

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report

Project Ref. No.	163/13/007
Project Title	Taxonomic training for a neglected biodiversity hotspot within Lao PDR
Country(ies)	Lao PDR
UK Organisation	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Collaborator(s)	Forest Research Center (National Agriculture and Forestry Institute), National University of Lao PDR, IUCN Lao
Report date	23 rd October 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 3
Project website	http://www.rbge.org.uk/rbge/web/science/research/tropdivers/laos.jsp under development

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project

In the first 6 months of the final year of the project RBGE staff visited Lao for the final field work and identification training visit (May – July). As in previous visits, the main period of field work was based in the Nakai Nam Theun NBCA. The project team joined forces with one of the NBCA's anti-poaching patrols to visit the Nam On catchment in Boulapa District in the most southern and remote part of the protected area. Over 400 collections were made over a period of 10 days. These included at least 2 new species and new national records for 3 conifers and numerous angiosperms.

In Vientiane the last formal identification workshop was held over a period of 2 weeks. 15 trainees from a range of organisations attended. During the training select trainees undertook the role of trainers as a way of evaluating their progress. Over 60 collections were identified, a considerable improvement on previous workshops. Included in this work was the verification of specimens collected from provenance trail plots of *Aquilaria crassna* that had been set up over the last 4 years by FRC. Students identified a species from a closely related genus (*Gyrinops vidalii*) that had been mistakenly included in the trial and were giving misleading results.

During this period, the herbarium at NUoL was completely reorganised by the trainees as part of their training. All specimens were placed in appropriate family and genus covers and older damaged specimens and those for which there were no labels or information for discarded. Specimens collected during the project have all been mounted, labelled and incorporated. A similar unsupervised training exercise is due to take place at the FRC herbarium after the departure of the RBGE staff - the results of this exercise will be evaluated during the final visit in February 2007.

Training in Vientiane also included work on the IUCN 2001 categories and criteria. A select group of senior staff and trainees evaluated all rattan species along with several important NTFP species. The results of the rattan work were presented by Mr Banxa Thammavong at an international conference in the Philippines. Senior staff are preparing a general translation and guide to the IUCN 2001 categories and criteria that will be published by the project. A preliminary checklist of threatened plants is also being compiled.

Project staff also completed and submitted a review to the IUCN of the plant species currently listed under CITES Appendices I, II and III. This review, based partly on the work that the

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

Not at this stage

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.**