

## Project Update: April 2022

### Executive Summary

This project involved fieldwork to be carried out in the Yangambi biosphere reserve in order to inventory the species of palm trees of the *Raphia* genus. This work was to be carried out in three stages: (1) field prospecting, (2) studies of taxonomic data on *Raphia* at the herbarium of the National Institute of Agronomic Studies and Research of the DR Congo, and (3) inventory of species in the forest. This last step was to be carried out in four phases. The duration initially planned for the fieldwork was 4 months (June-September 2021).

However, the difficulties encountered on the ground should be noted. First, the schedule for the start of the project was not respected due to the delay in validation and acquisition of financing, and logistical preparation. Then, the fieldwork was not carried out as planned. The main rainy season (August-November) in the Tshopo region did not make it possible to carry out the inventory work in the forest, since the palm trees generally grow in the swampy forests which become waterlogged during this season.

Therefore, to overcome this obstacle, I decided to implement another project on wild palms that could be done during this climatic season. This project concerns "the evaluation of the use and management of wild palm trees in the landscape of the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve (DR Congo)" (project description attached). This was planned to be the second phase of my project on palm trees in the Tshopo region. The details you will read below reflect the activities carried out in the field and in the office for this alternative project. I plan to complete all work in progress and finalise the project no later than August 15, 2022.

### Project progress

Primary activity	Description	Progress to date
Objectives	General objective: to study the diversity of uses and the traditional management systems of wild palm trees by the communities bordering the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve. Specific objectives:  1. Study the diversity of knowledge and uses of palms in local communities.  2. Assess traditional wild palm management systems and the degree of commercialisation of their products.	In progress.
Field work	Pre-survey of village chiefs and notables.	Finished.
	Study of palm herbaria in the INERA Yangambi herbarium.	Finished.
	Ethnobotanical survey in the villages (Lilanda and Yalikombo).	Finished.
	Data processing on Microsoft Excel 365.	Finished.

Data processing and analysis	Statistical analysis of data on R-4.1.3 software and qualitative analysis of content.	In progress.
Writing of the scientific article	I am preparing a scientific article on the diversity of knowledge and uses of palm trees in the peripheral villages of the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve. It is planned to publish it in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.	In progress.
Writing	Final evaluation report to be submitted to Rufford Foundation.	In progress.
Research note	The research note to be submitted to the Rufford Foundation.	In progress.

### Fieldwork Pictures



Departure for Yangambi on board the fast canoe of the European Union's FORETS project. © Albert Kahenga.



Herbarium of *Raphia gentilliana* De Wild, INERA Yangambi. © Albert Kahenga.



The local men are making crafts with the stems of *Ancistrophyllum secundiflorum* (P.Beauv.) Kuntze, Lilanda village. © Albert Kahenga.



A local man is making crafts with the stems of *Ancistrophyllum secundiflorum* (P.Beauv.) Kuntze. © Albert Kahenga.



Investigator on his way to the Lilanda village. © Fidèle Noah.



Making of the Raphia thatches by children,Lilanda village. © Albert Kahenga.



An interview between Investigator and local man, Lilanda village. © Joseph, the village chief's son.



An interview between Investigator and local woman, Lilanda village. © Joseph, the village chief's son.



*Eremospatha haullevilleana* and *E. laurentii* rattan threads for sale, Lilanda. © Albert Kahenga.



The harvest of the fruits of *Raphia gentiliana* De Wild. © Albert Kahenga.



Harvested fruits of *Raphia gentiliana* De Wild. © Albert Kahenga.



Investigator is observing the fibers of *Raphia longiflora*. © Joseph, the village chief's son.



The swampy forests, Lilanda village. © Albert Kahenga.





The swampy forests, Lilanda village. © Albert Kahenga.



The fruits of *Raphia laurentii* De Wild, Lilanda village. © Albert Kahenga.