

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Preservation, Rehabilitation and Utilisation of Vietnamese Montane Forests
Country	Vietnam
Organisation	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Project Ref. No.	162/10/017
Report date	April 2003 - September 2003

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months 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).

Two aspects of the agreed baseline timetable have been altered. The UK mycorrhizal specialist's visit to Vietnam was successfully undertaken in June rather than Aug-Sep 2003 – this enabled sampling to be undertaken in a different season and a wider view of the overall fungal diversity gained. The conifer visit has been delayed from Sep-October until October-November due to UK staff commitments.

As noted in the previous annual report, a training visit to the UK by Mr Thang (a technical officer from Lang Son Forest Enterprise) took place from May-June. His time was mainly spent working on the conifer manual and undertaking training in taxonomy as well as botanic garden management – Mr Thang is responsible for a new botanic garden in Lang Son that was established by his Forest Enterprise.

Work on the mycorrhizae and propagation manuals is proceeding according to schedule and they should be ready for publication in March 2004. However, for the conifer manual, there are a number of taxonomic problems relating to key species such as *Cupressus 'tonkinensis'* and *Pinus kwangtungensis*. These are described in section 2.

Additional outputs noted in the previous annual report have been completed (the market survey for the *Cupressus* and the newly described genus *Xanthocyparis* as well as the population survey for *Xanthocyparis*) and will be reported in the final report. Other activities in the last 6 months have centred on planning for the final field visit by the UK conifer specialist – these have included trained Vietnamese project staff surveying new areas where threatened conifers may occur.

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 effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

The identity of the *Cupressus* in NE Vietnam is proving problematic, mainly due to the extreme exploitation of this taxon – only one mature tree has been located, all others are juvenile and do not have the necessary characters for identification. To try and overcome this problem, the RBGE molecular section has undertaken a limited analysis of several *Cupressus* taxa from Asia (including the Vietnamese trees); the results suggest a possibility that 2 taxa are present in the NE of Vietnam; further field work in November may resolve the situation. The input from the molecular section represents a substantial in-kind contribution from the RBGE.

The problem with the pine is that the type specimen of a similar but very poorly known species from SE Yunnan (with which the Vietnamese trees may be con-specific) cannot be located from the herbarium where it was lodged (Kunming KIB). We may not be able to resolve the identity of this pine before the end of the project. These taxonomic problems may not delay publication, but, if they are not resolved, then the manual may not be as comprehensive as it could be.

Over the last 6 months, project staff have received reports about possible new conifer species in southern Vietnam as well as areas in northern Vietnam; these reports will be investigated by project staff during the next visit by the conifer specialist. More recently, Vietnamese staff have received a number

of requests for technical support on propagation and identification of species to be used in restoration and utilisation projects in buffer zones surrounding national parks such as Tam Dao NP. Due to the heavy work commitments for the final year of this project, only a limited response can be given. This type of work may present possibilities for post project funding.

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

The project is scheduled to officially finish in June 2004. As the major outputs and their related expenditure should be completed by the end of March 2004 it may be possible to complete the project early and submit the final report within 2 months after April 1 2004. This possibility has been discussed with the Darwin monitors.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Project Manager, Email: stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk