

Darwin M&E Project

Fellowship Report Review

Basic Project Details

Darwin Fellowship Project Reference No.	EIDPS8
Project Title	An integrated conservation programme for threatened endemic forest species in Chile
Name of Darwin Fellow	Daniela Leonor Weber Wyneken
UK Organisation	RBGE
Collaborator(s)	Universidad Austral de Chile
Darwin Fellowship Funding (£)	£6575
Start/End Fellowship	May 2005-March 2006
Main contact in UK Organisation	Martin Gardner
Review date	29 September 2006

1. Fellowship summary and background

The purpose of the Main project was to provide Chilean researchers and local landowners with the knowledge and skills to enable them to protect populations of threatened forest species not included in Chile's network of protected areas, by integrating *ex-situ* with *in-situ* conservation, in line with the objectives of national forest conservation and management policy. The main outputs were: agreements with local landowners to protect key habitats in the long term for endemic species; publication of an identification and propagation manual; development of the UACH arboretum into a centre of excellence for management of research *ex situ* conservation collections; and an agreement between a UK horticultural wholesaler and the Chilean government to commercialise amenity Chilean plants to provide income to support the long term conservation of threatened endemic species. The aim of the Fellowship was to test and refine the protocols and procedures for monitoring germplasm commercialisation.

Aims and objectives:

1. to test and critically examine protocols developed in the Main project for monitoring plants selected for commercialisation in the UK
2. to provide advanced training for a scholar to enable them to play a fundamental role in the long-term conservation of threatened Chilean plants, including: work experience in the partner commercial nursery; and formulating policies for the management and development of conservation collections appropriate to UACH which comply with the CBD and Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

It is not clear to what extent some aspects of the objectives of the project were achieved (see below under 'achievements'). The original Fellowship proposal stated that the management and implementation of the agreement requires staff with experience of both conservation and horticulture, which is a rare combination in Chile. The Darwin Fellow possesses such skills, and was selected with a view to providing her with training which would enable her to play a fundamental role in the long-term conservation of threatened Chilean plants. It is therefore disappointing that the Darwin Fellow will not be working with UACH beyond the period of the Darwin Scholarship.

2. Achievements

The following milestones are listed in the proposal, and the work programme in the Final Report.

Report on management of nursery stock (Liss): there is a brief summary describing the transfer of plant material from Edinburgh to Liss, including the location of the plants, and the final evaluation for commercial potential. However, this does not constitute a 'report' as very little detail is provided. The quality of this evaluation cannot be judged from the information available. However, the summary does indicate that the Fellow received a varied and useful practical training course at Liss.

Report evaluating monitoring system and access to genetic resources agreement (Liss): insufficient information is provided to assess the outcome of this milestone (more information may be included in the reports presented in Spanish)

Evaluation of procedures for transfer, cultivation and monitoring (RBGE): flow diagrams are included with the report, but not evaluated as such (more information may be included in the reports presented in Spanish)

Critique of RBGE's Access to Genetic Resources Policy (RBGE): this was carried out satisfactorily and an assessment was included with the Final Report.

Critique of protocols used for monitoring of germplasm for commercialisation (UACH): insufficient information is provided to assess the outcome of this milestone (more information may be included in the reports presented in Spanish)

Seminar in Chile: this was carried out

The other aspect of the work which is not described is the names of the seven Chilean plants which are being propagated by Liss Nurseries, for commercial reasons.

Because of the lack of information described above, it is difficult to assess whether the achievements of the Fellow have led to the accomplishment of the project purpose. I am certain however that the Fellow received a varied and high quality period of training, and that this will have been invaluable – if she continues in this field after the completion of the fellowship, when she leaves UACH to seek alternative employment.

3. Outcomes, lessons and impact

What is certain is that on returning to Chile, the Fellow spent three months working with colleagues who played a major role in developing the Benefit Sharing Agreement (BSA): transferring knowledge and experiences from the UK. The Fellow also tested the protocols for collecting new material and transferring this to Liss Forest Nurseries via RBGE. Two species were collected, and the procedures established in the BSA followed. One assumes that the plants were successfully transported to Liss, but this is not clear from the Final Report. As mentioned earlier, beyond the period of the Fellowship, it is not possible to comment on how the experience will be translated into practical application, as the Fellow will leave UACH. Consequently it is not possible to say whether the contacts made by the Fellow in the UK will be useful in her future work. If she continues in the same area, then they certainly will be.

Despite the lack of reports, it is clear from the descriptions in the Final Report that the Fellow enjoyed a varied and professional training experience in the UK, which should be of considerable value to her, if she remains in the same field in Chile. In particular, the Fellow was trained in the propagation of ferns using spores, which is poorly understood in Chile. This will have undoubtedly been passed on to colleagues at UACH, and a report on this was included with the Final report (in Spanish).

As predicted in the original proposal, the Fellowship has further developed the BSA and tested its implementation. This is a significant contribution to CBD Articles 9 and 15, which relate to the sustainable use of components of biological diversity, and access to genetic resources respectively. The Darwin Fellow worked with a landowner to collect one species from the protected area Reserva Paruque Oncol. A second species was collected from public land adjacent to the Magellan Straites. The training received by the Fellow has also contributed to Article 12: Research and Training.

The legacy of the Fellowship is difficult to determine, for reasons already described.

It is not possible from the report to identify badged outputs or the use of the Darwin name and logo. The three reports included with the Final Report did not carry the Darwin logo.

4. Project Outputs and Outcomes

One of the main objectives of the project was to provide advanced training for a scholar to enable them to play a fundamental role in the long-term conservation of threatened Chilean plants. Work experienced by the Fellow included the partner commercial nursery and formulating policies for the management and development of conservation collections appropriate to UACH which comply with the CBD and Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. The second objective was to test and critically examine protocols developed in the Main project for monitoring plants selected for commercialisation in the UK. This was carried out, but as stated earlier, insufficient information is presented to objectively assess the quality of the work.

5. General Assessment

Based on the information available, the Fellowship was a success; but, more information should have been included. The training provided was comprehensive, and there is no doubt that the Fellow will have learnt a great deal which will be of use to her in Chile.