

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	162/11/026
Project Title	Recovering Ukraine's Lost Steppe: a Unique Opportunity
Country(ies)	Ukraine
UK Organisation	CABI Bioscience
Collaborator(s)	Dr V.P. Isikov
Report date	22 October 2004
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	3 (half year of third year)
Project website	http://www.cybertruffle.org.uk/darw2002/index.htm

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).

This was a very productive and successful six-month period for the project. Particularly good results were achieved in collaboration with the Ukrainian military, with seed collecting, with renovation of the Opuk Reserve building, and with establishment of a backpackers hostel. The two agreed baseline timetable items and ten agreed project output items listed for April-September 2004 in the project schedule are shown below, with a comment on each. In my opinion, these rather bald listings do not indicate the full breadth of this project's activities.

- **Agreed baseline timetable item.** May 2004. Third year clearance of reserve land designated for living collection of Crimean steppe plants completed; restoration of second area of non-reserve land begins [if project is progressing successfully, every attempt will be made to extend restoration of non-reserve land to villages adjacent to other reserves]. **Comment.** Dr Isikov engaged several farmers in more than one village near Opuk for seed regeneration works and passed on to them some seeds. Seed regeneration of *Triticum baeoticum* at the experimental station near Simferopol was rather successful this year: a substantial amount of new seeds were harvested. Dr Heluta reported some progress towards establishing a new steppe "zakaznik" [SSSI] in Donetsk oblast.
- **Agreed baseline timetable item.** June 2004. Review of progress of sustainable tourism and economics of local B&B-style accommodation takes place. **Comment.** The "Balaclava Backpackers" was open for business and receiving clients by this point. By the end of September 2004, the "Crimean Backpackers" website first version, produced partly with support from this project, was ready to go live, and Dr Isikov, Dr Hayova and I stayed again in the simple B&B accommodation in Opuk.
- **Agreed project output item.** May. Reserve land for living collection of Crimean steppe plants established. **Comment.** See comment on first agreed baseline timetable item.
- **Agreed project output item.** May. UK project leader to visit Ukraine for one week. **Comment.** I went to Kiev on 18 June, returning to London on 28 June [within that time, from 22-27 June, I visited Armenia, going on from Ukraine, and using other funding].
- **Agreed project output item.** June. Eighth quarterly seminar in Kiev. **Comment.** Done.
- **Agreed project output item.** June. Study visit for Ukrainian group to UK to see examples of conservation on military land / farming practices altered to support conservation. **Comment.** From 12 - 19 July, three Ukrainian collaborators (including the previous and current deputy heads of Ukraine Ministry of Defence's Nuclear Biological and Chemical Protection Troops) visited the UK to participate in an international workshop "Management of Military Sites and Nature Conservation in Europe". They also visited the Dartmoor and Lulworth military ranges, and saw examples of

sustainable tourism in south Devon.

- **Agreed project output item.** July. Third year gathering of seeds and transplants; seed bank of Crimean steppe plants in **Nikita** enhanced; third year sowing and planting to follow at times determined by steppe experts [sowing and planting of non-reserve land for second time]. **Comment.** A very successful summer gathering seeds - this work was still going on at the end of September. Seed of over 200 species was collected, processed and stored. Collections were made from steppe lands not only in Crimea, but also near Kiev and Poltava (forest-steppe ecosystems).
- **Agreed project output item.** September. Ninth quarterly seminar in Kiev; fourth meeting of advisory panel in Kiev. **Comment.** See following item.
- **Agreed project output item.** September. UK project leader to visit Ukraine for two weeks [8]. **Comment.** I visited Ukraine from 20 - 29 September, in the company of 5 UK Ministry of Defence experts on environmental protection of military lands (including the Head of all military training areas in Great Britain, and the Commandant of the Stanford Battle Area in East Anglia). In a remarkable tour, we presented seminars in Kiev and Sebastopol, visited two Ukraine Ministry of Defence training areas, and toured current and former military sites in Sebastopol and Balaclava. The Sebastopol seminars were covered by local radio and television.
- **Agreed project output item.** September. Updated management plan for the reserve produced [9]. **Comment.** By the end of September, an updated management plan for Khomutovskyi Steppe Nature Reserve was available in English on the internet, and Dr Heluta was preparing the texts for the Ukrainian version planned for the internet. Furthermore, Dr Isikov and Dr Tykhonenko were preparing to produce a translation of the updated management plan for Opuk in anticipation of a bilingual website for that reserve.
- **Agreed project output item.** September. At least five scientific papers to be submitted and published in peer reviewed journals [11A/B]. **Comment.** To date, over ten scientific papers have been submitted and published; more if electronic publications and websites produced by the project are included.
- **Agreed project output item.** September. Opuk reserve database enhanced [12B]. **Comment.** At present Dr Tykhonenko is working on the seed bank databases which will hold information from Opuk reserve.

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.

Establishing a new reserve or “zakaznik” [SSSI] in post-Soviet Ukraine is not easy. Dr Heluta and Dr Genov (the now-retired former director of the Ukrainian Steppe Nature Reserve, which includes Khomutovskyi Steppe) have found negotiations to be complex and very delicate and time-consuming. If they are successful, which is still not guaranteed, the new SSSI may be one of the first to be established in Ukraine since the end of the Soviet Union. Ukrainian land law is similarly problematical, together with the fine balance in Crimea between Ukrainian slavs, Russian slavs and Tatars, making progress extending restored steppe land and establishing backpacker hostels also a more slow and delicate process than would be ideal. None of this is expected to result in a budgetary over-spend, but it is possible that some planned carry-over of monies to the next financial year may be desirable. I am currently evaluating this.

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

No: so far, nothing of this sort has been necessary

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin’s

management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

As usual, my colleagues in Ukraine join me in thanking the Darwin Initiative, and its staff in London and Edinburgh for their kind, patient and generous support.

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 or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**