

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.	Ref 14-059
Project Title	Certification to Support Conservation of Endangered Mexican Cacti
Country(ies)	UK; Mexico
UK Organisation	University of Reading
Collaborator(s)	Principle collaborator: University of Queretero,
Report date	31 October 2006
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	http://www.uaq.mx/ccma

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 the stakeholders' report was to be completed, and fieldwork was to continue with a focus on *in situ* and *ex situ* collection of target species for SSR testing. We planned to have 50% of our species collected (325 accessions, 400 individuals), extracted and sequenced, and ssr screening underway. The stakeholder report is available in English, and we are preparing the Spanish language version. Field work has continued, but with some changes to the schedule as discussed below. We now have more than 342 accessions in our DNA collection. This includes 157 collections for SSR work. We have sequence data from 149 species. There are fewer species sequenced than we had planned, and this is due in part to the field schedule (below) which has emphasised local sites and collection for ssr work. We have sequences of 53 and 51 primer pairs for our two case study species, *Echinocactus grusonii* and *Ariocarpus bravoanus* respectively. We are currently screening the *E. grusonii* DNAs for polymorphism using all the primer pairs for that species across all our DNAs and are on track to publish primer notes for both species early next year. We have two more populations of *Ariocarpus bravoanus* to collect, and will do so once field funds are resolved in Mexico (see below). Overall we are ahead of our ssr schedule and behind on our sequencing schedule, and are now diverting resources from ssrs to sequencing, including DNA extraction from voucher specimens.

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.

We still have to carry out the planned six-week trip collecting trip to Baja, and we have a fieldtrip to collect *Ariocarpus bravoanus* outstanding. As detailed in the Annual Report, rescheduling of the Baja trip was because the UAQ technician travelled to Reading for training. Since then other problems relating to the field work have become acute. These relate to UAQ's maximum advance for field trips, which is only MX \$5,000.00 (approx. GBP £250.00). This restriction is a serious problem for long trips, especially when an airfare is needed. The Mexican PI has solved this problem in two ways, firstly by accessing personal funds and

