



Mobilizing and making data available for identification, taxonomy, socioeconomic importance, and conservation assessment of Bryophytes in Benin (**BryoBen**)



Report of the project inception meeting



An important BryoBen project meeting was held on June 14, 2023, at the Conference of Polytechnique School of Abomey-Calavi (University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin) to mark the official launch of the project. In total, 75 participants attended the project inception meeting (hybrid mode). Among those who joined virtually were Dr Lova MARLINE, from the Kew Madagascar Conservation Center, one of Bryophyte Experts of the project, and other students while physical attendance gathered the university authorities (Vice-Chancellor in charge of research, the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Sciences and Techniques, the Head of Department of Plant Biology), the project team, students, Civil Society Organizations, stakeholders including media "La Nation".

The workshop was officially opened by the Vice-Chancellor in charge of University Research, Prof. Aliou SAIDOU after some keynote addresses successively delivered by the Project Coordinator (Dr. Hospice DASSOU), the Curator (Prof. Hounnankpon YEDOMONHAN) and the Director (Prof. Monique TOSSOU) of the National Herbarium of Benin, and the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Sciences and Techniques (Prof. Alice KPOTA HOUNGUE).



Official launch by authorities



Family picture with other participants

The details of their addresses are as follows:

1- Welcome Remarks and presentation of project:

Dr. Hospice DASSOU, Project Coordinator, welcomed and thanked all the participants for their presence and engagement from the initial stage of the project. He also thanked JRS Biodiversity Foundation for the grant. Afterwards, he presented a brief overview of the project, rationale and the framework for the project formulation and the implementation mechanism.



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JRS
Biodiversity Foundation

Herbier National du Bénin
HNB

UNIVERSITÉ D'ABOMEY-CALAVI

Academy of Science, Technology and Innovation
University of Cape Town

KMCC
Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre

Présentation du projet:
MOBILISATION ET PUBLICATION DES DONNÉES POUR L'IDENTIFICATION, LA TAXONOMIE, ET L'ÉVALUATION DE L'IMPORTANCE SOCIOÉCONOMIQUE ET DE L'ÉTAT DE LA CONSERVATION DES BRYOPHYTES AU BÉNIN (BRYOBEN)

BryoBen
Building and making data available for identification, taxonomy, and socio-economic evaluation of Bryophytes in Benin

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Atelier de lancement du projet BryoBen_14 juin_2023_ Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Bénin)

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2- Main keynotes

(i) Curator the National Herbarium of Benin

He highlighted two main periods of plant inventory: (i) 1970-1997 where 10,000 plant samples were collected and (ii) 1997-2002 where 20,700 plant samples were collected. Today, the inception of the new project “***Mobilizing and making data available for identification, taxonomy, socioeconomic importance, and conservation assessment of Bryophytes in Benin (BryoBen)***” will add another milestone in plant conservation at the National Herbarium.



The Curator giving his speech

(ii) Director of the National Herbarium of Benin

She underlined the importance of this project as it will strengthen the human and material capacities of her institution.



Director of the National Herbarium giving her speech

(iii) Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Sciences and Techniques

She stressed the traditional importance of bryophytes for local people. She also informed that unfortunately, the lack of scientific data in Benin does not make it possible to exploit the full potential of these plant resources and to establish a policy for their responsible and sustainable management.



The Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Sciences and Techniques giving her speech

(iv) Bryophyte Expert of the project

Dr. Lova MARLINE, congratulated the Benin team and the Prof. Terry HEDDERSON, the second Bryophyte Expert for this joint project. She also thanked JRS Biodiversity Foundation for the financial support and confirmed her availability for in the project implementation.



(v) The participants

They questioned on how to ensure their involvement in the implementation of the project. They added that, building the capacity in Bryology in Benin is essential for informed decision-making on prioritizing what interventions will be relevant for their context.



The participants



The Executive Director of the NGO SOS Biodiversity



The Executive Director of the NGO NATURE Tropicale

3- Official launch

Prof. Aliou SAIDOU, the Vice-Chancellor in charge of University Research, welcomed and thanked all the participants for their availability. He also thanked JRS Biodiversity Foundation for the grant. He highlighted that Biodiversity Inventory and Conservation is a teamwork, an everyone's responsibility and collectively working together for the common goal can achieve more and make meaningful contributions to society in meeting the country's goals and the aspirations.



Welcome speech of the Prof. Aliou SAIDOU, the Vice-Chancellor in charge of University Research