the case of Honduras, where Recoturh participated in a workshop to identify and assess internal and external threats, such as upstream pollution, to the Refuge (Activity 3.3). The network of community-managed Responsible Fishing Areas has been initiated in Costa Rica (Activity 4.4), sharing experiences of community initiatives and collaborating on indicators to monitor progress in their respective Areas. Local and national communication programmes (Activity 5.2), designed to raise awareness and support for marine conservation, participatory governance and responsible

fishing, have been started in Costa Rica, with press reports, radio programmes, video production and community accessible material, and in Nicaragua, with (i) the incorporation of marine conservation into a schools programme called Eco-Escuelas and (ii) press articles and television appearances by Fundenic about the dynamite fishing problem, denounced by communities – this led to the departure of the dynamite fishers.

Project activities have been documented by all project partners (Activity 5.1), mainly in written form with some photos and only a little video material.

CoopeSoliDar RL has participated in the FAO-led process to develop voluntary guidelines for sustainable small-scale fishing (Activity 5.3) and participated in COP11 in India, presenting project advances in the case of Costa Rica (Activity 5.5).

**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.**

Progress at Cuero y Salado has been more rapid than expected, which may lead some activities to be started earlier, but we do not at this stage any anticipate budgetary implications for Darwin Initiative. In Costa Rica CoopeSoliDar has proposed very minor modifications to the budget for personnel, for which we will request approval in November. In Costa Rica the project has also modified its entry point into a local dialogue about participatory governance, as described above. This is an interesting opportunity, because (i) the Municipality can be an ally of the project in community-level discussions of participatory governance, and (ii) there is scope for innovation with regard to the role of municipalities in Marine Protected Area (MPA) governance. However, it has led to a recommendation by the Tempisque Conservation Area that the project focus not on Coyote/Bejuco but on a different site, that is not affected by conflicts and is more apt for working on the central themes of the Darwin Initiative project. We are now discussing this in Costa Rica and will be contacting LTS in November to provide our analysis of the situation and any proposed change of project site.

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

**Discussed with LTS:** No. Will research and discuss in November/December.

**Formal change request submitted:** No no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

**Received confirmation of change acceptance** No no/yes in.....(month/yr)

**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