

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2017)

Project reference	24-021
Project title:	<i>Empowering Ivorian communities to conserve biodiversity</i>
Country(ies)/territory(ies):	<i>Côte d'Ivoire</i>
Lead organisation:	<i>Rainforest Alliance (RA)</i>
Partner(s) :	<i>Centre d'Etudes, Formations, Conseils et Audits (CEFCA)</i>
Project leader:	<i>Sarah Fadika, Senior Associate, RA</i>
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media etc.	

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Rainforest Alliance (RA) is pleased to present the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Darwin Initiative with Half Year Report 1 (HYR1) (July 1, 2017- September 30, 2017) for the project ***Empowering Ivorian communities to conserve biodiversity and improve their livelihoods***. Through this three-year effort, RA, together with its partner, CEFCA, is employing a three-fold strategy – including integrated sustainable landscape planning, climate-smart agriculture, and livelihood diversification – to build community and smallholder producers' capacity in production areas adjacent to Southwest Tai National Park.

After completing the project's start-up activities, RA finalised a sub-grant agreement with CEFCA (the project's local implementing partner) to set up the agreed yearly work plan on project activities on the ground, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Outspan Côte d'Ivoire (the local company of Olam International, one of the two largest cocoa supply chain companies in the world) to align and agree on the work plan. Apart from finalizing these two sub-grant agreements, RA worked with CEFCA on **Activities 1.1**, which focused on organizing the Land Management Board (LMB) consultative workshop; **4.1**, related to the organisation of an on-site M&E workshop; **4.2**, centred on the design of the sampled M&E survey on a representative number of cocoa farmers; and **4.3**, production of a draft M&E plan. RA also conducted preparations over this reporting period for the project's on-site M&E workshop, which is scheduled to take place during the project launch workshop in October. During this workshop, CEFCA and Olam's technicians will also be trained on the project's M&E plan. In addition, RA drafted a communications strategy for the project, which includes a plan to communicate the project success stories through RA's online media outlets (including website blog, email publications, and social/thematic elements). The communications strategy will be shared with Darwin in November 2017.

Progress on each of the Activities scheduled for Quarter 2 (Q2) of Year 1 (as per the approved workplan) include:

1.1 Organize one consultative workshop jointly with CEFCA and OIPR (Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves) to create the LMB in coordination with local Tai authorities

In preparation for the workshop, CEFCA's senior technician, Kouassi Konan, conducted a visit to the project site at the end of August to help mobilize the stakeholders. As part of this visit, Konan met with the President of two cooperatives, *Cooperative Agricole Fraternité de Djouroutou (COOFADJOU)* and *Société cooperative Agricole des Producteurs de Petit Grabo et Youkou (SCAEPGY)*, as well as the *Sous-préfet* of Djouroutou, who is the local government representative

in the project region. RA's Senior West Africa Manager, Christian Mensah, who has first-hand experience of establishing a Land Management Board in Ghana, worked on the design for the LMB, the members' selection strategy, as well as the composition and roles of the Board. These will be shared for discussion at the project launch workshop to take place in October 2017.

2.1 Identify and engage cocoa farmers' cooperatives and their members, to register in the sustainable, climate-smart cocoa farming training program

Together with the support of Olam, 500 farmers (including women) from the COOFADJOU and SCAEPGY cocoa cooperatives have been identified and registered for the climate-smart cocoa farming training.

2.2 Design the training program on sustainable, climate-smart cocoa farming, ensuring it is adapted to the local context and maximizes female farmer participation

CEFCA and Olam are currently designing the training program (to be finalized by December 2017, Q3), which utilizes aspects of Olam cocoa livelihood charter ('OLC')¹, an in-house training program designed by Olam to improve cocoa yields, as well as RA's expertise in best climate-smart agricultural techniques. Olam, together with RA and the lead farmers, will also encourage participation from female farmers that had registered under Activity 2.1.

2.3 Identify lead farmers willing to set up demonstration plots, and engage them in the sustainable, climate-smart cocoa farming training program

At the end of Q2, Olam has already established three demonstration plots on best practices and use of fertilizer, one plot in *Djaoudi* and two in *Djouroutou*. CEFCA will assess the state of current plots to identify areas of improvement and will address these areas into the next quarter period, with possible addition of another plot in collaboration with Olam. This plot will be focused on best practices without use of fertilizers, as well as regeneration of old trees. In addition, CEFCA's assessment will demonstrate the benefits of some of the best practices that are not in place yet.

2.4 Implement the sustainable, climate-smart cocoa farming training program

Olam has already started implementing training sessions based on their OLC in Q2. In November 2017 (Q3), CEFCA technicians will join these training sessions, utilizing RA's expertise and reinforcing climate-smart aspects of the OLC program.

4.1 Hold an on-site Monitoring and Evaluation workshop for the project team (RA and partners), aimed at designing the project's Monitoring and Evaluation System

The M&E workshop is planned to take place during the second week of October 2017 in Côte d'Ivoire. All the preparatory work has been completed by Rainforest Alliance and CEFCA.

4.2 Design and apply at project inception and end-of-project, the Sampled Monitoring survey on a statistically representative sample of target cocoa farmers

At the end of Q2, the sample number of 137 cocoa farmers has been determined for the target. The survey instrument is also in the process of being adjusted and should be ready by mid-November 2017. In addition, the survey itself will be applied after that between end of November 2017 and early January 2018.

4.3 Implement the project's Monitoring and Evaluation System, and produce and deliver quarterly and annual technical, evidence-based project performance reports

The project's M&E system and plan has been finalized, including tracking templates, defined processes to monitor the workplan progress, the project's delivery of outputs, and achievement of outcome indicators has been designed. This semi-annual report has been prepared, with the input of RA's M&E specialist, and training has been provided to the project team to collect evidence for the project performance reports.

4.4 Formulate a Project Communication Strategy, and submit for donor approval

The communication strategy has been drafted by RA and will be submitted to Darwin, in early November.

¹ <http://olamgroup.com/sustainability/olam-livelihood-charter/>

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

During the first quarter period of the project, RA experienced several challenges on the ground. CEFCA requested to replace one of their technicians, Koffi Serges, by Alangba, which has already been approved by Darwin. Difficulties for the workshop preparations are expected, due to the poor condition of the roads and power outages in several villages within the project area. Yet, RA and CEFCA have taken these local conditions into account and will take measures to mitigate these setbacks on the ground for workshops to take place in the next phase of the project.

Secondly, RA anticipates delays in implementing Activities 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 under Output 2, due to high demand for cocoa seedlings in the region, which has led to a delay in obtaining them from the *Centre National de Recherche Agronomique (CNRA)* research facility. Activity 2.5, related to getting the cocoa tree seedling from CNRA to establish the nurseries, is now scheduled to take place in December 2017/January 2018, Q4 of Year 1, instead of Q3 as initially planned. In addition, RA anticipates that the seedlings will be ready for transplanting by June/July 2018 (Activity 2.6), which is now scheduled to take place in Q2 of Year 2, as opposed to starting in Q3 of Year 1. Lastly, Activity 2.7 will also be delayed to Q2 of Year 2.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Yes, there has been a change for the CEFCA technician.

Discussed with LTS:	Yes
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Formal change request submitted:	Yes
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Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes
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3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

RA respectfully requests a change request to adjust the project workplan for anticipated delays in implementing Activities 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7, related to cocoa and shade tree distribution.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. Additionally, if you were funded under R23 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**