Project Update: May 2014

A workshop was organised on 12th March 2014, under the guidance of Bernard Akan (biologist and censor of Ewe Secondary School). The aim and activities of the project were presented. We discussed EARSDF biodiversity conservation by seed collecting, nursery establishment and planting activities. The audience was represented by delegates from interviewed households, local leaders, the team leader of the two villages, and the research team. We gave a talk to the participants after presenting two posters based on the preliminary field exploration. The board governors of EARSDF conservation and the project convention were established with the delegates (Photo 11).

During the workshop, local communities suggested to add to *B. oblanceolatum* (Photo 13) some other endangered species such as *Triplochiton scleroxylon* (Photo 14) and *Mansonia altissima* (Photo 15) to the planting campaign. The seed collection of these species (both on the IUCN Red List), is now included in the habitat restoration programs and the farmers' field school that will be held from June 2014.

Description of pictures

N°	Description of pictures	Author
1	Semi-structured interviews with the chief/head of the Ewe village	Alfred Houngnon
2	Fruit of *B. oblanceolatum* syn. *Englyophytum oblanceolatum* (March)	
3	EARSDF numbered map	
4	Pupil of Ewe Secondary school following the sample process	
5	Juvenile of *B. oblanceolatum* probably regenerated in the by seed in EARSDF and the GPS founded by Rufford Small Grant for the implementation of our project	
6	EARSDF Hunter and team member during field work	Daniel Bocossa
7	Root excavation for drageon induction and root suckering	Alfred Houngnon
8	Root section for root suckering	
9	Air layering	
10	Roots sucker transplanted	
11	Close out photo of the workshop	
12	B. oblanceolatum syn. Englyophytum oblanceolatum (Sapotaceae)	
13	Triplochiton scleroxylon (Sterculiaceae)	
14	Mansonia altissima (Sterculiaceae)	

Project Update: April 2014

Forest assessment started in April 2014 to determine the distribution of *B. oblanceolatum* within the EARSDF. The map of the forest was divided into 24 plots of 500 X 500 m numbered from the east to the west and the south to the north (Photos 3). Ten randomly selected plots within the forest were sampled with the help of students (Photo 4). The coordinates of a fixed point in each plot, were introduced in the GPS (Photo 5).

Two hunters (Photo 6) were proposed by the chiefs of villages to guide the team. Waypoint and "go to" tool were used to join the selected plots. Data on the ecology and the current status of the targeted species and general EARSDF biodiversity were collected.

Among wild populations of *B. oblanceolatum*, no flowering or fruiting was observed. We recorded the first estimates of occupancy and measured diameters at breast height, height and crown diameter of 10 sampled 'mother' trees. A single specimen found in the village began fruiting in February 2014 with maturation in March-April. Observations are underway to understand the phenology of the species.

The aptitude of *B. oblanceolatum* to be vegetatively propagated is now ongoing on three of the sampled trees. Air layering, root sucker and root induction are the regeneration methods being tested (Photos 7, 8, 9, 10).

Project Update: March 2014

An ethnobotanical survey was conducted on Bequaertiodendron oblanceolatum and ecological factors contributing to its viability. Structured interviews (Photo1) were conducted with 168 households in villages of Ewe, Dogo, Adapklamey and Ketou Township. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with 17 responsible persons in public office, as well as local authorities. Interviews were held with Mahi, Nago, Holli and Fulani tribes around Ewe-Adapklamey remnant semi-deciduous forest (EARSDF); 53 women and 115 men were interviewed from February 24th to April 6th 2014. Age of informants varied between 38 and 98 years. Only 3% of the informants, mainly healers and elders, recognised the leaves of B. oblanceolatum at first sight. According to them, the species has become rare but it can be found in the deep forest. No vegetative regeneration methods were recorded during survey.

Multiple uses are listed. B. oblanceolatum is used as a vegetable, brush and firewood. In the past, the leaves served to pack tobacco; the local name given by a large majority (77%) of Mahi ethnics is 'azhoo souman', meaning tobacco leaf pack. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents say that the plant treats anaemia and 9 % say that it heals convulsions; healers have cited other recipes without going into details. Over a quarter (27 %) of the informants knows the fruit as being an edible and the name given locally by Mahi is 'wini win' (Photo2). Some believe that the fruit can be used for making wine because of its sweet and tangy taste similar to grapes.

According to the local perception, the natural habitat known as the EARSDF is preserved until now because people do not have the appropriate equipment to carry out wood logging and overharvesting.