



Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31st October 2021)

Project reference	25-026
Project title	Securing healthy baobab populations through efficient fruit harvesting and use
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Madagascar
Lead organisation	Madagasikara Voakajy
Partner(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Label CBD Consulting (LCBD) - Fauna & Flora International (FFI) - Direction Régionale de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable Menabe (DREDD Menabe)
Project leader	<i>Julie Hanta Razafimanahaka</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR4, 29th October 2021</i>
Project website/blog/social media	www.madagasikara-voakajy.org https://www.facebook.com/madagasikaravoakajy

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).

Key activities carried out during the reporting period were:

- Equipping patrollers with uniforms and training them on using a smartphone to collect data (started in May 2021 and to be continued until project end).
- Setting up a bank account for each community enterprises (completed in July 2021).
- Monitoring of survival of the seedlings planted in February 2021 (carried out in June 2021 – to be continued until project end): a survival rate of 86.7%, 76.7% and 77.6% were recorded respectively for Andohaviana, Bepeha and Betankilotra. The number seedlings planted in February 2021 were respectively 500, 400 and 360.
- Monitoring of adult tree survival and fruit production for the three species (carried out in September 2021): one adult *A. grandidieri* (of 262), two *A. rubrostipa* (of 72) and three *A. za* (of 58) fell during the reporting period. These trees already showed signs of oldness and death during the previous monitoring. The quantity of fruits available seemed to have decreased this year compared to 2020 for the three species.
- Establishing a baobab processing unit in Andohaviana (ongoing). In addition to the processing unit, we will improve the wells in the villages as access to clean water is a prerequisite for respecting the quality of the baobab powder.
- Meeting with the CITES and ABS authorities to discuss the Grandidier's export quotas for powder, seeds and oil (May 2021). It has been concluded that only processed products will be exported (powder and oil). However, the quota has not been defined yet, due to lack of data for the southern part of the country.

- Discussing with the DREDD team and the potential buyers on the process to follow for trading the baobab powder produced by the local communities during the 2020
- Harvesting season and for 2021. Several documentations are required for this process to happen. We started the process and helped the communities establish the documents since July 2021. We are now waiting for feedback from DREDD.
- Training on good practises of sustainable harvesting, good practises of powder processing, traceability, quality control of fruits and powder, associative organisation and financial management (October 2021).
- Revision of the fair price calculation (ongoing). Some details have been reviewed to ensure that the price is viable from market perspective.

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.

- During the reporting period, forest loss in the Menabe-Antimena Reserve (northern Morondava) attracted the world and the Malagasy government's attention. As a result, the DREDD Menabe team, with whom we should have implemented training and evaluation fieldworks during the reporting period, were not available. Our plans were continuously postponed.
- During the reporting period, Madagasikara Voakajy received support from the Fonds Malgache de Formation Professionnelle to train its team members in entrepreneurship. This training increased the project team's knowledge on enterprise development and management. The training was organized as part of MV's strategic objective to develop auto-financing capabilities. We are now considering to an enterprise component within the organization and to include baobab in our products.

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.

As a result of Covid-19, we decided to cancel all trips of FFI team to Madagascar. The related budget was allocated to other costs as explained on the change request submitted and approved in September 2021.

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
Formal change request submitted:	Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes

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**

RESPONSE TO ANNUAL REPORT REVIEW

Annual Report #3

Query from the reviewer that needs to be addressed with this half-year report: 'Monitor incidence of beetle attack in Anjajavy region and report changes in infection levels'

Context:

In 2019, a beetle living in the baobab trees was reported to cause the death of the baobabs in Anjajavy, north-western Madagascar. In March 2021, the same beetle was reported by our team working in northern Madagascar and caused the death of three baobab trees. We observed that these trees were attacked after the area has been burnt. We therefore need to survey the presence of this insect in Menabe Region as it might cause a rapid depletion of the baobab population.

Response:

According to the latest updates from the Anjajavy team, one *A. rubrostipa* fell due to the beetle attack in 2020. This year, one *A. madagascariensis* also died because of the beetle. Currently, four trees of *A. rubrostipa* and one of *A. digitata* are heavily attacked and are expected to die by 2022. The local team conclude that the beetle continues to attack the population and is affecting all baobab species. Baobab trees are most vulnerable when their habitat has been burned.