

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports but will contact you individually should any questions arise

Project Ref. No.	162/12/001
Project Title	Darwin Initiative Research Exercise on Community Tree Seeds (DIRECTS)
Country(ies)	UK (and 15 African countries)
UK Organisation	Seed Conservation Department, Wakehurst Place, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Collaborator(s)	15 African Tree Seed and Biodiversity Centres (based on signed MoUs)
Report date	31-10-2005 (started in June 2003)
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 3
Project website	http://www.ipgri.cgiar.org/regions/ssa/SAFORGEN/DIRECTS/directs.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).

April – June 2005

Second year DIRECTS report.

– Completion of the second year report by April 2005; report dispatched to Defra / DI, followed by DIRECTS Advisory team and IPGRI; summary sent to all partners.

- Six reports were received and commented on in the Year 2 Annual Report; nine other reports were not received on time even though reminders were sent out. Seven of these reports were received between May and October 2005. The final two, from Cape Verde and Nigeria, have been promised shortly, following delays due to staff changes and difficulties in withdrawing money for research activities.

Work visit to partners at NTSC, Botswana

-Dr M Sacande visited (1 week) partners at the National Tree Seed Centre in Gaborone, Botswana (Gift-in-kind from the MSB Project at Kew) to advise on their research programme. Opportunistic training on DIRECTS research methodologies was provided. This enable NTSC to increase the number of species they will work on, thus enhancing inputs to the overall species programme.

8th International Workshop on Seeds, Brisbane

-Neither Dr Sacande nor Dr Pritchard could attend this meeting that was held in May 2005. However, Dr Pritchard gave an introduction to the project in his invited contribution to the Royal Society and FCO-supported 'Partners in Science – Plant Conservation Conference' in Kunming, PR China, October 2005.

July – September 2005

Final preparation of species leaflets

- 23 species leaflets were finalised in collaboration with partners and the co-authored leaflets submitted to DANIDA. We have prompted their release but they are still under final preparation in Denmark prior to hardcopy and electronic publication. Many of the other species reports have been drafted, but require completion.

Commonwealth Fellow from FORIG at Kew and work visit to partners at FRIM, Malawi

-Dr Sacande was successful in obtaining a Commonwealth Fellowship for Mr Joseph Asomaning from the Forestry Research Institute Ghana (FORIG). During his 6 month stay at the Millennium Seed Bank, Joseph will be working on the germination and storage of eight of the Ghanaian priority species selected from the global DIRECTS list.

-Dr Sacande visited (1 week) the Forestry Research Institute Malawi, Tree Seed Centre to help with protocol application and project development (Gift-in-kind from the MSB Project at Kew).

Management and Finance

- The transfer to partners of Year 3 money has been arranged.

-Dr Moctar Sacande resigned from DIRECTS at the end of September 2005 to move to another position in the Seed Conservation Department, but still with an Africa focus. Dr Sacande will be available to support the final DIRECTS workshop. Nonetheless, it is desirable to secure project assistant support for the last c. five months of Year 3 (Nov05-March06), in line with the existing UK staff budget, to: 1) ensure species reports are finalised; 2) help arrange and act as a rapporteur at the conference; 3) assist with the first draft of the Year 3 report. The draft recruitment paperwork has been submitted to Kew.

-IPGRI have been prompted to update the web site.

Final workshop

- We were in discussion with FORIG, Ghana for some time about holding the final workshop there and have now received clearance from the Director. The meeting will be held from 25 – 31 March 2006. We are expecting the participation of 30-40 partners, plus policy makers / agencies, e.g. IPGRI.

Publications

-Agyili J., Sacande M., Koffi E. and Peprah T. Improving the collection and germination of West African *Garcinia kola* Heckel seeds. *New Forests* (submitted and under review).

- 23 species leaflets are with DANIDA for publication.

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.

-1) Dr Sacande has left the project, but will support the final workshop. The management burden will be shared now by Dr Pritchard (Project Leader) and a research assistant, to be employed for nearly 5 months (Nov 05 – March 2006). Dr Sacande will provide some gift-in-kind support.

-2) The start date of the project was delayed by 2 months until June 2003 and it was agreed at the outset that the project (and finance) would run until May-June 2006, i.e. for a complete 36 months.

- 3) We are still experiencing difficulties communicating with IPGRI and serious discussions on exit strategy have not yet taken place.

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

-A note needs to be made of Dr Sacande's departure from the DIRECTS project. In addition, we would like immediate approval for the appointment of a 'casual' research assistant. There are no changes envisaged for the project workplan per se.

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

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: None anticipated , 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?

In the Year 2 report (2004-05) we asked for an extension to the project, but have still not received feedback from the DI about this suggestion.

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.**