

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2009)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	EIDP 0032
<b>Project Title</b>	Strengthening capacity for botanical inventory in the Republic of Congo
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Republic of Congo
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Dr J. Mokoko, Dr J.-M. Moutsamboté, Dr E. Kami
<b>Project Leader</b>	Dr D. Harris
<b>Report date</b>	31 October 2009
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR1
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://dps.plants.ox.ac.uk/bol/congo">http://dps.plants.ox.ac.uk/bol/congo</a>

## 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).

Two significant achievements were made by individuals on this project. One student completed her MSc in The Biodiversity and Taxonomy of Plants and returned to Congo to be employed by WCS as a biologist in northern Congo. Her thesis title was “Giant Herbs of the Sangha-Trinational”. The aim of the MSc research project was to investigate different identification and conservation tools for use in northern Congo. The outputs from the research projects were: a dichotomous printed key to the Marantaceae, Costaceae and Commelinaceae; two multi-access computer based keys to Costaceae and Commelinaceae; three photo guides to Commelinaceae, Marantaceae and Commelinaceae and an evaluation of a IUCN conservation assessment of one species which had been reported as “vulnerable”.

The other individual making a significant achievement was a second student from Congo, who travelled the UK in May 2009 enrolled in English language classes and received an unconditional offer of a place on the MSc course “Biodiversity and taxonomy of Plants” at University of Edinburgh in September. The student is now studying on that course.

A 15 minute documentary on botanical inventory for transmission on TV in Congo was completed.

The photoguide to the trees of northern Congo has progressed. The species list has been drawn up and the images selected.

A multi-access key to support the identification manual Sangha Trees, a major product from DI project 15-011 is being prepared. Over half the 522 species in that identification manual have been treated by the key.

Project partners Dr Moutsamboté, Dr Kami and Dr Harris spent two weeks identifying specimens from botanical inventories in northern Congo in Paris and Brussels. This was funded by the Sud Expert Plantes Initiative of the French Government from a grant submitted during work on DI Project 15-011 and as part of the exit strategy of that project.

**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.**

The rules for visa applications to UK changed on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 and this caused extra delays and expense in getting a visa for UK. A much greater amount of time was spent supporting visa applications, changing flights and changing English courses than was the case previously. It is unlikely that this will lead to any impact on the overall project however the timetable of activities has been changed slightly by postponing training in Congo to later in this reporting year.

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

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:    no**

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:    no**

**3. 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 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](mailto: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**