

## Darwin Initiative Main Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2015)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	22-005
<b>Project Title</b>	Conserving Madagascar's yams through cultivation for livelihoods and food security
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Madagascar
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	RBG, Kew
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre (KMCC), Feedback Madagascar Ny Tanintsika (FBNT), Silo National des Graines Forestières (Madagascar, SNGF).
<b>Project Leader</b>	Dr Paul Wilkin
<b>Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)</b>	30/10/15, HYR1
<b>Project website/Twitter/Blog/Instagram etc</b>	<b>Twitter:</b> <a href="#">@TeamKMCC</a> . <b>Blog:</b> <a href="https://teamkmcc.wordpress.com/">https://teamkmcc.wordpress.com/</a> . <b>Website URL:</b> <a href="http://www.teamkmcc.org/yams">www.teamkmcc.org/yams</a>
<b>Funder (DFID/Defra)</b>	DFID

### 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).

The project has made significant progress since April 1. Notable events include the project initiation workshop in Antananarivo in early October, the forging of initial links with communities in the North of Madagascar and the development of a new KMCC office in Ambanja, sited to help delivery of the yams project. No notable or unexpected problems have yet been encountered.

The following activities were included in the Q1/Q2 workplan:

#### 1.4 Workshops to develop a national strategy and conservation plans

The project initiation workshop took place on October 2 2015.

26 people attended from 13 different organisations. They included a substantial group from the Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Écologie, de la Mer et des Forêts (MEEMF), including those working at both national and regional level. Prof. Vololoniaina Jeannoda (Département de Biologie et Ecologie Végétales, University of Antananarivo) participated, the principal author of the strategy for cultivated yams in Madagascar, as did a Ministry of Agriculture representative.

Key collaborators were also present including principal collaborators KMCC, FBNT and SNGF. We are still seeking further partners including other NGOs represented at the workshop; some from the North were unable to travel to Tana, including representatives of the Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG) and Le Service d'Appui à la Gestion de l'Environnement from Antsiranana. A further smaller workshop will be held in Ambanja soon to engage with those potential collaborators as soon as the new KMCC office there is fully in operation.

The workshop comprised of presentations to introduce the project and relevant background material to the participants in English, French and Malagasy and focus groups on yam-related socioeconomic research methods, the mode of use of conservation status assessments in the project and yam cultivation in the context of conservation.

Further workshops to be held in Q3 of Y2 and Q4 of Y3 to work towards a national strategy for wild yams in Madagascar linked to that for cultivated yams

### 2.1 Building and populating a project website and blog

Regular tweets have been disseminated via [@TeamKMCC](#): many have been retweeted by the Darwin Initiative ([@Darwin\\_Defra](#)). A blog was presented at <https://teamkmcc.wordpress.com/> and a further blog referred to one of the key yam species for the project and Darwin funding (<http://www.kew.org/discover/blogs/kew-science/un-sustainable-development-goals-and-kew%E2%80%99s-science>). The project web presence is in the process of construction at [www.teamkmcc.org/yams](http://www.teamkmcc.org/yams). This activity will continue to take place throughout the lifetime of the project.

### 3.1 Baseline surveys of consumption and availability in markets

This data is being captured through socioeconomic surveying during early contact with communities in Y1. There are 8 active communities in the North: Amporaha, Belinta, Marovato and Galoko in Ambanja District and Mahagaga, Andavakoera, Ankorikihely and Ramena in Antsiranana II District. When added to the 20 communities that are already part of the project in the Corridor Forestier Ambositra – Vondrozo (COFAV). Thus we are at ca 50% of our target number of communities. We are in the process of adding others (in, for example, the Irodo and Sambirano valleys) although it may be the Y2 dry season (Q5) before we can get to some of them due primarily to poor road infrastructure. Motorbikes may help and we are looking into purchase arrangements.

Work has also taken place to set up a new KMCC office in Ambanja to facilitate project activities. KMCC staff from Antananarivo will visit to complete setup in November. A Technician has been appointed and is already working in the field with communities. Botanist and driver (or combined) role(s) will be recruited in the near future.

### 3.2 Training for community technicians in cultivation and ennoblement

Mamy Tiana Rajanoah and the new Technician based at Ambanja (M. Geodain) have spent a considerable proportion of the last 6 months engaged in community-facing meetings and workshops developing work programmes and delivering training activities both in the North of Madagascar and the COFAV. Much of this has focussed on yam cultivation and the potential for ennoblement, the process described in cultivated African yams where desirable tuber traits are gained by bringing plants into agro-environments. This has been complemented by sourcing cultivated winged yam planting materials (“seed yams”) and preparation of nurseries for both wild and cultivated yams

This activity will take place throughout the lifetime of the project via community workshops

### 3.3 Development of a manual and other materials

We are in the process of bringing together information resources from taxonomic research with field/conservation data and cultivation methodology for the development of local manuals.

IUCN Conservation status assessments based on herbarium specimen data are in the final stages of review for all species of *Dioscorea* in Madagascar. Once finalised, KMCC staff will be given access to the assessments on IUCN’s SIS to update them throughout the project. We have decided to use the iNaturalist site Zavamaniry Gasy (<http://www.inaturalist.org/projects/zavamaniry-gasy-plants-of-madagascar>) as an innovative repository for spatial data and evidence of occurrence.

This activity will continue during the dry season parts of the remainder of the project (Q5/6 and 9/10).

#### 4.3 Development of a monitoring methodology for communities

A draft document has been circulated among the project team. Areas of activity such as participatory monitoring were workshopped on October 2. Further skype meetings are needed to finalise the document. The methodology will then be trialled in communities and revised as needed during the remainder of Y1 and Y2.

#### 5.1 Identification of sites for collection of seeds

Areas adjacent to all the communities listed above in the North of Madagascar and the COFAV will be used for seed collection by the in-country project team, including those in the Irodo and Sambirano valleys. The Ambanja team will focus on the north and the Antananarivo team the, COFAV. General seed collecting teams will target other yam species, including those that are threatened such as Morondava for *D. bako*, Mahavanona for *D. decaryana/D. acuminata*. This activity will take place during the first 18 months of the project in order to permit the collection and banking of all seeds by March 2018.

#### 5.4 Establishment of living gene-banks

This activity will take place throughout the lifetime of the project. Sites at the University of Antananarivo and the Parc Botanique et Zoologique de Tsimbazaza have definitively been selected. We are also looking at whether it will be possible to establish living gene banks near Ambanja associated with the new office, in Ramena Associated with MBG, near Ambositra associated with FBNT and Ranomafana Arboretum. Community cultivation will of course add an extra layer of conservation activity.

**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.**

No events of this type.

**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
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Formal change request submitted:	No
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Received confirmation of change acceptance	No
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**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 as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year.** 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 and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

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

No

**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 send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at [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: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**