

Project Update: September 2015

Objectives

1. Generate data of wild useful fungi including their diversity, and their distribution
80% - Additional field works are being doing (August and September)
2. Access of size of habitat of endangered species and conservation status of numerous species
90% - Current fieldworks will provided additional data.
3. Identification of fungal hotspots and establishment of conservation strategies for both fungi and their habitats.
90% - Maximum data was obtained from previous fieldworks. However, Current fieldworks
4. Raise awareness of threats on macrofungi, and actions to undertake for their conservation.
70% - Data analyse are being processing, and will be made available to involved partners. Discussions/debates are been made with local populations and will be intensify after all fieldworks.

Unforeseen Difficulties

For this project, the unforeseen difficulties are those related to climate. Fieldwork was planned for July to September 2014. The recordable data include specimens sampling coupled to the identification of the status of their habitats in each vegetation type and the effective occupancy area. Unfortunately two different visits undertaken in August and September could not provide fruit bodies (specimens), because of the insufficient or lack of rain (the occurrence of fungal specimens is directly linked to humidity). Although the local inhabitants could help to identify common sites with high degradation due to human actions, it lacked the target study materials (the fungal specimens) that are essential for the present study. Therefore another visit was planned for the same period of the following year (August and September 2015) with additional cost. The direct consequence is the shift of pre-established timetable.

Outcomes

1. This project has contributed to the investigation on the conservation of wild useful fungi of Fazao-Malfakassa National Park and their habitats. Mycological investigations have enable to identify the commonly occurring macrofungal taxa (occurrence, abundance, distribution) in the targed forest ecosystem; and endangered species/taxa are identified and classified into different categories following IUCN criteria.
2. Characteristic of the habitats of collected specimens are investigated. Recorded data include: trees and their density, preservation state, implicated human activities or pressure, geographic coordinates.
3. Raise awareness on threats macrofungi, and actions to undertake for their conservation have been investigated

Timescale

This project was accepted on July 21st 2014, and the amount grant was transferred on July 30th 2014 and finally received on August 8th 2014. After administrative forms, I was able to start the project on August 15th, whereas the proposed chronogram was to conduct fieldwork from July to September 2014. Thus, the project has started with more than 1.5 months delay. The project is offset about 2 additional months to cover its execution time, and also take into account all fieldworks periods predefined.

Beneficiaries & Plans

Field data recording including specimens inventories have involved local population surrounding Fazao-Malfakassa National Park. Quantitative data regarding species/taxa occurrence, characteristic of habitats (abundances, sizes, structure of tree partner) have been collected in collaboration with local population representatives. Various implications of local populations, by human pressure or anthropogenic effects on forest resources and wild useful macrofungi were identified in cooperation with the local inhabitant's representatives. The populations surrounding the target area are informed about the threats of extinction of some wild useful fungal species. Inhabitants are informed about the essential role the wild useful macrofungi play in the balance of forest ecosystems, as well as for their survival. Strategies for sustainable management and conservation are proposed; threat species/taxa that need urgently to be preserved are known and listed.

Mycological investigations in tropical and particularly West Africa remain very scarce. Information regarding ecology and conservation status of wild useful macrofungi remains virtually unknown for almost all forest ecosystems in West Africa. This investigation will be extended to other forest ecosystems of Togo and West Africa.

The ecological and conservation status of certain wild useful macrofungi from Togo are known, as well as endangered species/taxa, from this project. The results of this investigation are being sharing in scientific workshops or congress. The investigations that are still ongoing will provide final results as a checklist and red list of threatened species, information regarding ecological characteristics of the habitats. This will be also shared as an original article, published and available online. At local and national level, apart from the direct discussion and debates with local populations, the results (data as red list, posters, articles) will be made available for Focal Point of Convention on Biological Diversity in Togo, Environmental and Forestry Ministry, as well as for IUCN-group, NGOs and government for a concrete actions and decisions in order to intensify actions for the conservation of these natural resources.

Once all the data analysis is done, the most important step is to make the results known mainly at local and national level. The results should be available for local populations surrounding the target forest. The important step includes especially awareness on the merits of the conservation/preservation of wild useful macrofungi, as well as their habitats.