

# Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

## Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

<b>Project Ref. No.</b>	15/003
<b>Project Title</b>	Conservation of Biodiversity in Traditional West African Vegetable Species
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Mali, Benin
<b>UK Organisation</b>	CAZS Natural Resources, University of Wales Bangor
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER) du Mali and Institut National des Recherches Agricoles du Benin (INRAB)
<b>Report date</b>	26/10/06
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 1
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.cazs.bangor.ac.uk/Research/Indigenous_vegetables_Darwin.htm">http://www.cazs.bangor.ac.uk/Research/Indigenous_vegetables_Darwin.htm</a>

The opening project workshop was held in Benin 26-28 May 2006 in Cotonou, Benin, in order to review project objectives, discuss methodologies, and formulate a detailed action plan to carry out the activities which will lead to the principal outputs detailed in the project log frame. The joint development of the questionnaires and interview guides commenced immediately afterwards, and the UK partner assisted the Benin team (3-9 June) and the Mali team (12-16 June) to train the enumerators. The surveys, which will target producers in 18 villages, retailers in six markets and consumers in three major cities in each of the two countries started in Mali in July and in Benin in August.

Mali is a large landlocked West African country covering 1.24 million sq Km. It can be divided into three distinct areas, the subtropical cultivated south, the semi-arid Sahelian centre and the arid Saharan north. The country is subdivided into eight administrative regions, and the survey will sample villages from all except the two most northern regions of Tombouctou and Kidal (which are too arid). Currently, the survey has been completed in Koulikoro, Sikasso, Segou and Mopti regions and the last surveys will take place in Kayes and Gao in late October /early November. Seed collection was carried out at the same time of the surveys (a Benin partner visited Mali in July to help train the Malian staff in this activity).

Benin is a much smaller West African country, with sea access, covering 112,620 sq Km, but stretching from the tropical, hot and humid south, to the semi-arid north. The survey will cover the whole country, in three distinct visits (covering 'the south', 'the centre' and 'the north'). The surveys and the seed collection were carried out as separate activities. Currently, the survey has been completed in the 'south' of Benin, and seed collection in the 'north' (6-16 Sep). Surveys and seed collection activities are planned for the 'centre' of Benin in late November.

The summer and early autumn months are busy fieldwork periods for IER. The interim visit to Mali by the UK partner was therefore scheduled for a mutually convenient time, and was moved forward from September to the first two weeks of August. The visit was used to check the first results from the survey and deliver additional training to the enumerator team.

Data inputting has commenced in both countries, and seed sample data analysis has commenced. The analysis of the survey results will begin in November. Seed bank facilities were established at AVRDC in August. Fridges have been ordered in both countries (samples are currently being stored in other project fridges). Ordering was delayed in both countries because of cash flow problems.

The partners have kept regular contact by e-mail, and the Benin partners have sent interim reports on the survey (27 Sep) and the seed collection (08 Oct).

One of the Mali project leader's children was hospitalized in France and as a result she was out of the country for five months. Project management was delegated to another team member, who unfortunately had less authority vis-à-vis the IER administration. This led to funding-related delays of the second round of survey activities. The situation improved upon the return of the project leader to Mali at the end of September, and therefore the project schedule should not be affected.

The decision to increase the scope of the surveys (complement questionnaires with semi-structured interviews and focus groups in the villages; administer questionnaires with consumers in three cities and retailers in six markets) taken by both host partners during the opening meeting has meant that some adjustment between budget lines will be necessary.

Both host partners have recently submitted a budget to CAZS-NR modifying their expected expenditure under different budget headings – The Darwin secretariat/DEFRA will be approached to request permission for these changes.

**Discussed with the DI Secretariat:**                      **no**

**Changes to the project schedule/workplan:**      **no**

Both IER and INRAB have cash flow problems, which could be solved with pre-financing.

**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 by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, [stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk](mailto:stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk). The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**