

## 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_024
<b>Project title</b>	Diverse agroforestry protects natural capital around Betampona and Vohibe, Madagascar
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Madagascar
<b>Lead partner</b>	Madagascar Fauna and Flora Group
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Association Lovasoa, Association Soavinala, Madagascar National Parks, Missouri Botanical Gardens-Madagascar (MBG), Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre, Prof Christof den Biggelaar, The Fruits, Vegetables, and Environmental Education (FVEE) Program of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), MC Ingredients, Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
<b>Project leader</b>	Karen Freeman
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	HYR1
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="http://www.madagascarfaunaflora.org">www.madagascarfaunaflora.org</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).**

The largest achievement this reporting period has been the collaborative establishment of the community monitoring protocols of forest fragments, the completion of the initial baseline surveys and establishment of fauna monitoring transects at all intervention sites bar one (Ambanitohaka). This process took far longer than anticipated as most of the community association (VOIs) had multiple forest parcels under their management that were designated as targets for conservation under this project and some were further away than we had anticipated. Community-nominated patrollers were trained in survey and transect techniques (with the exception of the fauna transects at Vohibe, which will be done in the next period). This process was carried out in consultation with Madagascar National Parks for sites around Betampona.

Follow up was carried out per participating household on all trees distributed during the Fruits, Vegetables and Environmental Education (FVEE) programme trainings in Year 1. Follow up of the mother orchards at each site was completed: all trees planted had survived and were weeded of competing vegetation and mulched with the resulting organic material. The households that would like to continue with the project have been identified. Planning is underway for the follow up FVEE trainings both at their own site (Mitsinjo) and at each of the intervention sites in the next period. Animators at each site have consulted participants on their preferred choices of plants/trees to cultivate and there is a good interest and uptake in the new species that have been introduced through the FVEE collaboration.

A seed collection permit was secured for Betampona for a 2-year period: 25 April 2022- 25 April 2024 and Missouri Botanical Garden secured a seed collection permit for all their sites including the Vohibe Reserve. 15,881 native and endemic trees were produced across the three intervention sites around Betampona by end August 2022 and the majority of these are destined for use by the respective VOIs and also the project participants. 2,596 native or endemic trees were planted by project participants across the 3 Betampona sites by the end of this period, which is 43.3% of the target for Betampona tree production/distribution to participants. MBG DI project staff have produced 6,217 agroforestry trees of 7 different types for distribution to project participants and have hence already nearly doubled their production target for the project. This level of production across the sites demonstrates the technical capacity of the nursery workers, and we anticipate no problems with the target to produce 12,000 trees for use for project participants specifically across all 5 intervention sites by end 2023. The 2,720 coffee trees bought and distributed to participants across the 3 Betampona sites have all been planted and so far all are surviving.

All nurseries were replaced or renovated as necessary during this period. Seeds for annual vegetable production were distributed in April 2022. Each household's agroforestry plot was visited during this period across all 5 intervention sites.

In July 2022, initial training and orientation sessions were held by the Project Coordinator around Betampona and Ampasina (in combination with the project site manager for Ampasina) for all project staff. Prof den Biggelaar was not able to attend at that time (see Section 2b) but is carrying out his training sessions in Oct 2022. MBG had carried out their initial staff training session in Year 1 and continued on the job training during this period. MBG was also able to carry out the scheduled training session led by our project partner at Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre, Dr Mamy Tiana Rajaonah, in yam cultivation, multiplication and preservation techniques. Due to scheduling conflicts, Dr Rajaonah was not available to come to Betampona and Ampasina during this period but postponed his visit until October 2022.

All participants at Ampasina and Ampitabe, and 96% of project participants around Betampona have signed their memorandums of understanding during this period (the remaining two as yet unsigned at Betampona are for two new participating households replacing two that left the project due to ill health in one case and family problems in the other).

One further large achievement in June 2022 was to carry out meetings at our intervention sites at Betampona (3 sites: Antananarina, Ambanitohaka and Analamangahazo) and Ampasina to explain in detail MFG's safeguarding policy and its implications for all our personnel, collaborators, and project participants. The trainings were held for the Darwin Initiative project participants but also for local authorities to ensure that they are all aware of our policy and the procedures to report any irregularities. This is not an activity we had scheduled formally in our timeline but in hindsight, due to our commitment to ensure compliance with the policy when we applied for the grant, we should have done. The policy has been shared with our partners at Missouri Botanical Garden who manage the Vohibe component of this Darwin Initiative project and the necessity of sharing it with all project collaborators and participants explained.

**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.**

Due to significant fires, cyclones and floods at the end of Year 1 of the project, several important training sessions needed to be postponed. We requested and received permission for a budget change in April 2022 to allow these important set-up training sessions to be completed in the beginning of Year 2. These delays caused significant delays to the set up of the project, as outlined in detail in our first end of year report. We list this here now as the Change Request was not submitted until April 2023 at the start of this reporting period and was approved by DEFRA during the same period.

The baseline surveys and setting up of community monitoring transects in the target forest conservation fragments took longer than anticipated. The transects and surveys at the Betampona site of Ambanitohaka were not able to be set up during this period but were carried

out in October. The MBG team and community association members at Vohibe need training over the next period to be able to carry out the fauna transects and to properly identify the species found. These various issues have delayed the start up of the data collection but will not significantly affect the overall project goals or timeline.

Dr Rajaonah, of Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre was only able to carry out one of his three planned training sessions during this period due to scheduling conflicts but the training sessions were held in Oct 2022 and hence will have minimal impact on the annual budget and timeline.

COVID-19 has been a lot less of an issue in Madagascar during this reporting period. The biggest ongoing impact has been due to the postponement of Prof Christof den Biggelaar's project staff training sessions, which were originally scheduled for the third quarter of the first financial year of the project (Oct/Nov 2021). These had to be postponed due to COVID-19 related border closures, quarantine regulations and health insurance considerations. Prof den Biggelaar was then committed to prior teaching obligations and was not able to reschedule his trip until Oct 2022. There were then further delays and a reduction to Prof den Biggelaar's stay as he contracted COVID-19 and suffered poor health for a number of weeks just before he was due to go to Madagascar.

As a result, some of the early staff-training sessions were not possible to complete in full at the scheduled time but we had on-site expertise from our own Project Coordinator and site managers to assure the start of the project as planned. Prof den Biggelaar is now currently in Madagascar, reinforcing and building upon the earlier training sessions. This will likely have some impacts on the timing of our deliverables, but we anticipate that we will be able to catch up by the end of the next reporting period and there shouldn't be any long-lasting impacts on our budget or timetable.

**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: Yes

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

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: £0

**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.

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

None

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**