



January 2023

2022, a year of intense activity, between crises and resilience

Climate change and the collapse of biodiversity are having increasingly visible and dramatic consequences, from South to North and East to West. An open conflict in the North of Europe is impacting food in the South of the globe. But hope remains, with the end of the lockdown in Europe, relief for the Amazon, and the resumption of international exchanges, while images of the James Webb Space Telescope open an unknown window on a universe contained in the tip of a pin, and show us how high the human spirit and cooperation can bring us.

In 2022, we explored several pathways to transition and resilience:

- fighting deforestation related to commodity export (cocoa in Ghana),
- exchange and transfer of farming skills (Ghana and Madagascar),
- enhancing biodiversity, particularly in aromatic and medicinal plants and spices (Indian Ocean), and
- resilience of coastal fishing communities in Palu Bay, Sulawesi, Indonesia, after a major earthquake followed by a tsunami in September 2018.

**Don't tell my mother I'm a consultant,
she thinks I work in tourism**

During 2022, the sometimes tedious and trying work of a consultant has brought me great personal reasons for satisfaction:

- Coordinating a team brings many satisfactions and lessons, and I would like to thank here my national consultants, without whom I could not do quality work: Abacar, Wassilati and Fatima in Comoros, Herimena in Madagascar, Nina in Indonesia. Thanks also to my partners in Ghana and to the CASEF project team in Madagascar.
- The wonder of discovering new cultures and new landscapes.

The Indian Ocean enshrines a unique and incomparable biodiversity.

Indonesia never ceases to amaze me with its cultural diversity and energy, perhaps induced by an intense tectonic activity.

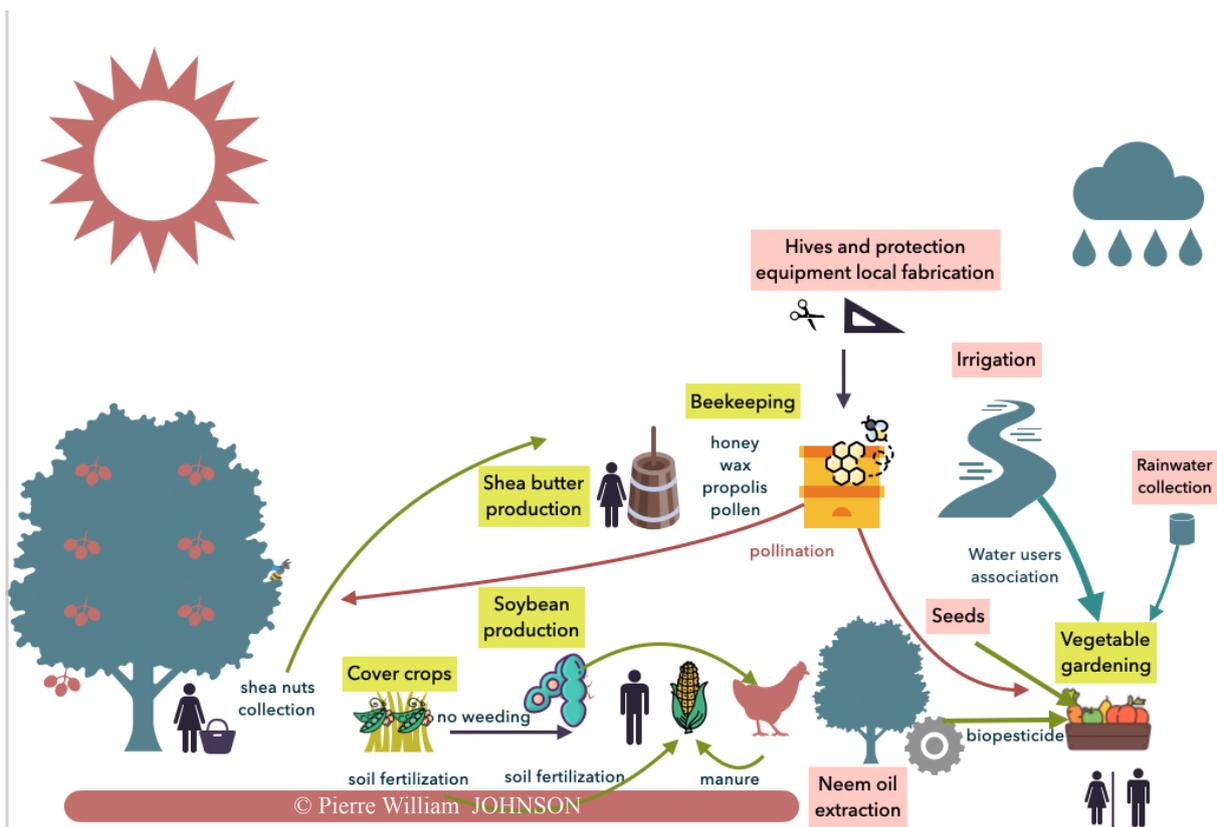
Sustainable value chains North and South of Ghana

The first field assignment of the year brought me to Ghana with a team coordinated by SOFRECO, to identify for the European Union relevant value chains for a new project in the North of the country. In addition, a more diplomatic mission was undertaken in the cocoa belt to anticipate the European Union's "zero imported deforestation" policy and the due diligence of buyers regarding child labor in the cocoa sector.

A multi-criteria evaluation allowed us to identify 5 value chains with high potential in the North of the country:

- shea butter, with a strong economic, social and environmental contribution,
- vegetable gardening (the main issue being access to water),
- soybean (nitrogen contribution, low fertilization requirement),
- beekeeping, complementary production and pollination services,
- cover crops, uncommon in this region in the dry season.

The emphasis of the project was put on agroecology.



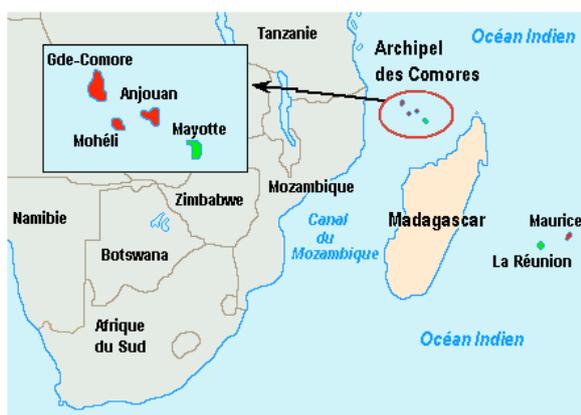
After an expert from Nicaragua resigned, I was also put in charge of the cocoa dossier, which aimed to prepare the country for the recently adopted European legislation. For this rather technical and political matter, we met the main parties, formulated strategic recommendations and elaborated a multi-year budget.

The Indian Ocean seeks to value its biodiversity

In 2022, we carried out four assignments in the western Indian Ocean, in **Madagascar**, the **Comoros Union** and **Mayotte**.

These perfume and spice islands, 70 to 300 km apart, have quite similar economies, but too often ignore one another. These "vegetable raw materials" have long made rich countries dream and still do. They come from an important plant biodiversity, endemic and naturalized.

First we evaluated the last project in support of the ylang ylang essential oils sector in Comoros by Initiative Développement (ID), then we capitalized the CASEF project in eastern Madagascar, aimed at developing the production of spices and fruits. We also designed an Observatory of Organic Agriculture in Madagascar, and finally laid the foundations for the processing of aromatic, perfume and medicinal plants, as well as spices in Mayotte.



On the East coast of Madagascar, the **CASEF** project, financed by the World Bank, has been providing technical assistance for four years to développer the production of cinnamon, turmeric, passion fruit and lychee, through the creation and strengthening of producers' cooperatives and a training program. Our work consisted in capitalizing these actions on two levels: technical training approach, and organization of producers.

In this country, the interest of companies, producers, investors and even consumers for organic agriculture (OA) is increasing thanks to a recent Law and a National Strategy for OA, as well as to a demand for exports still dynamic, despite a slow down in Europe.

In this context, we are working with Kinomé and Symabio to design an **Observatory of Organic Agriculture in Madagascar**, which will provide accurate data on the development of this sector, both for the national and the export markets.

In the Union of the Comoros, after an in-depth study in October 2021 of the ylang essential oil production value chain, we carried out in April 2022 an evaluation of the last three years of support provided by the NGO Initiative Développement to the actors of this value chain, with tangible and significant results.

We will soon publish a scientific publication that will be the first complete economic analysis of the ylang essential oil sector in the Comoros, between crises and the search for sustainable development.

We also await with great interest the results of a project to support three cash sectors in the Comoros (ylang ylang, vanilla, clove), which we designed collectively in 2019, and which is currently receiving 20 million euros in funding from the French Cooperation Agency.



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Photo exhibition project

In 2023, I would like to show a unique series of photographs on the ylang ylang essential oil sector in the Comoros, and I am looking for a partner space.

These quality digital photos (16 to 26 mpx), were taken from 2019 to 2022 with a professional approach. The exhibition aims to pay tribute to the actors who value this resource with dignity, humility and respect for the environment.

Please send your proposal or your relevant contact(s) at: contact@pierrejohnson.eu

In **Mayotte**, the local economy is strongly supported by European funding for the outermost regions. Clusters of actors have been organized in various sectors, including aromatic plants and spices, for cosmetic and food use. We have been selected to design a platform for the transformation of these products, an industrial demonstrator with a regional dimension for business project leaders.

I had a great pleasure to meet the concerned actors and their current or future partners, including the young, cooperative and dynamic scientific research ecosystem established in Mayotte.



Issues at stake and tools to protect biodiversity

During spring, I designed an interactive online training module on the **Nagoya Protocol of the Convention on Biological Diversity** regarding access to genetic resources and benefit sharing arising from their use. We tested this format with actors from several countries of the American continent who are engaged with the people from the Amazon in the defense of their knowledge of sacred plants from local biodiversity.

We then offered training on this topic to project leaders in Mayotte, since due diligence on the Nagoya Protocol is an obligation in Europe since 2014.

This is also one of the key issues addressed at the COP15 Biodiversity, which was held in Montreal in December.

This interactive training, intended for actors wishing to know the scientific issues, the legal tools, and to confront themselves with the plurality of cultural approaches to biodiversity, can be declined according to specific needs and contexts where it may be useful.



Post natural disaster resilience in Sulawesi, Indonesia

Some countries and regions are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. This is the case of Indonesia, with its numerous active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes, on the "Pacific Ring of Fire". Sulawesi (known in France as Celebes), the 4th largest island in the country, straddling 3 tectonic plates, is particularly exposed. On September 28, 2018, an earthquake of 6.1 on the Richter scale caused a rather atypical tsunami within the deep Palu Bay, causing several thousand casualties and a lot of destruction, still visible today.

A project led by an Indonesian NGO and supported by the French NGO CCFD- Terre Solidaire aimed to ensure the resilience of coastal communities after this disaster, through the transmission of traditional knowledge and the planting of mangroves (natural barriers to the tsunami), as well as the reconstruction of the traditional economy, through the restoration of boats and traditional fishing equipment.



The evaluation we conducted of this project highlighted the importance of professional recruitment practices, of relationships with local artisans involved in the reconstruction of fishing boats, and the knowledge of the local cultural, social and natural environment, for the success of this kind of project. It was also necessary to take into account the contextual elements that can complicate the realization of the project, such as the lockdown due to the pandemic as well as local and national elections.

We have been able to mobilize for this mission a solid network of consultants and French and national professionals present in this country, and find a skilled expert in disaster risk management to collaborate to this evaluation.

Voluntary commitments

Sustainable Land Management*

I am involved since 2021 in the Development Council (CODEV) of the Val d'Yerres Val de Seine community of cities, near Paris (France). This voluntary and local commitment with 114 citizens of 9 cities aims at bringing to the elected officials the point of view of concerned citizens on the subjects which are decided at this level. As co-ordinator of one of the three commissions, dealing with Sustainable Land Management, I led the discussions within the CODEV on two important subjects: the local plan for "soft mobility" (bicycle lanes mainly) and the Local Climate Air and Energy Plan (PCAET).

The CODEV was thus able to formulate and send to the elected officials remarks deemed relevant on the plan for *soft mobility* (bicycle lanes, inter-modality, etc.), and on the application of the PCAET, elaborated by a specialized consultancy.

* In French, management and care are separated by only one letter. I would prefer to talk about Sustainable Land Care rather than Land Management.



Conseil de Développement
Economique Social et Environnemental
Val d'Yerres - Val de Seine

To begin offsetting, and start insetting

All the international assignments described in this annual newsletter surely contribute to climate change. Whatever their positive impacts, they are not free of negative "externalities". I am conscious of this. Rather than trying to offset these externalities by purchasing carbon credits, I have chosen to invest in a sector that is particularly dear to me and that I believe has a promising future: freight sailing shipping.

After years of development under the radar, this alternative is finally emerging into the open. One of the companies involved, **Windcoop**, aims to build and operate one or more sailing boats to transport spices and other products from Madagascar to Europe. As its name indicates, it is a cooperative, and I am happy to be one of its 907 members.

This initiative, and others like it, prefigure a world where international trade will no longer be developed at the expense of climate, biodiversity and social rights, but on the contrary in harmony with them.

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