

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2011)

Project Ref No	18-010
Project Title	Tools for the sustainable harvest of Maya Nut (Mesoamerica)
Country(ies)	México, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras
UK Organisation	The Natural History Museum, London
Collaborator(s)	Maya Nut Institute
Project Leader	Alex Monro
Report date	31/10/2011
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	2
Project website	

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

1.1 Course content and structure planned in consultation with partners

Completed.

1.2 Course materials produced

Completed but requiring further adaptations.

1.3 Trial course implemented, materials & contents tested/ improved if necessary

The first course was used as a test of the course materials. The result is that a number of modifications were made to adapt the materials to rural women. This was especially the case with respect to data collection (see point 4 below).

1.4 120 Mesoamericans from 20 village forest committees trained in field data gathering for calculation of sustainable Mayanut seed harvest levels and the biodiversity associated with Mayanut forests

Training is ongoing. To date 42 women from 5 communities have been trained.

1.5 30 Mesoamericans from 20 village forest committees trained in technical aspects of forest management: logical basis and basic interpretation of the gathered data as tools for sustainable Mayanut seed harvest levels

Training is ongoing. To date 42 women from 5 communities have been trained.

1.6 30 Mesoamericans from 10 village forest committees trained in marketing and accounting

Training is ongoing. To date 30 women from 10 communities have been trained.

1.7 Basic forest inventories of major faunal groups associated to absence/presence of Mayanut trees undertaken.

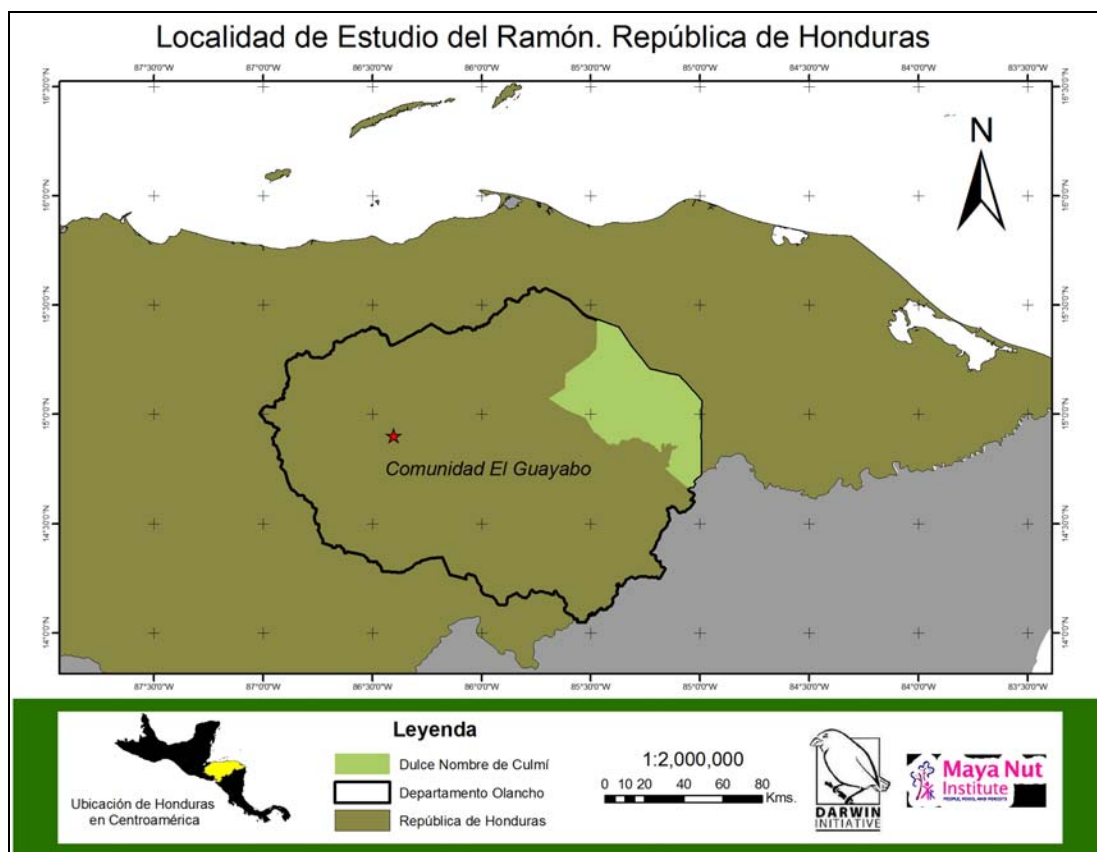
The original planned methodology for Sampling of the fauna associated with the Maya nut forests was not feasible. We are currently developing a survey tool to obtain this information

from hunters in participating communities. We will have the faunal association information by the next report cycle.

1.9 Field data compiled in each country and analyzed for calculation of sustainable Mayanut seed harvest levels by partners

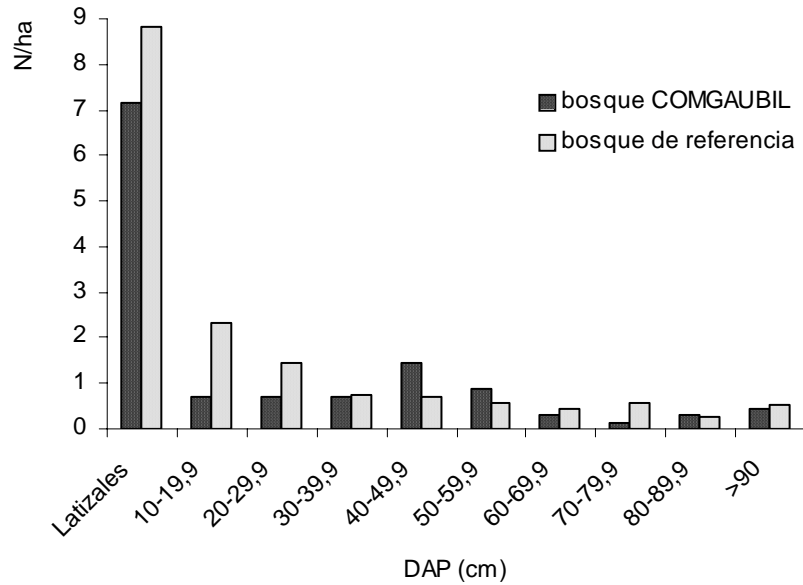
To date five sites have been surveyed:

El Guayabo, Honduras:



The methodology was developed in collaboration with the German development consultancy, PRORENA with women from the cooperative's Guayabo Man and the Biosphere Reserve of Rio Platano.

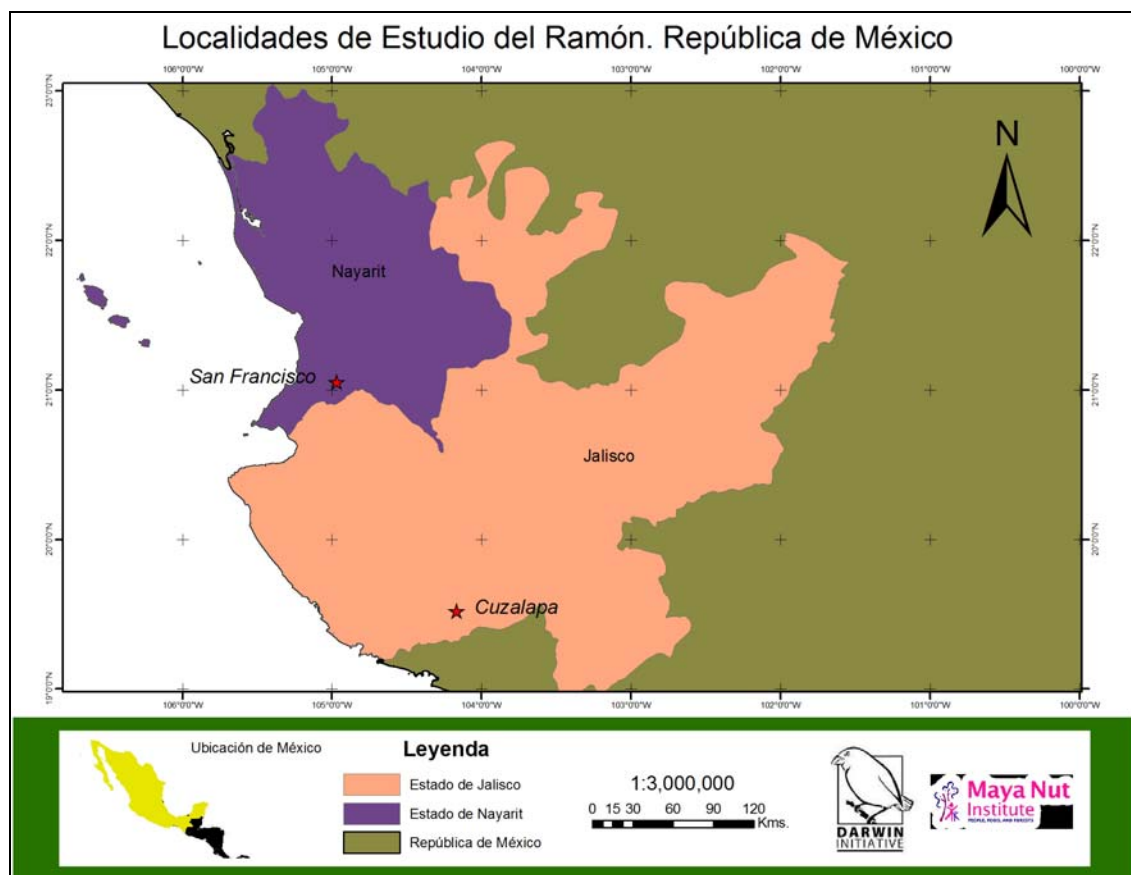
The COMGUABIL group has a management plan for timber harvesting and so had already compiled data on Maya Nut tree distribution and size classes. , therefore it was necessary to make an inventory, but we used the existing database. This database was constructed a comparative graph structure tree diameter maya nut in disturbed forest (with timber harvesting) and undisturbed forest (no extractive activity), and as a result we obtained the following chart which compares the actively logged forest (bosque COMGAUBIL) with a reference forest where no extraction takes place.



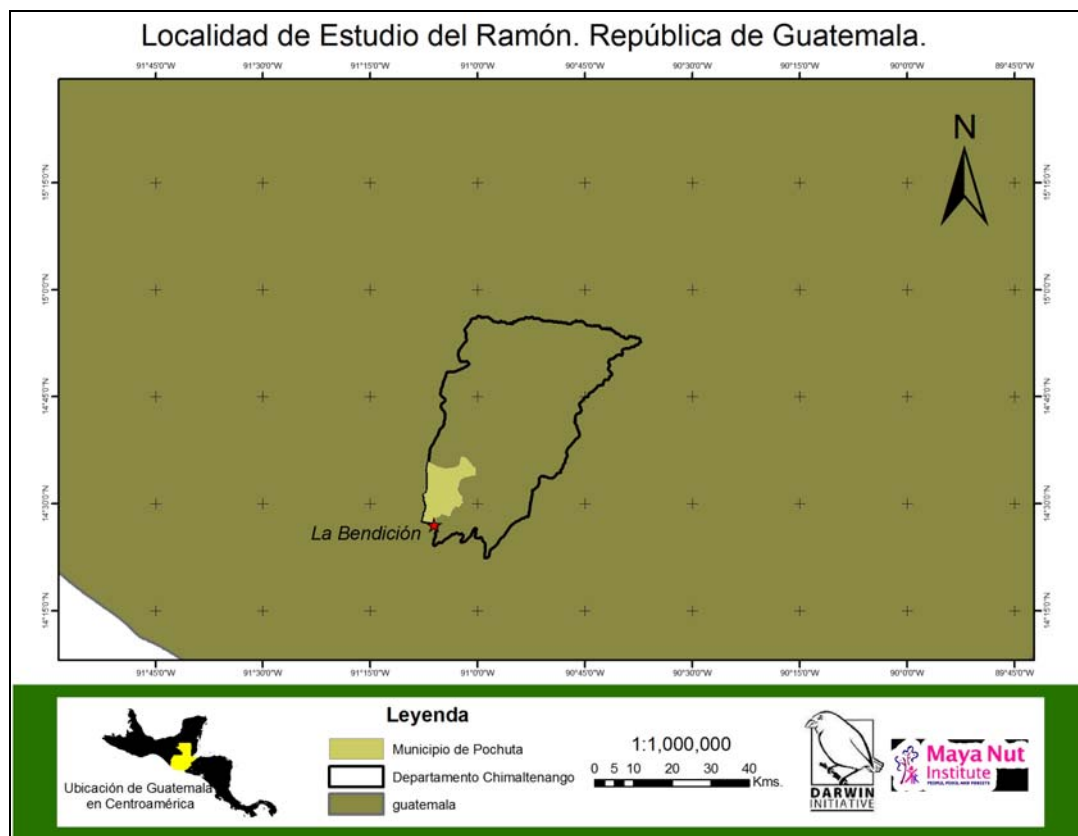
Abundance data by size-class for Maya Nut in the COMGUABIL cooperative of El Guayabo contrasted with a referente, non-logged reference forest.

Cuzalapa, Jalisco, y San Francisco, Nayarit, Mexico:

Both sites are still in process of collecting data. For these two groups the implementation of the methodology was challenging. this provides us with valuable input to further adapt and simplify the methodology.

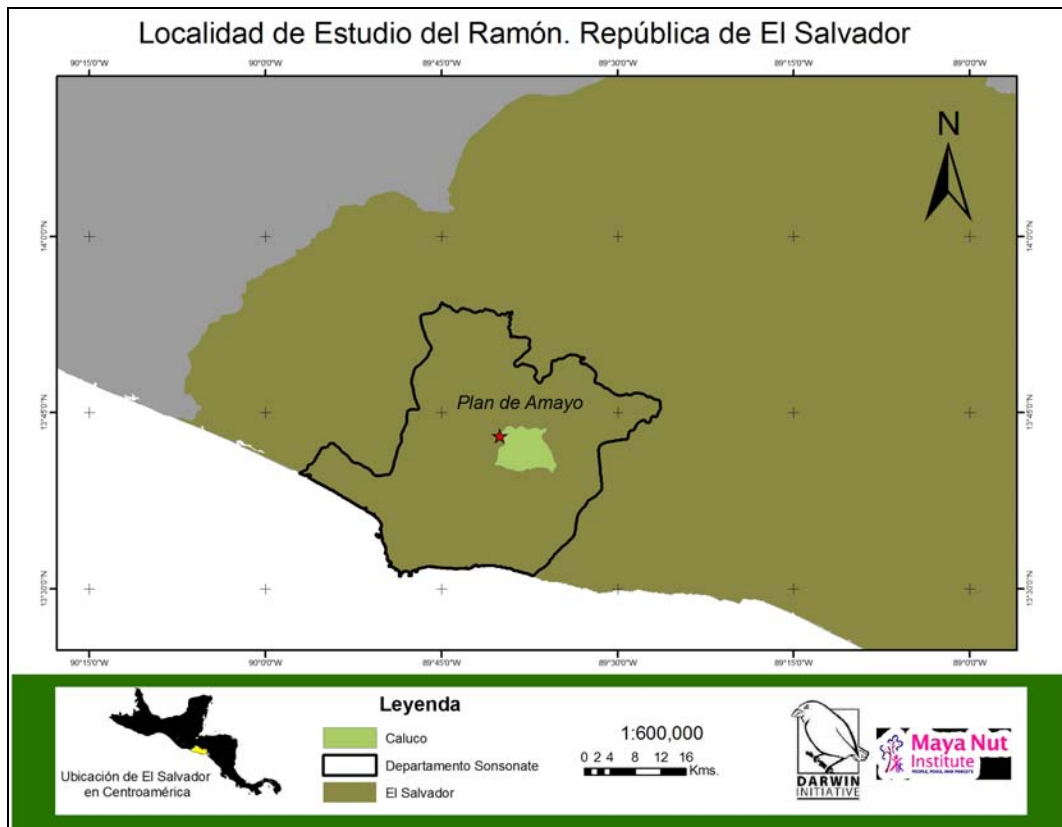


Pochuta, Chimaltenango, Guatemala:



The first training course was held with the Committee for the Development of Rural Women CODEMUR. The field data sampling was impossible for a variety of reasons and the field methodology not implemented. This group is comprised of 16 members of the agricultural estate of La Bendición which includes Maya Nut trees in cultivated land, agroforest and natural forest. Traps were established to assess seed production. Unfortunately these were stolen or used by other community members, so only data on tree height and diameter was obtained.

Plan de Amayo, Sonsonate, El Salvador:



The implementation of the field methodology was carried out in August and September 2011 and participants are still compiling the data obtained in the field. For this reason we do not yet have this information.

In summary the methodology developed and training has not yielded the desired results or data. This data is important to assess the effectiveness of the project and to establish sustainable harvest guidelines. The problem lies with the methodology developed which is too complicated for rural women to apply. We will therefore need to develop a more simple methodology that women groups are more easily able to understand and apply. Currently we are developing a three-step methodology that women can collect more easily and which can be integrated by the project team. These methods have been designed so that they can be adjusted to meet the experiences and abilities of the communities concerned.

2.1 Draft position agreements for 20 local forest areas by year 2, revised by year 3

Not yet begun.

3.2 Undertake molecular analysis of Mayanut genetic diversity.

In July 2011 we interviewed for the post of laboratory technician / research assistant for this aspect of the project. We were very pleased to appoint Tonya Lander, a Post Doc at INRA Avignon in France. She was only able to begin in January 2011 and the project schedule and budget was adjusted accordingly (with DI agreement). We have already collected over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the molecular samples needed and the remainder will be obtained between November 2011 and April 2012. We have also managed to reach an agreement with the Ken Oyama of the Mexican research institute UNAM Ecologia whereby they share the molecular tools necessary for assessing population variation in Maya Nut (microsatellites). This aspect of the project seems, therefore to be on track.

4 Monitoring survey of harvest levels, income, biodiversity undertaken at project inception and end.

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

Because of delays and inconsistencies with the development of the initial field methodology we do not have consistent information yet for all field sites. This however is in the process of being rectified and we have agreed to use a simplified methodology and to adapt the calculation of a number of parameters to meet local conditions. There were also some communication issues between different countries but these have been resolved by Anaité.

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 or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**