

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Ssemwanga Mohammed
Project Title	Creating enabling conditions for long-term conservation of Bothriocline auriculata species in Uganda
Application ID	28515-2
Date of this Report	Friday, May 20 ^{th,} 2022



1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not Achieved	Partially Achieved	Fully Achieved	Comments
Regenerate quality seedlings for critically endangered plant species (Bothriocline auriculata) for mass propagation and conservation				350 seedlings for the juvenile Bothriocline auriculata seedlings for propagation and conservation.
Identify sites or ecosystems, with conducive ecological conditions (e.g., weather and soil) required to support optimum regeneration and growth of the Bothriocline auriculata species				Five sites and ecosystems with suitable weather, soil fertility and other edaphic parameters identified, within Mabira forests.
Build/strengthen the capacity of the local communities in biodiversity conservation, mainly critically endangered Bothriocline auriculata plants				150 local farmers and stakeholders (students and conservationists) received tailored training in species conservation.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a) <u>Production of quality (clean and disease-free) seedlings:</u> over 350 seedlings for the critically endangered *Bothriocline auriculata* species were produced under aseptic conditions through tissue culture and micropropagation procedures. The seedlings were hardened in a greenhouse and propagated in suitable ecosystems; to increase the *Bothriocline auriculata* plant population under conservation.

b) <u>Identification of suitable ecosystems for biodiversity conservation</u>: in-depth, ecogeographical studies were deployed to profile/ identify favourable agro-ecological zones within the natural protected zones of Mabira forests with suitable weather and soil conditions for optimum growth and conservation of the seedlings for endangered *Bothriocline auriculata* plants. Five sites with conducive weather (rainfall, humidity, air temperature), soil conditions (biota, fertility, pH, moisture), and new protected natural vegetation were identified. At least 350 species of seedlings were propagated in the identified protected natural ecosystems for regeneration and ex-situ conservation.

c) Build or strengthen the capacity of local communities in biodiversity conservation: over 150 local farmers and stakeholders, mainly students and conservationists were trained in biodiversity conservation and adaptive management of the endangered plant species, including the Bothriocline auriculata species.



3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

a) Unforeseen difficulties/ challenges faced

The outbreak of Covid-19, a global pandemic and its effect on the economy, including the national lockdown that restricted the movement of goods and people. As a result, most of the field-based activities were halted especially those that required travel and gathering people, including farmers and actors into one place for data collection, as well as capacity building and training packages.

b) Response to COVID-19 challenge

During the post-Covid-19 lockdown, the project activities resumed. The project team adhered to the standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued by the government and the Ministry of Health directives to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The team put in place control measures to ensure the protection of persons engaged in the field activities observe the SOPs, which included but were not limited to: i) regular hand washing, ii) use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser, iii) wearing of face masks, iv) observing social distance in the office and fields; and v) restricting the public meetings or capacity building sessions to a maximum number of 10 people.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

Over 150 local farmers and stakeholders involving students, conservation actors, and policymakers were mobilised as ToTs (Training of Trainers) to receive tailored training in species conservation. Their capacities (operational and technical competencies) were strengthened in ecological surveys, data collection, biodiversity conservation, species adaptive management, ecosystem restoration, and agro forestry.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, the project team plans to introduce the quality (clean and disease-free) seedlings for the endangered *Bothriocline auriculata* species into the commercial nurseries for the agroforestry tree seedlings and horticulture production. To begin with, 100 species of seedlings will be propagated each season in the commercial nurseries under a cost-sharing arrangement with selected private farmers and nursery operators.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

The results are shared with local communities through formal and informal channels, including training sessions, mass media, community-based radio and meetings. The results of the project will be published in form of reports and research summaries on the websites of the stakeholder institutions, including AGRENES/AGRILIVE, NARO and Makerere University repository.



7. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

The next important steps include: i) scaling commercial production of the seedlings to increase the species' genetic resource base; ii) introducing the species seedlings in the protected ecosystems with suitable weather and soil, that support mass propagation, regeneration and recovery of *Bothriocline* species; and iii) implement actions/programmes that support long-term conservation of the *Bothriocline auriculata* species both at household and community levels, including agro-forestry, live fences, forestry, landscaping, etc.

8. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, the Rufford Foundation logo is attached to the project materials, which were used to train farmers and students in biodiversity conservation and adaptive management of the endangered plant species, including the *Bothriocline auriculata* plant species. In this regard, The Rufford Foundation received publicity during the training sessions as part of acknowledging the funds provided by the foundation.

Name of Team Member	Profession /	Core Role
	Career	
Ssemwanga	Climate science	Team leader providing logistics,
Mohammed	& Agroecology	administrative support, and all
	expert	coordination of project activities
Ms Nanteza Winnie	Development	Publicity, Communication, and
	Communications	Visibility of the project activities
Nakiguli Fatumah	Conservation and	Management of lab and fieldwork
	Agro forestry	for biodiversity management
Nassejje Shadia	Agricultural /	Micropropagation and production
	Crop scientist	of quality species seedlings
Ms Nakaddu Zytun	Business	Evaluation and Marketing of species
	management	seedlings
	expert	
Mr Nkumba Ashraf	Agribusiness	Manages the farmer training and
	expert	capacity building programs
Nakagawa N. Fiona	Conservation	Lead data collection and training
	expert	
Walusimbi Solomon	Farmer groups	Mobilise farmers for training

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

10. Any other comments?

The project team acknowledge the generous support from The Rufford Foundation.