

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

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

<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>	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2004
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 2
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://rbg-web2.rbge.org.uk">http://rbg-web2.rbge.org.uk</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).**

During the last six months there has been one major activity, that of the First Training Expedition in June 2004. Organisation and permissions for the botanical expedition went smoothly, aided by good collaboration with our Nepalese partners. Five Nepalese botanists accompanied three from RBGE on a 19-day trek-based expedition to Sagarmatha National Park (Everest region). 368 gatherings were made, including 228 herbarium collections (in sets of six, i.e. about 1200 specimens), with an additional 500 field records. Three sets of herbarium specimens have been left in Nepal (with DPR, TU-CDB and the National Park administration), three were brought back to RBGE and will be used during the identification process. A separate report on the expedition has been produced and will soon be available on the project website.

The feedback from the expedition participants was very favourable, and we were all very pleased with the outcomes. Due to the switch to a higher altitude than planned (see below), we were rather early in the flowering season for the area we visited and consequently the actual numbers of collections were lower than we anticipated. Nevertheless, all the training objectives of the expedition were met, and the reduced volume of plant material enabled us to focus more on training and testing of collecting and data recording techniques.

### **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 most significant problem encountered was the location of fieldwork. The original plan for the three training expeditions was to journey to botanically less well known parts of Nepal: the midlands in the east, the central lowlands and the highlands in the west. Unfortunately, since then the political situation with the Maoist insurgency in Nepal has deteriorated, it is not longer safe to visit remote areas that do not have government security. On the advice of HM Government of Nepal we decided to change the location of this first fieldwork from east Nepal to the Sagarmatha National Park in the highlands on the border of

