Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

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

Project Ref. No.	162/13/033
Project Title	Combating alien invasive plants threatening the East Usambara mountains in Tanzania
Country(ies)	Tanzania
UK Organisation	Centre for Ecology & Hydrology & Tropical Biology Association
Collaborator(s)	Amani Nature Reserve & Sokoine University of Agriculture
Report date	31 st October 2005
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR1
Project website	http://www.ceh.ac.uk/sections/ed/Usambara_project_page.html

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).

Progress to date has closely followed the agreed baseline timetable. The project start was initiated by the two UK partners undertaking a 10day visit to Tanzania in April 2005. Key meetings were held with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Forest and Beekeeping Division. Mr. Isaya Y. Mnangwone, Assistant Director Research, Training and Statistics was especially enthusiastic about the project. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was subsequently drawn up relating to the training and research provision inherent in the Darwin Project. This meeting was followed up with the Tanzanian Forest Research Institute(TAFORI) in Morogoro where the Director General, Mr L Nsubemeki, approved the project and emphasised the increasing need for capacity building in the area of biological invasions. Discussions were also held with Universities. In Dar es Salaam University (Institute of Resource Assessment), Prof. Yanda and Dr Schechambo provided information on their plans to establish a GIS for the Eastern Arc Forests and MSc training opportunities. More formal meetings were arranged at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Morogoro (Faculty of Nature Conservation). A round table meeting to discuss the project was held with the Heads of several departments. Subsequently an MOU was signed between the University and the TBA that covers the research and training elements of the Darwin project. The third group of stakeholders approached were the NGOs including the Eastern Arc Mountain Conservation and Management Project (Dr Neil Burgess) and Eastern Arc Mountain Conservation Endowment Fund (Mr Shedrack Mashauri). Again biological invasions were seen as a major knowledge gap in conservation activities and considerable information exchange took place to the benefit of all parties. Over the summer the TBA coordinating the advertising and interviewing of candidates for the Darwin Scholar MSc positions at Sokoine University. Considerable interest was generated by this opportunity (>30 applications) and a strong shortlist drawn up for interview in Morogoro. The two successful candidates were Mr John Richard and Mr Ezekiel Edward. As well as being high calibre and enthusiastic students, they provide strong links to partner institutions TAFORI and SUA. The TBA ran a week long course on proposal writing in Morogoro in August. Further contribution to the training component of the project was made by NERC in supporting a three-year PhD student, Mr Wayne Dawson, whose thesis will be closely allied to the aims of the Darwin project. Mr Dawson participated in the month long TBA Tropical Ecology field course in Amani, East Usambara Mts during September in which both the UK partners participated. The course had a major emphasis on biological invasions and training was given to an additional three Tanzanian students as well as 20 international students. September saw further meetings between the UK partners and national partners.

Formal links were established with the Amani Nature Reserve and approval was agreed for research to be undertaken by the PhD and MSc students in Amani. The three postgraduate students were briefed on the project and this was followed by a field visit highlighting the problem of plant invasions. More in depth training was given to the PhD student who initiated a two month fieldwork campaign. A further meeting was held with the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (Dr John Watkins). This major initiative is supporting conservation activities throughout the Eastern Arc does not as yet address biological invasion threats. However, again this was highlighted as a knowledge gap and plans were established to more closely work together. During this period, the UK partners and PhD students were interviewed by TAFORI journalists, including a video interview in the field.

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.

There have been no unexpected developments, indeed the project has progressed to a greater degree than expected and it is evident that it is filling a need in both knowledge and capacity within Tanzania. Plans to develop a GIS have been put on hold since it appears that there are at least three organisations currently involved in such activities. A freely available GIS has been promised for early next year and we await these developments before embarking on our own work. It is also evident that the environmental information (layers) available for a GIS are relatively limited and thus such an activity should not be especially time consuming. Training was provided by the TBA through a workshop on proposal writing and fund raising as well as the TBA field course in Amani. A specific workshop on invasions was not scheduled since it was felt that both the profile of the project and problems needed to be raised before such an activity would have maximum impact. The course has been rescheduled for June 2006. These developments will have no affect on the budget or timetable.

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

No

Discussed with the DI Secretariat:

no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, 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?

No

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. <u>Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.</u>