

Project Update January 2026

Rufford I.D.: 39692-1

Project Title: Ex Situ Conservation of Three Coffea (Baracoffea) Species Adapted to the Semi-Arid Regions of Northwestern Madagascar

Update:

We have obtained the first biological data on the germination of Baracoffea. As you know, the seeds were sown between January and February 2024, and the very first germination was recorded at the end of November 2025, approximately nine months later (a period that truly tested our patience). The majority of seeds have not yet germinated, and germination is still ongoing, making this result particularly valuable and exclusive.

As soon as the first seedlings emerged, we immediately secured the four nursery plots using physical barriers (nylon nets) to protect them from pests, especially snails. Unfortunately, just before Christmas, the nursery suffered a snail attack, resulting in the loss of at least ten newly germinated seedlings. We responded promptly by carefully inspecting each pot, assuming that some snails had already been present in the plots since the dry season. A snail control treatment was also applied to reduce further damage.

January will be a particularly busy month. We will host in Mahajanga trainers from FOFIFA, coming from the living collection of Mascarocoffea in Kianjavato (eastern Madagascar), to conduct a capacity-building and knowledge-transfer session for the local Mahajanga team on ex situ coffee collection management, as originally planned in the project.

In parallel, we will prepare the transplantation of the seedlings into the garden, including the necessary installations and setup in terms of shading, substrate, and water supply.

Regarding the data already collected in the field, three students from the University of Mahajanga will soon defend their theses on Baracoffea, made possible through the Rufford grant. The publication of these results will be undertaken at a later stage. It is worth noting that part of the work is already under peer review, and I hope for a positive outcome and acceptance for publication in the international journal **Plant Ecology & Diversity**.