

Unlocking the Potential of Vanilla with smallholder farmers

An inclusive, organic & biodiverse vanilla
initiative in Northeast Madagascar



- 2017**
Launch
- 2020**
First export
- 2027**
End of project *with
a continuity plan*



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The Challenges

Renowned for its **unique flavor and aroma**, vanilla is a key ingredient in the food, perfume, and aromatherapy industries—so much so that it's often referred to as **"green gold."**

Yet, there's a **striking paradox**: in Madagascar, which produces over half of the world's vanilla, **the smallholder farmers behind its cultivation see little of this "gold" in return.**

Main Obstacles for Smallholder Farmers

Strong speculation and predatory behaviors by some intermediaries, leading to high levels of theft in the field and limiting farmers' access to profitable markets.

Smallholder farmers in remote areas face **low productivity rates, poor quality**, and **climate-related challenges** driven by a **lack of technical support.**

Our Solution

Our **coalition of stakeholders** is working together across the entire value chain to **support farmers, their community and protect the environment**, and to increase net income from vanilla production.

Together, we created **Tambatra, a farmer-owned social business** (meaning 'together' in Malagasy) to establish a **direct market link with fair procurement practices.**

We also focus on **empowering women & young adults**, and **diversifying crops**, contributing to improved food security and strengthened household resilience.

Key Impacts (as of December 2024)



Over 3,000 smallholder farmers supported by the project



2,905 hectares of conserved landscape in a biodiversity hotspot, including the 800-ha protected coastal forest of Pointe à Larrée



Approx. 12,500 people benefiting from the project (vanilla-producing families and their communities)

3 Pillars of Sustainability

BUSINESS



Ensuring quality, complete traceability and access to profitable international market with strong benefits for farmers

PEOPLE



Improving the livelihoods of the farmers and their community, with a focus on women and young people

NATURE



Protecting local biodiversity and enabling sustainable community natural resources management



7-year Achievements

Over 3,000 smallholders planted vanilla under the project and 2,300 are active members of Tambatra (25% of women, 25% of young adults).

They are now organized with shared governance for collecting green vanilla, benefiting from local authority support and oversight.

With fair price for green vanilla and a pricing mechanism established with offtakers, their incomes have increased by an estimated 15–30% since 2022.

Our vanilla is 100% traceable and 60% is certified organic (+430 hectares and +1 million of vanilla vines under sustainable agroforestry systems).

Tambatra continues to drive local development in this remote area, creating over 115 jobs, and generating over USD 100,000 in taxes annually. Already 37 tons of green vanilla has been processed and exported since 2022, valued at approximately USD 3.7 million.



We had a lot of vanilla plants, but the production was random. In fact, I used to grow vanilla, without knowing where I was going. I knew we could make money with vanilla, but I did not know how to do it.

**Raphael Théogène,
Vanilla farmer**



Social & Environmental Services



Securing vanilla production while protecting biodiversity and ensuring natural resource management

The project supports **community-based governance to manage conservation activities**, enforce biodiversity protection laws, and plant native tree species—**totaling 250,000 trees**—to help prevent natural disasters in the area. As smallholders earn more from their farms, the incentive to engage in destructive activities within the protected coastal forest of Pointe à Larrée has significantly declined, **contributing to the protection of specific flora & fauna, including 3 species of endemic lemurs.**



Diversifying income through women empowerment

With vanilla accounting for 40% of farming household income, the project is now **integrating clove and cinnamon** to diversify farms, provide a reliable income source, and strengthen households' **resilience to vanilla market volatility**. Although food security remains a challenge in the area, **women farmer** groups are now managing **community gardens, contributing to improved households' nutrition**, and utilizing Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to fund education and small businesses.

The Project Implementers



LIVELIHOODS

Livelihoods is an impact-driven company based in Paris, France, which designs and manages large-scale sustainable sourcing projects aimed at restoring ecosystems, improving agricultural practices, and enhancing the resilience of rural communities. Within the project, Livelihoods has played a key role in assembling the coalition of actors, the co-funding strategy and co-developing the farm's technical model.



FANAMBY

Created in 1997, **Fanamby** is an NGO dedicated to the preservation of Madagascar's biodiversity. With a team of 40 people, it namely manages 4 protected areas covering around 600,000 hectares in Madagascar. Fanamby's specific approach links environmental conservation with the development of economic activities for rural communities. The NGO has successfully supported vanilla producers in the structuration and governance of their cooperatives in the North of Madagascar.

Fanamby is working with **Missouri Botanical Garden** on the management of Pointe à Larrée protected area and with a **Maisons Familiales Rurales** to provide training for youth.



TAMBATRA

Tambatra is a farmer-owned social business created with project support, specializing in vanilla production from planting to curing. Located in Andragahaza (Soanieriana Ivongo), the business is operational since 2020 and employs over 100 people (26 permanent positions). With a production capacity of 40 mt of processed vanilla, Tambatra obtained its export license in 2024. It sources vanilla from 2,300-3,000 producers, organized in 20 associations and 3 federations across 4 rural communes. Tambatra means 'together' in Malgasy.

The Project Partners



MARS

Mars is a family-owned business with more than a century of history making diverse products and offering services for people and the pets people love. With almost \$35 billion in sales, the company is a global business that produces some of the world's best-loved brands. Mars Five Principles – Quality, Responsibility, Mutuality, Efficiency and Freedom – inspire its more than 85,000 Associates to create value for all its partners and deliver growth they are proud of every day.



DANONE

Dedicated to bringing health through food to as many people as possible, Danone is a leading global food company built on four business lines: Essential Dairy and Plant-Based Products, Early Life Nutrition, Waters and Medical Nutrition. Through its mission and dual commitment to business success and social progress, the company aims to build a healthier future, thanks to better health, better lives and a better world, for all its stakeholders—its more than 100,000 employees, consumers, customers, suppliers, shareholders and all the communities with which it engages.



dsm-firmenich

dsm-firmenich is the world's largest privately-owned company in the fragrance and flavor industry. Founded in Geneva in 1895, it has created many of the world's most renowned perfumes and flavors enjoyed by billions daily. Its passion for smell and taste drives its success, bolstered by world-class research, creativity, and thought leadership in sustainability and consumer trends. Each year, dsm-firmenich invests 10% of its turnover in R&D, reflecting its commitment to understanding and enhancing the best that nature has to offer.



AFD and the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM)

AFD Group is responsible for implementing France's development and international solidarity policies. It comprises the **Agence Française de Développement** (AFD), which funds public sector projects, NGOs, and research in sustainable development; Proparco, its subsidiary focused on private sector financing; and Expertise France, the agency for technical cooperation.

The French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) is also engaged, providing support for biodiversity conservation efforts in Pointe à Larrée.

Contact us

Gabriel Morin

Senior Portfolio Manager

gmorink@livelihoods-venture.com

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Vanilla project](#)

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