

## Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

*Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.*

**Submission Deadline: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

<b>Project reference</b>	28-009
<b>Project title</b>	Enabling youths to lead lemur conservation in eastern Madagascar
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Madagascar
<b>Lead partner</b>	Madagasikara Voakajy
<b>Partner(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Association Mitsinjo (Mitsinjo)</li> <li>- Money for Madagascar (MfM)</li> <li>- Label CBD Consulting (LCBD)</li> <li>- Délégation de la Jeunesse Moramanga (DelJS)</li> <li>- Circonscription de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage Moramanga (CIRAE)</li> <li>- Circonscription de l'Environnement et des Forets Moramanga (CIREF)</li> </ul>
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Voahirana Claudia Randriamamonjy</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	<i>HYR2, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="http://www.madagasikara-voakajy.org">www.madagasikara-voakajy.org</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/madagasikaravoakajy">https://www.facebook.com/madagasikaravoakajy</a>

**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).**

This project tackles a key driver of Madagascar's accelerated biodiversity loss: the growing population's need to clear forests for agriculture. Around three Reserves in eastern Madagascar, we will equip 200 youths with the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to increase yields through sustainable farming, adopt aromatic and medicinal plants in their farming systems and market their products with ethical enterprises. Youths will share their knowledge, skills, and experience in their communities and will engage all members in lemur conservation stewardship. To date, 21 youth groups with 281 members were successfully set up. These youths already received initial training on sustainable farming techniques and 60% of them were able to receive training sessions on good practices relating to the aromatic and medicinal plant sector. Two potential buyers for the aromatic and medicinal plants have been identified. For this reporting period, progress against each output is as follows:

**Output 1: 200 youths take steps to move towards sustainable farming techniques in Analamazaotra, Ankeniheny and Mangabe, including composting, agroforestry and crop diversification**

- From May to September 2022, 8 field trips were undertaken by MV to achieve the objectives at the level of the 17 youth teams concerned. Concerning the 4 youth teams in Andasibe, 10 field trips were carried out by Mitsinjo to ensure their evolution. During each fieldtrip, the teams were reminded about the importance of community life, and offered capacity building on planning and activity reporting. Concerning the community life, the advantages of living in association and why we must unite for the development of the community and the biodiversity conservation were always mentioned. In fact, being in a group allows to acquire new skills, to participate in local development, and to learn to live in society. The activity reports that had already been produced by the youth groups were collected and fed into MV and Mitsinjo databases to ensure quality recording and MEL. In addition, all 21 focal points also received capacity building on group management and reports.
- From May-June 2022, all the demonstration plots for the 21 youth teams were identified. The endowment acts for the 21 plots were all signed. Then, each plot was delimited and characterized in order to know its state and better fulfill the production plans, designed by the youths to show what they will grow or raise. Afterwards, MV and Mitsinjo carried out training on developing the production plan for the chosen sectors for the 21 youths, taking into account the initial training on sustainable farming techniques already given in March 2022. All the technical itineraries, the costs, the productions envisaged as well as the cultural calendars have been recorded in a file and taken into account. 21 production plan sheets were then completed. For the youths who chose a fish farming project, the activities were immediately advanced to ensure that they fitted with the farming season. Theoretical and practical training, followed by the construction of a pond was carried out for the youth team in Ambatomasina, thanks to the collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy. Two youth teams did not choose new sectors because they preferred to be supported with the fish farming work that they had already started before the project. So, the youth teams in Andazoana and Ankarefo villages received training on carp spawn. Carp monitoring in group and individual ponds was also carried out to identify how the enterprise was progressing.
- In August and September 2022, MV and Mitsinjo teams were able to carry out all the trainings on the sectors chosen by the 21 youth teams thanks to the collaboration with the Circonscription of Agriculture and Livestock Moramanga (CIRAE). The sectors chosen by the youth teams include improved lowland rice culture, maize, bean, cassava, peanut, vegetables, potato, beekeeping, fish farming, rice-fish farming, poultry farming, and pig farming. After receiving focused training, all the youth teams reviewed and modified their production plans under the supervision of the MV team, Mitsinjo and CIRAE. The seed and agricultural input needs for each group were then collected. For the youth teams in Andasibe, the seeds have already been distributed and the agricultural activities, in parallel with the chicken farming, pig farming, and beekeeping have already started. Regarding fish farming, the youth teams in Ankarefo and Andazaoana were able to build ponds for the separation of spawners and they are only waiting for the laying in November 2022. For the youth team in Ambatomasina, the construction of the pond is already completed and they are only waiting for the introduction of carp fry in November 2022. Field monitoring of 05 demonstration plots

already cultivated was also carried out.

### **Output 2: Production of aromatic and medicinal plants becomes part of youths' farming system**

- In June 2022, production trials of dried leaves of *Centella asiatica* were carried out by the young beneficiaries of the project following the training on the good practices required when handling Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (AMP). The samples have already been received by Label CBD for analysis.
- From June 04, 2022 to August 2022, a quantitative assessment of the abundance, an estimate of the biomass and the distribution of pre-identified AMP species, which can be exploited and considered as plants of potential interest for buyers, have also been carried out at four (4) sites including PK 21, Amparalalana, Lakato and Ambodivarongy. This study, carried out in partnership with the Plant Research Centre of Madagascar (CRPM) of the Plant Biology and Ecology (MBEV) section of the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Antananarivo, aims to identify and locate plants that can be used sustainably, in terms of collection or cultivation. The study was completed in September 2022 and the results were shared with all partners. The conditions for the sustainable exploitation and management of resources, in the short, long and medium term, have been defined for each species. Good practices and collection rates have been defined for directly exploitable species and the conditions favouring the regeneration of plants or their reproduction have been identified for those whose exploitation may be considered in the future. Thus, Mitsinjo gave youth teams in Farahevitra and Ampangalantsary training on establishing and managing tree nurseries for growing the 12 identified aromatic plants for exploitation and cultivation adapted to the pedoclimatic conditions and the market demand during the period. These youth teams are already ready to create their own nurseries once the results of the Label CBD study are available on site. In addition, for the case of *Canarium madagascariense*, a study of the resin production capacity is in progress. The samples were already collected in August 2022. The Mada Herbs Company (a company specializing in the sustainable collection, processing and sale of *Centella* and another AMP) who is one of the buyers, was satisfied with the quality of the samples and a negotiation on prices and the type of contract was carried out. A good price of 9.000 Ar per dry kg has been accepted and the development of the contract is in progress.

### **Output 3: Youth-led cooperatives are established to drive social and economic development and biodiversity stewardship in the villages**

By September 2022, the statutes of all groups had been finalised. They then began to fill in all the files for the legalisation of the groups. It should be noted that on each fieldtrip the MV and Mitsinjo teams constantly remind young people about key elements needed to work cooperatively and improve of community life. They focus on key areas such as the art of living and working in a group, the importance of respect and methods of conflict resolution. Follow-ups on agricultural activities, conservation (awareness on lemurs, patrols, reforestation, reporting on infraction) and mini-development projects (e.g. bridge and road maintenance, public toilets, garbage bins...) are also always carried out. These activities correspond to the contribution of the youth teams to the sustainable development of each village and the activities related to lemurs protection.

### **Output 4: Three private enterprises, engaged in sustainability, commit to sourcing products from the youth-led cooperatives and support their development as a business and biodiversity steward entity in the villages**

- In May 2022, potential companies were identified with a view to marketing AMP. Two of them were contacted. To date, the Jacaranda Company and Mada Herbs are in the process of negotiation. A series of meetings made it possible to discuss with the company Mada Herbs for the collection of leaves of *Centella asiatica* and *Sigesbeckia orientalis*. The exchange with the companies Jacarandas and LABEL CBD as well as MV and Mitsinjo on a possible collaboration for *Curcuma longa* was also established. We are now awaiting confirmation.
- In August 2022, the MV teams mentioned the requirements of the Mada Herbs

Company on *Cintella asiatica*. 04 youth teams in the Lakato Commune (Ambodivarongy, Lakato, Mahafiaina and Ambatomasina) have agreed on the price of 9,000 Ar per dry kg. The administrative obligations related to the collection of leaves were prepared by Mada Herbs in August 2022. These obligations, called favourable opinions, were then deposited and then signed by the Mayor of the Rural Commune of Lakato. These favourable opinions are the documents signed by the municipality concerned in which it is written that the municipality accepts and approves that the company will collect the products described in its area. The signing of the rest is in progress. And in September 2022, a discussion about the mode of collection between Mada Herbs, MV and the young people was started.

- In September 2022, an instruction was given to all groups to send samples of *Sigesbeckia orientalis* because Mada Herbs is interested in it. Youth teams in Lakato are currently preparing to collect *Centella asiatica*.

#### **Output 5: Youths engage other community members in sustainable farming, cooperatives and biodiversity stewardship**

- In May-June 2022, the staff from Ministry of Youth Moramanga (DELJS) conducted training on awareness raising techniques for lemurs' conservation, health and other aspects of development for all 4 youth teams in Andasibe and youth teams in the following villages: Lakambato, PK33, PK32, Lakato and Mahafiaina. It should be noted that the 04 youth teams in Andasibe have also already benefited from training in communication.
- On 21st July 2022, MV teams participated in the inauguration of the information centre in Avolo village where the CIREF in Moramanga raised awareness about lemurs and the protection of the forest. In addition, the Babakoto youth team in Avolo was able to make awareness-raising performances on the conservation of lemurs through traditional songs and dances in front of all the community and the authorities.
- In August-September 2022, the MV teams participated in massive patrols organized by youth groups and local communities for the following villages: Lakambato, Andranomandry, PK33 and PK32. These patrols aimed at observing and reporting infractions within the Mangabe reserve. During these missions, the youth teams in PK21, PK33 and Amparalalana received training on time management by MV.
- On September 30, 2022, representatives of the 04 youth teams in Andasibe with MV and Mitsinjo teams participated in the carnival during the celebration of the Indri Festival 4th edition in Andasibe.

Other activities include the monitoring of the project and important visits:

- A monthly meeting has always been held between all the partners every first Wednesday of the month between April and October 2022 except in September 2022.
- A meeting between MFM, MV and Mitsinjo was also held to closely monitor the progress of the project and discuss the feedback from Darwin during the previous annual technical report year 1. To respond to this, we are now correcting the database and clarifying the indicators, trying to relate our activities and results on lemurs, increasing Darwin visibility on the ground and our websites. The organization of data collected on young people and focal points as well as their activities was carried out thanks to exchanges and working sessions between the team.
- On the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2022, the Director of MV, the Mangabe project leader as well as the partners of the Tusk Award visited the youth group in Farahevitra. A discussion and a visit to the demonstration plot were carried out. Visitors were also able to interact with all the members of the 04 youth teams at the Mitsinjo office in Andasibe.
- In August 2022, the youth project coordinator (MV), the local agent in Mangabe (MV) and the youth team responsible in Andasibe (Mitsinjo) visited all the stands at the FIER-MADA 2022 agricultural fair in Antananarivo in order to get inspired for the youth project, and to search for potential buyers and seed suppliers.

**2. 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 political problem between Ukraine and Russia has increased fuel prices in Madagascar. This has affected the team's budgeting and planning because all supplies and transport prices in Madagascar have increased significantly, yet the assigned budget is already fixed in advance.

A dynamic member of staff at the Ministry of Youth in Moramanga (Mr Andry Rasoloarimanga) who participated in the youth project from the beginning was very ill between April and July 2022. Unfortunately, he didn't survive the disease and passed away on August 02, 2022. Thus, the lack was really felt at the level of the team and the project because there is only one staff left capable of helping the team at the level of the Ministry of Youth, yet we have 5 sites and the missions are carried out in parallel. Sites were then prioritized during the training to be given by the Ministry of Youth up to now.

The condition of the roads linking Moramanga and the sites continues to deteriorate. The duration of the travel then becomes longer and longer and tiring, thus affecting the schedule and reducing the will of certain partners from the Ministry.

**3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS-LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

**4a. 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: £

**4b. 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget 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.**

**5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

None

**If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response 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 NIRAS-LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to [BCF-Reports@niras.com](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com). The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**