



Concept note

National workshop on wild edible mushrooms in Tabora (27/28 February 2025)

The Association for the Development of Protected Areas (ADAP) is a Swiss non-governmental organisation set up in Geneva in 1997. ADAP has been supporting community-based management initiatives in protected areas in central and western Tanzania for several years in close collaboration with local associations.

The goal of ADAP projects is to combine conservation actions with local development actions, in particular the development of value-added chains linked to the commercialization of non-wood forest products such as honey or more recently wild edible mushrooms. Promoting wild edible mushrooms is an innovative approach to add monetary value to the Miombo ecosystem thereby encouraging surrounding communities to better protect the forest.

ADAP, in collaboration with UNDP/GEF/GTZ-IS, has formerly mandated two mushroom studies in the Selous-Niassa Wildlife Corridor in Ruvuma region in Southern Tanzania (Bloesch & Mbago 2008, 2009). These studies clearly demonstrated the high potential of wild edible mushroom in the miombo woodlands and their importance for the diet of the local communities during the rainy season. The studies showed also the high interest of the locals to be involved in the commercialisation of this highly priced food.

Based on these experiences, ADAP has started in 2020 with first activities to develop a value chain for wild edible mushrooms based on socio-economic studies (Bloesch 2020, 2021, 2022a/b). The following key activities were carried out:

- 1) Interested mushroom pickers were organised in producer groups which are incorporated into professional associations or cooperatives
- 2) Inventory of wild edible mushrooms species (vernacular and Latin names)
- 3) Assessment of local ethnomycological knowledge
- 4) Current use of wild edible mushroom species (fresh and dried)
- 5) Training of mushroom pickers in appropriate harvest, transport and stockage, and drying technics of fungi
- 6) Assessment of the market demand and potential for wild edible mushrooms
- 7) Testing of solar driers for properly drying mushrooms
- 8) Elaboration of a leaflet of the principle edible fungi in miombo woodland of central and western Tanzania (in English and Swahili)

According to first inventories over 50 edible species were identified together with the local communities. 40% of the interviewees are eating at least three to four times a week fresh mushrooms, while 77% of the interviewees are consuming at least once a week mushrooms. Moreover, 34% of the interviewees are consuming at least once a week dried mushrooms in the off-season. These first activities confirmed (i) the high abundance of edible fungi in miombo woodlands in central and western Tanzania during the rainy season, (ii) the great importance of mushrooms for the local population and (iii) the high demand for quality mushrooms at market level.

Based on these first encouraging results, ADAP has contacted the Tanzanian Forestry Research Institute (TAFORI) and Adansonia Consulting to organise a joint workshop on wild edible mushrooms to further boost the consumption and selling of this important non-wood forest product (NWFP) at national level.

More specifically, the tentative workshop objectives are as follows:

- a. Present and discuss to key stakeholders first findings from ADAP's mushroom initiative in central and western Tanzania
- b. Discuss and refine a national strategy for elaborating an added-value chain for wild edible mushrooms
- c. Building partnerships between key players in the mushroom value chain
- d. Discuss and clarify current challenges in mushroom gathering in protected areas and make recommendations to create a legal framework that is more practical and supports the promotion and commercialisation of wild edible mushrooms.

Participants of the workshop will include key actors for the development of an added-value chain for wild edible mushrooms including government authorities (including TFS and TAWIRI), academia from universities and research institutes, international and national NGO, representatives from mushroom pickers / sellers and their associations, private sector...

The 2-days workshop will be held in Tabora on 27/28 February 2025 and jointly organised by TAFORI and ADAP. The first day will be a more technical meeting with experts /technicians/practitioners familiar with the topic, while the second day will be attended by a wider audience (authorities). In addition, the day before the workshop, an excursion for journalists will be organized in the Ipole area to give them the opportunity to conduct interviews with mushroom pickers and shoot videos. This field visit will also be used to collect fresh mushrooms, which will be exhibited during the workshop. The workshop moderation and facilitation will be ensured by TAFORI and ADAP staff.

During the workshop, ADAP will organise a promotional stand for edible wild mushrooms at the main market of Tabora (tentatively 27 February to 1 March 2025). There will be mushroom exhibition stands and mushroom dishes can be tasted, supported by a media campaign (tv, radio, newspapers) to promote the consumption of wild edible mushrooms.

References (<http://www.adansonia-consulting.ch/mushrooms.php>)

Bloesch U. & Mbago, F. (2008) The potential of wild edible mushrooms in the miombo woodlands of the Selous - Niassa Wildlife Corridor for the livelihood improvement of the local population. First study (21/1 – 31/1/08).

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Bloesch, U. (2020) Abundance and marketing potential of wild mushrooms. Community-based forest management of the Rungwa corridor. ADAP, Geneva.

Bloesch, U. (2021) Co-management of the Katavi – Ugalla corridor forests Wild mushrooms of Mulele Hills Forest Reserve. Use and marketing potential (24 February – 10 March 2021). ADAP, Geneva

Bloesch, U. (2022a) Wild edible mushrooms from Western Tanzania. Leaflet. ADAP, Geneva.

Bloesch, U. (2022b) Co-management of Rungwa and Katavi – Ugalla corridor forests. The added value chain for wild edible mushrooms in Katavi and Tabora regions. Stage 1: Baseline data, training, and strategy. ADAP, Geneva

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