

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	15-003
Project Title	Conservation of Biodiversity in Traditional West African Vegetable Species
Country(ies)	Benin, Mali
UK Organisation	CAZS Natural Resources, Bangor University
Collaborator(s)	Institut Nationale des Recherches Agricoles du Benin (INRAB); Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER) du Mali
Project Leader	Dr. Margaret Pasquini
Report date	24 October 2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	http://www.cazs.bangor.ac.uk/ccstudio/Research/cazsproject_Darwin1.php

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September)

Three major activities were planned for the first six months of the second year: 1) continuation and completion of the data analysis for the socioeconomic surveys; 2) the domestication trials and; 3) the interim partner workshop to exchange results.

- 1) The task of analysing the survey data has been undertaken primarily by the UK partner. However, the Benin partners have also been contributing, working on the market data. The information on threatened species and domestication requirements was used to select the species for the domestication trials in the two countries. Further results were presented by the UK and Benin partners and discussed during the interim workshop in Bamako. Data analysis has not yet been completed (see section two).
- 2) The species for the domestication trials were selected following discussions between partners in Mali in March 2007 and in Benin in May 2007, and confirmed at the interim workshop in Mali, subject to final agreement by the farmers. In Mali, trials will take place in the dry season, through irrigation, in the Gao region, at the village of Tondibi (species to be domesticated are: pasteque sauvage, *Corchorus spp.*, *Cleome gynandra*); for Segou, Koyan Coura (*Corchorus spp.*); for Koulikoro, Kalaya (*Trianthema portulacastrum*, fokoroba, *Sesamum radiatum*, *Solanum scabrum*). In Benin, trials will take place in two villages in the South, Akpate (*Croton lobatus* and *Talinum triangulare*) and Ayetedjou (*Croton lobatus*, *Lactuca taraxacifolia*, *Crassocephalum rubens*), one in the Centre Bognongon (*Lactuca taraxacifolia*, *Crassocephalum rubens*, and *Emilia sonchifolia*). Trials in the North, in Ganro (*Ceratotheca sesamoides*) and Wellan (various species have been listed but only one respondent per species. Focus group necessary to determine village interest), will take place in a second phase at the beginning of the rainy season, as irrigation facilities are not available.

Both partners have commenced the domestication activities with on-station seed multiplication of the target species (partners are also multiplying other species so that they can maintain the seed bank). The Benin partner has also recruited four students from the University of Abomey Calavi to carry out literature reviews on seed germination techniques for the species identified in the course of the first year, to provide the necessary background to the on-station germination trials (certain species, especially wild varieties, do not germinate very easily). One additional student has been recruited to carry out seed viability tests for *Vitex doniana* and *Bombax costatum*. As these are tree species, it will not be possible to have definitive results by the end of the project, however, the study is an important starting point for the domestication of these widely-used species, and the

partners intend to continue with this work after the end of the Darwin project. The literature reviews have been completed, whereas the seed viability study is due to start later in the year. It was not possible to find seed of all of the species targeted for the domestication trials in 06/07 - partners are therefore carrying out repeat field visits to find seed for the forthcoming on-farm trials.

- 3) The interim partner workshop was held on 17-19 July 2007, in Bamako, Mali, and was attended by 11 Mali participants, four Benin participants, and two UK participants. The first day of the workshop was devoted mainly to partner reflections on the methodology; the second day consisted of exchanges of results for the two countries and discussions of their implications for the second year programme; and the last day focused on the development of a dissemination and awareness-raising work plan for the third year.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments

As reported in the annual report, partners were not always able to find samples of species mentioned by survey respondents for identification. Until all the local names have been matched to a scientific name, it will not be possible to complete data analysis. Partners are currently conducting repeat visits to finalise identification. This has led to an increase in the travel budget (which was balanced by a decrease in the number of villages for the domestication trials).

Partners also had difficulties finding seed samples, particularly for wild species. Some of the species did not germinate successfully during the domestication trials. Thus, the visits to complete species identification will also be used to collect additional seed material for the domestication trials. This has meant that in Mali the domestication trials will have to take place in the dry season through irrigation, rather than in the wet season. The delay in Benin has not caused any problems in the South and the Centre, but trials in the North will have to take place in a second phase, at the beginning of the rainy season.

There has been an ongoing problem of poor communication by the Mali partner. Following discussions about this issue between all three partners in Bamako in July, the Mali partner has committed to interact more regularly with all partners. The UK partner has discussed the matter with the Secretariat and will update them in late November following a visit to Mali.

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

First two issues discussed with the DI Secretariat: yes, in 04 May, 20 June & 01 August 2007

Third issue discussed with the DI Secretariat: yes, 05 September 2007

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: yes, 25 June, 05 September 2007

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

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. 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**