

Fighting Malaria

Farming Artemisia Annuia in Madagascar

Investing in farming to increase the global supply of anti-malarial treatments

In an effort to fight the global Malaria scourge, UNDP's Growing Sustainable Business Programme recognized an opportunity to develop local farming initiatives in Madagascar to fight the disease. With technical help from Rutgers University (in collaboration with BAMEX) and TechnoServe (NGO), the GSB teamed with the Madagascar-based company Bionexx to implement a successful business model.

Malaria infects 350 million people every year, killing one million of those who suffer from the disease. In addition to the abundance of cases, the infection has grown resistant to traditional treatments. However, Madagascar's rich biodiversity holds 10,000 different species of plants of which 9,000 are unique to the island. Artemisia Annuia, a plant that has been recommended by WHO and UNICEF as an effective treatment for Malaria, grows abundantly in this environment. The GSB recognized the need to develop this good and partnered with Bionexx, the sole producer of Artemisia in Madagascar.

Through working with local farmers in Madagascar, the Bionexx and the GSB have enhanced production of Artemisia and strengthened the value chain through a carefully designed system:

- Bionexx began with an initial investment of \$2 Million USD to increase the global supply of Artemisia and stabilize the price of anti-malarial treatments. An additional \$2 Million USD contribution in farming equipment is planned over the next five years.
- 3,000 metric tons of Artemisia dry material is scheduled to produce 30 million treatments per year, far exceeding Madagascar's domestic need.

- **Country:** Madagascar
- **Launched:** 2005
- **Partners:** Bionexx, TechnoServe, Rutgers University, UNDP
- **Program Highlights:** \$ 2 Million USD initial investment with continued funding over five years, 73 permanent and 400 seasonal jobs, 340 farmers now receive stable income, production schedule of 30 million treatments per year



Madagascar is home to 9,000 unique species of plants. Artemisia Annuia grows abundantly here and has been recognized as an effective treatment for Malaria. Above: an Artemisia farm.

The partnership has created 73 permanent jobs and 400 seasonal jobs in Madagascar's farming industry. Salaries are higher than those which employees earned previously and some 340 farmers now receive stable income. Permanent employees also benefit from French language training and zero-interest loans.

In addition, the project has resolved issues for farmers such as transportation costs and lack of market information by assuring production transport and the exchange of information with help from local governances. Such methods have strengthened the value chain and put more influence in the hands of local farmers.