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SEMESTER REPORT (JULY 1 – DECEMBER 31, 2006)

&

2007 -2008 ANNUAL WORKPLAN



February 2007

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The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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Executive Summary

The Ecoregional Initiatives (ERI) program managed by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) for USAID Madagascar is a conservation and development program with a strong field presence in Fianarantsoa and Toamasina provinces. The overall inter-regional coordination and administration is assured by a small unit in Antananarivo. The regional offices of Fianarantsoa and Toamasina and the national coordination unit present in one unified document the semester report covering the period of July 1 - December 31, 2006 and an 18 month annual work plan covering the time-frame of January 1, 2007 to the closure of project activities in July 27, 2008.

At the request of USAID Madagascar the combined semester report and annual work plan are concisely presented as one short document discussing project achievements, constraints, recommendations, and perspectives for the remaining 18 months of the project. Each regional office report is strictly limited to no more than 20 pages for reasons of brevity. For this reason, the interested reader is encouraged to search for more detailed presentations of project advancements and perspectives in the following annexes. The report is accompanied by four annexes – Tables of Achievements, ERI Activity Intervention Fund Obligations/Expenditures to Date, 2007 Annual Work Plan tables, and an updated ERI Legacies table.

The semester progress assessment and presentation of orientations for the remaining 18 months of ERI program activities highlights the fact that the project is on a steady path of project implementation. While normal project ups and downs are reported for each regional office, the overall progress of the ERI program is excellent. The 2006 presidential campaign and elections did slow down some implementation of expected project results and heavy rains in the early rainy season similarly created havoc. Plans and activities for use of supplemental funding acquired from the USAID Madagascar mission in mid-2006 are now well in place. The two Conservation International NODE grants are similarly fully operational. All staff positions are fully filled and our highly motivated senior staff, administrators, and field agents are all very much directed to carry out the numerous project activities. ERI is now focusing on assuring that project legacies are left to the people of Madagascar just as predecessor projects have all left their particular imprints. Some 2007 work plan activities in the regional offices are thus consolidated in order to focus on priority components and activities.

Later this year, as the ERI program nears its completion date, the administrative team will present to USAID Madagascar a project close-out plan. This detailed plan to be presented in late 2007 will chart precisely the measures to be taken to close down in a steady way the ERI program. Some preparations are presently being made to prepare for the close-out. For instance, completed contracts associated with the Activity Intervention Fund are being progressively closed out so that no last minute documentation issues arise during the hectic months and weeks of close-down activities.

The following sections summarize in greater detail the many achievements, challenges, and aspirations for the national and regional ERI program offices.

List of Acronyms

ADRA: Adventist Mission and Rural Development program
AGERAS: Appui à la Gestion des Ressources et l'Approche Spatiale
AIF: Activity Implementation Fund
ANAE: Association Nationale pour les Actions Environnementales
ANGAP: Association Nationale pour la Gestion des Aires Protégées
ASC: Agricultural Supply Center
AUE: Association des Usagers de l'Eau
BAMEX: Business and Market Expansion
BCI: Business Center Ivoharena
BIANCO: Bureau Indépendant Anti-Corruption
CBNRM: Community-Based Natural Resources Management
CDIA: Centre de Diffusion de l'Intensification Agricole
CEDII : Centre d'Echange, de Documentation et d'Information Interinstitutionnel
CI: Conservation International
CIREEF: Circonscription de l'Environnement et des Eaux et Forêts
CKH : Coopérative Koloharena
CMP : Comité Multilocale de Planification
CNKH : Confédération Nationale de Koloharena
COBA: Communauté de Base
COGE : Comité de Gestion
CRS: Catholic Relief Services
DAI: Development Alternatives, Inc.
DGEF : Direction Générale des Eaux et Forêts
DIREEF: Direction Inter-Régional de l'Environnement et des Eaux et Forêts
DWCT : Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
EAM: Entreprendre à Madagascar
EP3: National Environmental Action Plan, Third phase
ERI: Ecoregional Initiatives
ESSA : Etablissement Supérieur des Sciences Agronomiques
FCE: Fianarantsoa-Côte Est
FER : Fonds d'Entretien Routier
FID: Fonds Interventions pour le Développement
FIFAMANOR : Fiompiana, Fambolena Malagasy Norveziana

GCF: Gestion Contractualisée des Forêts
GCV : Grenier Communautaire Villageois
GELOSE: Gestion Locale Sécurisée
GTDR : Groupe de Travail sur le Développement Rural
IRM: Innovative Resources Management
KASTI : Komitin'ny Ala sy ny Tontolo Iainana
KH: Koloharena
LDI: Landscape Development Interventions
MAEP: Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche
M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation
NEAP: National Environmental Action Plan
NODE: "Fruits of the Forest Program"
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
NWPH : Nature, Wealth, Power, Health
ONE: Office National de l'Environnement
ONG : Organisation Non-Gouvernementale
OPCI : Organisme Public à Caractère Intercommunal
OTIV : Ombon-Tahiry Ifampisamborana Vola
PA: Paysan animateur
PCD : Plan Communal de Développement
PMP: Performance Monitoring Plan
PPRR : Projet pour la Promotion du Revenu Rural
PSDR: Programme de Soutien de Développement Rural
PTE: Programme de Transition Ecorégional
PV: Paysan Vulgarisateur
SAGE : Service d'Appui pour la Gestion de l'Environnement
SAHA : Sahan'Asa HAmpanandrosoana
SAPM: Systeme d'Aires Protégées de Madagascar
SEFEM: Sustainable Environment and Forest Ecosystems Management
SIZ: Strategic Intervention Zone
STTA: Short-Term Technical Assistance
TAMIS: Technical and Management Information System
TIAVO: Tahiry Ifamonjena Amin'ny Vola
USAID: United States Agency for International Development
WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature

1 ANTANANARIVO NATIONAL PROGRAM

1.1 Antananarivo 2006 Progress and Summary of Results; Antananarivo 2007 Perspectives

1.1.1 Overview

The national office of the ERI program continued its principal role during the reporting period, acting as a liaison between the sphere of policy debates and dialogue occurring at the national level and those at the regional and local level.

During this period, the ERI National Coordinator deployed special efforts on supporting specific themes that have direct links to field initiatives, such as Communal Support Centers set up, agricultural production synergy in priority sites, partnership development on micro-credit, and Kaominina Mendrika tools development. These efforts consisted in providing technical assistance to regional teams in developing and monitoring action plan, ensuring linkages and partnerships with other Alliance USAID members, and ensuring close collaboration with ministry agencies.

The National Coordinator continued to take part in various meetings and platforms of national scope, such as the EP3 joint steering committee and its different sub-committees. The ERI program has always positioned itself to support initiatives conceived and proposed by those platforms in order to advance the NEAP agenda while achieving at the same time its own objectives.

The Antananarivo office also continues to provide overall administrative and financial management of the ERI program. Although the regional offices possess autonomy in the day-to-day management of their programmatic interventions and regional finances, Theresa Miles, the Administrative and Financial Officer ensures the coherence and conformity of the operations relative to USAID monitoring, reporting and budget procedures.

1.1.2 Achievements

The section below provides a general overview (not by Result Module) of 2006 achievements and advancement concerning interventions led by the National Coordination during the reporting period, as well as future 2007 perspectives.

1.1.2.1 Technical aspects

On agricultural related domains, the National Coordinator developed a broader agro-ecological approach in collaboration with GSDM (Groupement Semis Direct de Madagascar) and USAID. This approach that aims to promote the innovative techniques on direct sowing on vegetal cover (SCV) on hillsides, will lead to agriculture yields and global production increases. The concept will involve the entire Koloharena structures as training, promotion and extension mechanisms (PV/PA, LADIA, FKH, CKH). As a first step, a demonstration site is to be installed by ANAE within LADIA center to serve as a dissemination basis, ready for future propagation to the Koloharena movement.

The ERI National Coordinator played a central role in organizing and facilitating the national workshop on bio-energy was held in Antananarivo in October 2006. This was the first opportunity for multiple actors involved in alternative energies to exchange information, experience and ideas. Those who are interested and already intervening in Jatropha enterprise (farmers, researchers, private) took that opportunity to initiate the Jatropha plat-form that will promote information exchange and support any initiatives that may valorize the value chain. The ERI National Coordinator in collaboration with other partners (PLAE, ADER, BAMEX, MCA...) is developing a strategy to set up that plat-form at the national and regional levels.

Micro-credit has been identified by the Ag Production working group to be one of the most important factors to improve agriculture in rural areas. A certain number of KH associations and federations are already contracting with micro-finance firms, such as Entreprendre A Madagascar. The ERI National Coordination facilitated the negotiation for ongoing contracts and new requests from

Fianarantsoa and Toamasina KH associations. The MOU between ERI and Entreprendre A Madagascar will be renewed, and will involve the CNKH and BAMEX.

ERI program will set in place two Communal Support Centers, one in Fianarantsoa and one in Toamasina. The National Coordination is assisting the regional results module supervisors to conduct the process: conceptualize and develop institutional framework, develop technical and contractual documents, ensure information flow between the MDAT and the regions... The MOU between MDAT and ERI program is under finalization, ERI will work with the PlaCAZ in Toamasina and the CMP in Fianarantsoa to manage the fund that will support those CSCs.

The Ag Production working group has launched new approaches to reinforce synergy between Alliance members in the field. In Moramanga, the ERI National Coordination assisted ADRA-ERI-BAMEX teams to develop an action plan on three value chains: red rice, beans, and ginger. The objective of this initiative is to ensure that all along the chains, every segment actors and interventions (production, transformation, and commercialization) are identified, and at the end of the campaign, a substantial result will be recorded to the farmers. In Fianarantsoa, the watershed approach was tested in Kelilalina. The ultimate objective would be to integrate the watershed and the value chain approaches, and where the farmers would master the whole cycle of the system.

1.1.2.2 Administration and finance

Most of the achievements made by Administration/Finance team were made during the 6 months following the arrival of the DAF (2005). While we continue to have small achievements, the bulk of time is now spent on the work of project management, since most systems are in place and fully functioning. Some achievements over the last six months have been the following:

- Completion of our second annual inventory and disposal of various items.
- Provision of training to AIF and Node staff on closeout of grants, contracts, and other mechanisms, in preparation for next years project closedown.
- Administrative staff changes in Toamasina, which have led to overall improved functioning of the Toamasina office.
- Hiring of new staff per recent contract modification.
- Additionally, the receipt by DAI of a second grant fund from CI to complement ERI activities is a considerable success.

1.1.3 Constraints

The section below provides a general overview (not by Result Module) of 2006 constraints concerning interventions led by the National Coordination during the reporting period, as well as future 2007 perspectives.

1.1.3.1 Technical aspects

Two constraints were noted, that made it difficult to make further advancement in some dossiers:

- Lack of leadership within the resources management transfer network: ERI program has actively contributed in developing the M&E guide in collaboration with other partners (SAHA, FSP-GDRN), but the system is not officially set in place yet. Many of the transfer contracts are now waiting for their evaluation and are under "non formal" situation that could be source of misuse of the resources, not only from the COBAs but from outsiders.
- Different approaches between Alliance partners make it very difficult to coordinate operations in the field. Although common action plan has been developed, it is very hard to follow up since each organization tends to prioritize its own activities, with its own methodology and approach.

1.1.3.2 Administration and finance

Constraints in administration are few. Examples include:

- New financial systems initiated by DAI continue to prove a challenge, but improvements in our financial management can already be seen.

- A major constraint that we face is uncertainty as to the option year. Our four year budget is not sufficient for our needs, thus we have had to implement cost-cutting mechanisms. However, based on our projections, there are some surpluses in the 5th year. If we had that modification, we would not be forced to reduce travel, and potentially cut staff later in the year.
- Finally, the state of much of the equipment that was transferred to us by LDI/PTE is so bad that we spend a lot of money on repairs – not more than replacing, but considerably more than budgeted

1.1.4 Recommendations

Now that the ERI program legacies are well defined, the National Coordination will focus on their realization. A stronger coordination with the regional teams will be developed to conduct the “axes de concentration” and optimize the results.

The National Coordination should continue to reinforce partnership with Alliance members to improve coordination and scale up impact of interventions. A better communication with state services and GOM, USAID and other financial partners should be carried out to maintain and improve the program visibility.

1.1.5 Perspectives

Some perspectives for the upcoming year are:

- Contribute actively to the development and implementation of planning tools, such as land use planning, that involve multi-actors at regional or infra-regional level.
- Develop and implement new strategy to support the r-TGRN, in order to reinforce their management and coordination capacity.
- Support the initiative to regroup the COBAs in plat-forms, networks or federations.
- Continue to develop and support the implementation of watershed based and value chain based approaches integration in agricultural domains to optimize synergy and scale up impact.
- Support the KH movement in their re-orientation phase, and assist them to develop and implement innovative strategy to ensure their sustainability.

2 FIANARANTSOA REGIONAL PROGRAM

2.1 Fianarantsoa 2006 Progress and Summary of Results; Fianarantsoa 2007 Perspectives

2.1.1 Overview

The ERI Fianarantsoa program review effectuated for the reporting period of August 1, 2006 through January 31, 2007 indicates that objectives defined in the annual work plan are being successfully met on all fronts. Detailed summaries of these activities are reported in annex 1. Results of mid-term evaluations conducted by Pierre Thévenaut and Erika Styger on the agricultural intensification (Module III) and support to rural institutions (Module IV) are currently being put in place as the program carried out internal corrections. Despite a general slow-down of implementation of work plan activities during the presidential campaign, program planning for the remaining 18 months of the ERI program suggests that all contractual obligations will be met by the end of the project in July, 2008. As indicated in the detailed work plan activities tables in annex 3, the ERI Fianarantsoa program plans to retain its current course of action with relatively few modifications in approaches or tasks. Our sole new activity centers on the establishment of the new Centres d'Appui aux Communes (CAC) – itself a major component of capacity building for commune level governance structures. Holding steady our present course of action is the primary orientation of ERI Fianarantsoa.

2.1.2 Module I: Ecoregional Approach to Conservation and Development Adopted and Implemented by Multiple Actors in Priority Ecoregions

2.1.2.1 Achievements

The ERI Fianarantsoa module I has advanced relatively well over the past reporting period due to the strong collaborative relations between the ERI team and its many partners. Difficulties are being encountered, but these are linked to broader structural and institutional issues sometimes far beyond the domain of intervention of the ERI program! Highlights of these achievements are summarized below but reported in more detail in the Annex 1.



Figure : Vetiver planting at new Keliliana dam site.

Ecoregional Planning: ERI senior staff actively participate in the implementation of the new protected area of Fandriana – Vondrozo. As a member of the technical coordination committee, ERI continued to work closely with MIARO members and the CIREEF to refine further the spatial zoning visions for the forest corridor. ERI leadership has contributed significantly to defining mitigation measures required for the new protected area and senior staff have prepared several proposals with partners at the commune level. ERI continues to support actively applied research on the ecological and social dynamics of the forest corridor. Senior staff from ERI and the CMP participated in an IRD/GERM workshop in November that presented initial findings of field research in the Androy-Tolongoina transect. ERI's support to the Comité Multilocale de Planification led to a successful general assembly in October that confirmed many of the recommendations made by the consultants hired by ERI to help the CMP define new institutional structures.

Ecoregional Alliance Coordination: The senior ERI staff continue to provide direction and leadership to the alliance of USAID projects. Regular meetings have been successful held each month. The forum continues to be well appreciated by the members because it allows a rapid exchange of information and ideas. Following suggestions from USAID Madagascar, the alliance decided to try to achieve highly visible results in three focus areas – the Keliliana commune near the Ranomafana National Park, the Lac Antarambiky watershed serving as the source of water for the city of

Fianarantsoa, and the Lekomby-Betraka area near Manakara – a high growth zone for the coastal part of the province. ERI continues to invest much time in keeping tabs on the nature of donor and government investments in environment and rural development domains throughout the province. *Refinement of Spatial Planning Tools and Household Surveys:* The ERI program worked closely with JariAla to develop methodologies for use of Landsat images of 28 meter resolution for our Development Pathways and Appreciative Inquiry planning tools. The sub-contract between Pact Madagascar and ERI was revised in order to generate more funding to allow Pact technicians to clean up the images and work with our staff to expand the use of spatial information for planning at the commune level. ERI completed the dissemination of the resource guide of donor financing opportunities in Fianarantsoa. Refinement of the data collection tool *Cahiers de Ménage* continued with the collection and refinement of information on household income and production dynamics. This initiative continues to draw much interest from communes and Koloharena federations because it generates information charting the impact of our collective development interventions.

2.1.2.2 Constraints

The IRD/GERM conference on the evolution of ecological and social dynamics of the northern fringes of the Ranomafana – Andringitra forest corridor highlighted several disquieting issues about the future impact of the new protected areas set up through the Durban Vision. The in-depth field research documents clearly that new protected areas, be they community resource management agreements or more classical national parks, profoundly change the behavior of resource users. Unintended consequences are indeed emerging in the case study sites in the communes of Tolongoina and Androy. As the agricultural system shifts from one dependent on slash-and-burn practices to a more sedentary system, soil fertility becomes a more pressing problem because farmers no longer have access to the fertility reserves of primary forests. Agricultural intensification and diversification is not occurring at a fast enough rate in the peripheral areas along the forest corridor. Poverty rates and food insecurity may be on the rise in areas along new protected zones because the integrated packages of markets, transport, and extension of new agricultural practices may not be occurring fast enough to mitigate the presence of the new protected areas. Not enough resources are going into rural development in these peripheral areas and as a result the rural community support for the new protected areas may indeed be quite ephemeral.

The intense involvement of the Ecoregional Alliance to support the establishment of the temporary protection status of the Fandriana – Vondrozo is presently threatened by difficulties encountered in raising sufficient funds for carrying out the next steps required to create a permanent reserve. No funds currently exist within the Ecoregional Alliance partners to pay for the high costs of the public consultative process, the environmental impact studies, and other legal requirements. Programmatic paralysis is thus creeping into the effort to move forward the creation of the new protected area. ERI will have a key role to play in trying to break this vicious cycle.

The spatial planning initiative is not advancing fast enough towards its objective of helping communes revise commune management plans to reflect environmental priorities. While we possess the spatial planning tools of Development Pathways and Appreciative Inquiry, logistical issues like access to maps of sufficient scale have hindered some work. While these technical issues are now resolved, other political questions have consistently hindered our work. The Regions of Haute Matsiatra and Vatovavy-Fitovinany have been hesitant to embark on revision of commune plans until clarity is obtained with the Plan Régional de Développement and its relation to the Madagascar Action Plan (MAP). Guiding principles from these plans are to inform development priorities for communes. Constant discussions and negotiations about the interface between zoning, community resource arrangements (GCF/GELOSE), and the governance issues surrounding the creation of the new protected area have led to considerable institutional blockages. Brakes were also put on our commune level spatial planning process during the many months leading up to the presidential elections in December, 2006.

2.1.2.3 Recommendations

The Module I components consist primarily of developing strong institutional linkages with various actors in order to move forward key dossiers. ERI Fianarantsoa will continue its normal path of action, but key investments of time and energy are needed in the following areas:

SAPM: The implementation of the new protected area of Fandriana – Vondrozo is hitting a series of institutional barriers. It appears that once the temporary status of the protected areas was gained, further support for establishing the new protected areas has dried up. Funds are not available to carry out neither the required and vitally important public consultation processes nor the delineation process. ERI is proposing that a provincial conference on governance of the new protected area be held to discuss how to set up a body of local level stakeholders – the COBA platform proposed by ERI consultant Neal Hockley and Voakaty Ny Ala – so as to build political support for implementation of the new protected area. Then, in a step-by-step process, ERI will work with its partners to carry out commune level planning and consultation using its toolbox of spatial planning instruments. It will also work with the CIREEF and JariAla to obtain funding from the PE III World Bank environmental funds.

Spatial Planning: The Development Pathways and Appreciative Inquiry planning processes contributing to the revision and implementation of commune development plans (PCD) must advance and advance quickly. Despite the many institutional complexities around landscape planning involving multiple ministries, ERI must simply advance as best as it can to carry out initial revisions in key communes along the forest corridor. Through this leadership, pragmatic solutions can be found leading to an effective interface between the multiple planning priorities of SAPM/NAP, zoning, watershed management, monitoring of MAP advancements, etc.

Madagascar Action Plan: The MAP will be the dominant policy orientation for the next five years. ERI and its USAID partners will need to pay particular attention to assuring that work plan activities are closely allied with the priorities of this policy document. Initial internal reviews have assured us that ERI supports most elements of the 8 priorities of the MAP. Government will certainly ask for documentation showing how our programs contribute to implementation of the MAP. Monitoring and evaluation systems must be modified to take account of this need for information.

2.1.2.4 Perspectives

The ERI Fianarantsoa program plans to hold a steady course for Module I during the remaining 18 months. As noted above, it will continue to promote in-depth socio-economic research designed to inform policy makers of the opportunities and constraints linked to the creation of the new protected area Fandriana – Vondrozo. It will seek to integrate further the conclusions and recommendations of the recent ERI consultant reports into its range of program activities.¹ Leadership will continue to be provided to the Ecoregional Alliance through the investment of considerable time by regional coordinator Mark S. Freudenberger. Much of his time will be invested in trying to move forward with partners the many steps required to create a legally sound new protected area by the end of June, 2008. This will entail resolution of a wide array of questions such as the ways to incorporate the present community resource management agreements into the SAPM/NAP to defining new governance structures for the forest corridor currently under the jurisdiction of many legal entities. Finally, it is clear that the Madagascar Action Plan will become the dominant policy paradigm until the end of the ERI program. We must be prepared to work closely with our national and regional authorities to implement this visionary plan of action in the most professional and expedient way possible. This will be our major challenge for the next 18 months of the ERI program!

2.1.3 Module II: Community-based Natural Resource Management Improved and Expanded to Protect Forest Corridors

2.1.3.1 Achievements

The Module II has been carried out with great enthusiasm and aplomb by the module coordinator just returning from maternity leave. Two key studies have been carried out of the past six months² that show conclusively that community resource management agreements (GCF/GELOSE) are leading to the protection of natural resources but that socio-economic benefits are not being

¹ Consultancy reports prepared by Erika Styger for agriculture, Pierre Thévenaut for agricultural extension and rural association strengthening, Jamil Simon for rural communication, and Neal Hockley for community resource management.

² The ERI financed study by Neal Hockley and the NGO Voakaty Ny Ala on the dynamics of community resource management agreements and the French Institut de Recherche pour le Développement/GEREM multi-year research project of communities along the Tolongoina segment of the forest corridor.

generated to the local communities. It is thus necessary to reinforce agricultural intensification and diversification around community protected areas and to valorize economically the ecosystem services of the particular area. ERI has moved forward on this front by encouraging ecotourism in the forest corridor through funding from the Conservation International NODE "Fruits of the Forest" program and by developing a vision for small-scale hydroelectric production using water flowing out of the forest corridor.

Despite the lack of financial benefits generated directly from the community resource management structures of the forest corridor, rural populations continue to seek the expansion of the program. Four new resource management agreements (GCF) encompassing 3500 hectares are currently being completed by ERI Fianarantsoa. ERI is now monitoring closely 20 GCF set up by LDI, PTE, and ERI. COBA membership expansion continues at a rate of 30% per year. Some COBA are taking strong initiatives to set up *dinabe* traditional use agreements and sanctions, lobby for renewal of GCF agreements expiring after 3 years, and seek assistance to implement management plans. ERI continued to provide a wide range of technical assistance to the GCF USAID projects have set up over the years.

Status of Community Natural Resource Management

A large part of the Fandriana – Vondrozo new protected area is under community resource management – approximately 33% of the total land mass! 84 COBA now manage GCF/GELOSE agreements along the Ranomafana – Andringitra forest corridor of which 20 are back-stopped directly by ERI. The COBA continue to implement their resource management plans while 3 new COBA have been set up by ERI to manage new community resource management agreements. ERI has provided training in ecotourism management for some of these COBA such as those of the Andrambovato forest station site along the FCE railway. Numerous discussions on ways to better integrate Koloharena into the COBA. The major challenge is to integrate the GCF/GELOSE into the new protected area governance structure.

2.1.3.2 Constraints

The rural populations along the Ranomafana – Andringitra forest corridor have enthusiastically embraced the community resource management opportunities presented by the GCF and GELOSE legislation. Indeed, forest conversion has generally been arrested in areas under community control. But, donor support for capacity building for COBA implementation of management plans will lead to few durable results unless relations are strengthened considerably between the forestry service and the local communities. Covenants and other agreements specified in the forest management contracts are not being observed by the forestry service because of the latter's limited financial and personnel resources. Until now, there is very little evidence of PE III investment in the reform and financing of forestry service leading to improved support of the numerous community management agreements along the forest corridor. Poorly educated and remote COBA members need the technical advice of the forestry sector but this support is not forthcoming except for periodic inputs of donor projects like ERI.

The community management agreements are not generating the promised financial returns to the local communities. The initial analysis of the ERI consultant Neal Hockley notes that no GCF studied by the Voakaty Ny Ala field research team is generating palpable financial benefits for the COBA members. Certainly, some use value products are being conserved for the controlled exploitation of present and future generations, but these benefits are quite financially insignificant. While ecosystem services are being provided by the conservation of the primary forest resources, local communities have no way of capturing the economic value represented in protected forests, clear water, or fresh air!

The message is clear from the ERI Fianarantsoa experience of the past months – the community resource management agreements (GCF/GELOSE) are reaching a crossroads. The forestry service is not able to work effectively with the local communities to provide technical support due to the well known limitations in personnel and equipment. The 3-year statute of limitations for the first round of GCF agreements have been reached. Evaluations of the current agreements are desperately needed. Unless agreements are reviewed soon, communities may decide that the opportunity costs of conservation are not worth it because of the lack of interest of the state. Government through the forestry service is playing a diminished role in helping local communities enforce the use restrictions to natural resources embodied in the management contracts. COBA are becoming increasingly

frustrated because even the commune leadership is not backing them up when help is needed to sanction illegal users of the protected resource base. Disillusionment with the community resource management system is thus growing with major implications on the even more large-scale implementation of the Durban Vision and the new protected area of Fandriana – Vondrozo.

2.1.3.3 Recommendations

The ERI Fianarantsoa program supports strongly the strengthening of the COBA and their associated resource management agreements. It has a strong track record of providing many learning opportunities for COBA and through the Conservation International NODE program it has directed some financial resources to various community forestry activities. But, this is not durable. ERI believes that it is above all necessary to build up the *political power* of the COBA to express and defend their interests as managers and users of the natural resource base of their local community. COBA must become central players at the negotiation table so that their GCF/GELOSE can be incorporated into the new protected area strategies. Political power is needed to assure that the Koloharena federations indeed provide technical assistance and other financial benefits to the remotely situated members of the rural community who are engaged in protecting forest resources so necessary to the maintenance of hydrological regimes. ERI will advise strongly that the Koloharena members offer a stronger helping hand to the COBA of their locales. But above all, it is necessary for ERI and members of the Ecoregional Alliance to work more closely with the CIREEF to put in place a federation or platform of COBA sufficiently equipped to become an actor for support to the community resource management sector.

Part of the ERI challenge for the coming years is to involve more local authorities in the management challenges of caring for the forest corridors. Greater efforts must be made to involve mayors and councils in supporting enforcement of GCF/GELOSE contracts. Chefs de Districts must be better informed of ways in which they can back up these agreements and play a more active role in arbitration of inevitable resource management contracts. Hopefully, the forestry service will acquire more financial resources to better support the *cantonnements* field agents working at the frontline of resource management. The new personnel of the Centres d'Appui aux Communes must become strong defenders of the environment and become knowledgeable of the various ways to make the legal corpus serve development and the environment. ERI will train these new agents. Together, ERI is open to working on ways to better coordinate the actions of the various stakeholders committed to better management of the great biodiversity of Madagascar!

2.1.3.4 Perspectives

The ERI Fianarantsoa program will continue to put in place the community resource management agreements it is already scheduled to support. It looks forward to turning the new GCF site along the FCE railway in Andrambovato into a financially profitable ecotourism venture for the COBA. But, ERI will invest most of its energies and resources in trying to set up an institutionally viable federation of COBA committed to advocating for the maintenance and expansion of the community involvement in resource conservation and management. It will continue to call for integration of the existing GCF/GELOSE into the new protected area of Fandriana – Vondrozo. Our staff will advise again the importance of setting up the new CIREEF Cellules Techniques Régionales so necessary to the evaluation of the present resource management agreements. Our path is set we and we anticipate moving forward with enthusiasm for the next 18 months.

2.1.4 Module III: Profitable and Environmentally Sound Farming Systems Replace “Slash-and-Burn” Agricultural Practices at the Landscape Level

2.1.4.1 Achievements

The Module III is the core of the Ecoregional Initiatives program. The central thrust of our agricultural program is to offer alternatives to slash-and-burn agriculture along the Ranomafana – Andringitra forest corridor and to facilitate the adoption of proffered agricultural techniques and organizational practices. This long-term process continues to unfold in exciting but often unpredictable ways as our key client, the Koloharena associations, cooperatives, federations, and confederations adopt our advice selectively in light of the vast diversity of social, economic, and

environmental conditions of particular rural territories. The wide range of approaches and results of this module are evaluated in the mid-term assessment by the ERI consultant Erika Styer.³

The internal dynamics of the 9 Koloharena federations along the forest corridor determine to a large extent the achievements of this agricultural intensification and diversification module. The Koloharena federations have adopted 5 commodity streams for focused interventions – each choice of commodities determined by the particularities of the market and the agroecology of the zone. But, ERI provides technical advice to around 20 agricultural commodities. ERI's technical field staff and senior agronomist continue to provide a wide range of trainings in improved production practices, agricultural marketing, product traceability, product norms and standards, commodity transformation techniques, etc. Our technical advice is provided to the agricultural extension agents hired by the federations, with a subsidy from ERI, and the network of *Paysans Animateurs* and *Paysans Vulgarisateurs*.

Up-date on the PA/PV Extension Service

The Koloharena federations are increasingly selling the services of the *Paysans Animateurs* and *Paysans Vulgarisateurs*. 36 PA and PV worked directly for three members of the Voahary Salama network to provide extension services. BIONEXX is now negotiating with the 9 Koloharena federations to hire and train PV's to provide artemesia extension skills. Procedures manuals and contractual documentation is being prepared jointly by BIONEXX, ERI, and the federations to structure this innovative arrangement.

Fish Culture Status

Fish and rice-fish culture has been one of the great examples of successful farmer adoption of new agricultural practices. Set up by the LDI program and the government fisheries service in 2000 through the creation of a network of 5 private fingerling producers (PPA), today there are 20 PPA producers now operating along the forest corridor. Seventeen of the PPA producers raised 1.036 million fingerlings in 2006 – a dramatic expansion from the initial 7000 fingerlings introduced by LDI in 2000 ! The network of fisheries extension agents linked to the Koloharena farmer-to-farmer extension service assures pay-for-service technical training to interested farmers. Fingerlings are now sold not only to neighboring farmers but also to projects like the government fisheries service itself, the PSDR, Saha Betsileo, and PNUD. In light of the rapid expansion of fisheries, ERI is now pulling back its direct technical support. The commercial sale of fingerlings has now become one of the trade mark features of the Koloharena movement.

only being 557kg/hectare due to a widespread infestation of mold. Other commodity streams continue to advance very quickly and in an autonomous fashion like the fish culture of Royal Carp and *Telapia* (see attached box). New crops like FIFAMANOR varieties of orange flesh sweet potatoes have been met with spectacular success. Following varietal tests in various agro climatic zones using Farmer Field School techniques, the Koloharena focused on a select few favorable varieties. On their own initiative, Koloharena cooperatives purchased several hundred kilos of root stock directly from FIFAMANOR in Antsirabe. ERI is particularly pleased that the Koloharena federations are continuing to build strong collaborative relationships with other donor financed projects like FERT, AFDI, Saha Betsileo, SOFASPAN, PSDR, and others. This complements the successful efforts thus far of signing contracts with the firms Ramanandrabe Export for litchis, BIONEXX for artemesia, and SDMad for agricultural inputs. Other achievements are reported in detail in the ERI annual monitoring and evaluation report and the attached appendix 1 "Achievements by Component."

The ERI Fianarantsoa program is particularly pleased with the achievements obtained in introducing artemesia through the Koloharena linkages built with the commercial firm BIONEXX. Through a cooperative agreement with BIONEXX, young artemesia plants were given to Koloharena

³ Erika Styger, "Mid-term program evaluation consultancy report of Module 3: Profitable and Environmentally Sound Farming Systems Replace Slash-and-Burn Agricultural Practices at the Landscape Scale", Development Alternatives Inc. September 18, 2006.

associations situated in a wide range of agroclimatic zones. Despite considerable losses of young shoots due to difficulties encountered with transporting the seedlings from Antsirabe to the field, the yields turned out to be high and the artemesine content very acceptable. This early phase of careful testing and observation has convinced BIONEXX to enter into a contractual relationship with 6 federations to produce artemesia on 60 hectares of land this present rainy season. Despite a very high demand from farmers, BIONEXX and ERI are advising prudence and only 30% of the demand for seedlings has been met. Meanwhile, BIONEXX is developing commercial relations with the essential oil processing firm INDENA of Fianarantsoa to transform the artemesia leaves into artemesine. This initiative may be the first successful set of results emanating from the close cooperation between ERI, BAMEX, and the commercial sector.

Many similar successes are now being recorded by the Koloharena throughout the ERI zones of intervention. Annex 1 “Achievements by Component” describes some of these achievements in more detail. Considerable advances are being made around other commodity streams situated in various agroecological zones (ie: jatropha, corridor coffee, potatoes, new varieties bananas, moringa, ginger, corn, Malagasy chickens...) Suffice to note that these productivity increases are accompanied by a wide range of associated activities. ERI Fianarantsoa’s communication team is now producing on a regular basis technical fact sheets, agricultural radio emissions produced by the Koloharena themselves, technical videos, and regular trainings and agronomic testing through the farmer-to-farmer extension approach. Each federation is progressively using with greater effect the *Maison Koloharena* training facilities to carry out the range of extension of new ideas, approaches, and techniques.

Expansion of New Commodity Streams

The Koloharena movement continues to devise new income generation streams in the agricultural sector. The 8.5 hectares of artemesia test planted with BIONEXX led to the establishment of a protocol to expand production to 60 hectares for the 2006-2007 campaign. The initial testing of orange flesh potato varieties with FIFAMANOR led to the purchase by the Koloharena associations of 200 kg of stock late in the 2006 season. Another 2700 kg will be purchased in early 2007. Koloharena associations are now selling cuttings to interested parties like Peace Corps volunteers, other projects, and neighboring farmers. Thanks so the introduction of the Bielenberg jatropha oil presses by ERI, 150 liters of oil were sold to the national and international market. This stimulated greater interest by the Koloharena in jatropha plantings. Koloharena sold among themselves 1250 kg of seeds for a planned planting of 625 hectares in the 2006-2007 season.

2.1.4.2 Constraints

The Module III confronts many of the agricultural development constraints and risks encountered in many other places in Madagascar and around the world.

Transport: The system along the forest corridor remains very fragile. The FCE and port of Manakara rehabilitation process spurred by USAID following the cyclones of 2000 has come to a halt. The reliability of service of the FCE is continuing to decline despite valiant efforts by the management to obtain new traction motors. The Port of Manakara is receiving little boat traffic because of the inability to obtain the rehabilitated dredger now located in the port of Manakara. While the RNT 14 Ifanadiana – Ikongo road is receiving investments for rehabilitation, weight limits are not being enforced and hence damage is severe from road traffic after heavy rains. Similarly, feeder roads to other strategic zones of intervention have been seriously damaged by heavy rains in December and January. It is not clear if government funds are available to rehabilitate the bridges and roads – some built by the previous USAID projects CAP, ReCAP, LDI, and PTE. The lack of regular air transport to Fianarantsoa has also turned away some international agricultural investors.

Markets: Market reliability in an age of globalization is very limited. Successes were achieved this past litchi season in exporting roughly 250 metric tons of litchis to the European market, but new European norms of quality and traceability are seriously affecting the ability of small farmers to capture international market niches. If farmers from Fianarantsoa hope to enter into the international market, product quality must be improved significantly. The obstacles to capturing an emerging market for red rice was demonstrated clearly during ERI and BAMEX’s field visit with Lotus Foods – an American importer of specialized organic rice. Yet, some new markets for export products, like jatropha oil, are not sending out clear price or quality signals. Price incentives in some cases, like

for artemesia or bananas, may be attractive, but other factors like transport or land tenure are presenting important hurdles. Many of these structural issues are far beyond what ERI can tackle alone and thus our efforts to build strong coalitions with government ministries and other donors are so important.



Figure : Culinary art by Koloharena in Tolongoina

Land Tenure: The land tenure conundrum continues to present significant issues for ERI.

International investors over the past six months have repeatedly offered to provide significant investment for artemesia and sugar cane facilities, but sufficient land can not be obtained to permit plantations of cash crops associated with out-grower schemes. ERI is observing with great interest the Millenium Challenge Account initiatives in Amoron'i Mania Region to title agricultural land and it supports with enthusiasm a new European Union effort to identify available state lands for agricultural development in the Haute Matsiatra Region.

Agricultural Extension: ERI is investing considerable resources to build up a strong farmer-to-farmer system linked to the new Centres de Services Agricoles (CSA). Thus far this FAO sponsored initiative has not advanced too far in our regions of intervention. ERI Fianarantsoa is frustrated by the difficulties of encouraging exchanges of information among farmers themselves. While the PV/PA system of extension and the CSA of agricultural information are premised on the sale of services to interested farmer's associations, we are finding that it is extremely difficult to generate sufficient internal financial resources to pay the services of the *Paysans Vulgarisateurs* and *Paysans Animateurs*. We find that when even small sums are generated for payment of services, agricultural information flows. Yet, the financial flows within rural communities are so limited that even small sums are difficult to come by for the Koloharena federations!

Climatic and Weather Variability: The weather variability of the past year has created considerable havoc for the Koloharena farmers. The drought of the 2005-2006 season greatly affected both rainy season and dry season yields; but the heavy rains of the early 2006-2007 season similarly risks undermining rice and tanyety field crop productivity. Added to this variability, severe but cyclical rat invasions along the western side of the forest corridor are presently decimating up to 80% of the rice, sweet potato, and bean harvests.

2.1.4.3 Recommendations

The ERI Fianarantsoa program plans to continue its traditional agroecological approach as strongly recommended by the ERI consultant Erika Styger. ERI consultant Pierre Thévenaut⁴ similarly suggests continued support to the strengthening of the dynamic but always vulnerable Koloharena farmer's movement. We feel we are on the right track, but that we operate rather alone as one of the sole actors promoting agricultural development along the Ranomafana – Andringitra forest corridor. We hope to keep on attracting other projects to work along the corridor. Our central recommendations for the following 18 months of the ERI program are the following:

Expansion of Cooperatives and Commodity Platforms: Cooperatives earn money for the Koloharena association members. We must continue to expand the numbers and strengths of these cooperatives for they are the motor for the expansion of the Koloharena movement. We find that the creation of strong commodity platforms like the new network of private tree nurseries, association of private fingerling producers, and the grouping of honey producers is an excellent way to build coalitions of producers defending their own interests. These platforms build bridges between Koloharena and non-Koloharena farmers and allow all to construct the political power to better represent commodity producer interests.

⁴ Pierre Thévenaut, « Situation du Mouvement Koloharena de la vulgarisation faite par ses membres paysans et du programme ERI. » Development Alternatives Inc. 18 septembre 2006.

Expand Agricultural Input Centers: Demand for the creation of new agricultural supply centers remains strong despite ERI contractual inabilities (MOBIS) to pay for start-up costs. ERI has been approached by ANGAP to start up new *Centres d'Approvisionnement Agricole* in Ranomafana. We will see other co-financing opportunities to put in place new centers. At the same time, we must continue to help the cooperatives obtain financing to purchase rice dehullers (like in Miananarivo and Ambatovaky), purchase rice weeders and other equipment to rent out through the centers, and expand purchase of certain supplies like PSI supplied mosquito nets, Sur'Eau and condoms.

Expand small-scale agricultural machinery: Small-scale agricultural machinery saves much expenditure in agricultural labor. Our successful tool rental system set up through the Centres d'Appro must be continued through the rental of more equipment – weeders, water pumps, Bielenberg presses... We hope to strengthen our linkages with suppliers like ACAMECA in Antsirabe.

Develop strong linkages with COBA along forest corridor fringes: The Koloharena federations have incorporated COBA community forest management groups into the farmer's movement but agricultural services and benefits are not reaching this membership group. We must continue to find ways to better integrate these very distant communities into the mainstream activities of the Koloharena movement.

Strengthen internal agricultural monitoring and evaluation systems: The agricultural monitoring and evaluation system is not performing as well as it should. The ERI program, communes, and the Koloharena federations themselves want more accurate information on the dynamics of agricultural technology adoption, production information, and better membership data bases. We must strengthen these data collection and analysis systems based primarily on the use of the *Cahiers de Ménage*.

2.1.4.4 Perspectives

The ERI Fianarantsoa program plans to continue the orientations of the agricultural intensification and diversification program launched at the beginning of the program. ERI activities contribute fully to the spirit and orientations of the Madagascar Action Plan. Module III is the core of USAID Madagascar's gift to commitment 4, "Rural Development and a Green Revolution." The mid-term evaluation by Erika Styger and Pierre Thévenaut convinces us that we are on the right track. We hope in the next months leading up to the close of the ERI program to publicize much more the many successes that our rural beneficiaries are obtaining at this time. However, we feel that the next 18 months must focus on the following agricultural issues:

Long-term durability of the agricultural program will depend not simply on offering new technical alternatives to slash-and-burn agricultural. Adoption and innovation will hinge upon the following institutional necessities:

Integration of Koloharena into other Farmer Federations: ERI will continue to facilitate the development of linkages between the Koloharena federations and other farmer's federations linked to Tranoben'ny Tantsaha, the Centres de Service Agricole, the Université Paysanne (Formagri), the Chambre des Agriculteurs, and others.

Strengthening Agricultural Applied Research Partnerships: ERI maintains a large network of linkages with many agricultural research organizations (Formagri, FIFAMANOR, University of York, University of Honenheim, University of Tokyo, TAF...). We plan to expand especially our working relations with FOFIFA (ie: jatropha, bananas, rice, agricultural machines...). Through these linkages, we will build stronger ties with the Farmer Field Schools and the *Maisons Koloharena*.

Agricultural Transformation and Women's Empowerment: The Koloharena are beginning to generate surplus agricultural products that require better processing, preservation, and storage. We plan to continue to work with women's Koloharena groups to expand vetiver weaving, jam production in Tologoina, jatropha soap making, and other processing activities. Income generation with women will strengthen significantly the political power of women within the Koloharena movement.

2.1.5 Module IV: Rural Associations Achieve Financial and Organizational Sustainability and Become Effective Advocates for Local Concerns

2.1.5.1 Achievements

The ERI Fianarantsoa program dedicates a large percentage of its staff and financial resources to strengthening rural associations like the Koloharena at the local, regional and national level; water users associations (AUP); road users associations (AUE); and governance units like communes and intercommunal associations (OPCI). Over the past reporting period, ERI has provided 30 major training programs requested by the Koloharena associations. More importantly, the various rural associations we work with are very rapidly building new collaborative relationships with government and non-USAID associated projects as well as with the private sector. These new collaborative relations are resulting in technical training, subsidies of materials and equipment, rural credit, and most significantly agricultural production contracts.

Koloharena Expansion

The ERI program estimates that the Koloharena movement in Fianarantsoa presently accounts for 5200 fee paying members organized in 470 legally recognized associations. ERI expects another 100 associations to be legally established in 2007. It is estimated that 4500 Koloharena members adopt the package of agricultural techniques proposed and at least 1200 non-members adopt some combination thereof. Probably this number is much higher but measurement difficulties of spread effects constrain understandings of how adoption expands outside of the movement.

The institutional strength of the Koloharena movement has grown significantly over the past few months. The Koloharena federations have grouped themselves into a regional confederation (ARKH) linked directly to the Agricultural Business Centers (BCI) set up by the BAMEX program in Fianarantsoa and Manakara. The regional confederation tries to serve the same representational functions as the national confederation (CNKH) plays in Antananarivo. Both institutions continue to experience growth pains described more fully below. Thanks to the initiatives of the Kaominina Mendrika program launched by Santénet and Voahary Salama, the Koloharena have become central actors at the commune level in defining the contributions of federations and associations to the “star” system. The dynamism of the Kaominina Mendrika community planning process by objective is growing in part to the incorporation of the farmer groups into the Cycle I and Cycle II. But, great advancements have also been achieved in rooting Kaominina Mendrika within the rural planning process supported by the Ministry of Planning and Decentralization (MDAT). ERI’s progressive encouragement is leading to the incorporation of this innovative achievement by objectives into the national planning framework.

The micro-credit program is growing very significantly due to the financial support provided by ERI to establish TIAVO branch offices on the eastern side of the forest corridor. Over the past year, a total of 85 million Ariary (\$40,000) has been lent out to over 200 Koloharena farmers. While this is a dramatic increase in the granting of credit over past years, it nevertheless represents only 4% of the overall membership base. While the 80% reimbursement rate is very good, we find that the rural credit institutions like Entreprenre à Madagascar (EAM), TIAVO, and BOA remain quite slow in making decisions. Many times the individual Koloharena credit requests are rejected and for this reason ERI is focusing more on helping the cooperatives to position themselves vis à vis credit organizations. Notable successes have been achieved whereby EAM recently granted a credit to the cooperative in Miananarivo to purchase a rice dehulling machine – the first machine of its kind in this remote but rich rice producing commune!

Kaominina Mendrika

The Kaominina Mendrika program is jointly implemented in 6 pilot communes by the Ministry of Decentralization and the Ecoregional Alliance but with the technical assistance of SantéNet. Thanks to the active participation of the Koloharena movement, 80% of the anticipated “star” results were met: introduction of new agriculture techniques (SRI/SRA, ginger, fish culture, jatropa, orange sweet potato..) and expansion of the Koloharena movement (2 new federations, 125 new associations, 137 new PA/PV...). The cycle II starts up in early 2007 with a massive expansion into 18 communes and communities. The focus will be on helping the communes create the results oriented work plans and to locate diversified sources of funding.

The ERI program received supplemental funding from USAID Madagascar to launch the creation of the new *Centres d'Appui aux Communes (CAC)* initiated by the Ministry of Planning and Decentralisation (MDAT). Even though the supplemental funding came through during the height of the presidential campaign, ERI was able to publicize the new structure among mayors and regional authorities, identify CAC locales, build new collaborative relations with the NORAD funded SOFASPAN project to support as well the CACs, bring Catholic Relief Services into the fold, and collaborate closely with Pact to put in place the Last Mile Initiative telecenter for Ranomafana. Considerable institutional sensitivities surround the creation of the CAC so the ERI team has been cautious in launching the new center most likely to be situated in Ikongo or Ranomafana. The final decision hinges on decisions by CRS to set up a CAC in the Ranomafana or Ifanadina commune to serve this northern part of the corridor.

2.1.5.2 Constraints

The ERI mid-term evaluation by Pierre Thévenaut of our advancements in strengthening rural associations confirms the growing concern that the Koloharena leadership is increasingly distant from the membership base. The dynamic leadership of the national and regional confederations and even the leaders of the federations at the commune level are generally better educated and more connected with the broader world thanks to frequent capacity building activities offered by donor projects, communications through the BLU radio network, travel to workshops and conferences, and associations with private operators. This tends to exacerbate a gulf between Koloharena and COBA associations situated far from the rural centers of power. Mobilization of the Koloharena for collective endeavors, such as paying the regular membership fees, is thus quite difficult in some communes. The gulf between national Koloharena leaders and the regional and commune level leaders is also present because of the high costs associated with travel and other communications.

Communications: Two-way flow of information between the base and the leadership remains problematic. Retention of knowledge gained through trainings, study tours, and use of the BLU short wave radio system remains a major problem. The inability of the movement to exchange effectively information leads to this gulf. Part of the problem is fully understandable. Communication channels in remote and mountainous zones are notoriously poor around the world! Remote Koloharena members may not even visit markets or other gathering places for months at a time. For this reason, the nascent rural radio programming initiative is vitally important as a way to exchange information, but even in this case, many farmers lack access to radios or radio coverage.

Internal Financial Management: As with many rural associations in most parts of the world, internal financial management is problematic. ERI believes that the long-term viability of the Koloharena movement depends heavily on putting in strong financial checks-and-balances. If Koloharena members believe that the financial assets of the cooperatives are well managed, we suspect that the movement will gather greater strength. Yet, at this time, some cooperatives and federations struggle with notoriously poor records of managing funds despite the many trainings provided by ERI and other partners. Unless the financial management of the movement improves, it will be difficult to gain the confidence of the micro-credit institutions seeking to provide loans for productive activities.

Expansion of Koloharena Partnerships

The Koloharena movement has continued to expand its range of partnerships with various donor financed projects, the private sector, and communes. High visible results include:

- Seed stock: 10 areas of test trials for beans with CCS/PSA; FIFAMANOR trials with orange flesh sweet potatoes; BIONEXX introduction of artemesia plants; PSDR support for introduction of jatropha
- Commercialization: 240 metric tons of certified litchis exported through Ramanandraibe Export
- Agricultural Tools: Introduction and testing of conical weeders with PROIMPEX, water pumps with ACAMECA, Bienlenberg press with ACAMECA, VALY, and Saint-François Xavier
- Credit: Expansion of working relations with TIAVO and BNI
- Food Transformation: Training of 24 women in improved cooking and weaving techniques with SOARARY and CAPR

Despite these advancements, much work needs to occur to strengthen institutional relations between the federations, regional confederation, and national confederation. This must be a priority for 2007.

Expansion of Koloharena Movement: USAID Madagascar and other donors constantly call for the expansion or scaling-up of the Koloharena movement. The Koloharena national and regional leadership is cognizant that the health of a movement is to a large degree dependent on growth in membership in progressively wider areas. Expansion is not easy if growth is to originate within the movement itself. ERI can help create linkages between the Koloharena leadership and villagers interested in joining the movement. But, ultimately expansion is the domain of the present leadership of this movement. While the Koloharena movement is known among the 30 communes along the forest corridor, and new inter-association exchanges are occurring, it is not yet clear how an indogenous growth process will occur. Much depends on the performance of the present Koloharena federations and associations in inspiring confidence and interest!



Figure : Training of Koloharena women in basket weaving with vetiver and banana husks through funding from Peace Corps partners.

ERI Fianarantsoa follows with great interest the internal dynamics of the road users's associations set up by the CAP/USAID project. We remain concerned about the institutional state of some of these associations, but we will continue to work with the road users associations of the Namoly-Ambalvao and Betraka-Lekomby roads to raise funds from the *Fonds d'Entretien Routière*. Similarly, our team monitors closely the many water users' associations set up during the time of LDI and PTE to manage irrigation infrastructures. Despite very limited numbers of ERI field staff, we try to keep our pulse on the internal politics of these rural institutions while knowing that they suffer from most of the same difficulties as the Koloharena associations.

2.1.5.3 Recommendations

The many recommendations suggested by Pierre Thévenaut in his mid-term evaluation report are being instituted by ERI Fianarantsoa at this time. Among others, the program is focusing its energies on:

Internal Auditing: Enormous efforts must continue to be made to strengthen the internal financial auditing of Koloharena financial accounts. ERI will continue to develop strong mechanisms to support internal audits, certification of solid accounts, and other mechanisms to promote financial transparency.

Integration into Kaominina Mendrika Planning Processes: The Kaominina Mendrika planning process by objectives is a powerful tool useful for preparing annual Koloharena work plans. ERI will continue to introduce this "star" system based on the concepts of Nature, Wealth, Power, Health and Education into the normal planning cycles of the federations. This may be an easier and more transparent method of planning. Use of the Kaominina Mendrika tools may also open the doors to fostering more inter-association competition if procedures are put in place by the federations to recognize exceptional results of individual associations. Public recognition for excellent results seems to be a motivator and foundation for building solidarity.

Diversification of Institutional Affiliations: ERI Fianarantsoa will continue to introduce the leadership of the Koloharena movement to new commercial opportunities. Like we have done with BIONEXX, Ramanadrabe Export, and SDMad, we feel that negotiation of well conceived production and marketing contracts builds progressively the professional stature of the Koloharena movement. Commercial agricultural opportunities are the catalyst to adoption of new agricultural innovation provided by the growing range of donor linkages constructed by the federations with FERT, AFDI, Saha Betsileo, SOFASPAN, and others. Hopefully, this diversification of opportunities will open up

the doors for new and long-lasting partnerships capable of surviving the departure of ERI in 18 months!

2.1.5.4 Perspectives

The ERI program is very cognizant of the challenge of leaving key legacies by the end of the ERI program. Following the internal evaluation of the Module IV program, we feel we are on the right path but that we must focus our efforts on key activities as noted below. We look forward to leaving to the future generations of Madagascar a strong and vibrant Koloharena farmers' movement – the foundation for introducing new agricultural innovations as alternatives to slash-and-burn agriculture.

The future 18 months will focus on the following key activities:

- Building a strong and vibrant regional confederation of Koloharena linked up to the BCI structures in Manakara and Fianarantsoa.
- Strengthening internal financial audit structures of the Koloharena federations
- Expanding the marketing of services provided by the Koloharena *Paysans Vulgarisateurs* and *Paysans Animateurs* to government agricultural agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other projects
- Encouraging greater internal federation unity through expansion of the Kaominina Mendrika planning tools
- Promoting internal transparency through encouraging Koloharena to attract government adult literacy programs
- Expanding techniques of internal communication through ever expanding use of the BLU radios, rural radio programming, use of audio visual techniques, and the network of *Maisons Koloharena*.



Figure : Interviews with Koloharena farmers for rural radio emissions.

These activities are complemented by the new initiative to set up the *Centres d'Appuis aux Communes*. A large part of our collective team effort will be devoted to furnishing the CAC office, recruiting the new staff, training the recruits in many technical domains with the help of the ministries, and monitoring the outputs of this new institutional mechanism. Indeed, through this new program we are contributing directly to the Madagascar Action Plan's goal of "Responsible Governance" and "Rural Development and the Green Revolution" !

2.1.6 Module V: Strategic Communication, Education and Outreach Lead to Widespread Behavior Change

2.1.6.1 Achievements

The Module V component is a cross-cutting set of activities serving the other components. This semester the module put in place many new initiatives through the *Commissions Communications* (COCOM) committees of the Koloharena federations. Working closely with Andrew Lees Trust (ALT), the federations put in place 45 rural radio listening groups consisting primarily of *Paysans Animateurs* (PA) and *Paysans Vulgarisateurs* (PV). These groups are beginning to receive from ALT hand-wound AM/FM radios and one dictaphone for each federation. These recorders are used to develop farmer led radio emissions that are passed through ALT and then on to the network of rural radio stations. Agricultural prices are now communicated on local radio stations thanks to an innovative system for collecting local prices through the BLU short wave radios by the national confederation, analysis by the BCI/BAMEX programs, and diffusion to local radios for diffusion. This may be the only price diffusion mechanism in all of Madagascar. Andrew Lees Trust and ERI carried out 6 major trainings totaling 30 days for COCOM members. Our rural radio partners (Catholic

Church radios, Radio Mampita, and other private radio stations) are enthusiastic supporters of this initiative. Some “Fruits of the Forest” NODE/CI funds also go into strengthening our radio outreach work.

The ERI Fianarantsoa communications team produced other communication tools touching themes like the creation of the new protected area, community resource management agreements, micro credit, rural institutional development, jatropha, SRI rice intensification.... ERI has now produced with the help of the Koloharena 13 technical sheets, 10 posters, 1 Koloharena banderole, 32 radio spots, 12 radio plays, and diffuses 15 technical films.

The COCOM all met in November 2007 to determine the priorities for technical films. Since the majority of COCOM members are PV and PA, the thematic videos will focus on environmental protection and agricultural intensification. Terms of reference have been prepared and bids launched.

Agricultural Price Information

Three radio stations (MAMPITA, Tsiry, RAT) presently broadcast monthly programs presenting agricultural price information and analysis. The broadcasts report on 30 products grouped in five major categories: food crops, fruits and vegetables, fresh fish, cash crops, and livestock. Prices are gathered by Koloharena and sent by BLU short wave radio to the national Koloharena confederation and BAMEX for analysis and diffusion to the radio stations. Six journalists have been trained by ERI, BAMEX, and CRS in price information diffusion techniques. While the programs are very popular, long-term durability is not yet assured.

2.1.6.2 Constraints

The Koloharena are very much aware of the importance of communication to the future of the movement. However, the low educational level of the majority of members necessitates considerable care in choosing and diffusing messages. A study by the *Comité Multilocale de Planification* (CMP) noted that the average educational level of listening members is only the equivalent of the third year of primary school. Even though the CMP and ERI have prepared radio programs about the legal issues surrounding the creation of the new protected area, an internal CMP evaluation showed that these messages are not well understood by listeners. To be fair, it is not certain that even proponents of the new protected area grasp the process either!

Rural communication is not always recognized as a priority by decision makers. The PE III program has allocated no funding to the creation of communication tools of local interest. While a high demand exists for locally produced radio spots, films, and technical sheets very little funding outside of ERI goes to this vital work. The demand for new communication tools far surpasses the internal ERI internal funding availability. Despite the clear recommendations of the Spectrum Media consultant Jamil Simon, we see no movement in strengthening regional or national film making capacities. In fact, the technical services we depend on for providing information for radio spots and films often refuse to provide information unless fees are paid for their services! For all of these reasons, ERI only produces a limited number of rural communication tools despite the very high need and our constant efforts to leverage funds from other donors.

The rural radio programming component is booming because the Koloharena COCOM are deeply involved in producing radio spots. But, some areas like Manampatrana and Ikongo on the eastern side of the forest corridor remain untouched by any of the local FM radio stations. FM radio station strength is expanding like that of Radio MBS in Manakara and thus we strengthen our links with this powerful station. The BLU short-wave radio system has been expanded this semester with the installation of solar powered radios in Lekomby (near Manakara) and Keliliana (near Ranomafana) and BAMEX has not installed BLU's in Fianarantsoa and Manakara. A total of 13 BLU radios now cover the corridor. However, weather conditions sometimes limit coverage. ERI and BAMEX now jointly pay for two OMERT channels that serve different seasons. Questions arise how these BLU radio channels will be paid in future years by the regional and national confederations.

2.1.6.3 Recommendations

Rural communication is not a priority for most donor funded projects in Fianarantsoa. ERI Fianarantsoa and the Koloharena federations must work together to publicize better the range of messages and tools being diffused at this time so as to raise funds for future communication activities. Paying for communication from the financial resources of the federations will be a major

drain in the future so some type of external support ought to be invested by donors and government to pay the costs of developing basic tools and messages. Greater efforts must be undertaken by the Koloharena and ERI to obtain a larger share of development assistance for rural communication tools.

Some overlap of donor communication initiatives exist in Fianarantsoa. FERT, Saha Betsileo, and ERI are all interested in diffusing agricultural price information. Forces need to be joined to come up with a standard system of price collection and diffusion protocols through radio, television, and the local press. While the Andrew Lees Trust radio network serves as a mechanism to collect and disseminate radio programs to the member stations, no similar system exists for the gathering and transmission of the various technical documents prepared by the various projects. ERI and FERT are working together to coordinate better the use and communication of these technical documents.

2.1.6.4 Perspectives

The ERI Fianarantsoa communication program is advancing very rapidly and with much vigor. Certainly, this pace will be maintained until the end of the ERI program in 2008. Our goal is to continue to strengthen the capacity of Koloharena to produce their own technical fact sheets based on lessons learned through the Farmer Field Schools and the successes of adopters of new agricultural and environmental management techniques. New technical films will be produced based primarily on examples of how Koloharena members have managed to increase and diversify agricultural production. ERI will focus more effort on linking up the Koloharena movement with other projects like the new Saha Betsileo project, the on-going FERT/AFDI, and other new programs. Relations will continue to be strengthened between the Koloharena rural listening groups and the Andrew Lees Trust rural radio program.

By the end of the ERI program we hope to see a Koloharena farmers' movement skilled at generating its own internal agricultural and environmental information and then diffusing this through the existing channels of regional television, FM radio, local newspapers and BLU radios. The creation of the new telecenter in Ranomafana set up through the Last Mile Initiative also opens the door to teaching the Koloharena how to use the internet as a tool for rural development. This will require strengthening of linkages with these institutions and leveraging of some subsidies from other donor projects. If this occurs, we are confident that the Koloharena movement will contribute fully to the implementation of many of the Madagascar Action Plan objectives!

2.1.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

2.1.7.1 Issues

The collection of information for the various data analysis and presentation needs of the ERI program remains a complex issue. ERI Fianarantsoa currently provides information on project performance to the following institutions: USAID Madagascar, Régions Haute Matsiatra and Vatovavy-Fitovinany, Madagascar Action Plan commissions, the PE III, GTDR, communes, and the Koloharena movement itself. The ERI data collection system is based on two major tools – notation of internal program advancements through the TAMIS data base and the collection of agricultural information through the *Cahiers de Ménage*.

Indicators of ERI Fianarantsoa Staff Performance

In spite of a slowing down of project activities in the later half of the semester due to the presidential elections and the unexpectedly heavy rains of the early rainy season, ERI Fianarantsoa staff carried out 40 trainings over the past six months. About 150 days of training were provided to 800 participants of whom 30% were women. Roughly 40 field missions were taken to various work sites and our staff participated in about 230 meetings of various types in urban centers and rural communities.

Following the technical advice of survey specialists, the *Cahiers de Ménage* was administered in June and July to approximately 5% of the Koloharena households. Results were restituted to the regional and local Koloharena associations to show how agricultural production has evolved over the past year. Unfortunately, the Koloharena have not yet fully supported this internal monitoring and evaluation. Payment is often required even of those being administered the survey instrument. Communes and Koloharena leaders still do not see the utility of charting the progress made by the associations. ERI did indeed hire local surveyors to carry out the instrument and this helped to verify

the results. Specialists were engaged to verify again the household data. Survey results were summarized in the November 2006 Performance and Monitoring Plan.

The difficulties encountered by ERI in collecting good agricultural production at the household level reflect the fact that very little accurate rural household data is obtained in Madagascar at this time. Data collection systems for the areas of ERI intervention have generally fallen into disarray. The burden of collecting quantifiable data demanded by USAID and other entities thus falls on projects like ERI. Yield data is particularly difficult to collect because farmers do not measure surface areas when calculating yields. Rather, yields are based on aggregate household production per year regardless of the amount of land put under production. Rigorous collection of good household data costs a considerable amount – sums that could be used also for other productive activities!

2.1.7.2 Recommendations

ERI Fianarantsoa will continue to invest considerable resources in hiring independent survey specialists to collect agricultural household data. Koloharena will continue to be encouraged to monitor internal agricultural dynamics as a way to communicate to government and donors accurate information needed to generate further technical or economic assistance. ERI and the Koloharena regional and commune level federations will continue to work together to analyse the advancements of the individual associations. New techniques will also be introduced such as using the objective based planning process of Kaoiminina Mendrika to assess progress being made in making progress towards achieving different stars. Combined with the commune level use of the Kaoiminina Mendrika star system, we hope to build strong support for the important work of monitoring and evaluation.

The Madagascar Action Plan will be demanding accurate information on how ERI is contributing to the achievement of the plan goals. USAID and the government of Madagascar should work more closely together to harmonize their performance indicators and thus save time and resources in analyzing and communicating M&E information.

2.1.7.3 Perspectives

While the Koloharena federations and associations have been having difficulties monitoring achievements, interest nevertheless is strong from the movement to carry out strong assessments of association performance. ERI Fianarantsoa will continue to work closely with the federations and associations to develop interest in monitoring and evaluation so that this process is not viewed as simply a project imperative of limited value to local communities! Considerable time and resources will continue to be invested in sharing information collected at the local level with the many institutional entities requiring accurate assessments of what is happening at the local level!

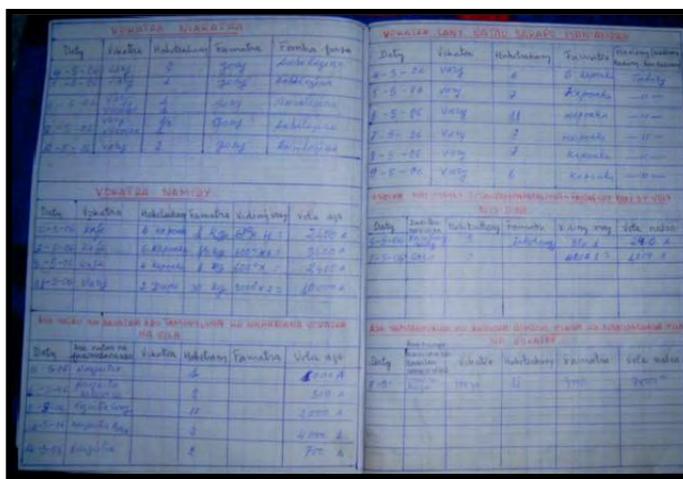


Figure : A « Cahier de ménage »

2.1.8 Activity Implementation Fund

2.1.8.1 Achievements

The past six months of project activity demonstrated how the ERI Fianarantsoa expenditures have reached an efficient expenditure rate. The expenditure flow occurred as planned though most of the 2005 960%) expenditures were spent in 2006 because many of the initial contracts carried over in the following year.

SITUATION OF AIF Budget (end of December 2006)

TYPE	Total Approved	Total Disbursed
IC	\$8,980.29	\$4,652.59
PROT	\$29,786.01	\$28,029.72
PO_GOODS	\$10,318.69	\$10,346.84
PO	\$71,423.27	\$160,056.73
TOTAL GENERAL	\$120,508.26	\$203,085.88

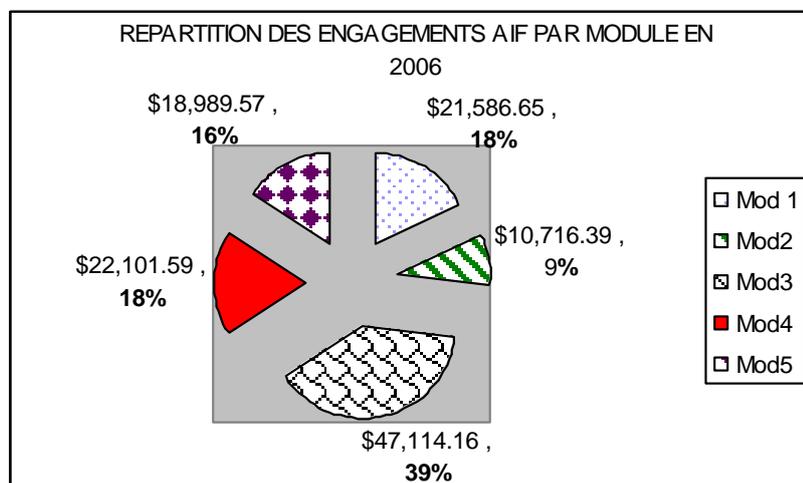
IC=Individual consultant, PROT = Protocol, PO_GOODS = Purchase of demonstration materials, PO = Purchase Order for services

The ERI Fianarantsoa Activity Intervention Fund engaged in 2006 \$120,508 out of the \$482,863 budgeted for the life of the project. By the end of 2006, 69% of the AIF allocation has been spent by ERI Fianarantsoa. Less funds were allocated in 2006 than in 2005. Our strategy has been to reduce progressively our expenditures throughout the rest of the project.

About 79% of the AIF expenditures were spent for contracting out services with institutions like the Koloharena federations, non-governmental organizations, and private enterprises. Fourteen percent (14%) of our funds were distributed through various protocol agreements to cover costs of partners to attend workshops, study tours and travel. Two percent (2%) of our funds were tendered out to individual consultants and the remaining 5% for the purchase of training and demonstration materials.

The principal activities of each module were financed according to the contracts already engaged in 2005 and some new engagements were made. The summary of our expenditures per module are presented below.

- Module I (18% of budget): Expenditures for setting up the new protected area Fandriana – Vondrozo and a study assessing institutional options for the CMP.
- Module II (9 % of budget): Contracts for services to reinforce and monitor existing and new CCF/GELOSE community resource management agreements. The module II supervisor also monitored closely the majority of funds for the NODE “Fruits of the Forest program.
- Module III (39% of budget): Services were contracted out to assist with the expansion of various commodity streams: tuber crops, corridor coffee, jatropha, rice, fish culture, bee keeping, small agricultural machinery.
- Module IV (18% of budget): This was the first year that ERI Fianarantsoa contracted out directly with the Koloharena federations to provide services to increase agricultural productivity and expand the movement into new communes. Contracts provided the opportunity for the Koloharena to hire their own agricultural technicians to help implement their annual work plans.
- Module V (16% of budget): The large majority of contracts were for implementation of the Kominina Mendrika approach as well as the production of radio broadcasts and films on various technical issues.



This summary shows that once again ERI Fianarantsoa is investing the majority of its funds in proffering alternatives to slash-and-burn agriculture through the extension of the Koloharena movement. Yet, ERI Fianarantsoa received a supplement of \$150,000 from USAID Madagascar to implement the new initiative of support to communes through the *Centres d'Appui aux Communes*

and to expand the Kominina Mendrika program. These supplemental funds are also being used to provide support to the WASH and HIP programs through the engagement of water specialist Jonathan Annis.

2.1.8.2 Perspectives

The burn-rate for the ERI Fianarantsoa program is on schedule for the next 18 months of the project. According to current engagements, and taking account of the supplemental funds, ERI Fianarantsoa will engage nearly \$350,000 for the remaining 18 months of the project. We do expect to close out our engagements by March 2008 so as to leave adequate time to close out all contractual issues. We expect to incur considerable lump expenditures for the purchase of computer equipment and office materials for the new *Centre d'Appuis aux Communes*. Our allocations will focus more in 2007/2008 on agricultural production and capacity building for the Koloharena movement as these will be one of the lasting legacies of ERI presence in Madagascar. In combination with the NODE "Fruits for the Forest" program, we expect to support more actively the capacity building of COBA resource management groups through the creation of a platform of resource management groups. The table below illustrates our expected allocation of resources for the rest of the project.

Period	Total budget	Mod1	Mod2	Mod3	Mod4	Mod5
January 2007-March 2008	\$350,315	\$15,300	\$40,090	\$85,588	\$129,130	\$79,202
% par module	100%	4%	11%	26%	37%	22%

According to this estimate, one can consider two essential points for the AIF:

Intensification of the follow-ups of the contracts and reinforcement of the capacity: For the first six-month period 2007, one will finalize the last contracts on funds AIF and as envisaged in the preceding reports/ratios, Team AIF of ERI Fianarantsoa will focus her interventions on:

- activities of follow-up with the technical Persons in charge for the modules to ensure qualities of the deliverable ones.
- reinforcement of the capacities of the partners in particular the Koloharena Federations to found a mechanism of perpetuation of the activities by the responsabilisation and the professionalisation of the basic communities.

Technical orientation: From the audits of the federations/co-operative koloharena and after discussions with the technical partners and Responsible, the approach of ERI Fianarantsoa (thus strategies of investments of Budget AIF) continues to be centered on the approach "farmer-to-farmer", the reinforcement of the capacities with transfer of competence to the co-operative Federations/Koloharena, the support with the transfers of management and installation of the federations of coba, support to the implementation of the Center of support to the Communes, reinforcement of the approach kominina mendrika. Also, the use of Budget AIF to carry out the various activities will sign mainly by contracts with the Koloharena Federations. The interventions of ONGs partners will be less direct and will be focused on the reinforcements of capacities of these more operational, autonomous and perennial Federations to be.

2.1.9 « Fruits of the Forest » Grant Program

2.1.9.1 Achievements

The NODE "Fruits of the Forest" program financed by a special grant from Conservation International continues to operate well. The NODE program focuses financing on rural communities not necessarily members of the Koloharena movement but who are living in close proximity to areas of high biodiversity. Over the past year, a total of 184 requests for support were received from the 5 regions of the Fianarantsoa province. 110 requests requested support for reforestation including 65 requests from the region of Vatovavy-Fitovinany. Out of this total, 31 projects were approved and financed of which the distribution is the following:

- 27 projects in the threshold between \$500 - \$5000,
- 03 projects in the threshold from \$5000 to \$15 000 and

- 01 project in the threshold between \$15 000 and \$ 35,000.

These projects represent a financial engagement of **242.298.582 ariary (60,57%** of the total of budgetary allocation for two years).

2.1.9.2 Constraints

The “Fruits of the Forest” program encounters a number of problems familiar with any grant making activity. Local community groups are confronting enormous difficulties meeting the basic administrative exigencies of the NODE program despite repeated trainings and coaching. Community members usually have very low levels of literacy and little experience with working with donor financed projects. While many communities request funds for reforestation, it is clear that basic land tenure issues are unresolved and seasonal considerations are not considered by the local communities. Few links are shown between reforestation of exotic species and biodiversity conservation. Internal community capacity for developing project proposals and executing project activities is remarkably low in these areas far outside of the normal range of ERI program implementation zones. Monitoring and evaluation of project activities by ERI in regions like Atsimo Atsinanana and Ihorombe is quite difficult because of the distance from Fianarantsoa.

2.1.9.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to improve the functioning of the Fruits of the Forest fund:

- Revision of Good Ideas: The technical oversight committee (CI Fianarantsoa and ERI Fianarantsoa) recommends that ERI advise the local communities to resubmit certain innovative proposals but that they take account of various technical and financial suggestions for improvement.
- COBA Focus: The technical oversight committee recommends that ERI invest more effort to help the COBA use the “Fruits of the Forest” program to support forest management plan implementation.
- Capacity Building: It is recommended that the NODE program invest some additional resources in building the capacity of project recipients to implement more rigorously the administrative clauses of the proffered funding.

2.1.9.4 Perspectives

The “Fruits of the Forest” program is now turning to the question of long-term durability of the Conservation International program. After taking account of the experience of various grant recipients, ERI is mandated by Conservation International to identify future implementers of the NODE funding mechanism. Terms of Reference have been developed for the new NODE granting agency and expressions of interest will be solicited from various partners in Fianarantsoa. Following a rigorous process of identification of the institutional capacity of a future NODE administrator, ERI will issue sub-grants to the qualified institution and help it carry out grant making for the remaining period of ERI presence in Fianarantsoa. Close collaboration with Conservation International will continue as we move toward identifying a new institution to administer this innovative program.

2.1.10 Ecoregional Alliance

2.1.10.1 Achievements

The Ecoregional Alliance USAID is alive and well in Fianarantsoa. The members (ERI, MIARO, BAMEX, SantéNet, CRS, JariAla, ANGAP, and DIREEF) continue to meet all morning every second Wednesday of the month to exchange information and ideas. The meetings are most always well attended because the forum is seen as a very effective way to maintain a common vision and sense of teamwork.

The Ecoregional Alliance reports on its achievements every six months with the last report being in November 2006. The compilation shows that the Nature, Wealth, Power, and Health thematic concentrations are advancing more or less on schedule. As noted above in the ERI semester report, some key dossiers such as advancement of the new protected area Fandriana – Vondrozo is

encountering difficulties. Following suggestions from USAID, it was decided to focus the collective efforts of the alliance on three key sites in order to obtain visible results – the commune of Kelilaina near Ranomafana, the communes around Lac Antarambiby, and the communes along the Betraka-Lekomby road near Manakara. Each of these are chosen as priorities based on where two or more USAID projects are already working actively in the area and where an interesting economic growth or environmental dynamic is unfolding. Even though ERI is the most operational project in the field, we feel that each of the Ecoregional Alliance projects can indeed contribute to the overall development of these three sites.

The focus on these three sites has led to some close inter-project teamwork. CRS, BAMEX, and ERI worked very closely together to build a small irrigation system and work with the water user's association to develop a strong management plan based on strong market analysis. The coalition of ERI, JariAla, and CRS worked together with the Région Haute Matsiatra on the water crisis of the city of Fianarantsoa in November, 2006. And BAMEX and ERI collaborated well in developing the new commercial opportunity with RamaExport in Manakara during the 2006 litchi season. Many other automatic collaborative efforts occur on a regular basis because the Ecoregional Alliance has fostered a strong inter-project sense of teamwork around shared common visions.

2.1.10.2 Constraints

Time, time, and time! Ecoregional Alliance members are fully engaged in the implementation of their respective programs. The coalition of partners seeks to minimize meetings but encourage rapid personal interactions so as to get work done in the field.

Certainly, as demonstrated in the annual work plans, enormous challenges confront the projects. Our major concern is that funding levels from donors and government are not sufficient to implement properly the new protected area of Fandriana – Vondrozo. The USAID members have invested enormous amounts of time to generate proposals for more funding, but as of now, this has led to very miniscule contributions from sources outside of the US government.

2.1.10.3 Recommendations

The Ecoregional Alliance functions well and it serves the purpose of being an inter-USAID project forum for the exchange of ideas and information. The structure should continue for the remaining period of presence of the USAID projects. Focus activities should continue around the three major zones of intervention but care should also be taken to monitor periodically the advancement of other collaborative efforts. Monitoring and evaluation of advancements also need to be integrated into the Madagascar Plan monitoring system.

2.1.10.4 Perspectives

The ERI Fianarantsoa program will continue to provide strong leadership during the remaining 18 months of its presence in Fianarantsoa. Senior staff know that the alliance is a firm foundation of inter-project exchanges of ideas and information. ERI will continue to provide advice, mentoring, and outreach to the other Alliance members but also serve as a focal point for communicating the activities of USAID projects to regional authorities and other donor projects.

3 TOAMASINA REGIONAL PROGRAM

3.1 Part I: Toamasina 2006 Progress and Summary of Results; Toamasina 2007 Perspectives

3.1.1 Overview

The ERI Toamasina Program continues to function at full capacity and to achieve significant results across all Modules. We received two new additions to the Toamasina-based team in December: a Module 1/4 assistant focused on the establishment of the commune support center (CAC) and a manager for the “Conserving the Indri Corridor” small grants program. One major setback did occur in July when the Module 3 manager resigned. Despite the fact that the new Module 3 manager was quickly recruited and has learned the details of the agricultural intensification program with amazing speed, our Module 3 program was probably set back by 6 to 9 months. The focus for 2007 will be on consolidation and assuring the five cross-cutting legacies that the ERI team has defined. Concentration efforts will include discontinuing activities in two zones that only have a marginal, at best, effect on the Ankeniheny-Zahamena corridor: the western side of Lac Alaotra and the Fenerive Est area. The text that follows attempts to be more succinct compared to previous reports. The reader is urged to peruse the achievement table annex for more details if need be.

3.1.2 Module I: Ecoregional Approach to Conservation and Development Adopted and Implemented by Multiple Actors in Priority Ecoregions

3.1.2.1 Achievements

One of the greatest challenges facing the current suite of USAID environmental projects is assuring local community participation and ownership with respect to the establishment and management of the new Ankeniheny-Zahamena Corridor (CAZ) Protected Area (PA). ERI Toamasina staff facilitated the realization of a major step in the achievement of this goal during the reporting period: testing the methodology for the commune-level consultations regarding the boundaries and management of the new PA as well as discussions on agricultural development and land use planning for areas outside of the PA. Maps produced by ERI and PACT via a multi-criteria spatial analysis formed the basis of the discussions on agricultural development. The test occurred in the isolated Maroseranana commune and witnessed the participation of approximately 20 technicians from Toamasina and Brickaville. Revision of the methodology subsequently occurred and ERI and other CAZ PA team members are now ready to continue the consultations in the remainder of the corridor communes.

Significant rural development results were achieved via ongoing support to Regions and communes. Along with the blue, health star, the green environmental star was awarded to five communes participating in integrated rural development efforts using the Kaominina Mendrika tool. These communes met or surpassed targets for a variety of natural resource management activities including soil conservation, transfer of forest management responsibility, and wildfire reduction. The process appears to have been internalized and these communes are now poised to repeat and improve on the results in the upcoming cycle. ERI was also instrumental in facilitating a round table of technical and financial partners intervening in the Alaotra-Mangoro Region. This was a first step towards achieving improved donor coordination in the Region as well as a milestone for a Region that is becoming increasingly proactive.

Spatial land use planning efforts received a boost linked to two major advancements. In collaboration with FTM, ERI was able to define, via a collaborative process, the boundaries of four, key corridor communes that were previously unknown. This will greatly facilitate ongoing efforts with regard to defining management of the new PA as well as developing holistic land use plans for each of the corridor communes. The ERI Toamasina team also finalized, printed and distributed natural resource and administrative maps for approximately 20 communes in its intervention zones. Previously, most of these communes did not even possess basic maps of their territories. A technical note in Malagasy on how to read and use maps accompanied these tools which should henceforth enhance the ability of these communes to plan for sustainable development.

ERI also spearheaded several ongoing processes which are extremely important for broad-scale or ecoregional development and conservation. The multi-stakeholder, ecoregional platform, PlaCAZ, continued to develop through an eye-opening study tour and exchange with the Fianarantsoa platform, the CMP. The PlaCAZ also neared finalization of the important, ecoregional vision. In addition, revision of communal development plans commenced in 10 key, corridor communes. Attractive appreciative inquiry reports were also finalized for 5 communes – these will be important tools for future sustainable development efforts while also serving as examples for neighboring communes. ERI Toamasina pursued ecoregional coordination efforts, monitoring progress and participating in broad-scale initiatives such as consultations on the Dynatec nickel mine, meetings on second phase orientations for the Millennium Challenge Account, and workshops on mining activities and permits within the new CAZ PA. Significant collaborative and organizational efforts also occurred with regard to agricultural commercialization through a series of discussions and meetings with BAMEX and its associated business center.

3.1.2.2 Constraints

A major limitation facing the team (including ERI) that is guiding the establishment of the new CAZ PA is a lack of funding to complete the public consultation process in approximately 30 communes. The suite of USAID projects (ERI, Miaro and JariAla) involved in this effort – which goes beyond the PA to include integrated, communal land use planning – do not have the necessary funds to implement this gargantuan activity. From the design and conception stage of this initiative, it had always been assumed that Environmental Program funds would be available for this initiative – an initiative that is part of the Malagasy government’s Durban Vision as well as its Madagascar Action Plan. All efforts to access these funds have been stymied by seemingly labyrinthine procedures and the fact that the money for the new CAZ PA must flow through four different CIREEFs.

New Horizons in an Isolated Commune

ERI Toamasina works in Fito commune, part of the Toamasina II District and one of the most isolated communes in its intervention zone: it takes two days by foot to reach the commune’s capital. The local population is not used to seeing strangers and expatriates. After a visit of the ERI Toamasina Regional Coordinator and some members of his team, an unfounded rumor circulated in the Sahaviavy Fokontany. According to the rumor, the commune Mayor wanted to sell the area to the visitors, perceived as tourists who took photographs here and there in order to gain better information. Moreover, people were warned not to become members of the famous Koloharena associations as their land would be confiscated. Questioned on these points, the Mayor only smiled, supposing that the rumor was politically motivated. Nevertheless, this kind of gossip was likely to have a negative impact on ERI, especially for the local field agent.

Unaware of these events, local Program staff organized a training on locating contour lines using an A-frame and planting leguminous hedgerows for improved hillside agriculture. A session on intensive rice culture using pagivolte or illustrated flip cards also occurred. During this period, a Koloharena and ERI/USAID banner was hung close to the commune offices. The commune provided a training room for Koloharena association activities and another was reserved for the installation of the BLU radio which will be provided shortly thanks to ERI-BAMEX collaboration. The training sessions were highly appreciated and the technical information was quickly communicated to neighbors and relatives. The land grab rumor was effectively eliminated. Several new people with a thirst for training presented themselves to the field agent and were subsequently able to form new Koloharena associations. Farmer Field Schools are being established and gaining increasing membership. The mandate of ERI and its local agent now seems to be understood

Development of the ecoregional vision continues to be a major challenge. Despite the fact that the executive team of the PlaCAZ has received significant mentoring from ERI’s Regional Coordinator and WWF’s Conservation Director, producing a high quality, specific document has been problematic. Linked to this is a more general constraint: there seem to be very few (if any) regional leaders who think in spatial terms and who possess the needed multi-disciplinary vision and technical skills to link sustainable development and conservation in an integrated land use planning context. An additional, related challenge is coordinating and staying informed about the myriad conservation and development initiatives that are currently being implemented in the greater CAZ.

Transaction costs linked to leveraging partnerships for ERI’s activities remain high. For example, the time and effort needed to monitor and lobby two major development actors – CRS and MCA – who intervene in some of the same communes as ERI within the Atsinanana Region is substantial. This fact, coupled with the need to focus on and manage internal ERI activities first and foremost,

translates into a less than desirable partnership and coordination result. Coordination challenges are also exacerbated by the lack of Regional decision-makers and the continued centralization of many organizations and projects in Antananarivo. A case in point is developing and promoting the Kaominina Mendrika tool at the regional level: two key actors for this effort (SantéNet and Voahary Salama) are principally based in Antananarivo, rendering regional coordination difficult at best.

3.1.2.3 Recommendations

Linked to the constraints above, we can make the following recommendations (which target, for the most part, ERI staff).

- ERI must continue to lobby and collaborate with allies in order to assure that PE3 funds are released for the commune-level consultations for the new CAZ PA. This will include coordination with Conservation International's and JariAla's Antananarivo personnel as well as maintaining a high profile for the issue via e-mails and telephone calls to members of the PE3 joint government-donor committee.
- Mentoring efforts for PlaCAZ executive staff should increase. An emphasis should be placed not only on developing a spatial vision for sustainable development and conservation of the greater CAZ, but also on helping to insure that they fulfill their coordination role. This latter element will require repeated reminders to major development and conservation actors to share information and to respect and reinforce the platform's mandate.

The ERI Regional Coordinator should try to delegate as much responsibility as possible to his senior team (including the new Module 1 assistant) with regard to implementation of internal, ERI activities. This should lead to increased time available to monitor and lobby potential development and conservation partners. Efforts should also continue on lobbying Antananarivo-based organizations and projects to empower regional personnel to make decisions and implement necessary actions.

3.1.2.4 Perspectives

Securing ERI's legacies will be a major focus in 2007. For Module 1 this will principally entail assuring that PlaCAZ becomes a sustainable coordination platform and promoting the auto-development reflex at the commune level via the Kaominina Mendrika tool. With regard to PlaCAZ, joint fundraising efforts are foreseen. Contacting potential donors in Antananarivo, identifying potential funding sources and developing a fundraising strategy will all be part of this endeavor. Moreover, supporting PlaCAZ to position itself as a service provider will also occur, contributing to the platform's sustainability.

ERI Toamasina will continue promotion of the integrated Kaominina Mendrika tool with SantéNet and two of its service providers (Mateza and ASOS Brickaville) in 10 communes during 2007. It will be important to evaluate the method and capture lessons learned at the end of the second cycle. If, as expected, the experience is positive, efforts will be made to further promote the approach and expand implementation. Plans are also underway to include KM as part of the training curriculum for the staff of the ERI-funded Ampasimadinika CAC; opportunities for presenting and promoting the tool at other CACs in the Atsinanana and Alaotra-Mangoro Regions will also be pursued where appropriate.

A final, focal thrust will be facilitation of coordination on integrated land use planning as well as agricultural production and commercialization. ERI will continue to play a proactive role among USAID Alliance members so that synergies and enhanced impact are achieved in these domains. While land use planning is at the core of the ecoregional approach, ERI will aspire to pass the coordination leadership role on this activity to the PlaCAZ. It is expected that promotion of the agricultural development zoning tool, derived from development pathways, will be an integral element of this activity.

3.1.3 Module II: Community-based Natural Resource Management Improved and Expanded to Protect Forest Corridors

3.1.3.1 Achievements

The impact of ERI Toamasina's CBNRM awareness raising efforts continues to be perceived: during the semester, the Program received 17 letters from local communities requesting support. The

majority seek assistance on the transfer of forest management responsibility, some desire capacity building, and one letter sought support on combating illegal logging. An encouraging sign is that letters are now coming from new zones (e.g., Fetraomby, Didy, and Sahambala) compared to the first two years of the Program when interest overwhelmingly came from zones inherited from LDI/PTE. Two COBA associations in the Ambatondrazaka area, Ambongabe and Ambohimbary, benefited from a visit and exchange with a more advanced COBA (Mitsinjo from Andasibe). It is expected that the visit will help the younger COBAs identify and solve weaknesses as well as orienting them towards the goal of autonomy and perpetuation. The results of this visit/exchange will be communicated to the entire general assembly of ERI-supported COBAs in March 2007. An additional analytic achievement should be noted: a visionary study on the socio-economic viability of forest management transfers occurred at the level of three ERI Toamasina COBAs. Results from the study will be used to improve revenue generation (a key obstacle at present) as well as facilitating the emergence of a COBA Federation that could potentially co-manage the CAZ PA.

For component 2 of the CBNRM module (targeting improved technical assistance, administration, and strategic attribution of resources at the level of Malagasy institutions involved in the management transfer process), planning for a major training session for commune Mayors and their staff continued. The training, slated to begin in March 2007, will build CBNRM capacity so that the communes can respond more directly to technical assistance requests emanating from local communities. At the level of the Malagasy Forest Service, significant achievements occurred regarding drafting and testing a methodology for the commune consultation on the new CAZ PA (see module 1 narrative above for details). Moreover, the national guide for monitoring and evaluating natural resources management transfer contracts was endorsed.

Perhaps the most significant Module 2 achievements occurred with respect to new forest management transfer contracts. Four new contracts were signed and implemented: two for the commune of Morarano in the Moramanga area – the forests of Sakalava (1,575 ha) and Sahasoa (4,512 ha), one in the commune of Anjahamana – the Bevoalavo forest (1,377 ha), and one in the Antanandava commune north of Ambatondrazaka – the Ambongabe forest (223 ha). Three additional sites completed the demarcation phase and began preparations for a forest inventory (two in the Ambodilazana commune [Tsimiakandroa and Marokiataina forests] and another site in Antanandava commune). Additional progress occurred with respect to preparation of 8 forest management transfer contracts in the communes of Andranobolaha and Anjahamana. Regarding implementation of management plans, ERI-supported COBA associations reached the 25% level (according to our internal definition), i.e., they completed training and awareness raising among members, demarcation and commencement of monitoring, and the opening of inventory and surveillance trails.

Collaboration with the Tany Meva Foundation also marked the second semester of 2006. Major, community-based reforestation efforts commenced in six communes on the eastern side of the corridor. Koloharena associations and cooperatives are playing a key role in five of these communes. Activities included construction of five large nurseries (10 ares each). Field agents facilitated the identification of nine village territories that will benefit from integrated natural resources and watershed management. Village committees were formed for each territory and demarcation also occurred. Participatory diagnosis and objective determination is ongoing.

Law of the Zebu

Awareness raising on community-based natural resources management in Lohariandava commune generated quick results. After attending a basic information session on this subject, members of the Ampasimbola Fokontany were immediately energized. Unwilling to wait for all of the formal steps of forest management transfer to be completed, community members joined together to purchase a zebu (cow) and sacrificed the animal next to their forest, proclaiming that the forest is henceforth monitored and under their control. Moreover, any unauthorized use or offense within the forest will be penalized: the perpetrator will be required to sacrifice a zebu. This traditional law was swiftly communicated to neighboring communities in the vicinity of the forest.

3.1.3.2 Constraints

Despite the results outlined above, numerous challenges remain, both at the level of local communities and among other stakeholders ostensibly involved in community-based natural resources management – notably, the Malagasy Forest Service.

At the community level:

- COBA capacity is still limited with respect to patrolling and monitoring the transferred resources and applying *Dina* sanctions when needed.
- Many management transfer contracts are dominated by a conservation vision (as opposed to sustainable use), yet COBA associations have not yet succeeded in gaining tangible benefits from conservation.
- There is an absence of lucrative markets for non-timber forest products and an unfair competition with illegal woody or timber products.
- The forest management transfer process and the creation of the new CAZ PA have not been internalized by some COBA associations.

At the level of other stakeholders:

- There continues to be a lack of engagement of certain actors (rural communes, Malagasy Forest Service) in CBNRM activities, justified by the pretext that had inadequate resources (financial and human); this lack of engagement was accentuated during the presidential election period.
- Motivation and engagement were apparently deficient at the regional and even national level among public services regarding new State visions or policies (for example: the evaluation of management transfer contracts and the creation of new PAs).
- There is still a lack of internalization of national and even regional policies at the level of rural Communes and even among some Malagasy Forest Service teams.
- For the most part, other USAID Alliance members as well as other donor programs do not work in the inaccessible corridor communes; linked to this, there is a lack of other support organizations (besides the ERI program) that promote and encourage natural resource management transfer.

3.1.3.3 Recommendations

The public awareness campaign regarding CBNRM and especially the natural resources management transfer process (GELOSE/GCF) must be continued at the Fokontany, and rural Commune levels. Yet this campaign must be augmented by more specific and persuasive communication materials and messages that achieve improved comprehension and assimilation of the information. Eventually, this work needs to be facilitated by village technicians (*paysans vulgarisateurs* and *animateurs*) as well as local authorities since the work load for this campaign goes beyond the capacity of ERI field agents.

In order to promote economic valorization at the COBA level, technical forest training is still recommended, but one must not forget agricultural intensification and diversification; one cannot rely solely on conservation or protection activities. In addition, it is necessary to develop the vision of co-management via COBA associations for the governance of the new CAZ PA; similarly, strengthening their capacity and their voice via a coalition or federation is highly recommended. Finally, in order to boost the integration of agriculture and NRM, it is necessary to reinforce support for the development and implementation of integrated village territory management.

3.1.3.4 Perspectives

The following points can be noted with regard to future orientation of Module 2 activities.

- Progressive implication of village technicians (*paysans vulgarisateurs* and *animateurs*) regarding CBNRM information, education and communication so that these technicians eventually become the leaders for this activity.
- A continued accent on reinforcing COBA capacity with respect to economic valorization of transferred resources so direct economic benefits are gained, rendering the process sustainable in the long-term.
- Pursuing the vision of a belt of forest management transfer in the sustainable use zone of the new CAZ PA. This will have the double effect of enhancing internalization of the new PA and potentially improving economic valorization of the forest at the local community level.

- Reinforcing the collaboration between the Malagasy Forest Service, COBA associations and USAID Alliance members (JariAla and ERI) on forest surveillance and enforcement.
- Existence and application of at least one integrated village territory management plan in each of ERI Toamasina's intervention zones.

3.1.4 Module III: Profitable and Environmentally Sound Farming Systems Replace “Slash-and-Burn” Agricultural Practices at the Landscape Level

3.1.4.1 Achievements

Supporting the development of a sustainable farmer-to-farmer extension system is one of the key activities of Module 3. In this respect, a week-long training session was organized for 85 farmer technicians (PVs and PAs) working for the six CKH in the Ambatondrazaka area. The ultimate goal is to build the capacity of these extension agents. The evaluations (very good to excellent on average) at the end of the session testified to a successful event; time, however, was relatively short for the volume of information and themes covered during the training. The training was conducted by local ERI field agents and covered themes related to all ERI modules except for Module 1; the accent was on Module 3, however, with technical information communicated on compost, soil fertility and conservation, FFS, SRI and SRA, and environmentally-friendly, hillside, rainfed rice.

Similarly, in order to augment the effectiveness of the PAs and PVs, the promotion of a package of improved techniques is of paramount importance. For this action, collaboration with an artist or illustrator occurred: this consultant translated technical information into a series of illustrated flip cards (with written, technical information on the back for use by the extension agent) or pagivoltes. Six themes were developed: improved production techniques and/or best practices for maize, groundnuts, litchi, black pepper, banana, and arabica coffee. (Two other series on compost and poultry raising are currently under development; a series on SRI/SRA already exists.) These flip card series will constitute an extension kit for the PAs and PVs and will be distributed in early 2007. Additional technical posters, based on collaboration with a Peace Corps volunteer, on compost, nursery establishment and tree planting, cassava grafting, SRI/SRA, improved maize production, and contour location and hedgerows, were distributed to PAs and PVs as well as field agents. The use of these charts constituted the first extension successes of the 2006-07 agricultural extension campaign.

Among the most important activities of ERI and the Koloharena movement is maintaining or increasing soil fertility, especially on degraded and under-utilized *tanety*. In this respect, the upkeep of demonstrations for direct seeding in live or dead (mulch) cover continued at the sites established with BRL in Andranobolaha, Ambodilazana and Lohariandava. Despite the late installation of the sites during the last third of the 2006 rainy season, encouraging results were noted: two leguminous cover crops (*Mucuna* [*Stizolobium atterinum*] and *Stylosanthes guyanensis*) are producing significant biomass as well as two grass species (*Brachiaria* spp.) recommended for association with cassava. Plans were made with the managing KH associations to harvest seeds and cuttings of these species to be used in the 2006-07 agricultural campaign.



Figure 6: Using the A-frame to locate the contours for soil conservation

In addition to the use and promotion of the LADIA center, the consolidation and growth of Farmer Field School (FFS) groups will make a positive contribution to the farmer-to-farmer movement. Regarding this objective, final actions of the service provider, Voahary Soa, including evaluations and collecting the results of these groups, transpired. Approximately one hundred groups were subsequently supported by ERI field agents and plans were made via a farmer facilitator for

continued observance of new techniques versus traditional technique during the main agricultural season.

Regarding the introduction of small, improved farm machinery, two initiatives can be cited. In Ambatondrazaka, demonstration of the conical-head weeders, manufactured by Pro-impex, continued. The results observed are convincing, yet farmers are stymied by the high cost of the equipment. At present, several agricultural input centers, managed by KH cooperatives, rent prototypes of these weeders to members. In the Ambatovy area north of Moramanga, promotion of traditional rice weeding machines continued as part of the red rice SRI/SRA production package. Over one hundred weeders were purchased and placed at the disposal of members of the Hanitrinala CKH.

Several achievements linked to the promotion of value or commodity chains, analyzed and identified with the KH movement and USAID Alliance members, can be mentioned. The objectives of this activity include sale of increased volume to lucrative markets and, ultimately, increased household income. The red rice of Ambatovy and the pink rice of Amparafaravola are two promising products with potential sales in the US and Italian markets. Several promotional meetings regarding this value chain were organized during the semester, emphasizing the need to use improved SRI and SRA techniques as well as organic inputs only. Two of these meetings were attended by the American company, Lotus Foods, in collaboration with BAMEX, at which quality issues linked to the US market were discussed. Linked to this, five deserving members of the Koloharena movement, including three rice farmers from Toamasina Province, received financing from an affiliate of the Italian organization Slow Food in order to attend an agricultural fair in Italy, enabling them to display and publicize their products.

Collaboration with the company D1 continued with regard to the Jatropha value chain in the Ambatondrazaka area. Seeds were purchased from KH farmers and plans were made for the main planting season. Many challenges remain, however, especially with respect to technical production aspects and land tenure; these will be addressed by a coalition of stakeholders in 2007 and will also be raised within the context of the national Jatropha platform. Many activities linked to the litchi value chain took place during the semester. These included participation in dialog organized by the litchi platform (PCL) and attendance by KH producers at training sessions on plantation, maintenance and packaging – all in relation to the goal of improved quality and eventual certification under the EUREPGAP standards. Plans are underway to identify and consolidate lessons from the 2006 season. Activities concerning the revival of the black pepper value chain continued in collaboration with CTHT. Participating CKH and AKH in Ambodilazana, Andranobolaha, Anivorano Est and Lohariandava all prepared nurseries and demonstration sites in anticipation of training sessions and delivery of potted seedlings and cuttings in January 2007.

Finally, progress on demonstrations of improved poultry farming techniques, aimed primarily at women KH members in Andranobolaha and Ambodilazana, were noted. This activity is implemented via a contract with the Lalana NGO. Initial training sessions occurred as well as construction of improved coops.

3.1.4.2 Constraints

Several general and specific challenges and constraints can be cited in relation to Module 3 implementation. Many young adults are impatient with rural life and move to urban areas in search of fast and/or easy revenue. In general, this has a negative impact on rural development programs which require permanent human resources. Technical and socio-organizational meetings in rural areas are often dominated by elderly people. Yet the labor force should theoretically be composed of young adults, people who are becoming increasingly rare in the rural development process.

Another constraint is that the associative principle is not sufficiently internalized by our target partners (the rural population). A considerable percentage of members of various ERI-supported associations do not yet understand the need and the interest of grouping themselves into associations or cooperatives. Some of the more clever members often join in order to see, once more, if they can make fast or easy money. Others join for the simple reason that it's a requirement for receiving donor funds.

A significant number of new agricultural techniques require some infrastructure. Yet this infrastructure is often lacking and ERI cannot, for the most part, fund construction of this infrastructure. Without the participation of other donors for infrastructure, some promising techniques are just not feasible. The alternative is to find crops or specific varieties that are adapted to the natural conditions of the ERI Toamasina intervention zones and that do not require infrastructure. This research must be carried out with local farmers and can, perhaps, be integrated into FFS themes.

Despite these constraints, numerous innovative or pioneering farmers exist in the ERI intervention zones; their receptive capacity represents a huge potential for agricultural development. The challenge is to develop their aptitude and promote and present them as model farmers to the majority who are married to traditional techniques; similarly, they need to be integrated into the KH farmer-to-farmer movement. Maximum support will be reserved for these pioneer farmers who are logical choices for managing and sustaining demonstrations. The CKH are also being encouraged to regroup these model farmers around a Koloharena house where several new techniques can be demonstrated simultaneously; these sites will serve in the future as exchange and training sites for the KH movement.

Though little documented, traditional knowledge and techniques can reappear via Farmer Field Schools. The challenge is, of course, to collect and disseminate this information on best practices. These techniques can be adjusted via confrontation with modern practices and can then form the basic elements of an extension campaign; the techniques are likely to be quickly adopted as they have been developed by the farmers themselves.

An exemplary yield

The national competition for rice production is an annual event. For the 2006 season, Mr. Martin Vanombelona, a Koloharena member living in Anivorano-Est (in the Brickaville district, Atsinanana Region), won 5th place at the regional level. He produced 9.36 tons on his one hectare rice field. He applied compost at a rate of 2t/ha and respected all the techniques required in the intensive rice cultivation system (SRI): Mr. Vanombelona has been practicing SRI for six years, since the time he became a member of the Koloharena association in his village. Using traditional techniques, he was unable to surpass 2t/ha.

The prize awarded to Mr. Vanombelona was 900.000 Ariary (approximately \$430). Using this money as collateral, he was able to obtain an unlimited loan without interest from the local branch of the Bank of Africa. The Vanombelona family numbers six people (husband, wife and four children). For the next season, Mr. Vanombelona's son, Tovo (also a rice farmer), will join the national rice production competition "in order to follow his father's footsteps."

3.1.4.3 Recommendations

The following, mainly internal, recommendations can be made in order to improve Module 3 results.

- Use of external service providers should be reduced. Instead, the Program should increasingly use ERI Toamasina's Internal Training Group (ITG) which has recently been established. Among other benefits, this should help the Program economize our operational and AIF budgets – budgets that are being quickly depleted at present.
- Basic training on agricultural techniques should be the responsibility of the ITG, composed mainly of ERI field agents. These agents should be joined by local PAs and PVs in order to dispense these trainings, many of which will be short, refresher courses based on seasonal needs.
- Management of service providers should be improved. The first step is to produce very clear and precise scopes of work. The second step is to assure that the field agents, charged with supervising the services on a day-to-day basis, are adequately briefed on the work to be done and that they also receive a copy of the SOW. This must happen several weeks before the activity begins. The field agent will then be capable of facilitating the introduction and installation of the service providers or consultants and will be a competent member of the supervisory team.

3.1.4.4 Perspectives

Module 3 plans on placing an accent on the following activities during 2007.

- Start-up of the ITG will be a priority. An initial step will comprise a final regrouping of the trainers at the LADIA center in Beforona in March. The principal task will be to establish the training session curriculums and compilation of the required documents for the development of the training modules.
- A reorientation of the LADIA center is needed, beginning with a reformulation of its vision and operational strategy. This new vision and strategy review will help the center become an engine of development for the Koloharena movement. It should also result in best management practices (including good governance and transparency) and eventual autonomy reinforcing confidence at the level of CKHs and AKHs.
- Development of a new strategy for the FFS will also occur. The main obstacle of the previous agricultural season was insufficient supervision. Consequently, the ERI Toamasina intervention zone has been divided into ten FFS zones to be supervised by an FFS agent who will ensure the coordination and supervision of the activities. A subsequent step will be revising the SOW for the FFS facilitators and conducting a refresher training course for them.

3.1.5 Module IV: Rural Associations Achieve Financial and Organizational Sustainability and Become Effective Advocates for Local Concerns

3.1.5.1 Achievements

For the second half of 2006, significant results were obtained, thanks to the efforts of all stakeholders, with respect to promotion of the Koloharena movement. Preliminary actions in the new zones began to bear fruit: 37 new associations emerged and some of them already commenced the process of regrouping themselves in order to constitute a Koloharena cooperative. In short, one can say that the KH movement in Toamasina is in full expansion from the point of view of numbers, size and geographical distribution.

Staff noted significant improvements in organizational capacity within the co-operatives: the majority (10 out of 14 partner CKHs) were able to organize general assembly meetings in order to renew board of directors members and to share information on the past year's results. All KH associations and cooperatives developed an annual work plan and each cooperative conducted a self-evaluation with regard to implementation of their previous work plan. In addition, training sessions on communication and management were organized for the executive units and technicians of each cooperative. This resulted in positive impacts regarding the behavior of some cooperative leaders: increased transparency was noted, discernible by various notices on activities and financial standing posted in public places.

All cooperatives currently have an office (this was not the case previously). Moreover, cooperative executives were able to organize themselves so that the office remains open and is constantly accessible to all Koloharena members. The level of responsibility also improved: monthly coordination meetings systematically occurred and reports from the cooperatives' farmer technicians (*paysans vulgarisateurs* and *animateurs*) became more regular. With the exception of a few cooperatives, this best practice was adopted by the majority of the board members, even beyond the expiration date of the programmatic contracts. In addition, the majority of cooperatives conducted an organizational diagnosis of member associations; this information will be used as guidance in the development of the new AWP, both at the association and cooperative level.

Significant achievements also occurred regarding transformation and marketing of agricultural produce. All existing cooperatives finalized business plans covering the next three years. Implementation of the plans will help them develop economic activities and assured income sources, thus guaranteeing their financial autonomy. With regard to marketing of KH products, three cooperatives in ERI's eastern intervention zones negotiated contracts with Litchi exporters, while others succeeded in collecting and selling products such as green bananas (1 CKH), cassava (2 CKH), maize (2 CKH) and ginger (1 CKH). Moreover, a new commodity chain was developed in collaboration with a foreign company: about thirty KH associations contracted with Madagascar Bamboo for the installation of nurseries and production of giant bamboo (*Volobemavo*) seedlings (via cuttings). It is expected that these contracts will be transformed into contracts for mature bamboo culms in the future. In the Alaotra area, four cooperatives organized rice collection via a contract with FCPA. In Moramanga, the Hanitrinala cooperative continues to operate its shredding

machine, permanently delivering mulch material to the Dynatec company. All these examples testify to the maturation and increased capacity of the KH cooperatives. This can be partly attributed to ERI's and BAMEX's technical support focus on the development of the product or value/commodity chain approach.

Similarly, a clear improvement was noted regarding the cooperatives' negotiation and partnership establishment capacity. Staff remarked many examples of contacts with major businesses and economic operators, projects of national and international scale, and financial institutions. Moreover, the Toamasina cooperatives are beginning to express their needs and to defend their interests. An example of a concrete advocacy action was the written plea at the level of the Presidency with regard to the price of paddy rice; as a result of this action, the President mentioned the problem in a speech and prices rose from 300 Ar/kg to 500 Ar/kg.

Great strides were achieved within the framework of facilitating access to credit. Nearly two hundred KH associations obtained agricultural micro-credits via OTIV and approximately twenty credit applications were submitted (and are currently being negotiated) to the FIEFE fund. To reinforce this action, a young professional (*expert junior*) was recruited recently by BAMEX to help KH cooperatives apply for financing. Moreover, a credit committee was established within each cooperative in order to better plan and manage credit activities. This committee's role includes monitoring the consistency of the applications with AWP activities as well as reimbursement of members. Several training sessions on the management of the agricultural input centers were organized for cooperative board members. Consequently, half (4 of 8) of the centers, having experienced serious difficulties in the past, were able to reverse the situation and increase sales.

Regarding ERI's new commune support component (4.4), several advancements can be cited. In late November, an exchange between Alliance members, PlaCAZ and a regional representative of MDAT occurred at which a commune support center (CAC) for 12 communes was proposed and tentatively agreed. PlaCAZ subsequently confirmed the engagement of the Mayors of these communes with respect to the CAC. Shortly thereafter, ERI Toamasina's Module 1/4 assistant commenced work; given his recent work experience at MDAT, he was given the lead for the CAC activity.

In late December a joint outing was organized by ERI, MDAT (Provincial Division) and PlaCAZ in order to identify common challenges and opportunities with the group of beneficiary Mayors and in order to reconnoiter the site proposed for the CAC office (Ampasimadinika). Results of this trip will facilitate formulation of scope of work for the third CAC advisor. Formal establishment of the technical committee charged with monitoring and supervising the Ampasimadinika CAC also occurred in December: the committee is composed of MDAT (Provincial Division), ERI, and PlaCAZ.

A new Koloharena partnership

Madagascar Bamboo is a new company in Toamasina. It has installed a factory to produce flooring from the giant bamboo species known locally as *Volobemavo*. In order to start the business, Madagascar Bamboo sought partners to furnish the raw materials, i.e., mature bamboo trunks. Due to sustainable supply concerns as well as a preoccupation with environmental conservation, it is also promoting bamboo planting. Twenty-six KH associations in Ambodilazana and Fanandrahana have seized this opportunity, managing to sign contracts with this new private enterprise to propagate and supply viable young plants or cuttings of *Volobemavo*.

3.1.5.2 Constraints

In spite of the results cited above, much effort remains to be deployed in order to solve problems and remove obstacles and obtain, in the end, a sustainable KH movement. Communication between the various structures and levels within the movement leaves something to be desired. Although the CNKH tries to fulfill its role as interface between the CKH, partners, authorities and decision makers, the impact of its actions is not apparent to the membership. In order to address this challenge, the establishment of an intermediate structure called ARKH (*Antenne Régionale de Koloharena*) was agreed at the KH general assembly in April 2006. Unfortunately, progress regarding the establishment of this structure was minimal. Thus, the operationalization of the various components of the movement remains a major challenge for all KH stakeholders.

Poor management constitutes a major problem for the majority of the cooperatives; it is one of the main factors blocking and slowing the achievement of financial autonomy. Consequently, the introduction of sound and transparent management remains a major challenge. Similarly, the philosophy or culture of credit has yet to be internalized by the majority of the KH membership; a major problem is thus recovery of debt scattered among cooperative members. At present, neither enough effort nor the development of clear strategies for debt recovery has occurred.

Managing agricultural input centers is an important auxiliary activity for the KH cooperatives, yet some cooperatives do not even have a center and similarly lack start-up funds. Moreover, some cooperatives were obliged to close their centers for various causes: poor management, embezzlement or lack of credit reimbursement. Facilitating access to credit in ERI's difficult access zones constitutes a huge challenge for the remainder of the Program. Indeed, in spite of various contacts and advocacy actions, micro-finance institutions do not want to intervene in these areas. Yet the Koloharena associations in these zones want to expand their activities.

Regarding ERI's new commune support component (4.4), several challenges can be cited. A geographical constraint constitutes, perhaps, the most significant hardship: the long distances between the 12 communes and the inaccessibility of several will render the organization of meetings for the 12 communes difficult at best. Similarly, the emergence of the required inter-communal structure will also be problematic as the establishment of this organization depends in large part on exchanges between the communes.

In the design of the scope of work for the third CAC counselor, rural development and environment were prioritized, to the detriment of land tenure, one of the main problems cited by communal authorities, and subject of a national policy, enabled through the establishment of land tenure centers. In fact, advocacy for a land tenure center constitutes another challenge within the framework of the development of the CAC communes. This can be addressed jointly by the three CAC counselors, the technical committee, and PlaCAZ.

3.1.5.3 Recommendations

The basis of the KH philosophy is to improve the well-being of its members, primarily via environmentally-friendly, economic development. For the moment, the KH cooperatives are unable to achieve this goal on their own; they need capacity building support from various structures within the movement as well as from external partners like ERI. In order to respond to this need, ERI Toamasina has established an Internal Training Group (ITG) composed of field agents grouped into various specialties. It is recommended that the ITG become operational as soon as possible and that the socio-organizational support group receives a refresher course and then, in turn, begins a series of refresher training sessions for KH cooperative executives (based on their needs).

Additionally, a system of data collection should be established at the cooperative level in order to help them monitor supply and demand for various agricultural commodities. In this respect, it is important that the AWP's are well conceived and that monthly management reports, taking account of the achievements and perspectives of the KH associations, are systematically written and internalized. In addition, it is highly recommended that each cooperative develop a marketing strategy. To build confidence and to reinforce the participation of members, it is essential that an internal audit system be established and that a spirit of transparency reigns. Finally, the implementation of the Business Plans is of capital importance for the cooperatives: it is the principal means for achieving financial autonomy.

3.1.5.4 Perspectives

In order to produce a perennial and dynamic Koloharena movement that continues after the departure of the ERI Program, the consolidation of the movement is critical. Thus, for the upcoming six-month period, six new cooperatives are likely to be formally established as well as many new associations, especially in the new zones. For these cooperatives and associations, as well as for others that are on the horizon, the strategy of engaging and empowering the ARKH and the CNKH for the perpetuation of socio-organizational support will be applied.

The reinforcement of the relationship with rural communes and decentralized technical services (e.g., the government Agricultural Department) are among the top priorities of the Koloharena

movement. Via the KM tool and the revision of Communal Development Plans, KH cooperatives and associations will endeavor to become more integrated in local governance. Moreover, advocacy actions are planned so that farmer or villager technicians (PAs and PVs) are recognized and utilized by the communes, constituting a focal point for local development.

The creation of professional KH cooperatives is a very important element for perpetuation of the movement. The extension and expansion of partnerships and the range of commercial activities is thus foreseen. This action will be reinforced by the realization of agricultural and institutional marketing. For the upcoming year, via renewed contacts and negotiation with various businesses, it is likely that KH cooperatives will export their products (e.g., pink rice, red rice, litchis) beyond Madagascar's borders.

3.1.6 Module V: Strategic Communication, Education and Outreach Lead to Widespread Behavior Change

3.1.6.1 Achievements

Module 5 is a cross-cutting component of the ERI program and, consequently, has to support the other results modules while at the same time implementing some unique activities. During the semester, there were more and more requests emanating from local communities for communication initiatives as a means to help them break the cycle of isolation and disconnection. Over two hundred communication actions were noted within the framework of awareness raising, festivities (e.g., fairs, celebrations, and KM award ceremonies), and farmer initiatives. Moreover, seven messages were created via tools adapted and listened to in rural settings, inspired by spontaneous ideas (e.g., creation of poems and songs, *hira gasy*, and sensitization campaigns). In general, awareness raising on rural development, the environment and NRM is becoming a habit for KH and COBA associations. This activity is also part of the programmatic contract for three KH cooperatives – a contract developed in a participatory fashion between ERI and the cooperatives.

For both ERI field agents and rural associations and communities in ERI's intervention zones, projecting VCD films remains one of the preferred communication techniques. ERI-supported associations actively participate in this context, furnishing the VCD player and organizing tours among Fokontany in order to project the films and lead discussions on their messages. An increased number of requests for communication equipment (for example, VCDs and dictaphones) in order to facilitate awareness raising actions and emission of messages was also noted. Due to ERI Toamasina training and guidance, more than 80% of farmer or villager technicians (*paysans vulgarisateurs* and *animateurs*) are active today in communicating key agricultural and natural resources management information.

The Program continues to take part in national initiatives, aligning our actions with Government of Madagascar policy. This resulted in more than 200 tools distributed at the level of the rural communes and the local population. The tools consisted of VCD films (*Madagasikara Fijery Vaovao* and *Dian'i Manan'ilatany*, financed by USAID and distributed to all ERI field agents, KH cooperatives and communes in ERI intervention zones), 50 Litchi posters entitled "if your litchi is well maintained, your standard of living will be improved" (distributed prior to the harvest in collaboration with the Atsinanana Region and MCA), and posters on the importance and role of

A Burning Desire

The villages of the Ranomafana Est commune and its neighbor, Mahatsara, are notorious for wildfires which constitute, it should be said, a danger to the local population, not to mention the severe, negative environmental impacts of repeated burning. Under the leadership of the President of the Ranomafana Est Koloharena Cooperative (who is, at the same time, president of the rural commune council), a delegation of that included local authorities, gendarmes, Koloharena members, and Fokontany Presidents, conducted a public awareness campaign throughout the two communes on the negative impacts of slash and burn agriculture, a traditional practice of the local residents. Thanks to the inspiration of the local Koloharena associations who directed this initiative, over one hundred families were sensitized via discussions, film projections and radio spots on environmental protection, zero fire/direct seeding agriculture, and the benefits of improved techniques. Wildfire incidents in Ranomafana Est commune decreased this year, thanks to the pro-activity of the "Fikoloana Harena" (taking care of local wealth), the name given to this determined program.

the forest corridor in daily life – rural and urban (distributed in collaboration with PlaCAZ and the USAID Alliance).

3.1.6.2 Constraints

Each field level activity is accompanied by some form of communication, be it awareness raising, education, or discussion. This practice is commonplace and often spontaneous, yet the central technical staff are not always aware of the details as they are not systematically captured as local initiatives in field agent reports. While our Koloharena partners implement numerous communication activities within their respective zones, only the most significant actions are reported to us.

Administrative procedures sometimes constitute an obstacle for activity implementation. Indeed, implementation is often slowed while administrative procedures are completed. This reality, in turn, delays the completion of a given activity. Linked to this, payment of service providers sometimes lags, tarnishing the image of the entire program but also impeding realization of our actions.

Access to most of ERI Toamasina's new zones is extremely difficult: much willpower and physical effort is needed in order to reach these areas. This isolation is also an obstacle to professional interactions and exchanges as well as to communication to and from these areas. Finally, this reality does not facilitate interaction between ERI intervention zones.

3.1.6.3 Recommendations

Madagascar's rural areas have suffered for a long time from a lack of technicians and techniques, contributing to the attachment of rural people to traditional practices inherited from their ancestors. The ambition of the ERI program is to fill this gap via a network of professional farmer or villager technicians, technically and pedagogically apt and effective. Module 5 should reinforce this network through the provision of adequate technical flyers and illustrative flip card series (pagivolte). The use of these didactic tools should be the subject of continuous, on-the-job training.

In order to induce the environmental reflex at the commune level and in the minds of local decision makers and planners, ERI should continue to furnish evaluation, planning, and decision-making tools. This work is ongoing, commencing with the provision of base maps on which all commune Fokontany are highlighted. The Program has thus anticipated one of the new national policy directions as the Fokontany will be a focal unit for the implementation of the Madagascar Action Plan or MAP.

Primarily, Module 5 should continue its capacity building efforts, supporting farmer or villager technicians in the emission of NRM messages and encouraging them to develop and diffuse their own messages and communication tools with respect to improved agriculture and the environment. This is in keeping with the legacy that we hope to bequeath to our intervention zones: a rural communication system driven and guided by able, rural professionals. Within this context, it is necessary to seek a two-way movement of information: to enable the voices of rural people and isolated communes to be heard at the level of regional and national decision makers and to facilitate the acquisition of information, news, and guidelines at the commune and rural population level.

3.1.6.4 Perspectives

To reinforce the capacities of local communities to be responsible for, and capable of achieving their own development: such is the central objective of any rural development effort. But how does one achieve this goal in a context of poverty, depletion of natural resources, and disengagement of the State? Participatory communication will constitute an effective working tool that will contribute to the processes of community development and engaging external development partners. The Module 5 approach aims at facilitating the participation of community members in their own development via the use of various communication strategies; during the final stages of the Program, an emphasis will be placed on utilizing and reinforcing the existing Koloharena communication network.

The expression "community participation" should not simply imply participation in activities conceived by development projects such as ERI, but participation in decision-making on the activities to be undertaken and the objectives to be pursued. There is thus a need to establish

communication strategies that will facilitate the exchange of information and know-how between the various partners involved, encouraging the public to play its role in development initiatives.

Communication is often used as a "top down" tool to inform, mobilize, motivate or persuade farmers. The approach has been particularly ineffective in generating lasting changes in attitudes and behavior with respect to development. A new approach is needed, one that facilitates problem identification, community involvement in the search for solutions, the promotion and circulation of useful local knowledge, and the appropriation of development initiatives by the affected people. Accordingly, ERI's module 5 will attempt to develop a communication strategy favoring the exchange of information and rural know-how between communities, farmers' organizations, development agencies and the local media, establishing a synergy among these stakeholders in order to support local participation in development initiatives designed to provide better natural resource management.

3.1.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

3.1.7.1 Issues

ERI Toamasina facilitated auto- or self-evaluations at the AKH level in collaboration with the CKHs. The results made it possible for these KH associations to improve and focus their work plans, especially with regard to newly defined objectives. However, the results are not yet representative and difficult to use for quantitative and even qualitative analyses. Adoption or use of household notebooks (*cahiers de ménage*) has been relatively low to date, especially in the new zones. The problem is due to the illiteracy of certain KH members as well as a lack of familiarity with the notebooks. Internalization of the system will be, however, beneficial for all involved (households, AKH, CKH and even CNKH and rural communes). Collected data is used, for example, by AKH during their auto-evaluations.

3.1.7.2 Recommendations

Two recommendations can be made to improve implementation of M&E activities. First of all, utilization of household notebooks should be improved so that they become a means for evaluation of AKH and CKH results. Secondly, internalization of the auto-evaluation system at the level of associations, cooperatives and rural communes merits continued support.

3.1.7.3 Perspectives

Efforts will be made to reinforce the cross-cutting nature of M&E activities, stressing its utility in tracking progress towards realizing ERI legacies. Similarly, the utility of monitoring and evaluation as an essential management tool and as a means to insure sustainability will be emphasized. Staff will also endeavor to use M&E to help AKH achieve results that go beyond past objectives. Key M&E activities during 2007 include the following.

- Support for the internalization of the auto-evaluation activity at the level of rural associations, helping them to profit from lessons learned and guiding future actions.
- Participation in federating or unifying actions initiated in collaboration with the other results modules.



Figure 7: The next generation: inheriting and building upon ERI's legacies

3.1.8 Activity Intervention Fund

3.1.8.1 Achievements

During the semester, ERI Toamasina spent approximately \$155,000 of its Activity Implementation Fund (AIF) – see table below. This represents a healthy "burn rate." In fact, ERI Toamasina has been disbursing its AIF funds a bit too quickly and must carefully manage the remainder for the rest

of the Program. The majority of the expenditures were in the form of Purchase Orders (POs) with service providers. The main POs were for compost demonstration activities with Voahary Soa, improved poultry farming techniques with the NGO Lalana, establishing and training listener groups with the ONG Mamizo and the establishment of multiple forest management contracts with the group Ravalisoa.

Spent TOTAL	\$156,074.53	Ar 346, 491,446.35
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In addition, approximately \$80,000 was obligated or approved during the semester (see below).

Type	Quantity	Total Approved USD
Independent Consultants	3	\$5,752.10
Protocols/MOUs	23	\$7,525.82
Pos	11	\$66,501.76
TOTAL		\$79,779.68

3.1.8.2 Constraints

The following obstacles can be cited with respect to implementation of the AIF.

- Some service providers were not able to adhere to agreed deliverable schedules, i.e., contracts or engagements were not respected.
- Consequently, there was an obligation to penalize or terminate some contracts based on:
 - o delays in submitting deliverables (e.g., the CKH Fanilon’lazafo of Maromitety, the independent consultant Ramahenina, and the Consortium Lova Reve), and
 - o the non-execution of activities envisaged in the contract (e.g., the case of the Tandem Razanamparany and the resignation of a field agent provided by the CKH Ivolamiarina of Amparafaravola).
- The non-adherence to deliverable schedules perturbs AIF planning, especially with regard to replenishment requests.

3.1.8.3 Recommendations

Improvement of AIF implementation can be facilitated via the following recommendations.

- Deliverable schedules must be well understood and accepted by service providers.
- The management capacities of CKH partners benefiting from a programmatic contract (financed by the AIF) should be strengthened, especially concerning respect and implementation of AWP’s and business plans, and, as noted above, adherence to deliverable schedules.
- Service providers should be implicated in technical analysis and an exact determination of the deliverable schedule when the contract is signed. Special attention should be paid to improved planning, especially anticipating unforeseen constraints and obstacles.

3.1.8.4. Perspectives

For 2007, use of the AIF will be focused on reinforcing previous results and achievements in order to increase ERI’s impacts, above all at the level of the legacies that have been defined. Following are some of the contracts, planned for each Module, to be financed by the AIF.

For Module 1:

- reinforcement of the capacity of the PlaCAZ,
- CAC establishment and start-up, and
- revision of PCDs in order to make them more practical, usable and integrated, taking into account all partners, in particular members of the USAID Alliance.

For Module 2:

- facilitation of the emergence of a COBA federation,
- supporting the establishment and implementation of forest management transfer contracts, and
- reinforcing the capacity of rural communes (mayors and their teams) concerning forest management transfer.

For Module 3:

- support for the farmer-to-farmer and FFS approaches,

- reinforcement of selected, high-potential value or commodity chains,
- establishment and/or improvement and utilization of farmer training centers (LADIA and KH houses), and
- small agricultural mechanization demonstrations.

For Module 4:

- institution of professional CKHs via integration in the micro-finance system and programmatic support contracts, and
- establishment of new CKH in zones adjacent to the forest corridor.

For Module 5:

- establishment of listener groups within CKH et AKH, and
- reinforcement of rural communication through BLU radios and the rural radio network.

The following table represents the estimated totals for each Module's contracts through the end of the ERI Program (July 2008). The reader will note that there is a deficit between the grand total and available funds. Efforts will thus have to be made to realize some of the contracts at levels below the estimates.

MODULE	USD amount
Module 1	63,700.00
Module 2	30,800.00
Module 3	66,700.00
Module 4	51,698.00
Module 5	32,200.00
TOTAL	245,098.00
Available funds:	218,000.00

3.1.9 “Conserving the Indri Corridor” Small Grants Program

After a series of discussions and negotiations, ERI-Toamasina successfully leveraged \$250,000 from Conservation International. The funds will be used to capitalize a small grants program, entitled “Conserving the Indri Corridor,” for community conservation in and around the CAZ. A small grants program manager began work in late November. Initial activities focused on producing a procedural manual, developing a scope of work for three sub-nodes (to be managed by local NGOs), establishing a list of initial community associations and NGOs for proposal solicitation, and creating an informational brochure. Disbursement of funds for the first grants is expected to occur in March 2007.

3.1.10 Ecoregional Alliance

3.1.10.1 Achievements

Collaboration between Miaro/CI, JariAla and ERI with regard to the communal consultation process for the new CAZ PA constituted a major result for the Toamasina USAID Ecoregional Alliance during the semester. Similarly, collaboration between ERI and SantéNet on the integrated KM tool was a significant achievement. Moreover, the approach was discussed at several Alliance meetings, anticipating potential orientations for its institutionalization. Details on these two activities have been described above. In addition, fruitful exchanges between ADRA, CARE, CRS and ERI occurred on commune-level support strategies, specifically in order to gather information and ideas that could be used during the establishment and implementation of commune support centers (CACs).

In general, the Alliance continued to function well as a platform for informational exchange. Progress also was noted regarding achieving synergies and increased impact on agricultural production and commercialization in the Moramanga area. BAMEX, ADRA and ERI produced an action plan focused on three value or commodity chains (red rice, ginger and white beans) as a framework for scaling up in this domain. Alliance members also fully supported and participated in the donor round table organized by the Alaotra Mangoro Region; the Regional Coordinator made a presentation at this event emphasizing the Alliance's integrated rural development approach as well as its strategy for supporting the Region.

3.1.10.2 Constraints

The main Alliance challenges can be summarized by the following points.



Figure 8: Promoting sustainable, integrated rural development via KM: a potential tool for all USAID

- There remains a lack of significant spatial overlap as well as a lack of field presence. Among the Alliance members with field presence (ADRA, CARE, CRS and ERI), there are very few CAZ or corridor communes where these members can collaborate. While the lack of spatial overlap does not necessarily limit scaling up efforts (in theory a larger number of communes or Fokontany can be covered if a given territory is divided up between members), it does limit opportunities for bona fide synergy and increased impact. This limitation is even more apparent when considering the lack of field presence.
- The transaction costs of collaboration and synergy, especially at the field level, remain high. Significant time and energy must be spent in order to achieve joint understanding of

approaches and structure, not to mention joint planning and monitoring. Moreover, these costs are often above and beyond those associated with the programs and activities of each individual member.

- The level of enthusiasm for the Alliance institution seems to leave something to be desired. This is exacerbated by the fact that many members do not send the same person to attend Alliance meetings: there is an ever-changing cast of characters, some of whom are not well informed with respect to Alliance activities and initiatives.

3.1.10.3 Recommendations

In response to the constraints cited above, the following recommendations can be made.

- It would be useful if USAID could send a letter or message to Alliance members reiterating the importance and role of the platform. Similarly, a USAID representative should attend every Toamasina Alliance meeting.
- Alliance members should continue attempts at achieving field-level synergy and enhanced impact. The example of the Moramanga initiative is promising; a second area, for example Brickaville or Toamasina II should also be the target of this scaling up effort.
- Each Alliance member should name one person (preferably someone who is well informed, has a regional or broad-scale vision, and has some decision-making power) who systematically attends Alliance meetings and who acts as a focal point for Alliance activities and queries.

3.1.10.4 Perspectives

There are several orientations that the Toamasina USAID Alliance should consider as the cycles of many of its project-based members begin to come to an end. First and foremost is the vision for facilitating coordination among rural development and conservation actors. Members will need to begin to think about how this coordination function can be expanded to non-USAID organizations and projects as well as who could or should fulfill this role. The Regions and inter-regional platforms (PlaCAZ) immediately leap to mind.

Alliance members should also develop a vision with regard to spatial planning and the information and database needed to support quality initiatives in this domain. The number of similar and duplicate informational requests that ERI and other Alliance members receive in this regard is astounding. An example is ADRA trying to construct a map of organizations and projects that intervened in the Moramanga area; while this should have been a relatively simple endeavor, it proved to be exceedingly difficult. It is clear that the information and planning functions should be amalgamated at one (or just a few) center where everyone can be directed for these requests.

Again, it seems logical to regroup this function at the Region level or, in some cases, at the inter-regional platform level.

One final perspective on the horizon is that of regrouping farmer or villager associations into one or two regional or national coalitions of federations. It has been suggested, for example, that all farmer groups supported by Alliance members should become members of the Koloharena movement. The advantages and disadvantages of this proposal should be considered. Perhaps the Koloharena movement should become an Alliance member and attend the bi-monthly meetings.