

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	16008
Project Title	Conservation of fungi - a voice for vulnerable and unprotected organisms
Country(ies)	Argentina, Armenia, Cuba, India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Ukraine
UK Organisation	BioNET-INTERNATIONAL
Collaborator(s)	Universidad de Buenos Aires [& others]
Project Leader	D.W. Minter
Report date	29 October 2008
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	Half year report, year 2
Project website	www.cybertruffle.org.uk/darwin-microfungi

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).

General synopsis. Exceptional factors, including family bereavements for three of the project co-ordinators, have resulted in some delays to project work, but these are thought to be recuperable. The project has had some significant successes, notably the establishment of totally new conservation committees in the mycological societies of North America and Brazil. Work to digitize information necessary for the project has been very actively progressed. Country websites set up through this project are now fully functional. A system to monitor numbers of visits by users to the websites established by this project has been set up. From 7 September 2008 (the start of monitoring) up to and including 29 October 2008, 17586 different visitors from 144 different countries viewed 241457 web pages. On the busiest days each week over 500 different users are logging-on. All of these figures are undoubtedly underestimates, since not all pages are linked to the monitoring system. Red-list evaluation workshops have been held in Cuba and Ukraine, and conservation has been placed on the agenda at two international mycological meetings, one global, the other regional for South America.

Statement in baseline timetable (section 21 of original proposal). By 31 July 2008, 300 sample species assessed; locations of second phase red list workshops decided. Second training course held. Country websites established for Argentina, Armenia, India, Saudi Arabia and South Africa with working database interface; target African countries for further country websites selected (probably Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia). **Comment.** Experience has shown that much more machine-readable information is necessary before assessment of sample species can start; intensive activity has been directed to digitizing that information, and evaluations are now expected to start in early 2009. Difficulties in establishing suitable host country locations are now thought to be resolved, and three training courses in different countries of Africa are now scheduled for the first part of 2009. Country websites have been established for Argentina, Armenia, India, Saudi Arabia and South Africa, all with a working database interface. Further country websites have been selected (Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) and are all established, all also with a working database interface. Completion of project objectives is still expected to be on schedule. **By 30 September 2008,** first assessment editorial workshops (Kiev, Havana); second phase red list workshops. Trawl for third training course candidates. **Comment.** Editorial workshops and training course work has been rescheduled, as described earlier in this paragraph.

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.

No changes are anticipated in outputs or budget, but some adjustment of internal timetabling has been necessary, although this is compensated by an additional major output, namely the huge websites generated by this project.

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

This project was selected for an intensive mid-term review, which was held during October 2008. The internal timetabling was fully discussed with the mid-term reviewers.

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?

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.

Annual report review. The reviewer of this project's first annual report wrote, "the project leader is involved in a number of overlapping projects, including *Red Lists for Microfungi* and *Digitizing the CABI Bioscience Fungal Reference Collection*. It is not clear what aspects of progress reported on in the Annual report are attributable to the Darwin project 16-008 as opposed to these other projects. The Project Leader should make this clear in all subsequent reporting".

Comment. All aspects of progress reported on in all reports for Darwin project 16-008 have been attributed transparently, explicitly and correctly to that project. No reported aspect is attributable to any other project. Should it become necessary in future to mention progress relating to other projects, that progress would be explicitly attributed to the correct project. For the record, no project entitled *Red Lists for Microfungi* was referred to in the Annual report. Reference was made to the *IUCN's Sampled Red List Project*, and perhaps the reviewer was thinking of that project. The purpose of the current Darwin Initiative project, as defined in the logframe, states that the project will work in co-operation with the *IUCN's Sampled Red List Project*, and that is exactly what has happened. No funding has been sought and no funding has been received from the *IUCN's Sampled Red List Project*. The other project, *Digitizing the CABI Bioscience Fungal Reference Collection*, funded by GBIF, was explicitly mentioned in section 27 of the proposal form for the current project. The relationship between the current project and the GBIF project remains exactly as described in that section.

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 email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**