

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2006, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports 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 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR2
Project website	http://www.usambara.ceh.ac.uk/

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 and included: running a workshop on invasive species mapping and monitoring, launching two MSc research projects, completing the first phase of PhD data collection and establishing a detailed project website. The "*Invasive plants in tropical forest ecosystems: An introduction to mapping and monitoring biological invasions*" workshop was organised in Amani Nature Reserve between 12th -16th June 2006. The aim of the workshop is to instruct Tanzanian conservation biologists up to date techniques in the understanding and management of invasive alien plant species. Specifically, the workshop:

- taught practical skills in surveys & monitoring,
- provided guidance in the use of GPS and mapping techniques,
- instructed attendees in the use of software for analysis of species distribution data,
- boosted attendees' understanding of invasive plant species ecology and management
- built institutional capacity as new skills are transferred after the workshop
- catalysed links between forest biologists nationally and internationally

Prior to the workshop the UK partners spent considerable time preparing course materials, advertising the course, selecting candidates and planning the logistics. The course was led by the UK partners in association with Mr Corodius Sawe, Conservator of Amani Nature Reserve; Prof Seif Madoffe and Dr P. Munishi, Sokoine University of Agriculture; and Mr Ahmed Mndolwa, Tanzania Forest Research Institute. The workshop comprised a series of lectures, seminars, group discussions and field exercises. Fifteen participants were selected for the course from a total list of over 30 applicants. All trainees were young, professional researchers working in conservation issues in Tanzania. The organisations represented included: Sokoine University of Agriculture, College of African Wildlife Management-Mweka, Tanzania Forest Research Institute, Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania, Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute, Forest and Beekeeping Division, Tanzania Forest Conservation Group, and the University of Dar es Salaam. The course covered such diverse topics as using GPS, reading and creating maps, field survey techniques, GIS, and invasive plant ecology. The course was particularly well received and has established a network of likeminded researchers keen to progress future work on invasive plants in Tanzania.

Two MSc research projects were initiated this autumn. Mr John Richard will be addressing "Status of the Panama rubber (*Castilla elastica*) in Amani Nature Reserve: Spread and Management options" while Mr Ezekiel Edward will conduct a study of "Population status and spread of *Cordia alliodora* in Amani Nature Reserve, Tanzania". These projects were discussed in the field with both research students and their Tanzanian supervisors, draft research proposals were prepared, assessed by Sokoine University and have now been approved. The UK PhD student, Mr Wayne Dawson, successfully completed his second field season in Amani and presented early findings at the British Ecological Society conference in early September 2006. Details of all three of these projects as well as more general information on the East Usambaras, Amani Botanical Garden, plant invasions (including species descriptions) and the Darwin Initiative project can be found at the newly established project webpage: www.usambara.ceh.ac.uk.

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. The project has now gained substantial momentum and awareness of our work has increased considerably since the workshop.

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?

At the beginning of the year we sought to move £23K from year 1 into year 2 since no workshop was organised in the first year. We are grateful that the Secretariat agreed this change in finance since this has given us much greater flexibility.

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.**