

# Darwin Initiative

## Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

**PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports but will contact you individually should any questions arise**

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	162/12/030
<b>Project Title</b>	Building Capacity for Plant Biodiversity, Inventory and Conservation in Nepal
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Nepal
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, Nepal (RONAST). HMG Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Department of Plant Resources, Nepal (DPR). Tribhuvan University, Central Department of Botany, Nepal (TU-CDB).
<b>Report date</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2005
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 3
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://rbg-web2.rbge.org.uk/nepal/darwin">http://rbg-web2.rbge.org.uk/nepal/darwin</a> (part of <a href="http://www.floraofnepal.org">www.floraofnepal.org</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).**

In the last six months one major activity was planned (the Third Fieldwork Training Expedition) and duly undertaken, but other activities including in-country progress meetings and personal project sessions have been undertaken by the Darwin Scholars and the Nepalese collaborators.

The Third Fieldwork Training Expedition involved a 21-day trek & camping-based expedition to Sagarmatha National Park between 10<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October. Four RBGE staff members participated in expedition and, along with the two Nepalese co-ordinators, provided training for six Darwin Scholars. Two of the RBGE staff members were entirely self-funded. As well as the vital training and experience-sharing outputs, nearly 900 plant collections were made in sets of 4 or 5 (ca. 3600 individual specimens), along with silica gel dried leaf material and digital photographs (habit and close up) for the majority of these collections. We were privileged that Dr Uday Sharma (Director General of Department of Forests, HM Government of Nepal) was able to join the team for the first week and shared his experience from his time as the first Warden of this National Park in the mid 1970's. He also set up meetings with the current Park Administration and Buffer Zone Council. The team of nine Nepalese botanists with four from the UK was the largest in which Nepalese botanists has ever been involved with in Nepal, and as such it was much acclaimed as a unique event. Work continued on return to Kathmandu where it took over three full days to process all the collections for distribution to the partner organisations. An additional activity (not funded by the Darwin grant) was the running of a one-day workshop by RBGE staff at DPR headquarters and the National Botanical Garden in Godavari. This workshop on basic techniques in seed collecting for seed storage and voucher collection was aimed at DPR staff (especially those of the Botanical Garden) who had not been able to participate in the Darwin Initiative project, and to give them the grounding for moving towards establishing a biodiversity seedbank for Nepal. A domestic fridge was purchased and donated to DPR for the storage of nearly 180 seed numbers collected in three sets as a start towards the seedbank. At the end of the trip Mark Watson gave a lecture at the British Council in Kathmandu on fieldwork and plant collecting in Nepal.

During the year the Nepali participants on the first UK study visit (Jan/Feb 2005) published an illustrated

booklet reporting on the event, and Keshab Rajbhandari and Mark Watson jointly authored a booklet on the Rhododendrons of Nepal (both in addition to stated deliverables).

**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.**

There have been no new unexpected developments over the last 6 months, but we are planning a slight change to the timing of one of the events. The Project Conference initially scheduled for after the third workshop will be moved to the end of the project (mid March 2006). This enables completion certificates to be awarded to all the Darwin Scholars as they would then have completed all their activities, and so this timing is more appropriate for such a celebratory concluding event.

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

No, no change in budget is foreseen and so it is not considered a major issue.

**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?**

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 by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, [stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk](mailto: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.**