

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: 31st October 2022

Project reference	DARNV005
Project title	Understanding Ugandan native plant species' role in innovative sustainable landscapes
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Uganda
Lead partner	Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)
Partner(s)	Tooro Botanical Gardens (TBG), GrassRoots Ltd (GR), Makerere University, National Agriculture Research Organisation (NARO) - Entebbe Botanical Garden (EBG)
Project leader	Alex Hudson
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	

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).

Output 1

Activity 1.1: Four (4) community consultation workshops were organised and conducted in 4 project site areas of Kagadi, Mbale, Lwamunda, and Tooro Botanical Gardens (TBG). Two hundred and forty (240) project stakeholders (140 males and 100 females) participated, including farmers, local leaders at the sub-country and district levels, women, youth, schools, Religious leaders and business representatives. These were participatory and allowed equal & free expression of participants' views and ideas. TBG presented the project objectives, expectations from different stakeholders, and the diverse tree species the agroforestry trial intends to promote. Grassroots Ltd also administered a questionnaire to understand food consumption barriers to accessing nutritional food, the growing habits year-round, and to gather traditional knowledge on the target plant species.

Activity 1.2: During the community workshops TBG and the participants identified community representatives who would take responsibility of overseeing the day to day operations of the agroforestry trials. Key consideration was given to individuals who had interest in conservation, and who would act as champions in the future, as well special interest / marginalised groups like women and youth. A total of 25 (12 males and 13 females) community members were identified and trained on their roles and their responsibilities.

Activity 1.4: GR have selected four markets for detailed study, which have over 1,500 stalls. So far, GR have interviewed twenty-five selected stallholders. They noted that within the stallholder community there is more knowledge and interest in these specialist products by mature women than younger people and men. GR also interviewed medical professionals. The medical professionals were aware of the need to ensure that Ugandans have access to these products

for community nutrition and health. There is medical interest in the detailed nutrient profiles, particularly micro-nutrients.

GR has been considering labels and packaging for potential products in the future. Some initial potential market gaps have opportunities have been identified to be confirmed with further assessments. They also note the arrival of Carrefour into the supermarket sector in Uganda, with its strong environmental and ethical concerns that may provide good opportunities.

Output 2

Activity 2.1: Makerere University conducted training for plant collectors in Mbale, Lwamunda, Entebbe, Kagadi & Fort portal. At each site, six collectors were trained to assist in collecting both voucher specimens of the plants for identification at the herbarium and samples of selected species for nutritional analysis.

Output 3

Activity 3.1: Two steering committee meetings were conducted online over Zoom in May and August with 12 participants from 7 institutes. A term of reference was agreed for the group and it will meet quarterly throughout the project. The committee meetings helped to give the committee a deeper understanding of the project so that they can guide the project implementation activities in relation to the work plan and outputs.

Activity 3.2: Agroforestry trials were designed with the support of Juventine Boaz Odoi from the Ugandan National Forestry Research Institute. TBG developed a field agroforestry farmland assessment criterion to decide where the plots would be established, as follows:

- Communally owned land or individual piece of farmland.
- Farmlands that are poorly managed and degraded.
- Land owners that would voluntarily offer at least one hectare of their degraded land.
- Farmers who are enthusiastic about tree growing and agricultural systems; are willing to shift their mind set to adopt the proposed agroforestry model and happy to use them as model farms within the community.
- Farmland not more than 5 kilometres from the existing nurseries (established in previous Darwin Initiative project – 25-020).
- Availability of a nearby water source, not more than 500 metres from the plot.
- Accessibility to transport infrastructure.
- Accessibility for labour to work on the agroforestry plots.

With sites selected, four (4) Agroforestry designs were developed to match the identified sites, in collaboration with the NARO-EBG and National Forestry Research Institute. These considered the relevance of 34-project target food tree species for each area based on their known provenance in the relevant agroecological zones (Western mid altitude landscapes for the Fort portal and Kagadi; Lake Victoria crescent for Mpigi-Lwamunda and Entebbe EBG; and Afromontane landscapes for Mbale).

Activity 3.3: TBG identified and trained 7 seed collectors from each of the agroforestry trial site areas. They were trained in seed collection, nursery bed establishment and management and seed banking. 20 out of the 28 seed collectors (12 female, & 16 male) have also benefited from training provided by Terraformation on seed collection and management gaining Certificates of completion from that course.

Activity 3.4: TBG's previously existing satellite nurseries (from Darwin Initiative project 25-020) spread across different agroecological zones provided the majority of the targeted 34 native food tree species planted in the agroforestry trial sites. Any species that were not found in these nurseries had to be sourced from elsewhere.

Activity 3.6: Memorandum of understanding (MOUs) were signed between TBG and land owners identified in 3.2 to guarantee the project agroforestry trial establishment and existence for project time frame and beyond. MOUs highlighted the roles and responsibilities of each party in accordance with the project guidelines.

Demarcation and mapping were conducted to mark the trials' boundaries to support trial development and produce spatial maps. Plots have been fenced to protect them from intruders and livestock. Bush clearance was completed to prepare the sites, followed by primary and

secondary tillage, to soften the hard surface and make a good seed bed for crops. Lining, pitting and planting activities were then done at 4 project sites (Kagadi, Mpigi, Mbale and Kabarole districts – Fort Portal). One site (at Entebbe Botanical Gardens) remains to be planted.

80 community members (20 from each site) supported this as hired labourers receiving incomes (40% were women and 60% men).

Activity 3.5: GPS coordinates for individual seedlings has been recorded to help in the monitoring of the trials, including monitoring growth performance of the different species planted.

Output 4

Activity 4.3: An education consortium has also been established with two meetings held in July and September. These provide an opportunity for implementing partners to meet every two months to discuss the project awareness raising strategies. They also provided a critical platform for cross-learning from different partners but also kept track of the set targets.

Through matched funds, three radio programs have been aired: two on Kibale-Kagadi development radio in Kagadi district and the other KRC FM in Fort portal. Jingles and spot messages were recorded English and translated into local languages and are currently running on selected radio stations so as to popularise the project goals and objectives.

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.

Acquiring land for the establishment of agroforestry trials was challenging in some districts. TBG engaged potential landlords and informed them of the importance of agroforestry and the potential importance to community development so that they agreed to host the trials.

There were some delays to training raw food material collectors due to finance issues at Makerere University. This required further communications with the administrative departments, to confirm overhead use before funds could be transferred from TBG to Makerere University. Release of funds to the team to begin activities was also delayed to August so that training took place in September / October, at the end of the period it was planned.

When carrying out market assessment work, GR have had challenges identifying the project target species with market sellers. Due to the delays in food raw material collection, nothing physical was available for them to take to markets. To support this further, the rest of the project team is going to collate relevant pictures and descriptions - to go with the information already compiled on local common names, uses and areas of the country found - to facilitate these discussions further. Makerere University will also provide raw food materials when available.

These small delays are not set to impact the project budgets or timetables. GR will continue their work once relevant materials have been compiled to make their work easier, both with engaging market sellers and people from the herbal sector.

GR have also noted that they had to purchase products from market sellers to get them to discuss the project. They also found it difficult to engage and talk with consumers at the markets to get their opinions and will develop new methodologies for this – e.g. taster sampling or focus groups. Market sellers did note that for the fruit species asked about, there was a problem with the continuity of supply and availability that they would like to see improved.

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/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes/No
Change request reference if known:	

<p>4a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</p>

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. 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**