



## Darwin Initiative/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019)

<b>Project reference</b>	25-026
<b>Project title</b>	Securing healthy baobab populations through efficient fruit harvesting and use
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Madagascar
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Madagasikara Voakajy (MV)
Partner(s)	Label CBD Consulting (LCBD) Direction Régionale de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable Menabe (DREDD) Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Julie Hanta Razafimanahaka</i>
<b>Report date and number</b>	<i>HYR2, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media, etc.</b>	<a href="http://www.madagasikara-voakajy.org">www.madagasikara-voakajy.org</a>

**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).**

Output 1: Three existing community groups empowered to reinforce and manage baobab resources by strengthening current co-management frameworks

During the reporting period, we completed the community evaluation meetings and participatory mappings in April - June. Drafts of the new co-management plans were submitted to the DREDD in August and we are waiting the validation planned for October 2019. In September, we also completed the survey of the baobab trees at the monitoring plots in the three areas. Two adult *A. grandidieri* died in Andoviana and Betainkilotra. These deaths were due natural hazards. No death was recorded for *A. za* and *A. rubrostipa*. No natural regeneration was recorded at the plots for the three species. Respectively 32, 13 and 15 of the 100 *A. grandidieri* seeds planted at each site (Andoviana, Bepeha and Betainkilotra) in February 2019 survived until September 2019. In Bepeha, survival was low because the planting area was unexpectedly inundated during the cyclone in March 2019. At the three areas, drought since April 2019 explains the low survival rates according to the local communities and staff. There was no evidence of grazing or fire. In Betainkilotra, 50-60 natural regenerations were recorded in each of the no-take zones (n = 3) in January but only three individual survived until April 2019 probably due to the drought too.

Output 2: Wild baobab species in Andoviana, Bepeha and Betainkilotra are protected and sustainably harvested by local communities, and there are enough fruits left to permit regeneration in the wild, particularly for *A. grandidieri* (EN)

Fruit harvesting quota is generally set to 80% of the total available but can be as low as 20% for threatened species (<http://tiny.cc/6g3qfz>). Final decision on the quota will be taken with the CITES management and scientific authorities. In September 2019, we assessed the total number of fruits available for the three species to be 47,035, 7,871 and 130 respectively for *A. grandidieri*, *A. rubrostipa* and *A. za*. Considering the higher quota (80%), it is possible to harvest 37,000 *A. grandidieri* and 6,200 *A. rubrostipa* while it is not recommended to harvest

*A. za* at the three localities. Since January 2019, the Malagasy government imposed a ban for collection and trading of all forest products including *A. grandidieri*. As a result, some of the fruits collected in 2018 has not been processed yet. The project is currently negotiating to secure a special permit from the Government allowing baobab collection for community enterprise. In June 2019, the project team discussed with the DREDD in Morondava, the importance of baobab in community's livelihood and the benefit the project will deliver for forest conservation. In September 2019, the project leader had follow up meeting with the Directeur Général de l'Environnement and the CITES management authority. A report detailing the project findings and planned activities have been submitted for obtaining special permits and is currently under review.

Output 3: At least 85 vulnerable members (children <10yo, pregnant women and elderly > 60yo) of approximately 70 households within the three target communities have improved nutrition during the hungry months (June – October) as a result of improved storage and consumption of baobab fruits

Following recommendations from the project advisory committee, we completed the analysis of the nutritional values of the fruits of the three baobab species during the reporting period. Three students from the University of Mahajanga graduated in August 2019 as part of this project. Results will also be presented at the Baobab Congress in December 2019.

Output 4: At least 80 women and 70 men receive a fair price for the sale of the sustainably harvested baobab fruit products, resulting in increased income of at least 70 households

Fair price assessment has been completed by Label CBD and FFI teams in September 2019 and has been submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development as part of the report to obtain a special permit to harvest and trade baobabs. This assessment recommended having a two-phase approach in Baobab enterprise development. In the initial phase, three village-level enterprises will be set up to process baobab fruit into fruit powder and seed. Processing house, equipment and training will be provided to the community members. In the subsequent phase, once the community start meeting the quality standards and sufficient volume of seeds are available for oil processing, investment into oil processing will be made. This two-phase approach will improve efficiency in the supply chain, increase income through fair prices for the products and also allow time for the community to be trained in baobab processing.

**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.**

Changing rules:

In January 2019, the Malagasy government issued a note prohibiting harvesting, transport and trade of all forest products, including the baobabs. Despite the efforts to obtain a special permit, we didn't get official approval yet to continue the process. We informed the communities on the new rules in September and although they accepted the rules, they are feeling disappointed. If this issue is not resolved, we might not be able to continue the process of providing additional training to the communities for baobab processing and linking them to other businesses.

Reforestation:

Since March 2019, the Malagasy government has put reforestation as the priority. At the DREDD Menabe, all staff members have been engaged to set up a nursery containing 10 million seedlings since August 2019. As a result, we were not able to move forward with the community management rights transfer in timely manner.

**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:

This is the initial estimate of the oil processing unit cost and the relevant accessories. We are considering to allocate part of this budget to improving local infrastructure for processing the fruits into powder as part of the first phase to establish the community enterprise. A change request will be submitted after the ban has been lifted.

**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.

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

- In early October 2019, we have also been informed that the process to renew community management contracts will have to be approved by the General Director in Antananarivo. This will cause a delay in the process.
- The Mayor election is now planned on 27<sup>th</sup> November. The propaganda will start on 04<sup>th</sup> November. During this period, organizing community meetings and training will not be possible.
- The project annual report review asked why we did not set up fences before planting the baobabs to protect the seedlings from grazing. This is linked to the security issue in the project area. In fact, the bandits attacked the villages to steal the zebus. As a result, all villagers lost their zebus and cattle grazing was no longer a threat. Now that securing is slowly getting back, people restart to buy zebus. Fencing will become a priority in the next planting season.

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. Additionally, if you were funded under R25 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate 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](mailto: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: 25-035 Darwin Half Year Report**