



**Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2020)**

Project reference	25-020
Project title	Supply and Demand: Restoration in Uganda for people and biodiversity
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Uganda
Lead organisation	Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)
Partner(s)	Tooro Botanic Garden (TBG), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
Project leader	<i>Kirsty Shaw</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	<i>HYR3</i>
Project website/blog/social media	https://globaltrees.org/projects/supply-and-demand-restoration-in-uganda-for-people-and-biodiversity/

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Output 1:

The steering committee meeting, postponed due to Covid-19, is to be held on 12th or 13th November 2020. This will follow the latest government advice and be held partly in person (maximum 15 people) with the rest of the attendance done using video facilities (e.g. Zoom).

Propagation data from nurseries has been compiled in Excel. BGCI and TBG are working with a software development company, Botanical Software, to develop a new online database that records collection and propagation information. This aims to be accessible and easy to use in developing world contexts by botanic gardens and plant records keepers. The data will be in a format that is easier to collate and analyse than Excel and the currently collated data will be imported. The improved format will make publishing final propagation protocols easier.

Output 2 and 4:

60 seed collectors (24 women) and 40 nursery staff (21 women) have continued to be employed by the project to collect, propagate and look after native seedlings for sale. So far 128 species have been monitored and seeds of over 100 species collected and propagated (19 species are threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Global Red List or Local Red Listing work). 262,641 seedlings of all species have been propagated so far.

4 nursery managers (1 woman) have continued to be employed to manage the nurseries and record propagation information to a high standard. 4 demonstration plot managers (2 women) have also been employed to maintain the demonstration plots.

16 of the seed collectors (4 from each site) were identified because they can ride motorcycles and have the ability to find target native trees further from the nurseries. A further 16 patrol men (4 from each region) were also engaged to find trees in their local forests further afield from the nurseries. These two groups have helped increase the amount of tree species being monitored with seed collected from for the remainder of the project.

The monthly basic rates for community members employed in the project are:

- Seed collectors: Ugandan Shillings (£)
- Nursery staff: Ugandan Shillings (£)
- Nursery managers: Ugandan Shillings (£)
- Restoration plot managers are paid Ugandan Shillings (£)

Phenology calendars have been successfully produced to help track provenance and future collections.

Output 3:

The successful WWF Reforestation Grant application was initially delayed due to COVID-19 but has now been received by TBG. This £ grant will be used to purchase seedlings, expand planting at the Kagombe central forest reserve restoration plot in Kagadi and provide associated training to local communities. It should also increase the demand for native species.

Restoration demonstration plots planted so far:

- Lwamunda central forest reserve: 2,842 seedlings of 37 species (7 ha).
- Ibanda local forest reserve: 1,410 seedlings of 30 species (3.5 ha).
- Kagombe central forest reserve: 1,074 seedlings of 32 species (2.5 ha). There is continued clearance and preparation for planting more than 10,000 seedlings under the WWF Reforestation grant.
- Mbale-Namatale restoration site: 2,050 seedlings of 38 species (5ha), including 8 threatened species. 29 regenerating species of trees were identified on the site that were left with spot weeding undertaken.

Monitoring and maintenance work is being carried out at all sites. The final MoU is to be signed between the National Forestry Authority (NFA) and TBG on 28th October 2020 that will cover Lwamunda CFR, Kagombe CFR and Mbale restoration site.

Regional workshop events have been delayed due to COVID-19 but are planned for when the situation improves, in November and December 2020.

Radio programmes and advertisements for the project and community nurseries have continued to be aired over the last 6 months. Further filming and editing has continued for the delayed television film, which is now set to be aired on Bukedde TV in November. TBG also plans to run a mobile communications van that will travel to the project areas to promote the importance of native trees and the nurseries as a source of seedlings in the last 6 months of the project.

Posters and leaflets about the project, the community nurseries and the importance of indigenous biodiversity have also been created, which will be displayed in key areas near to the nurseries or made available to customers at the nurseries to take home.

The 10-year business plans for nurseries are being developed with the help of the project consultant and he will submit an initial draft for review in November 2020.

The socio-economic and marketing surveys are ongoing with data being collected in the field. This has been partially delayed due to COVID-19 but the first draft will be ready by the end of November 2020.

Of the initial orders for Ugandan Shillings worth of seedlings (£), Ugandan Shillings (£) were completed in the period April-July 2020 with the reductions due to COVID-19 impacts. In August-September 2020, the 4 community nurseries sold a further Ugandan Shillings (£) worth of seedlings raising the total incomes received this year to Ugandan Shillings (£). This has provided the nursery workers with further incomes above their basic project pay rate, although reduced from what was expected pre-COVID-19. Most are sold to local communities and a few private institutions.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

Engagement with District Forest officers, Environment officers and local leaders has been essential for nursery site selection and with identification of the local community members to be involved in the project activities.

All nursery workers are content with their roles; however, some seed collectors would prefer their jobs to involve less travel and have more regular incomes. The seed collection networks are an important element to the project, so employing people across a wider area could work better to reduce travels to collection sites for individuals. The variability of seed collection work could also have been better explained to those involved at the project outset.

Some seed collections have not been scientifically identified so their vernacular names are recorded. Support from botanical experts of each nursery's ecological regions would improve the speed of identification.

Some of the target species are either difficult to find, or they have not produced viable seeds to be collected. This may be due to their reproductive strategies misaligning with a three-year project – e.g. they produce seed in mast years instead of every year, so collections can only be made in productive years. So far this has not been too impactful with many of the target species still collected, however it may be part of the reason the target is not reached in the project timeframe.

2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there

may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

TBG is in regular contact with NFA staff to adapt to the changing COVID-19 situation and follow government guidance to keep everybody involved in the project as safe as possible.

During the national lockdown, seed collection activities were halted and the TBG team was unable to visit nurseries (March to May). A revised schedule of nursery workers' shift patterns was created to help them to continue to water and care for seedlings in the nurseries. However, the nurseries were closed to the public so less seedlings were sold for the April – May planting season. Seed collectors have also started working in smaller groups to reduce COVID-19 risk to them.

Some of the species raised at the nurseries are pioneer tree species, and so fast growing. Since the demand has been lower than expected due to COVID-19 some of these seedlings have become overgrown despite good nursery practices being implemented like root pruning.

COVID-19 delayed some of the public awareness raising activities. This included a national programme of events associated with the Uganda Water and Environment week (16 – 22 March, 2020) which was postponed. The Ministry of Water and Environment has since run online sessions in early September, but these were at a much smaller scale (13th-16th September).

Staff from BGCI were unable to travel to Uganda to support TBG to plan activities, develop materials (e.g. leaflets, posters etc.) and help establish methods to analyse the impact of public awareness activities for the Uganda Water and Environment week. With travels not likely now in 2020, BGCI staff have continued to support TBG's public awareness campaign from the UK instead, holding regular meetings with the TBG team over Zoom, every 2 weeks.

Funds for travel to Uganda for BGCI staff for this year may not be spent due to COVID-19 restrictions on foreign travel from the UK (see estimated underspend below). Once we confirm the virus will stop travels from January and March 2021, we plan to submit a change request to support other project related activities instead. We have messaged LTS regarding this concern already. The funds could be used for:

- Further BGCI staff time to remotely support TBG team public awareness activities and assessment of success of those activities.
- Support to community nurseries to improve their access to water supplies where there are currently issues (Kagadi and Mbale).
- Establishment of restoration plots in community areas as examples to promote the corporate donor packages.

To alleviate the impacts of the reduction of support from corporate donors that had been expected due to COVID-19, BGCI and TBG have adapted the corporate donor packages to support planting in community areas only, removing more expensive options to plant 0.5-1ha restoration sites. The materials created for the three-tiered system for corporate donations (Bronze = community planting; Silver = plant 0.5ha of forest; Gold = plant 1ha of forest) will still be available to be used in the future when the economic impacts of the virus have been reduced.

The planting of restoration demonstration plots was held up due to COVID-19. However, all restoration plots have now been planted with trees (see the progress section above). These were done, ensuring social distancing measures were observed and government guidance followed.

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

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/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. 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, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

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

None.

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 DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to 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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**