

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

## Half Year Report Form

<b>Project Title</b>	DNA Banking, Phylogeny and Conservation of the South African Flora
<b>Country</b>	South Africa
<b>Organisation</b>	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	162/12/008
<b>Report date</b>	10 October 2003 (reporting for period 1 June to 30 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).**

Since commencement of the project in June 2003 considerable progress has been made towards our aim of establishing a plant DNA bank in South Africa. From July 1-3rd 2003 the first workshop was hosted by the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (RBG Kew), attended by 15 participants from the UK and four from South Africa. During this time a MoU was written and subsequently signed by both parties. Research presentations were given by participants from both countries and the existing DNA banking facility at RBG Kew was visited by the South Africans. Financial arrangements were also established during the course of this workshop, and an outline for the 'DNA banking manual' was drawn up. In addition a field guide to South African plants has been drafted and negotiations are underway with publishers. In August 2003 capital equipment was purchased by the National Botanical Institute in South Africa (NBI), and Ms. Koliwe Balele was offered and accepted the position of DNA bank manager. A week practical training course on 'Biotechnology and Molecular Techniques' (28 July - 1<sup>st</sup> August 2003) was successfully completed at the NBI by 12 students from the University of the Western Cape. A website has been established detailing the aims of the initiative and is being used to monitor progress according to the logical framework (see 'DNA bank' from [www.nib.ac.za/frames/researchfram.htm](http://www.nib.ac.za/frames/researchfram.htm)). The plant collection program has been initiated. From 3-5 September a second workshop was hosted by the NBI in South Africa. This was attended by two representatives from RBG Kew and 27 South African scientists took part in the 'Information and feedback' component.

### **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?**

Following request and subsequent agreement with DEFRA the project was initiated in June 2003, two months later than outlined in the project proposal. This has not had a major impact on the progress of the project, but did delay the appointment of the DNA bank manager. Consequently Ms. Balele will take up her post on 1 November 2003. The delay in initiation of the project also resulted in the target of 500 collections by September 2003 not being fully met. In addition severe drought has led to a poor flowering season in the Cape Region, this has impacted on our ability to collect as many samples as we originally anticipated. However, we are confident that we will be able to make up the shortfall during the next six months.

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

Due to the late appointment of Ms. Balele to the position of DNA bank manager we will have under spent by approximately GBP 2500 on salary costs during the first year. An exact figure cannot be provided due to exchange

rate fluctuations.

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](mailto:stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk)