



**Darwin Initiative/D+ Project
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2019)**

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)	Reporting Period: April 1, 2019 – September 30, 2019 HYR3
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) project ***“Empowering Ivorian communities to conserve biodiversity and improve their livelihoods”***, financed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs’ Darwin Initiative is now in its final stage of implementation and this project has been successful in engaging the local communities and smallholder farmers to build their capacities in sustainable landscape management, additional livelihood programs and climate smart agricultural practices.

Activities 1.1, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.8, 4.1 and 4.4. were completed and reported on in previous reporting periods (see HYR1, AR1, HYR2, AR2). Progress of activities in Quarter 1(Q1) and Quarter 2 (Q2) of Year 3 was as follows:

1.2. Organize 6 training sessions to train community members on the LMB’s governance structure and procedures: 2 central committee meetings were held on 23rd of May in Djouroutou and on the 25th of June to discuss challenges and address the PLMP, with specific actions on the issue of non-organised cutting of plants for cultural, spiritual or medicinal use, see Annexe 1 for the list of participants.

1.3. Facilitate 6 LMB Steering Committee meetings: The 3rd meeting of the steering committee was held on May 31, 2019 at the premises of OLAM in Abidjan. The meeting focused on project activities and prominent amongst these were discussions in relation to the provision of shade trees by the provider SOBETEK to compensate for the losses that occurred in Year 2, the environmental sensitisation activities in schools under the MCFEA (Mitsubishi Corporate Funds for Africa) funding and the planning of the M&E data collection.

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 evaluation workshops: The lessons learnt have been shared with Darwin in the previous report and during LMB consultative meetings with all stakeholders.

2.4. Implement the sustainable, climate-smart cocoa farming training program: 7 topics on CSA practices were developed for Farmer Field School (FFS) Training under the supervision of OLAM staff. Trainings were held from June to October 2019. 287 farmers (14 women and 273 men) trained on topics such as best agroforestry practices, child labor, harvest and post-harvest operations over the past six months.

2.5. Engage CRNA and SODEFOR on the establishment of nurseries: In addition to the shade trees already produced by Olam and SOBETEK, 10,000 more trees have been produced. In total over the last six months, 33 000 shade trees plants have been produced and are being distributed to the farmers.

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: As highlighted above, with a third-year renewal of co-financing from MCFEA, the farmers received the training necessary to successfully plant and maintain these trees in their cocoa farms in line with Climate-Smart Agriculture principles.

2.7. Coordinate the delineation and establishment of the biological corridor Buffer Zone along River Hana: As explained in the last half year report, we do not have enough Olam farmers to build a corridor along the Hana River. RA therefore approached Cocoanect, who is developing a corridor along the Hana River through a joint project with GIZ and KFW. Two follow up emails have been sent with no success on our attempt to organise joint actions and collaborate.

2.9. Deliver the beekeeping and chicken-rearing training program to at least 82 cocoa farmers and/or other adults: Over the last six months, six trainings sessions were organized with chicken rearing pilot farmers and one follow-up training in April by a hired consultant for beekeeping. 20 hives in different locations are established within Youkou and Djouroutou.

3.1. Design environmental awareness-raising posters in local language, and distribute 7,500 copies, reaching 30% of the wider 5 Taï communities of Beoué, Djouroutou, Petit Grabo, Poutou and Youkou: As previously reported, 12 additional environmental awareness posters have been designed. 3,500 copies of the posters have been printed and distributed to the farmers during awareness raising campaigns. In addition to the 5,000 copies printed and distributed by CEFCA in Year 1, a total of 8,500 copies of different posters have been distributed by the project so far.

3.2. Design training materials and agenda for the environmental education meetings aimed at key community members: The highlight of this reporting period was an exciting sensitisation campaign beginning in June 2019 organised with the backing of local authorities in complementary action with the MCFEA project. Olam was a strong partner in our efforts to engage children in local schools through these two programs, at both the school-level using the "The Greenest School" contest and at the individual-level, using a child-focused conservation education program. The criteria of evaluation of the schools were developed with Olam and Rainforest Alliance, see **Annexe 2** for details.

3.3. Organize 18 environmental education awareness meetings for 1,250 community members with the LMB, Olam and OIPR: Environmental education awareness sessions were organized in coordination with the *Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves* (OIPR) and *Société de Développement des Forêts* (SODEFOR) in villages and in schools. In total **997** community members (including children, women, and the elderly) participated in awareness-raising campaigns around climate change issues.

As explained above, to create awareness within elementary schools, RA and Olam jointly nominate and award one school as "*The Greenest School*". The goal of this contest was to foster friendly competition and encourage environmentally responsible behaviour. The first competition launched on June 22, 2019 in Djouroutou, with five rural public schools participating. Many of the farmers in the participating cooperatives have children who attend these schools. As part of this program, students gained a better understanding of climate change and the important CSA work their parents are doing.

3.4. Design the content of environmental awareness-raising radio programs: The next radio programs will be held in November 2019.

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 San Pedro region, with the goal of reaching 24,000 people in total.

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 was applied in September 2019. Data systematization into OLAM software OFIS is in process to be finalized for the next report.

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 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system has been in place and supports the development of all project reports.

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: Rainforest Alliance communication team is currently preparing for the end of October Darwin initiative newsletter on the theme: Tradition, Culture & Conservation which will describe the role of the project's local communities and the relationship with their natural environments and culture.

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 partnership with local NGO Impactum is yet to be finalized. This is because their quotation of service provided was too high and RA's finance and project management team are in discussions with them to review the implementation of this deliverable at a lower rate to fit into the available Darwin project funds. The project, however, is finding ways to incorporate this component with possible cofinancing of the CEPF project so that synergies and exchange of experience between landscapes are created and a solid follow up of the action plan is established after project end.

Another problem during this period was flooding of the chicken raising site in Youkou due to heavy rains. A nearby river burst its banks and killed 60 chicks, and 17 chicken were stolen. The project is currently thinking of changing the micro-project site.

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

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: £

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.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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

No