

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	162/11/023
Project Title	Education and training for restoring tropical forest biodiversity
Country(ies)	Thailand
UK Organisation	East Malling Research (formerly Horticulture Research International)
Collaborator(s)	Forest Restoration Research Unit, Chiang Mai University
Report date	October 31 2004
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR3
Project website	www.forru.org

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable.

Good progress has been made over the last 6 months, and the project outputs are mostly on schedule. A detailed report was recently provided (September 16 2004) in response to the review of the second year report (received September 04). This is appended.

Bimonthly Workshops: Three workshops scheduled for the last 6 months were completed as planned. The target groups reached were: secondary school pupils for whom the Darwin team ran a residential camp at Doi Suthep Park HQ on (7-9 May); employees of Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand who are responsible for rehabilitating open cast lignite mines (28-30th May); and a group of primary school teachers (8-10th September). We have now concluded the target number of workshops (14) but will run two extra ones in the next project period.

School events: Thirty school events (in classrooms and at FORRU's nurseries and field sites) were run during this reporting period (115 since the project began) reaching more than 1,550 children and involving 78 teachers.

Extension Visits: The Darwin team provided technical support and financial aid (from additional funds provided by the Rotary Club) to Amphur Pong conservation group in Payao Province on 22-23 September, to assist them with establishing their own native tree nursery. A previous planning trip had been made on 24th April. Additional extension visits were made to help communities plan planting events at Pang Fan and Pa Sor in Chiang Rai Province in May. In addition, a return visit to EGAT to plan further collaborative projects to help restore abandoned lignite mines took place on 14-15th September. An extension visit was also run to Maejo University Campus in Phrae Province in August to help former DEO, Mr. Thanakorn Latirsuwan (now a university lecturer) plan a tree nursery and forest restoration plots to serve as a demonstration area for agricultural extension students.

Additional education events: On September 24th, the Darwin team ran a 1-day mini-workshop for representatives from the Laotian and Cambodian Tree Seed Projects (supported by DANIDA). As a result a visit by more foresters from these neighbouring countries has been scheduled for December. In addition, 2 CMU undergraduate interns received training by working with the Darwin team for two weeks. Thai team leader, Stephen Elliott travelled to Yunnan, China (supported by ICRAF) to follow up on proposals made during the workshop for Yunanese foresters last year, to establish a forest restoration research unit in the Buffer zone of

Gaoligaoshan National Nature Reserve.

Newsletter and Website: The forest restoration newsletter was produced and distributed in May and September 2004. Approximately 700 copies in Thai and 200 in English were mailed out. Additional copies were downloaded from the websites and copies were handed out to all workshop participants and teachers at schools events, as well as casual visitors to the unit. The project website has been updated with copies of literature produced by the project, as well as news of latest events. The project is also featured on the UNEP-WCMC website (<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/restoration/docs/Thailand.pdf>).

Media: Darwin Team members took part in a local radio broadcast about the project in June. The recent visit of the UK's Environment Minister and Ambassador to one of the project sites was covered by the Bangkok Post and Channel 11 TV. In addition, discussions are being held to feature the project as part of a TV documentary for the BBC in 2005. FORRU was invited to make a booth at the "River and Stream Conservation Week" exhibition at Kaad Suan Kaew, Chiang Mai's largest shopping mall, to advertise its educational services, on 16-20th September. During that time several hundred copies of the newsletter and brochures were handed out. A seminar about the project was presented at the annual meeting of Thailand's Biodiversity Research and Training Programme on October 14th (SAVE FOR NEXT REPORT?). Darwin project leaders David Blakesley and Steve Elliott gave a joint presentation to Eden Friends at the Eden Project in May. This followed publication of an article in Eden Friends Magazine, Spring 2004, which described the Darwin Education Project.

Project evaluations: For our response to the reviewers' comments on the first project evaluation, please see the attached document, which was submitted to the Darwin Initiative on 09/09/04.

A second project evaluation exercise was completed during this project period, using questionnaires (65 replies out of 204 distributed) mailed to all those who have participated in project activities and in depth interviews with officials of 9 organisations, who have been involved in co-ordinated programmes of activities under this project. This evaluation exercise continued to show high satisfaction amongst those participating in project activities and demand for more work. A copy of the 2nd evaluation report is appended .

Forest Restoration Manual: Copies of key practical chapters have been provided to the Education Team, to field test in their workshops. Completed chapters have also been distributed to notable ecologists in the region for more formal academic review. Comments back have been very favourable, but not detailed. A copy of the draft chapters was also recently sent to Darwin, in response to the second year review. Because of the issues detailed in our last report, we have delayed publication expect to launch early in the new year. We do not feel that this will detract from the overall programme as it will allow time for the independent Darwin review process to improve the book.

Delays with transfer of funds to the Thai partner is causing further problems with production of the manual since the Thai partner is unable to borrow funds to prepay for printing of the book. If the current delays in payments continue (the Thai partner has not yet received any funds since last March) payment for printing the book will not be possible until mid-2005. Therefore, we request that funds for printing the book are transferred to Thailand in advance. We understand Darwin's policy on not making payments in advance, but would like to point out that in this case, one of the key outputs of the project will not be achieved within the timeframe of the project unless the money needed to print the book can be transferred to the Thai partner within the next few weeks.

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.

Frustration with late payments and the cash flow problems that result has contributed to several of the staff leaving the project. Personnel in developing countries do not have the financial reserves necessary to absorb delayed payments of salaries etc. Therefore, staff turnover has been higher than anticipated. The Thai team leader's time has been taken up with training new staff members, which has limited the amount of time he has been able to contribute towards writing the manual and has contributed substantially to the delay in preparing the manual. Over the project period, a total of 6 different people have occupied the 3 DEO positions at various times. Thus the time spent by the Thai team leader on training personnel has been twice that originally planned for. So far, money has been borrowed from other funding sources, meant for research work, to cover the considerable delays in receiving the Darwin funds in Thailand, usually. Consequently participation in the Darwin Project has impacted negatively on the Thai partner's ability to meet their new research objectives, on which improvements in the Darwin education programme should be based.

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

We have repeatedly brought up the problems caused to the Thai partner with delayed transfer of funds in previous reports but with no resolution being offered by the Darwin office in London. The matter was also raised by the Thai team leader with UK Environment Minister, Elliott Morely during his recent visit to view the project.

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.

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 by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**