

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Idohou Alix Frank Rodrigue
Project Title	Scaling-up the stakeholders-led conservation actions in areas adjacent to Pendjari biosphere reserve in Benin (West Africa)
Application ID	31042-D
Grant Amount	£9960
Email Address	rodrigidohou@gmail.com
Date of this Report	10 Feb. 22

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
Pursue the already initiated negotiation of lands to host the restoration activities				Land tenure is critical when women are especially of concern. Indeed, women do not often have the possibility to inherit lands or acquire it directly especially in rural areas even when their father dies. However, they constitute an important component of the marginal group involved in traditional agriculture in the region. In the continuation of what has started at earlier stages, strategies have been improved to negotiate more lands for ecological restoration especially based on agroforestry species.
Scale up the revegetation activities based on locally acknowledged and well performing species				Revegetation activities have been improved especially based on agroforestry species (African baobab, shea trees, African locust beans, etc.). Locals were enthusiast with insightful implication in the project activities.
Enhance participatory actions through creation and animation of eco clubs in the area				Eco-clubs have been created for discussion and sharing of ideas regarding ecological restoration, better management of degraded lands, and use of agroforestry species for landscape recovery. A group (forum) is created and often animated with case studies from elsewhere.
Initiate landscape conservation business for those who will be affected by the restoration plan				Some locals may be affected by the new land management strategies. In the frame of mitigation of such risk, existing activities such as beekeeping have been proposed to those people as alternatives.

Reinforce the proposition and ongoing policy development for limitation of the deforestation and degradation of the areas			Ministry of Environment and the Protection of the Nature has set the process of improving existing texts related to species and ecosystems management. This initiative comes in addition to the existing one and will continue.
Intensify the public education and participatory restoration actions			Local people are more and more concerned about the restoration activities. We organised a series of public awareness sessions to remind them about the negative impacts their daily activities could have on the environment while compromising the availability of the resources for future generations.

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

On the field, some unforeseen difficulties include:

- Intensification of COVID 19 infections leading to reticence of some people.
- Seedling attacks by parasites.
- Shortage of the rainy season for water provisioning to transplanted seedlings water for experiments.
- Difficulties in locals' mobilisation in the rainy season.

The difficulties have been mostly overcome to get the current findings.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- Continuation of strategy for negotiation of lands to host the restoration activities

Land management constitutes a daily problem in local communities of Benin from south to north. Land issue is a recurrent problem in the areas due to loss of soil fertility and practice of extensive agriculture. Indeed, Benin has established its targets of restoring approximately 1.25 million ha of degraded land by 2030, while increasing efforts to avoid further degradation. In Benin, two types of rights characterise land: the customary land right and the modern land right, also known as the registration system. By the way, food security and nutrition reach could also be a reality as those lands would be more productive and contribute to local economy and local population welfare. Moreover, authorities in charge of the National Park of Pendjari with the help of the national Forest Office have made possible a strategy of recovery of the previously abandoned core areas of the park which is used by locals for agriculture or animal rearing. Thus, most of the landowners in the areas practice

agroforestry systems which allows them already to keep some fruit producing or medicinally important species in the field. This constitutes in their knowledge an important land part already devoted to agriculture.

Land tenure is critical when women are especially of concern. Indeed, women do not often have the possibility to inherit lands or acquire it directly especially in rural areas even when their father dies. However, they constitute an important component of the marginal group involved in traditional agriculture in the region.

In the continuation of what has started at earlier stages, strategies have been improved to negotiate more lands for ecological restoration especially based on agroforestry species.

- Scaling up the revegetation activities based on locally acknowledged and well performing species

Revegetation activities have been improved especially based on agroforestry species (African baobab, shea trees, African locust beans, etc.). We took advantage from the changing climate (more rains in the northern part) for more seedling plantings.



Photo 1: Illustration of a nursery

- Initiation landscape conservation business for those who will be affected by the restoration plan

Some locals may be affected by the new land management strategies. In the frame of mitigation of such risk, existing activities such as beekeeping have been proposed to those people as alternatives.



Photo 2: A one-year transplanted baobab tree in an agroforestry system



Photo 3: Beekeeping activity on the field. A beehive on the farm

4. What do you consider to be the most significant achievement of this work?

5. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

Local communities have been fully involved in all steps during implementation of the project activities. They were first used as interpreter and also for the facilitation of data collection and organisation of awareness raising sessions on the field. They have also made quite interesting suggestion of policies and recommendations for regulating deforestation and degradation in the area.

6. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. This is a half-way work and strategies and process which leads to whole transformation of the degraded areas around the National Park of Pendjari in Benin are very welcome. We are looking for additional support from elsewhere to achieve this goal. Local people have also expressed their willingness to pursue the already started activities for better and more interesting results.

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

Parts of the current project's findings have already been shared during formal and informal meetings (seminars and workshops), recently. As a panel member of the recent RUFORUM conference in Benin and Chair of session of the international conference 'Climate Nexus Perspectives I2CNP 2021', I had the honour to share case studies from Benin. A paper is currently submitted in collaboration with other researchers on a vulnerable wild edible species found in the area.

8. Timescale: Over what period was the grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The project was used for 12 months of intensive activities. We had some difficulties at the starting due to CoVID-19 pandemic.

9. Budget: Provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Preliminaries for fieldwork	500	200	-300	
Hiring of a generator and fuel	550	350	-200	Co-funding
Awareness and policy development	800	800		

sections				
Training workshops on alternative activities	700	700		
Educational workshops for farmers	1,135	835	300	Co-funding
Communication and internet connexion	315	315		
Mobilization of locals for workshops	510	510		
Animation of Eco-clubs	750	750		
Seedlings follow-up	1375	1375		
Seedlings plantation on the field	2525	1525	-1000	Co-funding
Nurseries preparation on promising species	1000	700	-300	Co-funding
Transportation across areas on-the field	1550	1550		
Two-ways travel to project areas	350	350		
TOTALS	12060	9960	-2100	

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

Next steps of this research include: understanding deeper the tree planting initiative approach; developing an ecosystem services education across the country; setting a monitoring plan for endangered species and assessing the efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of different propagation methods used up to now in conservation strategies.

11. 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 foundation has been acknowledged during presentation at national or conferences of the findings. Logo of the foundation has also been used recently in a sensitisation activity.

12. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

IDOHOU Rodrigue, PhD. I am the principal investigator and first responsible for the project implementation. I was in charge of coordinating all project activities and submission of the project update and final report

AOUDJI Augustin, PhD. He is an Associate Professor in Socio-economy. He has a long experience of contribution to trainings, workshops, advertisement and awareness raising. He was in charge of all training and awareness activities.

HOUNSOU-DINDIN Guillaume, MSc. He has a Master in Natural Resources management and biodiversity. He helped in scaling up of the revegetation activities based on locally acknowledged and well performing species. He was mostly involved in locals' mobilization.

13. Any other comments?

Warm and special thanks again to The Rufford foundation and its donors for the continuous support.