

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

Project reference	26-015
Project title	Traditional African vegetables strengthen food and nutrition security in Madagascar
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Madagascar
Lead organisation	World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg)
Partner(s)	World Vegetable Center, Centre National de la Recherche Appliquée au Développement Rural (FOFIFA), Université d'Antananarivo (UA), SEMANA
Project leader	Sognigbe N'Danikou
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	23 October 2019, HYR1
Project website/blog/social media etc.	N/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).

This report includes the period from 16 May - 30 September 2019.

Output 1: Good understanding of the status of agro-biodiversity in Malagasy food systems.

- A GIS analysis of Madagascar was part of a continental analysis of patterns of the distribution of 126 selected vegetable crops following van Zonneveld et al. (*in prep.*). At country level, Madagascar has a relatively low observed richness of 44 species on the basis of herbarium samples and genebank accessions, while ecological niche modelling resulted in 83 species. This indicates a collecting gap in Madagascar of 39 species (83- 44) to better understand the vegetable diversity in this country and to improve the conservation of the available diversity. Hotspots of diversity on this island can be found in the Northern, Southern and Eastern part of Madagascar (Figure 1).

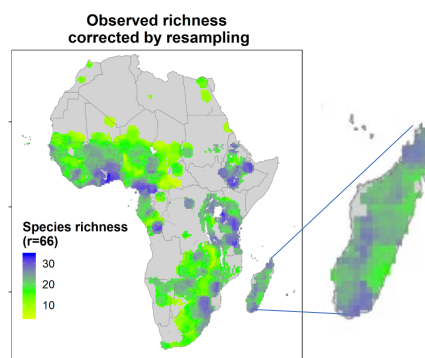


Figure 1. Map indicating hotspots of vegetable biodiversity in Madagascar. Source: van Zonneveld M, Kindt R, Solberg SØ, Dawson IK. Diversity and conservation of traditional African vegetables: priorities for action, *in prep.*

- A project meeting was organized in Antananarivo from 30 September to 4 October to discuss the progress of the project implementation and to review the workplan. An official project kick-off workshop was then organized on 4th October 2019, where project objectives, activities and expected outputs were presented to stakeholders, including the Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture of Madagascar. The status of traditional vegetable conservation and their contribution to food security and income was also discussed.
- Field research protocols and questionnaires for ABD four-cell analysis have been developed and were channelled through an approval process, since the research involves human subjects. The protocols have been approved by the WorldVeg Institutional Biosafety and Ethics Committee. The protocols will also be submitted to competent national authorities in Madagascar for clearance. Partners were trained in Antananarivo on the ABD protocols, and fieldwork is anticipated to start in November 2019. Participating students are selected, their dissertation topics are discussed. The students will be involved in ABD four-cell assessment, seed network analysis, and household baseline data collection.

Output 2: Protected and characterized genetic resources of vegetable diversity.

- Collecting of vegetable germplasm is planned to start in year 2. In preparation for this task, the project team has organized a meeting in Antananarivo with the National Focal Point of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) to discuss the administrative procedure and learn about the requested documentation for the germplasm collection and export to the WorldVeg genebank in Tanzania. However, a new national focal point of ITPGRFA was recently appointed. The new focal point was invited to the stakeholders workshop in Antananarivo to familiarize with the project activities.

Output 3: Malagasy extension workers and women farmers trained on seed saving and production of traditional vegetables.

- Project sites were selected in Antsirabe and Itasy and contact persons were identified. A field visit was organized by the project team to meet and discuss project objectives and activities with project beneficiaries. Farmers in Itasy region were very keen to get WorldVeg varieties, especially non-bitter African eggplant lines.
- Training materials have been developed and the project beneficiaries were selected (25 extension workers and 200 women farmers). Research protocols for baseline data collection were developed and are going through ethical clearance at WorldVeg and at the University of Antananarivo's ethical committees, respectively. Household surveys are expected to start in November. Trainings are expected to start in January 2020, after the baseline studies are completed.
- 250 seed kits (10,000 grams of seed) of promising 12 improved lines of Amaranths, African eggplant, African nightshade and Ethiopian mustard were developed and imported to Madagascar to be distributed to beneficiary women farmers, school gardens and for on-farm evaluation.

Output 4: Regional school garden programs strengthened to promote conservation and use of agro-biodiversity.

- The approach to strengthen school garden programs and protocol were discussed during project meeting in September. There will be demonstration gardens in selected schools. At each selected site there will be one school with and another without already established school feeding program. This design will help to track the impact of the project intervention.
- Focus group discussions with school children and their care takers will take place in January-February 2020.

Output 5: Malagasy women farmers trained on seed production for commercialization.

- Trainings are expected to start in January 2020, after the baseline studies are completed. Women farmers will be trained after the extension officers have been trained.

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 start was delayed (16 May 2019). In addition, there were also unplanned administrative issues from a partner organization, the National Center for Applied Research on Rural Development (FOFIFA), for signing the sub-contract with the World Vegetable Center to receive funds in time. To deal with this situation, a change request was sent to Defra to give FOFIFA's sub-contract to the second Malagasy partner, the University of Antananarivo. This request was recently approved by Defra and immediately implemented by WorldVeg. This option has been discussed and approved by all project partners, and is expected to minimize risks of underspending in year 1 and ensure smooth implementation of project activities and output delivery.

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: 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.

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

N/A

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. 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**