

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Darwin Initiative Research Exercise on Community Tree Seeds (DIRECTS)
Country	UK (and 16 African countries)
Organisation	Seed Conservation Department, Wakehurst Place, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Project Ref. No.	162/12/001
Report date	31-10-2004 (<i>started in June 2003</i>)

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).

April – June 2004

First year DIRECTS report: was completed and submitted on time in April 2004. The report was dispatched to the DIRECTS Kew Advisory team, plus the Director and Head of Department. (NB It was also sent later to IPGRI).

MoUs: Two more completed MoUs were received (Cape Verde and Mali), bringing the total Agreements to 14; only Botswana and Kenya are likely to sign in the near future.

Communications: Annual Reports: 12 countries' reports were received.

Presentation: MS presented the objectives of the DIRECTS Project to the Forest Tree and Shrub Seed Committee of the International Seed Testing Association during their 27th Seed Congress in Budapest in May 2004. MS was invited to join HWP (vice-Chair) on the Committee. The overall objective was to raise awareness of the Project and to argue for ISTA to work more on tropical tree (rather than temperate) species.

Visit to Malawi: MS travelled to Malawi (5 working days) to visit to partners at the Forestry Research Institute (FRIM) to help with protocol application and project development. This visit was supported by gift-in-kind from the MSBP.

Lab studies: As stated in the Annual Report (April 2004), about 30 species are being worked on by the partners.

July – Sept 2004

Visit to Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali: In August, MS visited partners at CNSF, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (5 days), to help with protocol application and project development; he also had a meeting with Mr Yacouba Ouedraogo, co-ordinator of TreeAid West Africa, to discuss shared interests in sustainable use (in Burkina, Mali, Ghana and Ethiopia). The meeting explored how the research outcomes of the DIRECTS Project can benefit village nurseries (supported by TreeAid) to raise seedlings of native species for planting. DIRECTS could provide 1) information on the collection of quality seeds and other aspects of seed handling (e.g. germination and storability) and 2) technical advice/support. A list of DIRECTS species has been submitted for consideration to Tony Hill, the Programme Support Director of TreeAid at Bristol. MS also visited Ghana (5 days) and Mali (3 days) to help with protocol application and project development. Visits to all three countries were supported by gift-in-kind from the MSBP.

Communications: DIRECTS bulletin board: Kew set up the BB in September 2004 (and in October 2004 the collaborators started to use it; the traffic is just starting to flow). Web site: In October, IPGRI finally agreed to develop the web site and to host it under the SAFORGEN programmes. They require the information (including images) from the partner institutes by the end of November 2004. Kew Advisory Committee: The committee met on 25th October at Wakehurst Place to discuss the project. Our position on trying to find funding for a mid-term meeting was supported and Dr Paul Smith agreed to raise the matter with the MSBP. Also, MS and HWP have been pursuing IPGRI regarding funding, and IPGRI have kindly offered to waive their web costs in deference to the workshop objective. So there is the possibility of a joint DIRECTS, MSBP, IPGRI workshop in March 2005. This workshop can be used as a 'reality check' of how and what African partners/scientists are delivering in terms of seed science since the beginning of the project and to re-consider exit strategies for the partners.

Finance: The money to DIRECTS partners who have signed MoUs was transferred in September,

except for Togo who informed us that for the first part of the year they were able to carry forward the budget from last year to support their studies. We will review again their financial needs in the coming months.

Lab studies: Detailed germination testing at a range of temperatures has been undertaken at Wakehurst on 5 species (*Combretum micranthum*, *C. nigricans*, *Grewia bicolor*, *Pterocarpus lucens* and *Sterculia setigera*). Work in Africa continued on about another 25 species. We worked also on a 2-page template for the species reports and discussed collaboration with the Danida Forest Seed Centre to produce species leaflets. We envisage that they could be co-promoted by DI, DFSC, MSBP and the African Institutes contributing to a specific report. We also had positive feedback from Michael Muschick, Secretary General, ISTA about ISTA also being involved when we met him at the ISTA Congress. We will finalise plans for the reporting style by December 2004.

(MoUs: New copies of MoUs were requested and sent out to Kenya and Botswana in October 2004. We anticipate that countries other than Kenya and Botswana (see comment above) who wish to join the network are unlikely to be able to catch up with the lab studies at this stage but should be able to actively contribute to the bulletin board and the web site).

Publications:

Published: Sacandé M, Pritchard HW and Dulloo EM. (2004). Seed science and technology needs for SAFORGEN trees for conservation and sustainable use. *Plant Genetic Resources Newsletter* **139**: 54-59.

In press: 1) Sacandé M, Pritchard HW. (2004). Seed Research Network on African Trees for Conservation and Sustainable Use. *Forest Genetic Resources Newsletter*. Forest Division, FAO (expected before end 2004); 2) Sacandé M, Pritchard HW. (2004). African tree seed conservation research: opportunities and implementation. In: Shahina A Ghazanfar & H Beentje (eds); *Proceedings of the 17th AETFAT congress, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*. RBG Kew, London, UK (expected April 2005).

Submitted: Agyili J., Boateng K. and Sacande M. (2004). Improved methods for germinating dormant *Garcinia kola* Heckel seeds from Ghana. *Annals of Forest Science* (under review).

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

MoUs: The project continues to be affected by the late signing of agreements by two key countries (Kenya and Botswana). We estimate that this may have an impact on information generation on about 10 species.

Reports and monitoring: There have been delays in receiving both annual and 6-monthly reports from partners. For example, we have just received the annual report from Niger, which was expected in April, and we are still waiting for three more reports from Benin, Cape Verde and Kenya (understandable in the latter case). We have been rather careful about issuing funds for Year 2 until we were confident that studies were on-going, and thus we probably contributed to this delay. We have observed three standards of report: (a) high quality reports (n = 6) with detail information on species and research data; (b) medium standard reports (n = 5) with less data but more management wording, and (c) reports which just explain that administrative procedures have been put in place in order to commence the project activities (n = 2). We have concerns about the difficulty of following up partners' activities, and have tried to alleviate these by making visits to 4 countries in the first 6 months of this report year. Put simply, we are pushing to reach the 30 species target for the year.

IPGRI: Although we offered twice to visit Rome, it was not possible to set up a meeting with IPGRI and email discussions took many months in the first part of this report year. As a consequence, the web page development has been delayed, but we now have a commitment from IPGRI to receive information by the end of November 2004 so that the site can be launched before the end of this report year.

Finance: We would like permission to use the £6000 in this year's budget for a web site on a workshop (see above). If this is not possible, as other monies are clearly needed, we wish to put the savings towards catching up with the species work; this could be in-country or as part-time help for MS to consolidate the technical back-up in the UK.

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

- Please see comments above in 1) about virement of funds for a mid-term workshop or seed studies.
- We are including at the end of this form replies to the Evaluator of the first year report, and will send representative Annual Reports in the mail.

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
