

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2009)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	EIDPO026
<b>Project Title</b>	A Forest Restoration Research Unit Facilitating Biodiversity Recovery in Cambodia.
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Cambodia and Thailand
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Forestry Administration Cambodia and FORRU, Chiang Mai, Thailand
<b>Project Leader</b>	Kate Hardwick and David Blakesley
<b>Report date</b>	31/10/09
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 1
<b>Project website</b>	

## **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).**

The main aim of this project is to implement the FORRU-Cambodia Plan which was produced under the Main Project (14-010) and to begin research to develop effective techniques to restore Cambodia's unique forest ecosystems.

FORRU-Cambodia was officially set up in May during a joint project initiation meeting between FORRU-CMU (Chiang Mai University) and the Forestry Administration Cambodia at Siem Reap. A staffing structure was established and sites for the nursery and field work confirmed. Construction of an experimental nursery dedicated to the project was completed in September. Two key supervisory staff were trained in FORRU methods in Chiang Mai in June and subsequently ran a training program for the rest of FORRU-Cambodia staff on-site in August. Furthermore, a third training session took place in Cambodia over the first week of October, run by Dr Steve Elliott of FORRU-Thailand (see box 2 below). In addition, Dr Maxwell, a plant taxonomist from Chiang Mai University, visited the project in July 2009 and worked with local staff to identify seed collection trees. Voucher specimens of 43 potential framework tree species were collected for identification of species and seed lots of 21 species stored until the nursery was completed. Duplicate vouchers have been sent to Kew. A list of 93 potential candidate framework species for seed collection and germination trials has been compiled and regular seed collection is now underway. Germination trials have begun but were delayed due to delays in nursery construction (see box 2 below). The labelling of 250 trees of about 50 species along a trail in the seed collection area will be completed by early November for a study of reproductive phenology and to identify optimum seed collection times.

A further workshop at the project site will take place in February 2010, run jointly by Kew and FORRU-CMU.

In addition, project discussions were held at Kew between the UK project leaders, Kew seed experts and Dr Steve Elliott from FORRU-CMU in July 2009. These meetings were not scheduled in the original work programme, but were able to take place alongside meetings which were part of the output of our other Darwin project, entitled 'Restoring tropical forests: a practical guide'.

In summary, following the logical framework:

**Output 1** Local steering committee established comprising FORRU-Thailand and FORRU-Cambodia staff; field station constructed

**Output 2** Training sessions have been held; research programme initiated

**Output 3** Provisional list of framework species compiled

**Output 4** Collection of 18 months of tree phenology data to start October 2009

**Output 5** Germination of 50 tree species has started

**Output 6** Field trials scheduled to start in Y2

**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.**

Initiating this project has been challenging but the staff are enthusiastic and the partners are working closely together to address emergent problems. A complex local management structure and communication problems led to confusion over how project duties would be shared amongst the staff members. This caused delays with data recording and the setting up of germination trials. The Cambodia team now recognises these problems and worked with FORRU-CMU to resolve them. The project leaders in Cambodia have now revised the staffing structure of the project. The Director of the Forest Wildlife Research Institute, Mr. Sok Heng, has now assumed overall leadership of the FORRU-Cambodia Team (with Mr Nup Sothea remaining as Project Co-ordinator) and the project management team has committed to working more closely with the field staff from now on.

Further training will be necessary, and one extra training session is being considered, in December 2010, to be run in Cambodia by Dr Elliott from FORRU-Thailand. Additional training was provided, by Dr Elliott in early October. At this time, Dr Elliott identified gaps in project implementation and provided targeted training to nursery and field staff on key issues, including the project management structure, nursery techniques and phenology recording. Considerable progress was made during this process and several areas of misunderstanding resolved.

Labelling of trees for the phenology study is behind schedule, but the Cambodia Project Administrator, Mr. Sobon, will supervise the field staff to label 250 trees of 50 species by early November. Flooding has also hampered this, but data will still be collected over an 18 month period, within the timeframe of the Darwin project.

Nursery construction was also delayed, due partly to the severe wet weather, although it is now complete. As a consequence of this, the start of germination experiments was also delayed, although trials are now underway. Further germination trials have been set up as seed became available from early October onwards. The growth rates of the species germinated in the latter part of 2009, and possibly early in 2010 will determine whether there are sufficient trees for planting the 2 ha of experimental plots scheduled in May 2010. If there is a short fall, it is planned to source candidate framework trees from local forestry nurseries.

As the nursery was delayed and over-budget, Nup Sothea requested that £2574 be transferred from the salary budget to the Operating Costs (nursery construction) in Year 1. Nup Sothea also requested that £7018 of the budget for research activities in Year 1 be transferred to Year 2.

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

These budget changes were discussed with Ruth Palmer at the Darwin Secretariat in October 2009 and will be formally requested via a change request form before the end of 2009.

**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 email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at [Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk) . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**