

# DARWIN INITIATIVE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF SPECIES: APPLICATION FOR GRANT FOR ROUND 10 COMPETITION

Please read the accompanying Guidance Note before completing this form. Give a full answer to each section; applications will be considered on the basis of information submitted on this form. Applicants are asked not to use the form supplied to cross-refer to information in separate documents except where this is invited on the form. The space provided indicates the level of detail required but you may provide additional information on a separate sheet if necessary. Copies of this form are available on disk or by e-mail on request. You are asked also to complete the summary sheet. Although you may reproduce this sheet in a reasonable font, you should not expand it beyond an A4 sheet (leaving the allocated space for DEFRA comments to be made) as additional information will not be taken into account.

## 1. Name and address of organisation

**University of Leeds, School of Geography**

## 2. Principals in project

Details	Project leader	Other UK personnel (if working more than 50% of their time on project)	Main project partner or co-ordinator in host country
<b>Surname</b>	Springate-Baginski		Datta
<b>Forename(s)</b>	Oliver		Ishwar Chandra
<b>Post held</b>	Research Fellow		Head of Department
<b>Institution (if different to above)</b>			Institute of Forestry
<b>Department</b>	School of Geography		Silviculture
<b>Telephone</b>			
<b>Fax</b>			
<b>Email</b>			

Please provide a one page CV for each of these named individuals.

## 3. Project title (not exceeding 10 words)

**Institutionalising Participatory Biodiversity Assessment, Conservation & Sustainable Utilisation in Nepal.**

## 4. Abstract of study (in no more than 750 characters)

Sustainable biodiversity conservation in the densely populated middle hills of Nepal requires the active participation of local people. Many forests across the middle-hills have already been put under the management of local 'Forest User Group' (or FUGs), yet the Nepal Biodiversity Action Plan has so far lacked a participatory process to involve FUGs in conservation (Shrestha, NK: 2001), beyond buffer zones around specifically protected areas. FUGs are the obvious basis for both local biodiversity conservation AND locally equitable and sustainable resource utilisation, to help reduce Nepal's extreme poverty. This research project will test models for decentralised biodiversity conservation and use, in conjunction with local, district and national stakeholders. The project will initially support the piloting of participatory Biodiversity Assessment / Biodiversity Action Planning for conservation (BA/BAP) at a number of FUGs, and will monitor the results. At the District level, the project will develop the technical capacity of stakeholders to support the ongoing process of FUG BA/BAP. Workshop facilitation and process support will be provided in order that these FUG plans are coordinated through District Biodiversity Action Planning. District-level initiatives will feed into the National Biodiversity Action Planning process, through briefings and workshops. The objective and intended legacy is that participatory ways of working to conserve and use biodiversity will become recognised and established at all levels.

**5. Timing. Give the proposed starting date and duration of the project.**

April 2002 - March 2005: 3 Years

**6. Describe briefly the aims, activities and achievements of your organisation. (Please note that this should describe your unit, institute or department within a university.)**

**Aims**

The School of Geography at the University of Leeds aims to be a centre of excellence in teaching and research in Geographical issues. Within the School of Geography, the Environment and Development Group focuses on natural resource management issues in developing countries, and has particular experience and expertise in South Asia, including Nepal. This research also involves the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation, which is spread between the School of Geography and the School of Biology at Leeds, and is a national centre for research and training on Biodiversity issues.

**Activities**

The Environment and Development Group at Leeds is currently engaged in a number of major research projects. The 3 year DFID Policy Research Programme funded project 'Improving Policy - Livelihood Relationships in South Asia', which is led by Professor John Soussan, examines livelihood impacts of a number of progressive natural resource policies, both forest, water and coastal zone, across India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The project involves a broad network of collaborators in the region, including in Nepal; the DFID Livelihoods and Forestry Project; Dr. Keshav Kanel, Donor Project Coordinator at HMG Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation; Dr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, team leader of a leading national NGO (WATCH), South Asia regional co-ordinator for FAO Forest Trees and People programme, and long-time leading CF activist; and Sabita Thapa from Kathmandu University.

**Achievements**

The Environment and Development group has recently successfully completed a DFID NRSP-funded 3-year research project 'Community Forestry in Nepal: Sustainability and Impacts on Common and Private Resources'. Findings from this are shortly to be circulated through the ODI Rural Development Forestry Newsletter. As part of this project two Nepali Community Forestry Officers (working in the DFID NUKCFP project) received PhD training at Leeds, and are shortly to submit their theses. The findings from this research project have been incorporated in the design of the new DFID Livelihood and Forestry project, and through national-level Workshops in Kathmandu have influenced thinking on Community Forestry in Nepal, particularly in regard to issues of poverty alleviation and support relationships between the Department of Forestry District Offices and Forest User Groups. This research, coordinated by Oliver Springate-Baginski, was based on a Participatory Action Research method, and the resource assessment exercises (primarily of woody species) provide a base line for further biodiversity assessment in some Districts. Overall the Environment and Development group has well-established and on-going working relationships with all the key national stakeholders in Community Forestry in Nepal, and a respected track record of working with them.

**7. Has your organisation received funding under the Initiative before? If so, please give details.**

No

**8. Which overseas institutions, if any, will be involved in the project? Please explain the responsibilities of these institutions.**

The action research programme is focussed on inter-institutional learning on biodiversity conservation and use, and so involves bringing together a range of different stakeholders to work together. The field team will be made up of 4 members: 1. The nodal project partner at National level will be Kathmandu University, and led by Sabita Thapa a lecturer in Biological sciences. Sabita already has close affiliations with University of Leeds, and is currently in the final year of her PhD, on Gender issues in Community Forestry, supervised from Geography, University of Leeds. The research team will also be constituted from: 2. A field officer from Federation of Community Forest User Groups of Nepal (FECOFUN), a well established apex organisation supporting and promoting the interests of FUGs. 3. A field officer from the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation / Department of Forests. This is likely to be a motivated District Forest Officer or Ranger, on secondment. 4. A bilateral project District officer: OP Dev (of DFID Livelihoods and Forestry project), who is also currently completing his PhD part-time from the University of Leeds. At National level the project will be guided by a 'learning group' panel involving the key stakeholders: Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation; FECOFUN; and Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST) (Prof. Bhajracharya) who will play a facilitative role. Other key stakeholders will also be involved. At District level, 4 Eastern districts will initially be selected for working in, and within these an area coordinator will be established..

## PROJECT DETAILS

### 9. Define the purpose (main objective) of the project in line with the logical framework.

The project aims to institutionalise the maintenance, improvement and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity across the middle hills of Nepal, through mobilising Community Forest User Groups to incorporate biodiversity consideration into their Operational Plans for forest management, product extraction, processing and marketing. His Majesty's Government of Nepal has been developing the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) through a consultative process. To date Forest User Groups, the actual legal managers of much of the middle-hill forests, feel their views and interests have been poorly represented, and fear a return to a conflictual relationship with the Department of Forests, which had led to a deterioration of forest condition. To ensure the achievement of Nepal's commitments to the Biodiversity Convention, new ways of coordinating biodiversity conservation between the Regional Conservation Officer and Forest User Groups must be identified and implemented. Biodiversity in middle hill forests is a valuable asset. These forests had been under serious biotic pressure, but through Community Forestry policy reforms and the active involvement of local people in their management they are now flourishing (Springate-Baginski et al 2001). There are many examples where the poorest people, those with least private assets, have made a sustainable livelihood from the collection of valued medicinal herbs.

### 10. Is this a new project or the continuation of an existing one?

New

### 11. What is the evidence for a demand or need for the work? How is the project related to conservation priorities in the host country(ies)? How would the project assist the host country with its obligations under the Biodiversity Convention?

#### How was the work identified?

From findings of previous Leeds University research project in Nepal (DFID NRSP R6778), participatory biodiversity monitoring and conservation was identified as a key need, both if FUGS are to reassure the Department of Forests that they can be effective managers of the forest resource, and also if they are to identify and make best sustainable use of potentially valuable opportunities for marketing forest products. Biodiversity in the mid-hills is a threatened asset whose sustainable use could bring great livelihood benefits, especially to the poorest. FUG groups and their national representatives currently express concern that their role and potential for biodiversity conservation is not being paid sufficient attention.

#### How is the project related to conservation priorities in the host country?

The National Report in Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (1997: HMGN Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation) states that 'the goal is to integrate biodiversity conservation with socio-economic development'. Through the implementation process, protected areas have been established across 15% of the country. The management of much of the forests in the Middle hills have been handed over to the local forest users. Although biodiversity conservation in these forests adjacent to settlements are also stated conservation priorities, they have not yet received similar level of attention as have protected areas, and this work is now urgent, as the local FUG institutions mature and consolidate their capacity to implement forest management plans locally. There are concerns over the sustainable extraction of forest products, particularly many marketable varieties of medicinal and aromatic plants, and means of effective regulation of extraction levels has been highlighted as an important issue to be clarified.

#### How will the project assist the host country meet its obligations under the Biodiversity Convention?

His Majesty's Government of Nepal is a signatory of the Convention of Biological Diversity, and has made significant progress in implementing obligations, through the formation of a network of protected areas which totals almost 15% of the country. However there is now a need to address the issue of biodiversity conservation outside of this protected area network. The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation is currently seeking to introduce a system of biodiversity 'corridors' outside of protected areas, although the modalities for this remain to be established. The lack of a consultative process in doing this has caused concern amongst FUGs and their representatives in FECOFUN, who have expressed fear that the government may undermine their role as local managers of the forest, through hasty and non-participatory conservation measures. Hence this research project seeks to find a common understanding between the government and local forest users through which participatory and equitable conservation processes may develop. In this way the research will help support the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation to identify practical approaches to local biodiversity assessment, conservation and active management.

**12. In what ways can this project be considered a Darwin project? How does the project relate to the Darwin principles? How would the project be advertised as a Darwin project and in what ways would the Darwin name and logo be used?**

This project fits directly within the Darwin Principles in that it seeks to establish and promote innovative practical methods for spreading biodiversity conservation and also sustainable biodiversity use for poverty alleviation. The project will be unusual due to its policy-process oriented Participatory Action Research method, and is likely to attain a high profile, both nationally within Nepal, with the UK and internationally. At the outset of the project a bulletin announcing the project will be circulated to all relevant National and District level stakeholders in Nepal, and also appropriate institutions in the UK. The bulletin will discuss the project aims and methods. This will clearly state the primary source of funding as the Darwin Initiative, and will feature the Darwin name and logo. The Darwin name and logo will appear prominently on all subsequently published materials, and will feature prominently on any banners used in workshops.

**13. Set out the proposed timetable for the work, including the programme's measurable outputs using the attached list of output measures.**

<b>PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>		
Year/Month (starting April)	Output Number (see standard output measures)	Description (include numbers of people involved, numbers of publications printed or produced and days/weeks where applicable)
August 2003	2.	2 MSc.s 'Biodiversity and Conservation for Nepali team members
September 2002	4B	4 team members to receive 2 weeks training in biodiversity assessment.
March 2005	7.	Tools Manual for Participatory BA/BAP, local & District (Engl/ Nepali)
March 2005	7.	Bulletins, posters and leaflets summarising tools (Engl/Nepali)
	8.	Total time: 41- 57 weeks (OSB 32-48 weeks, OP: 6 weeks, PB: 3 weeks)
Mar 2004	9.	16 local FUG level BA/BAPs, 4 District level BA/ BAPs
Mar 2005	11.A / B	At least 3 papers to be published (1 per year) / 6 papers to be submitted
Mar. 2004	12A.	Web database for local & District Bio. Assessment & Action-Plan data.
Mar. 2005	14A	3 National workshops incl. one final seminar, & 12 District workshops
Mar.2005	14B	At least 3 international conferences attended where findings presented.
Mar 2005	15A / B	12 local and 12 national press releases in Nepal.
Mar 2005	15 C / D	3 National and 3 local press releases in UK
Aug.2003	17A.	Dissemination network established in Nepal via Nat. 'learning group'.
Mar.2005	19A.	3 National radio features on Nepali Community Forestry show.
Mar.2005	20.	£1,500 laptop computer & printer
Mar.2005	22.	At least 16 FUGs will have Bio. Assessment process established in their forests

<b>Key Milestones</b>	
Year/Month (starting April)	Description (include travel dates, drafts and other processes that support the delivery of outputs)
2002/April	1. Initial inception meeting with research team
May - Oct	2. National Project inception workshop held in Kathmandu, for national-level 'learning group' / advisory panel to 1. Review progress of National Biodiversity Action Plan and highlight gaps and issues for project to address; 2. Reach consensus on how to identify improved ways of working for achieving Biodiversity Convention objectives through the research project. Revise research plan. Draft paper on NBAP process in Nepal.
	3. Regional / District level workshop to involve district level stakeholders in research process, and identify issues, opportunities and locations for field activities.
	4. Develop Field tools: on Participatory Biodiversity Assessment methods, and Biodiversity Action Planning facilitation method.
	5. Field training of team in participatory biodiversity assessment methods: (2 weeks with O. Phillips).
	6. Pilot Biodiversity Assessment and Biodiversity Action Planning process in 1 FUG (estimated time: 10 days). Biodiversity Action Plan, to provisionally include; Participatory biodiversity assessment; Forest Operational Plan: modified to accommodate conservation and sustainable product extraction regulations; Product extraction and marketing options: identification and exploration of potentials, and means to monitor extraction level specified; time-bound implementation plan Bio-diversity assessment also performed in similar forest in non-FUG managed areas, to assess differences in biodiversity outside FUGs.
	7. Facilitation of 2 FUG Biodiversity Action Plans in each of 2 districts; (total of 4) (est. 5 days each)
	8. District Level process: workshops held with FUGs and FUG networks, and District stakeholders (DDC, DFO etc.), to share findings and discuss possible support roles and activities.
	9. District Development Committee Planning meetings – to facilitate District Biodiversity Action Planning process on basis of issues emerging from FUG BAP process.
November - December	10. National Workshop to review progress. NBAP in light of FUG BAPs and DDC BAPs
Jan-March	11. 2 members of research team to visit UK to begin MSc. courses in Biodiversity and Conservation at Leeds University, involving courses on Field Biodiversity Assessment Methods, Statistical Methods and computer skills.
March	12. Drafting of annual outputs; Annual report on progress, Field Method for BAP: paper produced; Analysis of biodiversity assessment data; Journal articles on review of NBAP process in Nepal, and opportunities to implement 'best practice'.
	13. FUG BAP Review in each existing site (5 days each – team working together); Biodiversity Assessment – compare with previous levels from 2002; Review progress of FUGs BAP implementation and outcomes; revise FUG BAP
2003 /April	14. Facilitate 2 further FUG BAPs in each district (5 days each)
May-June	15. Workshop of FUGs with BAP to meet together to discuss NTFP marketing issues and other issues of common interest. District Level workshop to share findings with other FUGs and District stakeholders (DDC, DFO etc.)
July	16. District Development Committee planning meetings to review District Biodiversity Action Planning process on the basis of issues arising from FUG BAPs.
August-October	17. National learning group meeting to assess and discuss outcomes
	18. National level workshop: review of NBAP implementation in the light of the FUG and District Biodiversity Action Planning process.
November - December	19. Team to travel to Leeds for MSc. course; for analysis of biodiversity assessment data and to finalise outputs for Year: Annual report on progress, Analysis of biodiversity assessment and change; analysis of local process of biodiversity action; Journal articles on review of NBAP process in Nepal
January -March	20. Investigation of marketing opportunities for NTFPs and support activities to FUGs (e.g. supporting marketing networks, etc.) to develop marketing linkages to districts and FUGs
2004 / April	21. Field Biodiversity assessment and action planning review cycle: in the 12 FUGs.
May - July	22. DDC BAP process workshops.
August	23. Supervise exposure visits from other project staff, govt. staff, and NGO staff

Sept.	24. Advise / train capacity in 4 further districts, to adopt similar approaches
Nov. - Jan	25. Analysis and writing up final reports
2005 / March	26. National / International Level review workshop in Kathmandu to conclude project: §Presentation of biodiversity profile of FUGs with BAPs over 3 yr.s §Assessment of Action-planning process § Policy options assessed and best-practice recommended §Networking activities with aim of ensuring further funding / support to district planning process – institutionalisation of improved working relationships

**14. Do you know of any other individual/organisation carrying out similar work? Give the details of the work, explaining the similarities and differences.**

Previous work in Nepal on taxonomy of flowering plants has been completed by Bob Press of the National History Museum, in conjunction with Tribhuvan University. Currently there are a number of groups working on Biodiversity-related forest management issues in Nepal, although most focus on protected areas.

**15. Will the project include training and development? Please indicate how many trainees will be involved, from which countries and what will be the criteria for selection. How will you measure the effectiveness of the training and will those trained then be able to train others? Where appropriate give the length of any training course.**

Training Activity	Dates	Who will participate, how many will participate and for how long?
Field method training	Sept. 2002	Dr. Oliver Phillips, Lecturer in Geography, University of Leeds, will give 2 weeks field training to the research team, at the time of piloting the first FUG research assessment.
Part time MSc. 'Biodiversity and Conservation' University of Leeds to include: §Field Biodiversity Assessment Methods §Statistical Methods and Computer Packages §'Ecology and Change in Tropical Environments'	January - March 2003 January - March 2004	2 members of research team to attend part time MSc. course at University of Leeds , for 1 term per year (spring term) over the first 2 years of the project.

**16. How will trainee outcomes/destinations be monitored after the end of the training?**

Field methods training will be assessed through process monitoring of FUG BAP implementation by senior team members  
MSc. training at Leeds will be examined as part of the course.

**17. How is the work of the project expected to continue after the end of grant period? A clear exit strategy must be included.**

The aim of the project is to institutionalise new ways for stakeholders at different levels to co-ordinate biodiversity conservation. By the end of the project biodiversity action planning processes will be set in place at local, and district level, and ownership of these will be held by in-country institutions. These processes are intended to be self-sustaining, and through demonstrating models for improved participation and stakeholder coordination, it is reasonably expected will be duplicated and 'scaled-up'.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

**18. Describe how progress on the project would be monitored and evaluated in terms of achieving its aims and objectives, both during the lifetime of the project and at its conclusion. How would you ensure that it achieves value for money? What arrangements will be made for disseminating results? If applicable, how would you seek the views of clients/customers?**

Progress monitoring - according to milestone achievements  
Value for money: through improvements in local, district and national capacity for biodiversity conservation and management, and stimulation of the biodiversity conservation policy process at each of these levels.

**Logical framework. Please enter the details of your project onto the matrix using the note at Annex B of the Guidance Note.**

Project summary	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Important assumptions
<p><b>Goal</b></p> <p><i>To assist countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources with the conservation of biological diversity and implementation of the Biodiversity Convention</i></p>	/	<p>Independently collected data and monitoring of biodiversity and of implementation of conservation initiatives</p>	<p>Continued commitment of State and District governments and local people to biodiversity conservation as a priority.</p> <p>Independent data collection reliable</p>
<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>To institutionalise Biodiversity Action Planning processes in Nepal at District and Forest User Group levels, to ensure biodiversity is identified, protected, and where appropriate utilised on a sustainable basis to help alleviation of rural poverty.</p>	<p>Number of FUGs with Biodiversity Action Planning (BAP) process institutionalised, and FUG Operational Plans accomodating bidiversoity issues. Number of Districts with Biodiversity Action Planning process institutionalised. Evidence of maintained or improved biodiversity in Community and National Forests</p>	<p>FUG's BAPs collated at district level annually.</p> <p>District' BAP's collated annually.</p> <p>Evidence of changes in biodiversity collected through biodiversity assessment excersizes in 16 study sites.</p>	<p>FUGs and District Development Committees (DDCs) willing to co-operate with research project.</p>
<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <p>Field tools for local participatory Biodiversity Assessment, and Action Planning (BA/BAP) process developed</p> <p>BA/BAP implemented and documented in at least 12 FUGs.</p> <p>District-level Biodiversity Action Planning (DBAP) proicess implemented in at least 4 Districts</p>	<p>Field tool documentation produced</p> <p>BACAP documetation for 16 FUGs produced, including biodiversity assessment data</p> <p>DBAP documentation produced for 4 Districts</p>	<p>Project progress reporting:</p> <p>By month 3 field tools documented.</p> <p>By month 12 documentation of 4 local BAPs</p> <p>By Month 24 documantation of at least 4 district BAPs.</p> <p>By month 36 documentaiton of National BAP process changes in light of project</p>	<p>Existing institutional arrangements provide a basis for more participatory and sustainable approaches to biodiversity management. Inovations in management regimes and collaboration can be developed and implemented</p>
<p><b>Activities</b></p> <p>Field tools developed and piloted.</p> <p>BACAP process facilitated in at least 12 FUGs</p> <p>District DBAP process facilitated in at least 4 districts.</p> <p>National BAP process regarding CF sensitised to local participation issues.</p>	<p>Budget summary</p> <p>Project milestones: 1:26</p>	<p>Project reports</p>	<p>Political instability does not prevent meetings and field work</p>