



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	19-017
Project Title	Building capacity for participatory, ecosystem-based marine conservation in Central America
Country(ies)	Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Ecuador
Lead Organisation	Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
Collaborator(s)	CoopeSoliDar R.L., FUNDENIC, RECOTURH, FFLA
Project Leader	<i>Robert Bensted-Smith</i>
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	<i>31 October 2014; HYR3</i>
Project website	<i>N/A</i>

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) 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 to end September).

Cuero & Salado Wildlife Refuge (CSWR)/Honduras:

The association of fishers from CSWR, APROCUS, has continued to receive institutional and organizational support from RECOTURH and their communication and relationship with the co-manager, the Fundacion Cuero y Salado (FUCSA) has improved. Rather than FUCSA or a third party convening meetings with fishers, APROCUS now calls meetings with co-management and key technical partners within the Refuge, showing improved leadership and a sense of empowerment in Refuge management decision-making (Output 1). RECOTURH has provided significant support in the development of a new public use plan for the Refuge with the protected area co-manager FUCSA (Output 3). This plan focuses, among other things, on the integration and regulation of tourism within the Refuge. Enforcement capacity has improved at the Refuge, with the support of RECOTURH, including fuel for patrolling by FUCSA. Recently FUCSA has increased staff at the site in charge of Refuge protection, including enforcement of the marine expansion. Monitoring of the six buoys currently installed to delimit the outer boundaries of the marine expansion took place with Government and municipal authorities to build awareness of the expanded zone (Output 5). Plans to install the second set of buoys are in progress and it is anticipated that these will be installed in February 2015. Livelihoods interventions (Output 2) to provide basic artisanal fishing equipment and fruit/vegetable seeds to the 36 members of APROCUS was monitored to ensure that seeds were planted accordingly and to document the impact of improved equipment. In addition, a seed fund was initiated and is managed by APROCUS, allowing for fishers from one of the communities (Boca Cerrada) within the Refuge to borrow money for fishery improvements (e.g. equipment repair/maintenance). Another community, Salado Barra, is being supported by the project, in collaboration with the local water council, to increase access to potable water through improvements to water infrastructure. The project co-financed international travel to enable a female member of APROCUS to attend a workshop in India in July 2014 on implementing the FAO voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty alleviation (Output 4). In addition, the President of APROCUS was funded to participate in a 3-day learning exchange with fishers and a local NGO working on marine protected areas in the Sian Kaan Reserve in Quintana Roo, Mexico.

Cabuya & Cabo Blanco Strict Nature Reserve/Costa Rica:

CoopeSoliDar R.L. has continued to support the Cabuya fishers association in their discussions and negotiation with national and local government authorities, particularly the Área de Conservación Tempisque (ACT), the authority in charge of protected area management in the region, and municipal authorities. Meetings have also been facilitated between ACT, the Cabo Blanco Reserve authorities and Cabuya members to ensure that community members have a space to voice their perspectives on Reserve management. Representatives of the fishers association have attended meetings about the design and implementation of additional protected areas in the region and have fed back this information to community members in Cabuya. The proposal put forward by Cabuya for a community managed marine area remains an important model for this process and is influencing the dialogue about design within nearby communities (Output 1). In particular, CoopeSoliDar has facilitated a dialogue between Cabuya members and the neighbouring community of Tambor to provide information about the protected area design process (Output 3). High-ranking authorities from both the Environment Ministry and the Fisheries Authority have visited Cabuya to discuss with fishers their proposed design and vision for marine conservation in this area. In the area of livelihoods (Output 2), progress was made by community members in learning about the creation of local handicrafts and identifying a product that can be sold to tourists. Support for further livelihoods related trainings related to tourism (particularly for youth), repair of boat motors and management of distribution centres have been requested by the community and are planned to occur within the next 6 months. Following the participatory base line study conducted in Cabuya earlier this year, over the past 6 months the results were shared with the community and a published copy was handed out to all community members. This information was also shared amongst the Network of Responsible Fishing Areas (Output 5). Two meetings of the Network were held over the past 6 months, including one meeting of youth. Cabuya has two representatives within the Network, one woman and one man, and a member of Cabuya's youth participates in Network activities (Output 4).

Pie de Gigante & Coral Corridor/Nicaragua:

Advances have been over the past 6 months in bringing together a core group of fishers in Pie de Gigante who are committed to improving the management and protection of their marine resources – the group has increased from 20 to 31 people. They have preliminarily defined a spatial area of conservation interest, which over the coming 6 months will be used as the basis for discussion of options for conservation zoning and sustainable fisheries management (Output 1 & 3). Based on previous trainings and workshops, community members are more readily open to diversifying livelihood opportunities beyond fishing, particularly in tourism (Output 2). Capitalizing on this interest the project is currently supporting 8 fishers to obtain their PADI licenses and will continue activities to support sustainable livelihood opportunities that help reduce the pressure on fishery resources over the next 6 months.

Regional Partnerships & Networking:

Two important regional networking events were held during this period. In September 2014, regional representatives of the project led a 2 hour session sharing lessons learned from the project on marine protected areas and participatory governance at the 2nd World Small-Scale Fisheries Conference in Merida, Mexico (Output 5). At least one representative from each partner organization was present along with a fisherman from each of the project sites. This was a particularly important opportunity for fishers from the project sites to interact and learn from other fishers, who came from across the world, particularly about their experiences implementing marine protected areas. The experience significantly increased motivation and inspiration among the fishers who attended to continue efforts to construct participatory governance and management models for marine resources at project sites (Output 4). In addition, a regional meeting of project partners was held in Pie de Gigante, Nicaragua in September/October 2014, offering the opportunity for partners to share lessons learned and plan the coming 6 months. Project monitoring & evaluation was also discussed at the meeting and, following recommendations by the reviewer, a steering committee is being set-up to ensure a more coordinated and effective approach to monitoring & evaluation over the coming months.

2a. 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.

There was a change of personnel in the project manager position in Nicaragua at the beginning of the last six month period, which temporarily slowed project momentum at the site, while a new manager was hired. This has caused a slight delay in the timetable of project activities; however the new project manager is now in place and project activities at the site are advancing rapidly.

Also in Nicaragua the foundation laid by the Darwin project has enabled FFI and FUNDENIC to secure funding for a complementary project over a larger geographic area, which will expand the efforts to develop collaborative marine management and focuses particularly on excluding harmful fishing practices, notably blast fishing with explosives. This additional project does not affect current Darwin project implementation but is very significant for post-project continuity and expansion.

2b. 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

Formal change request submitted: Personnel change request to be sent

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

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

None.

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 can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**