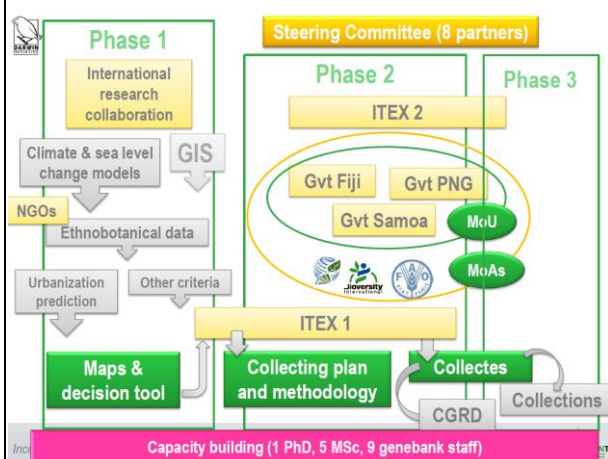




Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

Project Ref No	23-008
Project Title:	Upgrading and Broadening the South-Pacific International Coconut Genebank
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Samoa
Lead Organisation	Bioversity International
Partner(s)	SPC, Governments of Fiji, PNG & Samoa, CIRAD, APCC, GCDT
Project Leader	Dr Alexia Prades
Report date and number	HYR1
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	Not set up yet (will be part of http://www.cogentnetwork.org/ , but see: http://www.bioversityinternational.org/news/detail/saving-the-pacifics-coconuts/
Funder (DFID/Defra)	Defra

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).



The project started last June 2016 so activities between June and September 2016 (4 months) are presented. Project partners from Fiji, France, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea met in Lautoka, Fiji 14 - 17 June 2016 to launch the project. All presentations and associated documents were subsequently made available on USBs provided to meeting delegates. A list of invited and attending delegates can be found in annex 1 of the attached inception meeting report. It was impossible to find a sufficiently early date when all partners were available, hence the earliest date with the most available delegates was chosen, thus some delegates were unable to attend on account of the short notice. The project

coordinator, Alexia PRADES, visited Samoa just after the meeting in Fiji to meet the Samoan Government, not able to attend, to present the project and the outcomes of the inception meeting. Press releases from Bioversity, COGENT and the SPC (see annex 2 in meeting report) generated other regional interest¹. The project coordinator Dr Prades presented the overall project conceptual framework. The overall workshop goal was to launch the project. The meeting achieved all of its objectives, and a detailed account of delegates' exchanges is provided in the attached report. Objectives included: 1) building a collaborative project **team spirit**; 2) strengthening a **common understanding** of the regional context of coconut production and germplasm conservation; 3) familiarising project partners with the **scope** of the project, and reviewing the concerns of the Darwin Initiative around the final MoA, gender and extent of impact; 4) highlighting the partners' **roles and responsibilities**, including timely reporting, within the context of Bioversity's LoA requirements; 5) refining the project **timeline** to ensure achievable milestones; 6) developing the project **communications** plan via a stakeholder analysis; 7) developing the project **monitoring and evaluation**; 8) drafting the terms of reference (**ToRs**) for the two international teams of experts (**ITEX**

¹ <http://nr.iisd.org/news/bioversity-international-coordinates-efforts-to-save-pacific-coconut-diversity/>
<http://us.makemefeed.com/2016/06/22/bioversity-international-coordinates-efforts-to-save-pacific-coconut-diversity-1417689.html>
<http://foreignaffairs.co.nz/2016/06/22/bioversity-international-coordinates-efforts-to-save-pacific-coconut-diversity/>

1 & 2- collecting missions and governance respectively); 9) outlining the project **capacity-building programme** (PhD/MSc students and genebank staff); 10) discussing the required procedures to deliver the **signed MoAs and MoU** ratifying the three governments future involvement in the upgraded and expanded genebank; 11) discussing **partner concerns**, and 12) holding the first project **steering committee meeting** (SC) to : a) validate the workshop outputs; b) agree calendar of SC meetings and their format; c) best way of communicating; d) propose the next steps, and e) evaluate the inception meeting

- The Steering Committee was established during the inception meeting. It is composed of one representative of each key partner (COGENT/ Bioversity International, SPC, CIRAD, APCC, KIK, Governments of Fiji and Samoa, GCDT). COGENT/Bioversity will chair the SC and is in charge of organizing the meetings. The SC will meet twice a year (by videoconference and back to back to the 3 project meetings). Some additional extraordinary meetings can be organized at the request of any member. The next virtual meeting is planned on 28th November 2016.
- Agreements have been made with the CIRAD staff running the collecting missions in each of the three countries, LoAs between Bioversity and CIRAD are in preparation.
- The three governments have begun preparing the planting sites for the new material. PNG, Fiji and Samoa have all secured the land. The project coordinator visited the new Samoan site in June 2016. The PNG government has signed, an MoA (May 2016) with the Milne Bay Provincial Authorities where the new genebank is to be established.
- Arrangements have been made for a PNG partner staff (Alfred Kembu) to receive training in tissue culture (at a TC workshop in the Philippines in November 2016), and embark on a TC Master's programme via Papua New Guinea and University of Queensland (UQ). Prof Steve Adkins, from UQ agreed to welcome Alfred in his research team in second semester 2017. Negotiations are also under way to train one SPC staff at the same time.
- Contacts are in place between CIRAD and SPC regarding the threatened areas mapping work. Complementary contacts from USP were put in the loop. Due to the student calendar years, the 2 MSc and 1 PhD students will not be able to begin their work before January 2017. Currently, discussions are in place to prepare the LoAs between Bioversity and SPC or USP to find 2 Masters students beginning the training period. The PhD thesis topic has to be defined and discussed under the ITEX 1 which is under construction. The PhD student has nearly been identified by KIK. A young scientist is currently finishing his Master in breeding outside PNG and has been identified to be hired as a staff of the ICG-SP.
- Composition of international expert teams was decided during the inception meeting (see ToRs). Contacts have been set and leaders for the 2 ITEX are in touch with the project coordinator.
- Project partners met in BALI in September 2016, at the APCC Cocotech conference. At this meeting, the project coordinator made a presentation on "*Status of the International Coconut Genebanks with Opportunities for Utilisation of Coconut Germplasm for Development*". The Darwin project was described for the 370 participants of the APCC meeting.
- Informal meetings were then organized during the APCC Conference with project partners :
 - i) PNG confirmed nursery preparation on the quarantine island in Misima. We were able to meet some of the PNG private partners (virgin coconut oil processors) that will be involved in value-adding for coconuts fruits coming from the new genebank. The aim is to have more sustainable genebank sites and making products for the local and regional markets is one of the envisioned solutions. KIK, representing the PNG Government would like to invite Dr Luc Baudouin, CIRAD expert, to come and help them in the design of the new genebank. This mission could be combined with the collecting preparation mission of Dr Baudouin which is the project framework.
 - ii) The Samoan Government was preparing a mission for CIRAD expert (Dr Roland Bourdeix) in October 2016 to design the new genebank's site. Unfortunately the mission was postponed at the last minute to February/March 2017 for financial and government agenda's reasons. Discussions were held about the idea of having a multi-crop genebank and also develop the in-situ conservation for remote and isolated areas as a complement of the accessions conserved in the ex-situ genebank and/or as a mean of supporting the transition period between the time that Darwin will identify the endangered accessions and the time that the new genebank site will be ready to welcome the seedlings of the identified coconut trees.

- iii) Fiji key partners were not present but the project coordinator had the chance to meet Mr. Jitendra Singh, Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and took the occasion to describe the objectives of the project. Mr Singh gave us the information that a team at the Ministry of Agriculture has already a detailed map of Fiji, using remote sensing tools. He told us that he will give the contact of this team so that they can interact with the Darwin partners in charge of the mapping of the threatened zones in Fiji.
- iv) SPC discussion with Valerie Tuia (CePACT) and Karen Mapusua, Team Leader of the Coconut Industry Development for the Pacific (CIDP), included possible connections between the Darwin initiative project and the EU coconut sector development project that Karen is coordinating. The EU project begins this year and will support the private sector to develop new and innovative projects (not business as usual). Some of the private farmers or group of farmers who would like to produce coconut seedlings (build a nursery and sell the plantlets) could be beneficiaries of the EU project and could help diffuse the germplasms out of the genebank in the future.
- v) UQ was contacted (Prof. Steve Adkins and Dr. Jimmy Botella). Professor Adkins agreed to host a genebank staff-member-Alfred Kembu (ICG-SP Curator), in his laboratory for coconut tissue culture research and training (MSc). We also talked about having him or students from UQ joining the collecting missions of the project. Darwin project has no funds to collect embryos and do cryopreservation but we could go together to ACIAR or other donors and ask for complementary funds. Indeed ACIAR have already expressed a desire to support this work during meetings in September 2016. Dr Adkins agreed on the idea and was interested in getting embryos from different varieties to test the robustness of his protocols.
- vi) APCC will still support the project for inter-Governmental negotiations, as it is their main mission.

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.

The project began 1st June 2016, as expected (project proposal submitted). However, because of some of the main partners non-responding during the preparation of the main coordination contract, significant communications between project stakeholders were delayed until early September. Drafting and signing Bioversity's letters of Agreement (LoAs) for each participating partner has taken considerably longer than anticipated. Even though we agreed a revised project implementation timeline during the course of the inception meeting (see report), we have been obliged to revise the timeline again on account of the delays to establishing the LoAs. We have therefore completed a change request form which accompanies this report, and an associated revised timeline. We are on track to make the required disbursements according to our revised plan within this timeline.

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: £1,958

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year. There will only be a slight budget change request (£1,958).

4. Are there any other issues

During 2017 we anticipate some delays in the negotiation and signature of some documents from the PNG Government, as 2017 will be an election year in the country. Thankfully we can expect the partners of the project will remain the same persons and will fulfil their commitments.