



DARWIN INITIATIVE



Pre-Project Funding Report

This report should be completed and submitted with a Stage 1 Darwin Application

Project Title	A biodiversity conservation training programme for the Yaboti Biosphere Reserve
Country(ies)	UK and Argentina
Project Ref No. (if known)	
UK Organisation	Eden Project
Names / Titles of those who travelled to the host country	Prof. Sir Ghillean Prance, Director of Science Mr. Daniel Ryan, Biodiversity Coordinator
Grant Value	£2,100
Start and Finishing Dates	11 th – 21 st Oct 2004
Report Date	3 rd Nov 2004

1. Please provide a concise overview of the activities undertaken during the pre-project development visit. (Please also include relevant activities before and after, as appropriate). Please highlight those that were not planned.

Major activities included site visits to Yaboti, in two locations, accompanied by Mario Malajovich (UNDP) and Hector Kellor (Ethnobotanist, FacFor). Visits to four Guarani villages and discussions with chiefs regarding collaboration. Two visits and meetings at University of Misiones, Faculty of Forest Sciences (FacFor) were held to discuss training programmes, their new Botanic Garden and the ranger guide school. An unplanned activity was a formal public and press meeting in the provincial capital and meetings with the Minister of Ecology, the Governor, 10 local chiefs and other dignitaries. This culminated in the signing of a collaborative agreement with the Governor of Misiones. In Buenas Aries we met with National Secretary for the Environment, held meetings with the Darwinion Institute about collaboration with the botanical inventory and met with the local British Embassy staff. Importantly there was a meeting of the International Advisory Committee including Thomas Lovejoy (USA) and Mario Boza (Costa Rica). Other activities included thesis orientation consultation studies with H. Kellor.

2. Were any difficulties or setbacks encountered? If so, how did they impact on the intended achievements for the visit, and on the intended Darwin project proposal.

No major difficulties were encountered. Collaboration is enthusiastically desired by the local institutions. Our visit was hosted superbly by the local project manager and significant investment, mainly in terms of internal travel, was made by the Ministry of Ecology. This contributed to a successful and very smoothly run visit.

3. Briefly explain how the pre-project funding has helped to confirm or change the planned project intervention – what difference did getting the grant make?

The grant 1) considerably broadened the local contacts 2) convinced us more of the vital importance of the Misiones forest. This was mainly ascertained on a helicopter trip over the remaining forest fragment and with work on the ground. 3) helped define courses that match Eden Project expertise with local needs. 4) allowed a meeting of the International Advisory Committee to occur, which broadened horizons for other support for reserve beyond Darwin Initiative, especially from the USA. 5) helped to better understand the local political and social context for the project in order to work more effectively in the region.

4. Briefly describe the outcomes and conclusions arising from discussions with the host institution(s). What is the value of the project to the host institution(s) and what will their intended contributions be. Have any other partnerships evolved as a result of the pre-project grant?

FacFor: It was established where the courses would be taught and the broad details of the course content. A letter of agreement is being drafted by the faculty to be signed if funding is approved. A new need emerged in assisting FacFor to establish a native species Botanic Garden on the campus site.

Darwinion Institute: Darwinion will collaborate with the invaluable botanical inventory. They have created the backbone of a database that will be launched in 2005. Herbarium specimens will be sent to Darwinion for cataloguing. The project will allow completion of this activity and allow for a full inventory of Misiones plants. They also requested training seminars from Eden Project staff in relevant areas.

Ministry of Ecology: A formal agreement of collaboration was produced and signed. The project will help the Ministry produce a long-term management plan for Yaboti.

Field Station: The field station is now 90% complete and will make an ideal headquarters for work within Yaboti. The project will provide ideas for research usage and promote its existence to the wider international scientific community as well as providing minimal capital assistance with laboratory equipment.


Guarani: The Guarani are in agreement that this project will help their livelihood and sustainability. They will be given training in and utilised as forest rangers in the protection of the forest.

5. Conclusion and lessons learned from the Pre-Project Grant

Briefly highlight the main conclusions (positive and negative) gained from the pre-project grant. Please also include any suggestions you may have for improving the impact of this funding scheme.

The region is politically complicated and this visit has gone some way to understanding the machinations of local political and social systems. The meetings with very high level officials, however, showed willingness to help with the project and also means it is possible to bypass much meaningless bureaucracy. However, the forest is even more fragile than we previously envisaged and it is vital to conserve the last remaining fragment of a once great and expansive habitat. A successful Darwin Initiative project would greatly assist the local partners in the protection of the forest and sustain the livelihoods of the Guarani people. The Argentinean partners are absolutely committed to the project and the visit helped to reaffirm this commitment and also to provide extra international links and collaborative opportunities for local research groups. Further, the visit gave the Argentinean partners an increased awareness of the international importance of the project, which will help retain and focus this inherent commitment and collaborative efforts.

Signed:



Date: 3rd Nov 2004

Name / Title: Prof. Sir Ghillean Prance,
Director of Science

Please restrict this report to no more than two pages in length and send the completed form to ECTF with your Stage 1 Application Form either via email to darwin-applications@ectf-ed.org.uk or by post to ECTF, Pentlands Science Park, Bush Loan, Edinburgh EH26 0PH.