



## DARWIN INITIATIVE



### *Pre-Project Funding Report*

This report should be completed and submitted with a Stage 1 Darwin Application

<b>Project Title</b>	A biodiversity monitoring system for Trinidad and Tobago
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Trinidad and Tobago
<b>Project Ref No.</b>	293/14-004
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Department of Plant Sciences, University of Oxford
<b>Names / Titles of those who travelled to the host country</b>	Dr Nick Brown Dr Stephen Harris
<b>Grant Value</b>	£2,224.00
<b>Start and Finishing Dates</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2004
<b>Report Date</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2004

1. Please provide a concise overview of the activities undertaken during the pre-project development visit. (Please also include relevant activities before and after, as appropriate). Please highlight those that were not planned.

1. Two-day planning workshop at the University of the West Indies (UWI) with staff from 4 UWI departments, National Herbarium, Forestry Division, Asa Wright Nature Centre, and the Trust for Sustainable Livelihoods.
2. We held individual meetings with Dr John Agard, Chairman of Environmental Management Authority, Mr Antony Ramnarine, Conservator of Forests, Carlton Sanbury, Director of Eastern Caribbean Institute for Agriculture and Forestry, Professor Narinesingh, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture UWI, and Dr Robyn Cross, Biodiversity Technical Co-ordinator, Environmental Management Authority, to discuss our proposals and details of collaboration.
3. We made a joint presentation (with UWI staff) to the Biodiversity Advisory Council of Trinidad and Tobago at their meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June and received feedback and support for our proposals.
4. We made a field visit, to permanent sample plots in the Victoria-Mayaro Reserve with the Deputy Conservator of Forests to discuss sampling strategies and field logistics.
5. We made a field visit to Asa Wright Nature Centre with Conservation Manager Howard Nelson to discuss their needs for user friendly field guides.
6. We visited the Eastern Caribbean Institute for Agriculture and Forestry to discuss with staff their needs for new teaching materials and a course in plant identification.
7. We held detailed discussions with Yasmin Comeau, Curator of the National Herbarium (and proposed lead collaborator) about the schedule of activities and funding required.

2. Were any difficulties or setbacks encountered? If so, how did they impact on the intended achievements for the visit, and on the intended Darwin project proposal?

We discovered that the National Herbarium does not currently have the storage or curatorial capacity to cope with this project. After discussions with the Director, Dr David Rampersad, UWI have offered to resolve this problem by initiating a major upgrade of the herbarium in anticipation of our project (see attached letter).

We became aware of rivalry between two of the institutions with whom we proposed to collaborate which may have impacted on their ability to work together. We have adapted the project in order to avoid potential conflict and to ensure that both institutions are fully involved.

3. Briefly explain how the pre-project funding has helped to confirm or change the planned project intervention – what difference did getting the grant make?

The original proposal was made by UWI staff – our visit allowed us to identify ways in which this could be moulded into a coherent project that was achievable in three years and within a realistic budget.

During our visit the Asa Wright Nature Centre and the Eastern Caribbean Institute for Agriculture and Forestry requested that we produce user-friendly field guides as outputs from this project. We have added these to our proposal.

National Herbarium staff requested that we make high resolution electronic copies of pre 1850 Trinidad and Tobago herbarium material held in Oxford. We have added this to the proposal.

We were able to meet key people face to face and identify those who were enthusiastic and had the time and skills to devote to making this project work.

Most importantly, we were able to get local advice on what is practical, safe and a National priority.

4. Briefly describe the outcomes and conclusions arising from discussions with the host institution(s). What is the value of the project to the host institution(s) and what will their intended contributions be. Have any other partnerships evolved as a result of the pre-project grant?

Advice and guidance from the Chairman and Biodiversity Technical Co-ordinator of the Environmental Management Authority has allowed us to match the proposed outputs from our project to priority actions in the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

The University of the West Indies sought collaboration with the University of Oxford in order to build capacity and its reputation in biodiversity research. We were able to work closely with UWI staff during our pre-project visit to turn their proposal into a practical and scientifically robust project. They have proposed a new course in plant identification which we have agreed to help them develop and teach.

We were able to talk frankly with Forestry Division staff about their needs and constraints and how this project might meet some of these. They made clear that a shortage of staff with field identification and data analysis skills was a serious problem and they embraced the opportunity to collaborate with university researchers. As a result of our visit and proposed project UWI and the Forestry Division have signed a memorandum of understanding for collaborative research.

### 5. Conclusion and lessons learned from the Pre-Project Grant

Briefly highlight the main conclusions (positive and negative) gained from the pre-project grant. Please also include any suggestions you may have for improving the impact of this funding scheme.

Pre-project funding was essential for developing a realistic proposal and a safe and practical work plan in close collaboration with our Trinidad partners. They are now enormously enthusiastic about this project and we are certain that it is feasible, will be of real benefit to biodiversity conservation

There is some sensitivity in Trinidad to overseas donors imposing projects without proper consultation. Pre-project funding established the credibility of the Darwin Initiative as a funding agency committed to working collaboratively with local agencies.

Signed:



Date: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004

Name / Title: Dr Nick Brown



## THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

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22<sup>nd</sup> September 2004

Dr N.D. Brown  
Department of Plant Sciences,  
University of Oxford,  
South Parks Road  
Oxford OX1 3RB

Dear Nick:

I am writing to confirm that the University of the West Indies commits itself to providing funds from its own resources to provide the upgrades for the National Herbarium, specifically the acquisition of storage cabinets. It also undertakes to provide resources in kind and to seek private sector funding for the upgrade of the Herbarium generally.

I should like to reiterate that Yasmin Comeau, the Curator of the National Herbarium, would be the most suitable person to take overall responsibility for the project from the UWI end and to liaise with you and other researchers at Oxford.

I should also like to let you know that Professor Narinesingh, the new Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, fully supports the application.

With best wishes

David

Dr. David Rampersad  
Director

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