



Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31st October 2020)

Project reference	24 025
Project title	Community reforestation for biodiversity, livelihood diversification and culture
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	East Timor
Lead organisation	Charles Sturt University
Partner(s)	Group Training Northern Territory and Carbon Offsets Timor Leste World Vision Timor-Leste RAEBIA Australian Landcare International
Project leader	<i>Joanne Millar</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	<i>HYR4</i>
Project website/blog/social media	https://communityreforestationtimorleste.wordpress.com/

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable.

Output 1 Expansion of tree plantations and agroforestry development

The last six months has been the dry season in Timor Leste so watering and weeding has been the main activity for the 33 farmers who planted 18,595 new tree seedlings over 20 hectares in early 2020 in Laclubar, Soibada, Manatuto Vila and Viqueque (FCOTI quarterly report). The additional 3,000 trees planted in a communal area of Manatuto Vila are being monitored by field staff. See story at;

[https://wordpress.com/block-editor/post/communityreforestationtimorleste.wordpress.com/398.\)](https://wordpress.com/block-editor/post/communityreforestationtimorleste.wordpress.com/398.)

Tree plantations now cover 91 ha with 146 households involved and one high school. In May 2020, FCOTI identified farmers and potential sites for establishing nurseries for planting that will occur in early 2021. The list of farmers who are establishing nurseries this year is presented in the table below, with a few recent photos here;



Table 1. Nurseries This Year for Planting Next Year – Laclubar

No	Names	Village	Total Seedlings
1	Adelino Lequi-Wain	Orlalan/Diric-un	3000
2	Mario da Costa	Orlalan/ Pualaca	1500
3	Jose Pereira	Funar	2000
4	Jacinto de Jesus	Batara/Bahareduk	3000
5	Hipolita Pereira da Cunha	Manelima	2000
6	Romao Soares	Orlalan/Lei	2000
7	Pedro C. Soares	Orlalan/Torilalan	1500
	Total		15,000

Table 2. Nurseries This Year for Planting Next Year – Soibada

No	Names	Village	Total Seedlings
1	Virissimo do Rogerio da Costa	Manlala	1000
2	Luiza Mateus Cardozo	Manlala	2000
3	Palmira da Costa	Leohat	1000
4	Angelica da Silva	Leohat	2000
5	Sebastiao Soares	Fatumakerek	2000
6	Bento Soares	Manufahi	2000
	Total		10,000

The following farmers have volunteered to plant 25,000 trees over 39 hectares in 2021.

Table 3. Farmers who will plant seedlings in 2021

No	Names	Hamlet	Village	Post
1	Adelino Lequi-Wain	Diric-Un	Orlalan	Laclubar
2	Lino Soares	Diric-Un	Orlalan	Laclubar
3	Claudina Soares	Diric-Un	Orlalan	Laclubar
4	Luis da Cunha	Diric-Un	Orlalan	Laclubar
5	Vitor Soares	Diric-Un	Orlalan	Laclubar
6	Onorio Barreto	Nauleen	Orlalan	Laclubar
7	Lucas Soares	Torilalan	Orlalan	Laclubar
8	Armindo Soares	Are Ain	Batara	Laclubar
9	Agostinho Malilequi de Jesus	Are Ain	Batara	Laclubar
10	Antoninho da Costa	Are Ain	Batara	Laclubar
11	Jeronimo Soares	Are Ain	Batara	Laclubar
12	Fernando Soares	Are Ain	Batara	Laclubar
13	Orlando de Jesus	Lawado	Funar	Laclubar
14	Flavionos Soares	Lafulau	Manelima	Laclubar
15	Francisco Amaral	Lafulau	Manelima	Laclubar
16	Rodolfo da Costa	Manlala	Manlala	Soibada
17	Marcas da Costa	Manlala	Manlala	Soibada

18	Joao da Costa	Manlala	Manlala	Soibada
19	Graciela Cecilia Martinha	Malus Hun	Leohat	Soibada
20	Antonito da Silva	Malus Hun	Leohat	Soibada
21	Luis dsa Costa	Malus hun	Leohat	Soibada
22	Bento Soares	Teras	Manufahi	Soibada
23	Rofino Lay	Teras	Manufahi	Soibada
24	Sebastiao Soares	Sasahi	Fatumakerek	Soibada
25	Albino Pinheiro	Sasahi	Fatumakerek	Soibada

Output 2 Establishment of farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR) in eroded areas

There has been no further interest from farmers to practice FMNR due to the labour and time involved and because FMNR sites were not included in the carbon accounting. Hence, there has been no visible change to forest production from FMNR areas.

A change request form has been submitted to reduce FMNR target area from 15 to 5 ha and change some of the indicators and assumptions. The area of FMNR is determined by GPS measurements not satellite imagery. Changes in farmer's forest management skills will be determined in the final household survey by asking respondents and field staff to what extent their skills have improved on a scale from 0 to 100%. This addresses comments 4 and 5 by the reviewer of the 2020 Annual Report.

Output 3. Forest carbon certification

The Halo Verde/Darwin project was registered with Plan Vivo Foundation and the Registration Certificate issued in June 2020 (see below). This is the first carbon project in Timor Leste to receive Plan Vivo Foundation carbon certification! FCOTI then coordinated with the CSU carbon expert Jorge Ramos to prepare the Annual Report to Plan Vivo which was approved in August 2020. An account is now being set up with Markit to enable carbon certificates to be traded on the international carbon market. See blog post at;

<https://wordpress.com/block-editor/post/communityreforestationtimorleste.wordpress.com/430>

The Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Agreement with farmers underwent some changes based on discussion between FCOTI and CSU and Plan Vivo. PES Agreement drafts in both English and Tetum were revised for farmers signatures which occurred in August 2020 as shown below.



The additional 2021 planted areas shown in Table 3 will be included in the certification pool as part of the annual carbon crediting development program the project has in place.

Output 4. Biodiversity research and education

We were unsuccessful in our biodiversity research grant application to the National Geographic Society for US\$22,000 to cover costs of a month long survey. FCOTI submitted a proposal worth US\$100,000 to the Secretary of State for the Environment that included expansion of tree planting and research on biodiversity. FCOTI was informed by the Secretary of State for the Environment of Timor-Leste that forwarded the request to several leading donors in Timor-Leste such as DFAT, USAID, European Union and UNDP. UNDP has since requested a proposal but the outcome will not be deliverable within the timeframe of the Darwin Project. Hence, a change request form has been submitted to delete targets for comprehensive research from the logic frame. This addresses comment 2 in the annual report review.

An ecology learning guide has been developed by Joanne Millar and Jorge Ramos for use by the school nature club (copy available on request). Covid travel restrictions have delayed delivery of the program but field staff will run learning activities with the school and community in November and December. Evaluation of changes in ecological awareness and learning will take place in January to March 2021 during household survey and nature club events.

Output 5. Livelihoods impacts determined

FCOTI has been visiting women beneficiaries of the Micro Grant program to document how they are using the loans (see Annual Report Year 3) and determine the repayment of loans back to FCOTI. Since June 2020, 8 of the 10 women have repaid all their micro loans to FCOTI. One of the two remaining women has paid more than 50% while the other one has not been able to repay. FCOTI team is providing regular visit and assistance in order to revive her business. Her business has been affected by COVID 19.

General micro business of these project beneficiaries has been impacted by the recent Corona Virus pandemic because public transportation has been suspended and schools and churches have been closed. This lack of movement of people and gathering of people has affected the demand for their services and products. Several of the participants had promised to repay 50% of the money but they have not been able to do so due to the impact to their business. Most of them continue to need training in financial bookkeeping. FCOTI will do another round of training to participants.

The final household survey questionnaire is currently being drafted and will be submitted for CSU ethics approval. FCOTI field staff will have to conduct the survey as there are no funds left to employ consultants or students to do the survey. Drs Joanne Millar and Jennifer Bond will mentor the field staff in survey technique and will monitor progress. Data will be analysed by CSU and FCOTI.

A focus group discussion will be held after the survey to gauge community attitudes to environmental and social changes that have occurred during the Darwin project, and what they would like to see happen in the future.

The first journal paper from the project has just been published in the ***Forests, Trees and Livelihoods*** journal. The title is "Livelihood benefits and challenges of community reforestation in Timor Leste: implications for smallholder carbon forestry schemes". Findings are based on the 2017 household survey and 2018 indepth interviews with project participants and non-participants.

Citation: Jennifer Bond, Joanne Millar & Jorge Ramos (2020) Livelihood benefits and challenges of community reforestation in Timor Leste: implications for smallholder carbon forestry schemes, *Forests, Trees and Livelihoods*, 29:3, 187-204, DOI: 10.1080/14728028.2020.1798817

Pre-publication copy is available at; https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Joanne_Millar/research

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

We have been unable to conduct a scientifically designed biodiversity survey in the project area as originally planned due to underestimating the costs. We have learnt that it is very difficult to get funding for biodiversity research in Timor Leste even though biodiversity has not been adequately researched and unknown species are yet to be discovered. Timor Leste is a small country with a young government that is slowly signing up to international biodiversity and climate change conventions and developing its own policies. For this reason, international donors are not familiar with the country and are often told that there is no biodiversity in Timor Leste due to forest fragmentation. However, our basic monitoring and the limited research that has been carried out in protected areas shows there are diverse bird, bat, frog and reptile species. FCOTI will continue to pursue funding for a landscape biodiversity assessment to inform landscape planning and management.

2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

We were very lucky to complete the carbon validation process before covid travel restrictions. The rest of the registration process occurred online with Jorge Ramos and Ben Bardon working from Australia, Alex Sarmiento in Timor Leste and Luke from Plan Vivo in Scotland.

Joanne Millar was planning to go to TL in June/July to facilitate school nature club activities, however she has completed an ecology guidebook that FCOTI field staff will deliver with the Catholic secondary school. The final household survey will have to be conducted by field staff due to covid travel restrictions.

There has been no impact on the budget.

2c. 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: £

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. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

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

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.

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 DO NOT send these in the same email.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to 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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**