



***Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species  
Annual Report***

***April 2002- April 2003***

***Community based conservation of Hoang Lien Mountain Ecosystem,  
Vietnam***



# ***Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species***

## ***Annual Report***

### **1. Darwin Project Information**

<i>Project title</i>	Community based conservation of Hoang Lien Mountain Ecosystem, Vietnam
<i>Country(ies)</i>	Vietnam
<i>Contractor</i>	Fauna & Flora International
<i>Project Reference No.</i>	162/10/011
<i>Grant Value</i>	89290
<i>Start/Finishing dates</i>	July 2001 – April 2003
<i>Reporting period</i>	April 2002 – April 2003

### **2. Project Background**

The Hoang Lien mountain forests in northwestern Vietnam are a major centre of global plant diversity as identified in the IUCN/WWF Centres of Plant Diversity project {CPD EA67} and one of the last refuges of the crested black gibbon. The fragmented forests are under threat from unsustainable exploitation and illegal trade of threatened species, as well as timber extraction and agricultural encroachment.

### **3. Project Objectives**

The project aims to identify threats to endangered plants, primates and their habitats and to identify priority sites for conservation. Based on this work community-based conservation interventions will be designed such as community participation in the management of an expanded protected system, local conservation stewardship agreements, development of sustainable management of non-timber forest products and propagation of endangered plants. The idea for these initiatives is to generate alternative sources of income and to reduce the pressure on the forests and endangered species. Within the Darwin project itself the focus will be on preparatory work for these interventions, consisting largely of information (biological & socioeconomic) gathering and analyzing, which is a prerequisite for the development of sound conservation interventions implemented by follow-on funding secured from the EC. There have been no significant changes to the project since the first year.

### **4. Progress**

In the first year of the project (July 2001 – April 2002), baseline biological surveys were undertaken in the Hoang Lien Mountains. Based on these biodiversity surveys, a number of priority sites for conservation were identified. Conservation awareness training took place including the production of a black gibbon storybook which was introduced into local schools.

All background research work, both biological and human ecological, has been completed. The awareness programme has continued and local media campaign started. All of these components have been delayed by six months during the start of the project (see first annual report). Further delays in commencing the protected area development process have occurred due to recent changes in local government policy.

The provincial government is currently revising their strategy for protected areas and have focused all immediate development on the upgrading of the only existing protected area in the province from nature reserve to national park status. The development of any new protected areas in the province is expected to be delayed until the new national park is established.

In response to preliminary investigations of the vegetation types and forest resource use by local people (see revision of output 4 reported in the first annual report), a new line of research has been developed over the past year - an investigation into cardamom cultivation inside the forests of the project site.

Baseline biological surveys were continued during this period and completed. During this reporting period survey reports for birds, reptiles, amphibians and conifers were produced, and two technical papers based on previous botanical work have been submitted to scientific journals.

A survey of non-timber forest products in Van Ban district was carried out from July to November 2002 by researchers and consultants from Hanoi College of Pharmacy (HCP), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), and Center for Research and Development of Ethno-medicinal Plants (CREDEP), with the assistance of Lao Cai Forest Protection Department, Van Ban Control Forest Station, and local people. The local people were the Tay in Liem (Liem Phu commune), the H'Mong in Na Nheo (Khanh Yen Ha commune), and Red Dao in Phien Doong (Nam Xay commune) villages. The targets of the survey were medicinal plants, vegetables, fruit trees and orchids. Other NTFPs studied during the course of the survey, included dye plants, spices, betel and some edible insects.

Community land-use mapping and agro-ecological resources research were also undertaken as part of the research into the livelihood and resource-use of the three minority groups in the three sample villages referred to above. Past and present management, tenure and land-use of the Red Dao, H'mong and Tay people were investigated through a combination of interviewing, vegetation plots and participatory mapping to understand local perception of the management and ecology of vegetation and soils.

6,000 conservation stewardship agreements were developed with the local FPD and distributed during village festivals of forest protection to all the households in the target communities of the project.

The project's Conservation Awareness Officer, with the support of the local FPD and Youth Unions continued the village-based awareness programme implemented through village meetings and festivals. The children's storybook was distributed to local schools and contributions to the 'Green Forest' environmental education magazine were made with copies going to the same target schools.

A public media campaign started with a six-month trial radio programme. Six conservation topics pertinent to the local situation (ranging from wildlife hunting and trading to timber and non-timber plant exploitation) were broadcast in four different languages (the three main minority languages and Vietnamese). After positive evaluation of this activity, the radio campaign may be extended to provincial or even region level.

Despite the continued progress described above, the project has not been able to make up time lost due to initial delays incurred during the inception phase (see first annual report).

Further delays in the final project outputs are anticipated as a result of:

a) prioritisation in the national and provincial governments concerning the protected area strategy for the Hoang Lien Mountains. During 2002 focus was on the upgrading of the only existing protected area in the Hoang Lien Mountains from nature reserve to national park status. The start of the formal process leading to the creation of new protected areas, such as the Van Ban Nature Reserve (original output no. 6 of this Darwin project) has been postponed until late 2003.

b) developments in the implementation of the follow-on project funded by the EC, coupled with a lack of confidence of the project's partner, has resulted in significant amounts of key staff time (from FFI and FPD) being taken up in administrative and institutional development matters. This will have long term benefits in relation to the process for formal designation of the site during 2004.

As indicated in the first annual report funding from the EU is now in place. This follow on project is due to start in July 2003 with the Team Leader being in place in September 2003. Many of the activities initiated under the DARWIN funding will continue – including the awareness work.

In late 2003, as a result of the agreed extension, a workshop will be held in Van Ban to evaluate the awareness work and to plan suitable activities, as well as possible expansion in the follow on project.

The EU funding will also allow work to continue with the FPD to facilitate appropriate designation of key areas in Van Ban for Biodiversity conservation. Based on work being undertaken in other sites in the Hoang Lien Son it is hoped that appropriate co-management strategies can be developed for different areas of biodiversity value in Van Ban District.

Appropriate local financing will be sought to continue work on Cardamom issues (including fuelwood efficiency, processing quality as well as approaches to cardamom garden management which might be valuable for biodiversity conservation).

**Timetable (workplan) for the next reporting period.**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Biological surveys</i>												
<i>Human ecological research</i>												
<i>Stewardship agreements</i>												
<i>Awareness programme</i>												
<i>Protected area development</i>												

**5. Partnerships**

As indicated above, low capacity in the main project partner continues to limit progress of the project, although the working relationship is steadily improving.

Following up on the work of Aljos Farjon, Paul Mathew, FFI's Global Trees Campaign Projects Manager visited Vietnam and developed a conifer conservation

project with FFI local staff. British American Tobacco agreed to fund this as a component of the Global Trees Campaign (GTC).

Further discussions with the Royal Botanical Gardens, Edinburgh and the project, with the support of the GTC, have paved the way for future collaboration regarding *ex situ* conservation of *Taiwania* at the project site, in addition to a publication of a conservation status review of Vietnam's threatened conifers.

## 6. Impact and Sustainability

The principal exit strategy of the project is to successively lever further funding to maintain conservation action at the site in the short-term, i.e. while a need for external support persists. The first step of this process has already been achieved with the approval of a larger EC grant (see Section 2 above) that will build upon the foundations provided by this Darwin project till 2006. In the longer term, the project hopes to achieve sustainability through a dual strategy of: a) elevating local community's levels of awareness of, and commitment too, conservation of the Hoang Lien forests, coupled with, b) the development of a network of national protected areas (of which Van Ban would be one) embedded in a wider, internationally recognised, 'Man & Biosphere Reserve' designation.

## 7. Post-Project Follow up Activities

Not applicable.

## 8. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

**Table 1. Project Outputs (According to Standard Output Measures)**

<i>Code No.</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Description</i>
6A	23	Awareness extension training
6B	6	Awareness extension training
7	6	Awareness posters and magazines
8	95	Conservation biologist and project co-ordination
11B	2	Botanical papers
13A	1	Herpetological reference collection
14B	1	Genetic conservation of forest resources workshop
19C	96	Local radio programme
22	3	Permanent plots in cardamom plantations
23	30,000	GTC co-financing

Awareness training is greater in the second year due to delays in starting the project (see first annual report for changes in awareness training strategy).

Additional outputs for this year include: two botanical papers, a new reference collection of reptiles and amphibians, permanent vegetation plots set up as part of the cardamom research and a further £ 30,000 co-financing with the GTC.

**Table 2: Publications**

Type *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
(e.g. journal paper, book, manual, CD)	(e.g. title, authors, journal, year, pages)	(name, city)	(e.g. contact address, email address, website)	
Report*	Tran van On, Tran Manh Hung, Tu Minh Tiep, Tran Tuan Hai (2002) A survey on non timber forest products in Liem, Na Nheo and Phieng Doong villages, Van Ban District, Lao Cai Province	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, Hanoi	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, IPO Box 78, Hanoi GPO, VIETNAM <a href="mailto:vietnam@ffi.org.vn">vietnam@ffi.org.vn</a>	Free
Report*	Buckingham, S. & Tu Minh Tiep (2002) Community land-use mapping and agro-ecology resources of three villages in Van Ban District, Lao Cai Province.	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, Hanoi	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, IPO Box 78, Hanoi GPO, VIETNAM <a href="mailto:vietnam@ffi.org.vn">vietnam@ffi.org.vn</a>	Free
Report*	Nguyen Quang Truong (2002). A rapid survey of the herpetofauna of Van Ban District.	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, Hanoi	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, IPO Box 78, Hanoi GPO, VIETNAM <a href="mailto:vietnam@ffi.org.vn">vietnam@ffi.org.vn</a>	Free
Report	Cox, S & Tran Manh Hung (2002). Socio-economic Status and Forest Resource Use of Three Villages in Van Ban District, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, Hanoi	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, IPO Box 78, Hanoi GPO, VIETNAM <a href="mailto:vietnam@ffi.org.vn">vietnam@ffi.org.vn</a>	Free
Report*	Buckingham, S. & Tu Minh Tiep (2003) A rapid characterization of Cardomom Amomum aromaticum (Roxb.) cultivation in three villages in Van Ban District, Lao Cai Province	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, Hanoi	Fauna & Flora International Vietnam Programme, IPO Box 78, Hanoi GPO, VIETNAM <a href="mailto:vietnam@ffi.org.vn">vietnam@ffi.org.vn</a>	Free
Journal paper	Averyanov L., Phan Ke Loc, Nguyen Tien Hiep & Do Tien Doan (2003). Highland vegetation and flora of Van Ban District, Lao Cai Province in northern Vietnam.	Turczaninowia		
Journal paper Submitted to Oryx	Farjon, A., Thomas, P. & Nguyen Duc To Luu (in press) Conifer conservation in Vietnam – case reports			

of three potential ‘flagship species’.

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## 9. Project Expenditure

**Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period**

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Item	Budget	Expenditure
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## 10. Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

General project progress has been monitored through bi-annual reports to project partners and FFI project management cycle reporting. Specific research outputs are verified by survey reports (see Table 2 above).

Protected area development, although delayed, has been successfully incorporated into the provincial strategy for ‘special-use forests’ (i.e. protected areas). This is a strong indicator that indirect awareness raising of project partners has been successful with local government accepting the overall goal and vision of the project. A feasibility study document summarizing the findings from all the individual research reports has been accepted by FPD as the first step in the formal gazettement process of a new protected area in Van Ban. This will be finalized before the end of the project in December 2003 and will be based on the detailed biological and socio-economic studies undertaken under Darwin.

Due to delays documented here and in the previous annual report, no monitoring or evaluation of the project’s interventions to date have been conducted. Review of the awareness, media programmes and stewardship agreements is scheduled for the last six months of the project, and will be reported in the final project report.

## 11. Author(s) / Date

Sara Oldfield and Steven Swan, August 2003