

Project Update: January 2026

Following obtaining the necessary permit from the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation. The Rufford-funded project followed up with a meeting with traditional and security authorities in the project area. To this end, we held formal discussions to introduce ourselves and present the project and its various objectives.

1. Evaluation of threats and documentation of indigenous knowledge of *Aphyosemion bamilekorum* and sympatric species.

Various human activities have been identified in the Bafounda area. The main human activity likely to directly threaten the water quality of watercourses that may harbor *A. bamilekorum* is agriculture (Fig.1). This agriculture is practiced along watercourses in order to benefit from a permanent supply of water to irrigate fields of tomatoes, corn, and beans, the main food crops grown (Fig.2). In addition, water sources are used for washing cars, laundry, dishes, agricultural equipment, etc., all of which are rich in chemicals that can affect the physicochemical quality of the water in watercourses. These water sources are also used as drinking troughs for livestock and for dumping household waste.



Data collected during surveys conducted among the local populations, fish sellers (Fig.3), fishermen, and farmers in various locations in Bafounda show a lack of knowledge about *A. bamilekorum*.



2. conduct ecological survey to understand the current distribution patterns of the species

During these 6 last months, many small localities around the main sites have been visited. To this end, 15 sampling sites belonging to four courses were selected for research into the species and assessment of the physicochemical variables of the water (Fig.4)



3. Detailed Mapping of the *Aphyosemion bamilekorum*' distribution

The GPS coordinates (latitude, longitude, altitude) of the various sections of the waterways selected as sampling sites for the research campaigns were recorded. These geographical coordinates will enable the locations where *Aphyosemion* specimens were identified to be referenced and subsequently mapped.

4. Community Engagement and Local Conservation Effort

Three schools in Bafounda, namely Mbougoung High School, Bafounda Public School, and Bafounda Chefferie Public School, were selected to host awareness-raising meetings in schools and set up conservation clubs.

