



Darwin Initiative Main Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2015)

Project Ref No	22-017
Project Title	Mutually supportive implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and Plant Treaty
Country(ies)	Madagascar and Benin
Lead Organisation	Bioversity International
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Project Leader	Michael Halewood
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	HYR1 – 31 October 2015
Project website/Twitter/Blog/Instagram etc	Under development. There will be dedicated pages on the Bioversity website
Funder (DFID/Defra)	DFID

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

In this section, we report against the activities that were scheduled to take place in the first six months of the project, as set out in response to question number 26 in our approved project proposal. We provide information about additional activities in response to question 4 below.

Activity 1.1: Form national project oversight committees:

National Project Implementation Committees have been formed in both countries. The process was potentially sensitive in each country, as it involved merging traditionally separate functions/mandates exercised by the lead agencies with respect to their 'own' treaties. The foundation of the committees also required recognition and acceptance of potential influence from other stakeholder groups (both governmental and nongovernmental). So it took a while for the relevant actors in each country to come to an agreement about the constitution of the Project Implementation Committees and their links to other bodies.

In both countries, the Project Implementation Committee is currently being co-chaired by the National CBD/NP and ITPGRFA focal points, as foreseen in the approved proposal. In both countries however, the focal points highlighted the importance of leaving open the option, at least in principle, of their eventually being replaced by higher level policy representatives from their own organizations. (N.B. the focal points are named individuals, not organizations.) They feel this option is important as a means of encouraging continued buy-in and proactive

interest among higher level actors in their organization, thereby contributing additional political support for the project and its objectives overall.

In Madagascar, in past years, interministerial committees were formed, at least on paper, to help guide the processes of implementation of the ITPGRFA and the Nagoya Protocol (separate committees, for each instrument, with a single chair from each of the lead agencies). Neither committee was actually active; the ITPGRFA committee had not met for years. The lead agencies have decided to merge the two previously separate committees, with the additional of non-governmental stakeholder representatives, to form the National Project Implementation Committee for this project. The members are appointed, and they have adopted terms of reference for their activities vis-à-vis the project.

In Benin, the baseline situation was somewhat different. There was already a fairly active interministerial committee created to help guide implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. A committee to help guide implementation of the ITPGRFA was formed years ago, but had only met a few times, and not at all in the last four years. With the stimulation of this project, leading Benin agencies have decided to expand the mandate of the Nagoya Protocol-related committee to include mutually supportive implementation with the ITPGRFA. To that end, in August 2015, they confirmed membership on the committee of a range of new members/stakeholders to represent agricultural-related interests and plant genetic resources for food and agriculture-related expertise. It has a new title which translates roughly to National Committee on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS). At the same time, the lead agencies decided to create the National Project Implementation Committee, to be chaired by the two national focal points, drawing from a smaller subset of the members of the National Committee on ABS. The Project Implementation Committee will work in close coordination with the National Committee on ABS.

Activity 4.1: Identify at 1 lead organization in each of the 4 communities across the two countries for in-depth project research, capacity building

Before identifying lead organizations, the national partners had to confirm which communities (or groups of communities) would be involved in the project. After considerable deliberation and discussions with municipal and traditional community leaders, the national project teams have identified the two communities (or groups of communities) in each country. In Benin: the biodiversity rich community is Bonou, Oueme Department, and the community with less biodiversity, suffering from climate change impacts on agricultural production is Tori Bosito, Atlantic Department. In Madagascar, the community in the biodiversity rich area is Antavolobe, in the Moramanga District. The community in the area with less biodiversity, but that is active in agriculture and is suffering from climate-change related impacts on crop production is Analavory in Miarinarivo District.

The national project teams have visited all four communities to discuss the project with community leaders, members of local organizations, including women's groups, and to invite them to be involved. Agreements in principle for participation in project activities were secured from combinations of local government officials and traditional leaders. The lead organization in each of the communities is as follows:

Bonou, Benin – Comité de gestion des forêts sacrées de Bonou (committee to manage the sacred forest of Bonou)

Tori Bosito, Benin – Jeunesse Sans Frontière (NGO active in agricultural production and medicinal plants)

Antavolobe, Madagascar – VOI Firaisan-Kina (a local community-based organization dealing with forest management)

Analavory, Madagascar – Santatra (a local farmer seed group)

Activity 5.1: The national steering committees develop terms of reference for the baseline surveys and engage research teams

The Madagascar National Project Implementation Committee has considered the terms of

reference for the baseline study included in the approved proposal, and added details where necessary. It has engaged staff and consultants to start compiling information for the baseline study. They have also started to gather information on climate-related stresses to crops in the case-study communities. As a complementary exercise, Bioversity is assembling data sets of materials in international collections to support exercises (later in the project) to identify germplasm of varieties or populations that may be adapted to their changing climatic conditions. (These exercises are not part of the baseline study per se, but information that needs to be gathered as part of the project.)

The Beninese Project Implementation Committee has also reviewed the terms of reference for the baseline study included in the approved proposal. They have used it as a basis for developing terms of reference of individual researchers that they have developed agreements with to conduct the various elements of the survey. They have started compiling information for the core elements of the baseline survey. (They have also proposed a reorganization and merger of some of the issues to be surveyed; this will not alter the information being collected, just the way in which it is eventually presented.) Like the Madagascar team, the Benin team has also started to gather information on climate related stresses on crops in the case study communities. And again, Bioversity is assisting by downloading and compiling climate data and information on international PGRFA collections that may house adapted germplasm.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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.

This work of Activity 5.1 – the base line study - is behind schedule. Bioversity received notice that the Darwin Initiative award was offered on 4 March 2015 with a start date of 1 April 2015. It took a few months to get the project up to speed while we developed four letters of agreement with national project partners in two countries, transferring funds for activities to start, and scheduling participation of international experts on the project oversight committee (Expert Guidance Group or EGG) to participate in national project inception workshops. As a result, we are a little bit behind where we planned to be at the end of the first half year of the project. However, the rate of project activities is now accelerating; we anticipate finalizing the base line studies by the end of year 1.

The state of knowledge and awareness about the Plant Treaty in particular is very low in both countries, considerably lower than knowledge and awareness of the Nagoya Protocol. To that end, we have decided to build-in some additional activities to boost awareness of the Treaty generally in the country, and boost related technical expertise of a few key actors, including both the ITPGRFA and Nagoya Protocol focal points. We included both focal points from Benin and Madagascar in a ITPGRFA-related meeting hosted by Bioversity in June in Rome (as related in 4 below) and supported the Madagascar Nagoya Protocol focal point to attend the ITPGRFA-Governing Body meeting in October (We would have supported the NP focal point from Benin also, but he was not available.) The project will organize/sponsor additional awareness raising workshops in both countries in November and December of this year. These additional activities will be supported through available funds from the Netherlands-supported GRPI 2 project, as referenced in our approved proposal.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

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

In section 1 above, we limited ourselves to reporting against those activities which were set out in the activity schedule in section 26 of the approved proposal, and meant to be finalized in the first six months. We have been engaged in additional, complementary activities that are described below.

The Expert Guidance Group has met twice in these six months: the first time in Benin, in May 2015, and a second time in Madagascar in July 2015. The Expert Guidance Group (EGG) comprises the National Focal Points for the ITPGRFA and the National Focal Points for the Nagoya Protocol from both Madagascar and Benin and representatives of the CBD Secretariat, ITPGRFA Secretariat, African Union Commission, ABS Capacity Development Initiative and Bioversity International. Additional staff from Bioversity International and the ABS Capacity Development Initiative also attended these meetings to provide technical support. The national teams took advantage of the presence of the EGG in Madagascar and Benin to organize official project launching workshops (involving high-level policymakers), and community visits. These meetings provided opportunities for the EGG to sit with project partners to work through the details of the project, develop common understanding of objectives, outputs, activities and desired outcomes.

The four co-chairs of the National Project Implementation Committees for Madagascar and Benin were supported to attend a four-day 'Workshop to develop a decision-making tool for developing national policies to implementation of the multilateral system of access and benefit-sharing' organized by Bioversity International, in Rome, 23-26 June 2015. This workshop was organized as part of Bioversity's Netherlands-supported GRPI 2 project. This workshop provided an excellent opportunity for the National Project Implementation Committee co-chairs to work together, to deepen their mutual appreciation of the issues that need to be addressed when implementing the ITPGRFA (and how it intersects with the Nagoya Protocol).

Two participants from the communities partnering in this project were supported to participate in the workshop 'Community to Community Exchange and Capacity Development Workshop for Traditional Knowledge Holders' 28 September - 4 October 2015, Bengaluru (Bangalore), India. This workshop was co-organized by the ABS Capacity Development Initiative and United Nations University, and it represented an opportunity for local community representatives in the project to gain exposure to the views and experiences of representatives of other communities dealing with ABS issues and related experts.

While the participation of project partners from Madagascar and Benin were not foreseen in these workshops, they provided much needed capacity strengthening to project partners to fulfil their roles in the project. These additional activities were provided as co-funding from Bioversity's GRPI project.

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 can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g., Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**