



**Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2018)**

Project reference	24-021
Project title	Empowering Ivorian communities to conserve biodiversity and improve their livelihoods
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Côte d'Ivoire
Lead organisation	Rainforest Alliance (RA)
Partner(s)	Centre d'Etudes, Formations, Conseils et Audits (CEFCA)
Project leader	Sarah Fadika
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	1 April 2018 – 30 September 2018, HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	N/A

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).

The Rainforest Alliance (RA) is pleased to present the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Darwin Initiative with Half Year Report 2 (HYR 2) (April 1, 2018 - September 30, 2018) 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 Taï National Park.

The Landscape Management Board (LMB) consisting of 57 total members, including 14 women, and the 18 members of the main LMB executive committee, representing smallholder farmer representatives of the Cooperatives COOFADJOU and SCAEPGY, the Sous- Préfet of Djouroutou representative, the Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves (OIPR), and traditional authorities, made significant advances in the project's activities, such as the drafting of the Participatory Landscape Management Plan (PLMP).

Progress on each of the Activities scheduled for Quarter 1 (Q1) and Quarter 2 (Q2) of Year 2 (as per the approved workplan) include:

1.2 Organize 6 training sessions to train community members on the LMB's governance structure and procedures
RA worked with CEFCA on organizing LMB consultative meetings to establish the draft PLMP. Key elements of the draft plan include the elaboration of the environmental challenges and actions necessary to obtain a sustainable landscape around the Hana River amongst others. A series of three one-day central committee meetings were held in Djouroutou on February 20, June 8, and August 17, 2018, which 15 out of 19 members of the central committee attended. See Annex 1 for the draft PLMP plan and Annex 2 for photos for these meetings.

1.3 Facilitate 6 LMB Steering Committee meetings
One Steering Committee meeting was held in Abidjan in (Q1) of Year 2 on May 25, 2018, with the Sous Prefet, OIPR, OLAM, and CEFCA, with the next meeting scheduled in Abidjan in November. Olam's cocoa sustainability team held a presentation during this meeting, which outlined revisions of the progress on project activities and next steps in the calendar. The meeting presentations and the revised calendar for completion of project activities is shown in Annex 3.

1.4 Document lessons learnt and challenges from the LMB's operation, and share them during the Steering Committee meetings as well as in the mid-project and end-of-project monitoring and evaluation workshops
Lessons learnt since the Year 1 report were discussed during the Steering Committee meeting. Decisions regarding the PLMP coming from thematic sessions held at the village committee level are now being analyzed and discussed at the executive level during Steering Committee meetings held in Abidjan. Feedback from the sessions are then shared back with the village committees. In November, we are hoping to bring in more staff to work on the PLMP.

1.5 Provide technical assistance to leaders and other relevant stakeholders living in communities adjacent to the Taï National Park, on the formulation of a PLMP at the village level

Key village activist associations such as AVCD (Association Villageoise pour la Conservation et le Développement) along with expertise of some participants on other initiatives in the region such as the GIZ PRODEMIR project on livelihood improvement with pork farming participated in drafting the PLMP and were able to establish and define

the challenges that are affecting their environment and list potential solutions, like reducing deforestation resulting from the Palm Oil industry by including village conservation groups and other stakeholders in major discussions.

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

As of September 2018, a total of 527 farmers have been trained in climate-smart agriculture techniques using modules, which have been shared in the previous report, in each of the six communities adjacent to Southwest Tai National Park – Diaoudi, Beoué, Djouroutou, Poutou, Youkou, and Petit-Grabo. Each of the farmers from the communities have been trained on six demonstration plots and learned to replicate best agricultural practices during cocoa production. In May 2018, with co-financing from Olam, 40,000 cocoa tree seedlings and 25,000 shade tree plants have been distributed and planted by the farmers.

As RA continues this project, adjustments will be made to the productivity module as all stakeholders involved in the cocoa supply chain in Côte d'Ivoire are required by the Conseil du Café Cacao (CCC), the regulatory body in charge of cocoa and coffee trade in Côte d'Ivoire, to suspend all activities related to productivity improvement and yield increase of cocoa supply from October 2018.

During this reporting period, a local consulting agency focused on farmer training, LOCAGRI, further refined the current governance procedures to improve compliance and record-keeping of the cocoa cooperatives' practices, both at an organization and farm level. A three-day training session took place in San-Pedro (South-Western region of Tai) from July 23, 2018 to July 25, 2018. Ten lead farmers and the two group administrators from COOFADJOU and SCAEPGY attended the training sessions, giving them the opportunity to work with the trainers to reinforce their understanding of CSA techniques. A capacity building report including attendance and pictures of the three-day training session from July 23-25, 2018 are included in Annex 4

2.5 Engage CRNA and SODEFOR on the establishment of nurseries; and 2.6 Coordinate the distribution of cocoa and shade-tree seedlings, so that it responds to farmer needs, according to project-endorsed sustainable, climate-smart practices

In May 2018, with co-financing from Olam, 40,000 cocoa tree seedlings were distributed and planted by the farmers. To account for the CCC's suspension of activities, RA has hired a private company to produce the shade trees nurseries, which has had some delays and issues on quotas and the delivery schedule which has been addressed by Olam and CEFCA. To date, 25,000 shade tree plants have been distributed and planted. A sample of 50 farmers were surveyed in February 2018 to account for their needs in terms of shade trees, for example, the number of shade trees they require as well as the species preferred to continue pursuing climate smart practices. These results are available in Annex 5.

In collaboration with the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) project, *Chaine d'approvisionnement zéro déforestation*, which protects High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) landscapes in the Tai landscape, 2,000 additional shade trees have been distributed to farmers of the Darwin project, which have been funded by GIZ. These shade trees have helped in preventing further delays for this project.

2.7 Coordinate the delineation and establishment of the biological corridor Buffer Zone along Hana River

As this project only has three farmers on the Buffer zone of the Hana River, CEFCA has tried connecting the Darwin project with the *Hana River project* of Cocoonet exporting company. This is a challenging task, as it can be difficult to coordinate farmers working on different projects as a sense of trader competition is present. Rainforest Alliance is currently working on organizing a meeting with the Darwin project's farmers to see who would be interested in supporting the Hana River corridor efforts.

2.9 Deliver the beekeeping and chicken-rearing training program to at least 82 cocoa farmers and/or other adults

In the Tai region, in addition to the two chicken rearing sites which have been already established in Year 1, an expert from the School of Agriculture was hired this reporting period to set up five beekeeping hives per site, with an aim of setting up 20 hives in total (10 per site). The program's training module and pictures taken during the training session are available in Annex 6

3.1 Design environmental awareness-raising posters in local language, and distribute 7,500 copies, reaching 30% of the wider 5 Tai communities of Beoue, Djouroutou, Petit Grabo, Poutou, and Youkou

200 more copies of the awareness raising posters have been distributed during the sensitisation campaigns.

3.3. Organize 18 environmental education awareness meetings for 1,250 community members, jointly with the LMB, Olam, and OIPR.

In this reporting period, seven environmental sensitisations were held in Diaoudi, Youkou, Beoué, Joachimkro, Petit-Grabo, Danielkro and N'Guessankro reaching 160 people, outlined in Annex 7.

3.4 Design the content of environmental awareness-raising radio programs

The radio program has been designed to discuss the Tai National Park and its impact on biodiversity and livelihood improvement of the population. It was designed on May 2, 2018 at the Steering Committee meeting in Abidjan and

has been broadcasted on May 25, 2018. **3.5 Organize 6 environmental awareness-raising radio programs, involving OIPR, CEFCA, and community leaders**

To date, two radio programs have been delivered in the wider San Pedro region, with the goal of reaching 24,000 people in total. There is no radio station present in the five communities of the project, so recordings of the radio programs will be played at community sensitisation workshops in the sections of Beoué, Djouroutou, Petit Grabo, Poutou, and Youkou so that actors of the project can become empowered by the positive impact they are creating in their communities and seek to revitalize their landscapes. A sample of the recording is attached in Annex 8

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

The draft Performance Monitoring and Environmental Plan (PMEP) has been finalized in Q1 of Year 2, which is included in Annex 9. The PMEP analyses the results of the data in the M&E survey from 201 cocoa farms.

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

The survey tool and findings of the baseline analysis, based on a survey applied on a representative sample of 201 farmers, has been analysed by Rainforest Alliance’s M&E system and are described in Annex 10.

4.3 Implement the project’s Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system, and produce and deliver quarterly and annual technical, evidence-based project performance reports

The project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system has been in place. Results from the baseline analysis presented above indicate that the project is relevant to tackle several socio-environmental issues of the targeted communities which provide the urgency of improving production practices to protect the environment and insure alternative livelihood solutions to the community

4.5 Produce the project’s semi-annual online news piece and publicize it through email and social/thematic networks to relevant in-country and global organizations and stakeholders

Olam is supporting RA in gathering source information from the beneficiaries and farmers of the project in the field. The RA Communications Department is also assembling already collected information and waiting upon feedback from an RA field technician in the Tai region to produce an article, which is scheduled to be published in four weeks.

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.

The project does not have an important number of farmers that are located near the Hana River to build up a significant corridor around the water body. CEFCA has approached the *Hana River project* in the region in June 2018, to propose a collaboration, but has received no response from their project manager, outlined in an email in Annex 11.

Additionally, there is an issue with the shade tree provider SOBETEK, some of the plants delivered by the local provider are unhealthy upon delivery, causing multiple plants to die, putting the project off schedule. CEFCA and Olam will assess if we must continue with this provider or discontinue the contract.

The new CCC order to cancel cocoa regeneration activities in Cote d’Ivoire will partially impact our climate-smart agriculture training curriculum and will result in a logframe change. However, the budget will remain unchanged as the cocoa nurseries’ activities budget, which is co-financed by Olam, can be replaced by shade trees and further technical assistance on composting. Shade trees remains an important path of this project to achieve livelihood improvement together with the new Forestry law which supports tree ownership.

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

Discussed with LTS:	Yes/No
Formal change request submitted:	Yes/No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes/No

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: £

N/A

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

N/A