



PLANTS PEOPLE
POSSIBILITIES

Press information 2010

Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership Timeline

1992	Initial draft of a global seed banking project drawn up by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.
1995	A proposal for the Millennium Seed Bank Project submitted to the Millennium Commission in February. The successful grant application (eventually for close to £30m) announced on 22 December.
1996	A financial appeal is launched on behalf of the Project on 31 May by HRH The Prince of Wales with UK naturalist and presenter, Sir David Attenborough, as patron. Later on, Kew's Foundation under its Chief Executive, Giles Coode-Adams, secures substantial sponsorship including that of Orange plc, the premier sponsor.
1997	The Wellcome Trust announces a donation to the Millennium Seed Bank Project. Reception hosted by HRH The Prince of Wales at St. James's Palace on behalf of the Project. UK Flora Programme, aiming to collect and bank seed from the UK's native plant species.
1998	Construction of the Wellcome Trust Millennium Building starts.
2000	UK Flora Programme substantially completed (96% of the UK native flora, including more than 75% of the UK's threatened plant species). Building completed and opened by HRH the Prince of Wales on 20th November.
2001	Under the International phase of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership, major agreements on collaboration signed by seven countries, increasing to 16, two years later.
2004	European Seed Conservation Network (ENSCONET) funded for five years by an EU grant. Involves 19 institutes from 12 countries with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew as co-ordinator.
2005	Roger Smith retires and his place is taken by Dr Paul Smith, Head of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership, who had previously worked as an International Co-ordinator.
2007	The billionth seed is collected and presented to Gordon Brown (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) at 11 Downing Street.
2009	The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and its international partners in Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership collect and bank 10% of the world's wild plants species on time and under budget. Plans for the next phase of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership are to conserve a further 15% (or 45,000 species) by 2020 and to increase use of banked collections by organisations researching and delivering the sustainable use of plants and the restoration of damaged habitats. Kew's response to environmental challenges such as climate change is the Breathing Plant Programme www.kew.org/breathingplanet . Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership is at the heart of our plans to use our collections and plant science knowledge to do all we can to mitigate the effects of climate change and provide options for human adaptation.

Ends

For further information visit www.kew.org/msbp. Contact the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew press office on telephone +44 (0) 20 8332 5607 or e-mail pr@kew.org