## **Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species**

## Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No. 13-003

**Project Title** Taxonomic capacity building in support of biodiversity conservation in Thailand

Country(ies) Thailand

**UK Organisation** Natural History Museum, London

**Collaborator(s)** Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden, Chiang Mai. Coordinator Prof. Visut Baimai

**Report date** 29<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

**Project website** 

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).

The project has been running for 5 months and is on course. It started on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2004 with the recruitment of staff and purchase of basic equipment and chemicals. Ralph Harbach and Tony Shelley visited Thailand (June/July) to set up the project by means of a planning workshop, provision of basic field and laboratory training on culicids and simuliids and selection of field study sites. Monthly collections of these families started in Doi Inthanon National Park in August. Preliminary sorting, identification and curation of the material have begun. The project is based in the Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden (QSBG) in Chiang Mai. An office and laboratory have now been equipped and the next phase is the installation of the image analysis system and training of Thai biologists in its use.

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.

A problem has occurred concerning the purchase by our Thai counterparts of two microscopes essential to the image analysis system. The Thai financial year begins in September and therefore does not coincide with ours in the UK. Consequently, the DI project started in the middle of the current Thai financial year and hence Thai funds for these microscopes costing about £12000 would only be available in their next financial year in 2005. The Director of QSBG confirmed today that funds would only be available in his budget starting September 2005. We are unable to cover this relatively large cost from our DI budget. It is vital that we have the image analysis system in place in Thailand for in situ training by February 2005. The order for the microscopes and the Synoptics imaging component needs to be sent to Synoptics (Cambridge UK) by mid November 2004 at the latest.

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

A report was sent to Mr Elliot Morley at DEFRA prior to his recent visit to Thailand, when he visited the QSBG to review this project. The problem concerning Thai funding for the microscopes was highlighted. e have not yet had any feedback concerning this problem.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no, but see above

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no

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

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 <u>planned</u> modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should <u>not</u> 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, <u>stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk</u>. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**