

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

Project Ref. No.	14-004
Project Title	A Biodiversity Monitoring System for Trinidad and Tobago
Country(ies)	Trinidad and Tobago
UK Organisation	Oxford University
Collaborator(s)	National Herbarium, University of West Indies, Forestry Division, Asa Wright Nature Centre
Report date	31 st October 2005
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 1
Project website	

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).

1. Oxford University issued a press release announcing the project on 4th May 2005. <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/po/050504.shtml>. The project was featured in BluePrint, the University newsletter, on 12th May 2005. The University of the West Indies posted a feature on the project on their website in June 2005.
2. A Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up between Oxford University and the University of the West Indies. This was signed in Oxford by the Head of the Life Sciences Division on behalf of OU and by the Director of Development on behalf of UWI on 5th May 2005.
3. The project started on the 1st July 2005.
4. All field equipment and the field vehicle were purchased in August 2005. UWI made a substantial additional financial contribution to the project to enable a new, rather than a second-hand vehicle to be purchased.
5. The refurbishment of the National Herbarium has begun. New steel herbarium cabinets have been ordered and will be installed once a structural survey of the Herbarium building has been completed.
6. The Oxford post-doctoral research position was advertised and attracted 17 applicants. Four candidates were short listed and interviewed, one by video link from Australia. Dr William Hawthorne was appointed. Dr Hawthorne has extensive experience of biodiversity surveys and development of field guides. The UWI post-doctoral research and herbarium assistant positions were advertised. No applications were received for the post-doctoral position and only one application for the herbarium assistant post. As it was felt unlikely that an appropriately qualified applicant would come forward, the post-doctoral position was re-graded as a post graduate research assistantship. Ms Shoba Maharaj was appointed to this post from October 2005 and will co-ordinate field surveys. Depending on her progress over the forthcoming year, Ms Maharaj may register for a Ph.D. at UWI under our joint supervision. The herbarium assistantship is being re-advertised.

7. A team of 3 students were employed in Oxford during the summer to database Caribbean specimens from the Oxford herbaria. Approximately 4500 specimens (about half of the Caribbean material held at Oxford) have been databased. All specimens (not just type material) were photographed at high resolution. The material is available at <http://herbaria.plants.ox.ac.uk/bol/?Caribbean>.
8. Drs Brown, Harris and Hawthorne visited UWI for two weeks in September 2005. BRAHMS software was installed on two computers in the Herbarium. SAH gave a two day training course to the Herbarium Curator, Mrs Yasmin Baksh Comeau (YBC) and research assistant in the use of the software and developed a plan for the databasing of the Trinidad collection on BRAHMS. Approximately 6,000 specimens held in the T&T Herbarium had already been recorded on an MS Access database by the Herbarium Curator. These were converted to BRAHMS format and this database is now up and running. A method has been developed for converting over 30 Microsoft Word file containing full details of the herbarium records for Trinidad and Tobago material held in Kew and the Natural History Museum (collated by YBC and Dr Denis Adams) to BRAHMS format.
9. A field methodology was agreed and three full surveys carried out (Mt St Benedict, Morne Blure and Matura Reserve) in order to test the practicality of the method and train field staff. Over 400 voucher specimens were collected. YBC and SM have now trained the first group of volunteers who will carry out the field collection work. Three more training sessions are planned for NGO and Forestry Division staff.
10. NDB and WH visited two Forestry Division permanent sample plots with the Assistant Conservator to discuss how they should be incorporated into the country-wide survey. WH trained YBC and SM in taking photographs of botanical specimens for use in the Virtual Field Herbarium and field guides.
11. A detailed programme for the next four months was agreed. A network of 80 sample plots was identified. The first phase of field sampling is now scheduled for completion by April 2006.

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.

None

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/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

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.**