

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report Form

Project Title	Conservation of the Plant Diversity of western Cameroon
Country	Cameroon
Organisation	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Project Ref. No.	162/8/038
Report date	7 Nov. 2002

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

A. The main thrust of work over the period was continued analysis of specimens gathered in previous fieldwork sessions with the National Herbarium of Cameroon. This analysis consisted of identifications, databasing, preparation of Red Data accounts, and description of new species for publication (four papers). Eleven papers based on the project's work were published.

B. The 6 month period began with a month plus long period of fieldwork (April & May) in western Cameroon led by Darwin officer Ben Pollard (two months in the field) with the National Herbarium of Cameroon which included training for about ten conservation project workers and concentrated on surveys of species already identified as threatened. A bonus was the discovery of three sites for a tree species (*Newtonia camerunensis*) previously suspected extinct. Ben's Darwin contract at Kew concluded in mid August. He then obtained a new post as conservation projects co-ordinator at RBG, Kew, but is continuing his link with the Darwin Project.

C. During July GIS training was given at Kew by Justin Moat to Jean-Michel Onana and Gaston Achoundong of the National Herbarium of Cameroon. Because of a recent (2002) increase in official Cameroon government per diems for Government servants when abroad, the higher daily rate meant that the duration of teaching was reduced from a planned two weeks to just over a week for each person. Nonetheless, the objectives were achieved, both students working over the weekend. Equipment was taken back to Cameroon to enable the National Herbarium to conduct basic GIS work.

D. Using funds from inside Kew, we were able to give one month's training at Kew (August/September) in specimen identification and new species description/scientific paper writing for Martin Etuge whose airticket was provided by CRES, the local conservation project at Kupe-Bakossi (western Cameroon) that employs him as field biologist. Two papers have been drafted. This was a particularly successful venture although it was not budgeted/planned in the initial project schedule.

E. During September Dr Achoundong, head of HNC, organized a meeting at Kew with the participation of colleagues from counterpart institutes from France, to discuss future research needs and opportunities regarding botany in Cameroon and the Gulf of Guinea area in general. This included a presentation of the joint National Herbarium of Cameroon-R.B.G., Kew Darwin Initiative and how this work might be extended in future.

F. In early October, specimens began arriving from Yaounde resulting from fieldwork in Oct. 01 and April-May 02. Analysis of these specimens is likely to be delayed due to their having been treated with Naphthalene to counter insect damage while being stored in Cameroon. Naphthalene is now regarded as a hazardous substance in UK and will need to be removed.

G. Two new conservation posters (*Cola suboppositifolia* and *Korupodendron songweanum*) were designed and printed by Ben Pollard for distribution in Cameroon.

H. At the end of October, funded by BAT International, seven staff from RBG, Kew met in Yaounde to begin teaching a two week long course in Herbarium Techniques at the British Council. This was aimed at both technicians from West and Central African National Herbaria and at technicians from local herbaria in Cameroon, especially those that have been involved or been in receipt of specimens from the fieldwork associated with this Darwin project. This training should help ensure the long term survival of the the specimens concerned. This was a project output additional to the original schedule.

Publications submitted for publication 1st April -31st Oct. 2002:

1. Pollard, B. J., Cheek, M. & Bygrave, P. New *Dorstenia* (*Moraceae*) discoveries in western Cameroon. Kew Bull. Subm. 19 May 02.
2. Mackinder, B. & Cheek, M. A new species of *Newtonia* (*Leguminosae-Mimosoideae*) from Cameroon. Subm. 11 July. 02
3. Hoffmann, P. & Cheek, M. Two new species of *Phyllanthus* (*Euphorbiaceae*) from southwest Cameroon. Kew Bull. Subm. w/e 19 July 02
4. Cheek, M. A new species of *Keetia* (*Rubiaceae-Vanguerieae*) from western Cameroon. Kew Bull. Subm. 4 Oct 02.

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 effect the budget and timetable of project activities. Have any of these issues been discussed with the Department and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Unexpected developments (D,E,G &H above) have increased project outputs (in terms of conservation products (G); project sustainability (D, E), and capacity building (D, E, H) and sustainability of herbaria established (H). This has been done by obtaining resources from outside the Darwin budget, generally on the strength of previous achievements by this project. These developments are not expected to perturb the project timetable.

No notable probl

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures.

No.