



# DARWIN INITIATIVE



## Pre-Project Funding Report

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

Project Title	Tomsk Forestry and Biodiversity Action Planning
Country(ies)	Russia and UK
Project Ref No. (if known)	Appl 468
UK Organisation	The Tree Council
Names / Titles of those who travelled to the host country	Kevin Hand, Director Of Campaigns, The Tree Council Wayne Talbot, Educational Consultant
Grant Value	£2188
Start and Finishing Dates	Travel from 8 – 16. 5.04
Report Date	10.8.04

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.

**In Russia:** meetings were organised by IIES at the appropriate levels within organisations to ensure we gained support for the project. The initial meetings were with the Director of the Ecological Committee of Tomsk city; The Head of Ecological Education and other Tomsk city representatives; Head of the Natural Resources Dept of Tomsk region (who represents the region at National Government level) and the Head of Sustainable Development for the region. The main organisations involved in forest conservation also made time to discuss the potential project enabling us to compare and contrast approaches, identify overlaps, and see where duplication had occurred in activities. The organisations contributing to this process were Environment Protection Agency Tomsk Region; State Forestry Organisations; Oblcomnature, which acts as a network with all other NGO's in the oblast. This includes Windrose, 'House of Nature' and TESI (Tomsk Ecological Students Inspection) Tomsk State University Department of Ecology; Tomsk City Ecological committee and the Department of Local Management.

We also undertook field visits to managed forests with both State and Federal Forestry Dept staff, and to city parks with Tomsk State University staff (as an illustration of how urban forests are used). Federal Forest organisations meetings were not planned before the visit, and new meetings with Regional ecological staff resulted from discussions with the University and State representatives.

**In the UK:** meetings on return with the Global Trees Campaign run by Flora and Fauna International (FFI) and forest ecology experts from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). Telephone conferences with Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC), Traidcraft, BTCV, RSPB forest ecologists. Meetings planned with UK reps of the first forest to get FSC certification in Russia. This and the BTO meeting were not planned before the visit.

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.

IIES proved to be a partner that enabled us to gain access to all the relevant organisations, which prevented any major problems. Flexibility was needed on the timetable, depending on availability of staff to be met. This partly reflected changes required in meeting Federal Forest representatives and Regional ecological staff, which were unplanned. The field visits coincided with a national holiday that meant the initial round table became a series of meetings with all partners on the second day. This actually enabled closer questioning on NGO roles and more open discussions on forests and related species conservation. Getting visas proved difficult but happened in time.

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 visit enabled us to develop a better understanding of the complexities of forest conservation and to focus the project on the areas that need support. Without it, it would have been impossible to

understand the problems and opportunities in the region, or develop the trust and co-operation needed by all parties. The outcomes refined our original project idea by identifying new partners most suited to implementing the project, and gaining their support; redefining the use of FSC standards to reflect progress made by groups so far; definition of the main threats to forestry in the region; the potential of other products such as Kedar nuts which had not been mentioned by partners; redefinition of the Red Data species status and the need to undertake further research. All of these points reflect a refinement rather than a change in the original proposal.

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?

By the end of the trip both partners had agreed on the main problems, had identified 3 key areas to work in (primary forest, managed forest and the urban area where most people live) and a series of interlinked projects in each area that would provide definite contributions to biodiversity conservation and help to tackle the main problems.

IIES will be the lead partner in Russia for most of the work and will be the primary contact with all other institutions in Tomsk. They had contact already with all the groups we met, as there are a relatively small number of environmentalists and forestry specialists working in the area, but in most cases our visit added strength to these contacts. Together we developed the following ideas: creating a pilot Forestry Stewardship Council site; raising awareness of the biodiversity value of Tomsk forests amongst local communities; the development of forest product markets, initially with Kedar nuts; developing School Forests; ecological monitoring of forest habitats and red data species.

The project proposal was agreed with IIES, and they suggested many of the ideas in it; others came from joint discussions. They will take the lead on the School Forests work, the organisation of ecological monitoring, and on community production of non-timber forest products. BTO will provide expert advice on monitoring. Price Batch (Altai) Ltd will advise on FSC certification. Traidcraft will help with market research. These 3 partnerships developed as a result of the Pre-Project visit.

#### **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.

This will definitely be a valuable and successful project, as detailed above. The host partners and their colleagues provide a reliable and efficient way of delivering the project in Russia. The project can be a model for similar situations that are likely to be common throughout the vast Siberian taiga forest, and perhaps in other forest areas.

Pre-project funding was very valuable, enabling proper development of the proposals. Flexibility in the timing of the visit was important, especially when the climate precludes field visits over much of the year. The short concise report form is useful. It would have been helpful to have this available on return rather than wait for 3 months. Likewise the Project proposal forms, which have only just appeared, leaving little time for submission by 1 October.

Signed:

Date: 10. 8. 04.

Name / Title: Kevin Hand, Director of Campaigns, The Tree Council

***Please restrict this report to no more than two pages in length and send the completed form to ECTF with your Stage 1 Application Form either via email to [darwin-applications@ectf-ed.org.uk](mailto:darwin-applications@ectf-ed.org.uk) or by post to ECTF, Pentlands Science Park, Bush Loan, Edinburgh EH26 0PH.***