Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(October 2010)

Project Ref No EIDPO025

Project Title Capacity building to enhance Marine Protected Area effectiveness

Country(ies) Malaysia (Sabah)

UK Organisation Marine Conservation Society

Collaborator(s) Sabah Parks

Project Leader Dr Elizabeth Wood

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Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

HYR 2

Project website <u>www.sempornaislandsproject.com</u>

1. Progress over the last 6 months (April – September)

Output 1: Increased public understanding and support for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use strategies within the TSMP

Further meetings and discussions were carried out as planned during the first half of Yr 2. The aim of these discussions was to expand the education and outreach programme after mainly concentrating on schools during yr 1. Target audiences were identified and outreach activities undertaken in the Park with a) the Bajau Laut community on Pulau Sibuan b) the community on Pulau Selakan, and c) the Army and Police (also see next page – replies in response to the Annual Review).

Establishment of a TSMP 'Supporters Group' was scheduled for the first half of year 2 and progress has been made with this initiative. The project facilitated the formation of a 'Pulau Selakan Community Committee' in May 2010 and options for the Supporters Group were considered and discussed with this Committee and Sabah Parks. A scheme called 'Friends of Tun Sakaran Marine Park' is now being developed, the aim of which is to enhance people's understanding and awareness of the Park and its aims and to encourage people to become engaged and back conservation initiatives.

Output 2: Sabah Parks staff with increased understanding of marine biodiversity and ecosystem functioning within the Park, and with resources and ability to teach and inform others.

Through the Darwin project, a Masters student from Newcastle University (Jennifer Miller) visited Sabah (June 2010) and undertook a 3-week research and training programme with Sabah Parks Marine Unit. The aim of the project was to a) train Sabah Parks field staff to recognise and survey for coral diseases and b) to carry out field research with them in three of the Marine Parks (including Tun Sakaran Marine Park) to investigate links between coral disease, environmental stress and water quality. This was an important capacity-building exercise and means that Sabah Parks now have baseline data and the ability to monitor reef health more effectively.

In addition, the PL was requested by Sabah Parks to act as team leader for a 4-day study to assess the status of the coral reef at Pulau Sipadan. This provided further capacity building within Sabah Parks, including an introduction to some of the methodologies for assessing reef resilience. It is particularly important to have a better understanding of the ability of reefs to recover from events such as warm water / coral bleaching episodes (a severe episode occurred locally in June – August 2010).

During the first 6 months of yr 2, work has gone into planning the second Training Course on reef biodiversity for Sabah Parks. One of the outcomes of the first Biodiversity Training Course was a request for an advanced course on coral identification. Research into the biology, diversity and population dynamics of corals can help guide management and protection of reefs, identify areas of conservation importance and support restoration programmes. However, studies in Sabah are hampered because of lack of knowledge on coral taxonomy. Our project is collaborating with coral biologists from Australia to run a 'Coral Finder' course which provides practical training in coral identification and significantly enhances the participant's skills and ability to identify corals in the field to at least genus level. This Workshop is scheduled for Feb 2011.

Further progress has been made on the Giant Clam trail. The specially designed all-weather signboards have been made and are currently being deployed, and the illustrated trail notes are in final draft stage. In addition a set of biodiversity posters has been completed, illustrating flora and fauna of the Tun Sakaran Marine Park.

Output 3: Scope and effectiveness of alternative livelihoods programme enhanced.

'Homestay' was identified as a possible alternative livelihood in Yr 1 and the project has been helping members of the local community to officially register their interest and sign up for one of the training course held annually by the Sabah government. We have continued to explore other ideas with local communities, assess strengths and weaknesses of different supplementary or alternative livelihoods and incorporate the findings into an Action Plan & Strategy for guidance into the future. Watermelon farming has been selected as feasible and straightforward and we will be conducting trials with the local community shortly. Our project officer has also been working with the newly-formed Sabah Parks Community Unit to help collect data on seaweed farming activities in the Park (an alternative livelihood that the project has consistently encouraged). The current programme aims to ensure that eligible local community members are able to register for 2.5 acre plots at designated sites within the Park.

The programme to cultivate juvenile abalone for sea ranching is progressing. The senior technician in the hatchery attended a 3-week training course in the Philippines and now has the ability to produce results and train others. We have obtained more abalone broodstock from local communities and spawning trials are currently underway. The project has been supporting technical development in the hatchery – in particular the cultivation of algal cultures for maintaining larval and juvenile stock prior to transfer to community-run ocean cages.

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.

The Hatchery Development Officer partly supported by Darwin funds left in August to take up a teaching post and there was a slight delay before a new member of staff was appointed. He is Elvin Michael Bavoh, an aquaculture graduate from Universiti Malaysia Sabah, and he has settled quickly into his new job. The invertebrate spawning programme has still not produced the juveniles for sea ranching and this in turn has set back the timetable for the sea-ranching programme. However, trials are on-going and following the advanced training for the senior technician we believe success is now imminent.

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

No

Discussed with LTS: no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

Formal change request submitted: no/yes, in(month/yr)
Received confirmation of change acceptance 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?
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: £

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

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 <u>planned</u> modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should <u>not</u> 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