

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref. No.	17-003
Project Title	Developing tools for reducing biodiversity losses in tropical agricultural landscapes
Country(ies)	Malaysia
UK Organisation	University of York
Collaborator(s)	Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysian Palm Oil Board, Forest Research Centre, Wilmar (PPB Oil Palm Bhd), Royal Society SE Asian Rainforest Research Programme, Dato' Henry S. Barlow
Project Leader	Dr Jane K Hill
Report date	31st October 2010
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	http://bioltfws1.york.ac.uk/biostaff/staffdetail.php?id=jkh

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).

- Noel Tawatao (DRF1) continued with on-going sampling of ants in forest remnants within oil palm plantations.
- Yen Yee Loh (DRF2) completed writing and submitted her MSc proposal for Universiti Malaysia Sabah.
- Noel and Yen collected data on vegetation structure and forest disturbance in study remnants.
- Two of the UK partners (Prof Jane Hill and Dr Keith Hamer) visited Sabah for 6 weeks in July – August 2010 to meet project partners to discuss progress and to visit field work sites to assess on-site training of DRFs. Face-to-face meetings were held in Malaysia with the following project partners: Dr Suzan Benedick, Dr Glen Reynolds, Dr Chey Vun Khen, and Calley Beamish (all in Sabah) and Dato' Henry S. Barlow (in Kuala Lumpur).
- Jane Hill, Noel and Yen met up with Calley Beamish to discuss gaining access to land cover data sets to be used in investigations by Yen modelling habitat connectivity in oil palm plantations in eastern Sabah that are managed by PPB Oil Palm Bhd (Wilmar). We discussed issues of spatial scale and the scope of Yen's analysis and agreed a timetable of activities for Yen during the 1st year of her MSc.
- Yen received on-site training and field experience sampling butterflies using fruit-baited traps. Traps were set up at two sites in rainforest close to Danum Valley Field Centre and were sampled for 12 days each. This protocol will subsequently be used to sample butterflies in forest remnants in oil palm plantations starting April 2011. Data from Danum Valley will be used as base-line data and analysed to examine changes in diversity over space and time, developing field techniques to be used in future sampling of plantations.
- Noel and Jane Hill met up with Brian Fisher and colleagues from the California Academy of Sciences (<http://www.antweb.org/>) who visited Sabah to run an ant

identification course at Danum Valley Field Centre. Noel demonstrated on the course (~20 graduate students were attending) and also received further advice and support to help him identify some of his cryptic ant species. Further collaborations were discussed to help increase the amount of information and number of Bornean species uploaded onto antweb.

- Jane Hill and Keith Hamer both gave invited talks at the Association for Tropical Biology Conference (July, Bali) and presented findings from current and previous Darwin Initiative-funded projects. Keith Hamer gave a plenary talk at the conference of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (Seoul, August).
- Noel and Yen travelled to York in October to receive further training in research skills, and to attend Masters' courses.
- Copies of manuscripts (Sodhi et al. (2010) *Biological Conservation*; Berry et al. (2010) *Biodiversity & Conservation*; Chen et al. (in press) *Global Ecology & Biogeography*; Tawatao et al. (submitted) *Ant Myrmecology*), recent annual Newsletter, and training progress reports of DRFS are attached, as requested by the reviewer in the Annual report. Evidence of project activities & outputs, such as photographs of training activities, maps, sampling details and current databases will be provided as requested in the next Annual report.
- We are in discussions with our RSPO partner (Henry Barlow) about the best mechanisms for Knowledge Exchange. At the moment, his recommendation is to publish and distribute scientific papers or results, but we are discussing whether brief synopses of paper findings would be helpful also. We are also planning to run a one-day workshop in August 2011 (at the request of Calley Beamish and hosted by Wilmar) to facilitate knowledge exchange with plantation managers. This mid-term workshop had not been planned but there will be no costs implications.

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 problems encountered. Yen started on the project 6 months after it had started (discussed in Annual Report), and she has made an excellent start to her MSc studies.

Noel Tawatao had been in the UK prior to the start of the project in June 2009, and Yen only joined the project in November 2009. In addition, Jane Hill and Keith Hamer visited Sabah in August –September 2009. It had been hoped that the DRFs would visit York in October 2009 to attend Master's courses that start at the beginning of the UK academic year. Because of Yen's late start on the project, and Noels' considerable previous experience in the UK we decided to delay this visit until the following year. This allowed the DRFs to start their field sampling earlier in the Yr1. Requests were made to the Darwin Initiative to carry over UK subsistence costs to Yr 2 to reflect this change, but this was not granted. This change in the timetable will not affect project progress.

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

n/a

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £

4. 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 planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.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: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**