

## Final Evaluation Report

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We ask all grant recipients to complete a project evaluation that helps us to gauge the success of your project. This must be sent in **MS Word and not PDF format**. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

**Please DO NOT fill in and submit this form until the project has been completed.**

Complete the form in English. Note that the information may be edited before posting on our website.

Please email this report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

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Your Details	
<b>Full Name</b>	Sydney Thony Ndolo Ebika
<b>Project Title</b>	Valorisation of traditional Ecological knowledge on Wild Edible Fungi in the Republic of Congo
<b>Application ID</b>	43319-B
<b>Date of this Report</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2026

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
Training local population and students in collecting macro-fungi			Yes	Ten posters were printed and distributed to Chief of the villages, Forestry authorities, Nouabalé-Ndoki authorities and Logging company. They included 15 wild edible mushroom species all with local names in Mbenzele and Ngombe languages. Its also included the description of the habitat where the species can be harvested from and some ecological information.
Identifying important habitats for macro-fungi in Hunther-gatherers's area			Yes	From the two mixed focus groups organized with the two ethnic groups in Bangui-Motaba (24 people) and the two homogenous focus groups organized in Makao and Thanry with only hunter-gatherers (24 people), it was reported that edible mushrooms can be harvested in several habitats including cassava fields, mixed species forest on <i>terra firma</i> , <i>Gilbertiodendron dewevrei</i> monodominant forests, wet places, etc. However, in order to harvest a huge quantity, the harvesters have to walk far from the village ( up to 15 km). Most of the harvesting areas are forests with a well known stream were men also go for hunting. In Bangui-Motaba, for example,

				<p>the areas are named: “Boua”, “Mboulé”, “Moposso-posso”, “Tété” which refer to the streams and also refer to the old camps where the hunter-gatherers lived before settling at their current places following the opening of the roads.</p>
Identifying the collected samples			<b>Yes</b>	<p>Three plots of 2500 m<sup>2</sup> each, established in <i>Gilbertiodendron</i> forest since 2016 in Makao and Thanry, were revisited. One hundred and thirty-three specimens were collected. Of this specimens, 33 species were recorded and 23 other names still only identified at the genus level.</p>
Producing a bilingual (English-French) manual of wild edible mushrooms used by Hunter-gatherers with local names		<b>Yes</b>		<p>This objective has been slightly modify to give to the book a wider impact. Instead of focusing only on Wild Edible Mushrooms by Hunter-gatherers which will reduce the scope of the book to two departments of the country located in the North, we enlarged it the country level to have a larger targeted audience and to the species diversity of the country. In addition, we all co-authors, we agreed to publish one version in English and another one in French to avoid reducing the text. An update will be done to the Foundation once the book has been published.</p> <p>Species outside of the study area will be gathered from our own fieldwork conducted in those places.</p>

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

- a). Production of a book on edible mushrooms for the first time
- b). Insertion of data on fungi in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Congo 2025-2030
- c). Attendance of two conferences (one in Czech Republic and the other in Benin)

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

The main difficulty encountered was the lack of enough funds to cover my ticket, conference fees and accommodation to Prague (Czech Republic). Since I personally only have funds to cover the conference fees, accommodation and part of the round ticket Brazzaville - Pointe-Noire – Prague – Pointe-Noire –Brazzaville, I used some of the funds from the project to cover some cost related to the ticket. This conference was a great opportunity to present results from our work and it was an opportunity to valorize fungi from the Republic of Congo. More interestingly, it was from attending that conference that I got in touch with Dr Eric Boa, one of the renown independent researcher from London who has published many books on wild edible fungi with FAO. Eric is now a key partner and co-author who is guiding the preparation of our book on Edible Mushroom from the Republic of Congo. He is in charge of compiling the text and images to produce the final version of the document.

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

Local communities were key partners during the implementation of the project in the field. During the focus groups organized in Bangui-Motaba with women on one hand and men on the other, we found that settled farmers (bantus) and hunter-gatherers (Bayaka) were able to provide local names of edible mushrooms. This is contrasting with Makao and Thanry where the bayaka seem to know more about wild edible mushrooms than the bantus. In addition, when making monitoring of plots to estimate natural productivity of the fungi, bayaka men played the role of local guides during the entire mission.

Apart from the temporary income generated by the project, six members of the community who had some educational background have been trained in field related activities. They have been trained in the use of a: (i) compass and GPS unit for navigation in the forest to find a point selected from the computer, (ii) compass to lay out a plot in the forest and (iii) weighing scale to weigh the mushroom harvested in the forest. Such trainings, especially the two first ones are adding value to the capacities of the local guides to be used in projects which will be arriving in their area. Many research teams, ecoguard patrols and exploration timber teams use, in addition

to local guide, people who know using a compass and GPS to move from one point to another in the forest, to open line transects and plots, to take waypoints for geo-referencing places or objects into GPS and then on the maps.

Twenty-three (23) local guides were involved in the project and were taking the team in the forest by groups of two local guide on a daily basis. Their names are provided in section 9.

Two students and two stagiaires were also involve in the project. The two students (Ms Nancie Ngampele and Mr Hermann Mahouckoud) were from the High National School for Agronomy and Forestry and were trained in data collection and specimens identification. This allowed them to successfully defend their Master. The two stagiaires (Mr Tibeau Ikango and Roden Okabandzele) gained professional skills in leading a team and collecting data in the field (for Mr Ikango); proofreading and design the overall academic document such as a Master dissertation (for Mr Okabandzele).

### **5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

In the future, another mission in Bangui-Motaba will be requested during the period where edible mushrooms are harvested in order to match all local names we obtained with physical mushrooms.

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

Some results have already been shared as a contribution in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Congo 2025-2030 and at international conferences as posters and oral talks.

In the NBSAP 2025-2030, I contributed by making a summary of macrofungal data in the chapter 2 on the State of biological resources (Chapitre 2. ETAT DES RESSOURCES BIOLOGIQUES), section 2.2. State of Fungal diversity. <https://developpement-durable.gouv.cg/2025/08/19/validation-officielle-de-la-spanb-2025-2030/>



Three posters presented during the conferences are:

- *Wild Edible Mushrooms and ways of cooking them in the Republic of Congo.* This poster was presented during a conference organized by the Society of Ethnobotany in Prague (Czech Republic) in June 2025 <https://ethnobotany.org/home/meetings/ethnobotany-2025.html>.

- *Wild edible mushrooms: the potential for poverty alleviation in the Republic of Congo, and*
- *Insights into the taxonomy and the use of Melastomataceae in the Republic of Congo both presented in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) during the First Annual Conference of the Congo Basin Science Initiative organized in January 2026. <https://congobasinscience.net/news/cbsi-annual-conference-2026/>*

Two oral presentations were given during the course of this project:

- *Activités et perspectives de l'ONG Initiative des Champignons et des Plantes du Congo (Activities and perspectives of the Initiative des Champignons et des Plantes du Congo NGO) presented to the research and monitoring team of the Odzala-Kokoua National Park in March 2025 at the Park's Headquarter in Mbomo.*
- *An analysis on funding support provided by the Rufford Foundation for fungal conservation in Africa. This talk was given during the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Association for Fungal Conservation organized in Cotonou (Benin) in November 2025 <https://fc-ssa.org/first-day-of-the-4th-congress-of-the-international-society-for-fungal-conservation-isfc4/>*

Other results will be shared as a book and scientific articles. The Rufford Foundation will be informed on any publications which will be made using data from this project.

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

Based on the feedback and calls that we are receiving at the NGO, two points seem to have more priority for mycology in the country: mushroom cultivation and long-term monitoring of mycological population trends. With the changing environment and the need to have continuous data on the population dynamics as highlighted during the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Association for Fungal Conservation, the two points mentioned above will contribute to human well-being and understanding conservation action to be taken for fungi.

## **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 was used in seven posters and two oral presentations.

Six posters presented during the First Annual Conference of the Congo Basin Science Initiative organized in January 2026 in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo).

- *Filling taxonomic knowledge gaps in Mycology : case of Russulaceae in the Republic of Congo by Mougouya-Moukassa et al.*

- *Contribution du fungarium HICPC à la documentation des champignons en République du Congo* by Obindi Gath et al.
- *Etude taxonomique préliminaire des champignons des familles Pluteaceae et Volvariellaceae en République du Congo* by Atikani et al.
- *Diversité et répartition des espèces de Termitomyces en République du Congo* by Wawa et al.
- *Wild edible mushrooms: the potential for poverty alleviation in the Republic of Congo* by Ndolo Ebika et al.
- *Insights into the taxonomy and the use of Melastomataceae in the Republic of Congo* by Ndolo Ebika et al.

One poster presented during a conference organized by the Society of Ethnobotany in June 2025 in Prague (Czech Republic):

- *Wild Edible Mushrooms and ways of cooking them in the Republic of Congo* by Ndolo Ebika et al.

Two oral presentations were given at two different events:

- *Activités et perspectives de l'ONG Initiative des Champignons et des Plantes du Congo (Activities and perspectives of the Initiative des Champignons et des Plantes du Congo NGO)* presented to the research and monitoring team of the Odzala-Kokoua National Park in March 2025 at the Park's HeadQuarter in Mbomo.
- *An analysis on funding support provided by the Rufford Foundation for fungal conservation in Africa.* This poster was presented during the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Association for Fungal Conservation organized in November 2025 in Cotonou (Benin).

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

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Role in the project</b>
Sydney T. Ndolo Ebika	Project leader
Prefilna L. Ossindza Epeni	Account of the project
Gracia M. Obindi Gath	Technician of the project: databasing and specimen management
Tibeau S. Ikango	Team leader: supervising and guiding the data collection in the field
Nancie Ngampele-Tso	Student: data collection in the field
Herman Mahouckoud	Student: identified specimens at ICPC herbarium
Roden Okabandzele	Stagiaire at ICPC: helping the students in writing and specimen management
Paul Embele	Local guide
Pascal Amadou	Local guide
Lambert Mbongui	Local guide

Ambroise Dekaba	Local guide
Machmaud Moussudja	Local guide
Simon Mbembe	Local guide
Diony Ngouabeo	Local guide
Jean Ngouele	Local guide
Alain Zawa	Local guide
Christian Bondeli	Local guide
Maximum Bafemba	Local guide
Ouragan Moliko	Local guide
Gervain Danga	Local guide
Pierre Ngali	Local guide
Paulin Massaki	Local guide
Pierre Kabali	Local guide
Pierre Mbadi	Local guide
Louis Zongo	Local guide
John Massombo	Local guide
Faustin Sango	Local guide
Chadrin Malele	Local guide
Eve Mandala	Local guide
Chrislain Bondele	Local guide

#### 10. Any other comments?

One Research assistant, Tibeau Ikango, who worked with us on projects ID 37196-2 and 43319-B has been recruited in the Odzala-Kokoua National Park jointly managed by African Parks (UK) and the Congolese Government. The field experience he gained with us is greatly contributing to his performance in biomonitoring in that Park.

**ANNEX – Financial Report**

<b>Your Details</b>	
<b>Full Name</b>	Sydney Thony Ndolo Ebika
<b>Project Title</b>	Valorisation of traditional Ecological knowledge on Wild Edible Fungi in the Republic of Congo
<b>Application ID</b>	43319-B

**Using the budget provided with your original application, please give a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure. If there is a difference between the budgeted and actual amounts, please explain why.**

**If there are funds remaining, these should be returned to the foundation. We will provide details of how this can be done.**

**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.**

**All figures should be given in pound sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.**

