

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

Project reference 24-022

Project title Strengthening Forest Management in Mali

Country(ies)/territory(ies) Mali

Lead organisation TREE AID

Partner(s) Sahel Eco

Project leader Maurice Koné now replaced by Amadou Tangara

Report date and number (e.g., HYR3) HYR1

Project website/blog/social media etc.

<https://www.treeaid.org.uk/2017/strengthening-forest-management-mali/>

<https://www.facebook.com/TREEAID/>

@TREEAID = twitter account

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 project is on track and has already made good progress against the planned outputs. Below is a summary of progress against the agreed timetable (showing only activities that were intended to begin in Q1)

Output 1 Communities are undertaking best-practice NRM activities by 2020.

1.3 Define and demarcate land for protection and deferred grazing

39 ha of land for protection has been identified and demarcated.

1.5 150 ha are defined and enriched with threatened, indigenous species.

The year one target of 25 ha defined and enriched has been reached and even exceeded with 39 ha of forest now defined and enriched with 3,000 gum trees. 22 ha are in Sutebwo forest and 15 ha in Duwa forest. The planting was carried out collectively by members of the cooperatives Farakunna and Hirosin.

1.6 Agroforestry techniques and tree planting carried out on 3,623 hectares of land

Agroforestry planting was carried out by individual farmers on their own land as well as at the community level on communal land (e.g. schools, town halls, public squares). In total 10,000 trees were planted of various species such as baobab, cashew, eucalyptus, mango and locust. GPS mapping is currently taking place to determine the area.

Out of the 13,000 trees planted to date 5,608 are indigenous species and 7,392 exotic species. The low number of indigenous tree species planted is due to the lack of native species available from the supplier. Setting up community nurseries later this year will allow us to produce indigenous seedlings, restoring the balance between native and exotic species.

1.8 GPS mapping of site locations and data shared with the department of environment.

The GPS data for the 39ha of enriched forest is available and has been shared with the relevant stakeholders.

Output 2 Strengthened capacities of stakeholders (municipal authorities, technical services, village communities) to manage the Duwa and Sutèbwo forests.

2.1 Training in data collection and monitoring SWC, ANR and planting activities for 41 Village Extension Officers

The selection of the 41 Village Extension Officers is underway but not yet completed as recruitment of suitable officers has taken longer than expected. To be selected as a Village Extension Officer, candidates must meet certain criteria such as being between 18 and 45 years old, be literate, live permanently in the village, be approved by the rest of the villages and to be communicative and available. After the final selection in the coming weeks, all the Officers will be trained in SWC, ANR and planting activities.

2.3 Training in ANR techniques for 2,672 people (30% women) trained

Between the 2nd and 15th August 2017, the two Forest Resources Management Advisors organised training in assisted natural regeneration (ANR) techniques in 16 villages. Awareness raising sessions focused first on the objectives and importance of ANR; the principles and techniques as well as the benefits. In total 346 people, including 107 (29%) women have been sensitized to good practice of RNA techniques and the associated benefits. The next stage involved practical demonstrations on the good practice of ANR in the field, where participants learned how to identify shoots and how to take care of them. The participants also learned actions needed to upkeep trees such as pruning, weeding and the input of organic matter to stimulate growth. 600 people participated in this practical training.

2.8. Training workshops on community forest managements texts (covering the forestry code for NRM, management principles for forests, and transfer of powers to municipalities)

This activity is behind schedule due to the change in Project Lead (detailed below). With the new Project Lead now in place, we expect to be caught up with the training in the next quarter.

Project Start up, Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Project Start Up workshop (Partner Agreement, M&E Plan, Security and Response Plan), including at community level

A start up meeting was held on 27th July 2017 in the office of the implementing partner (Sahel Eco) between TREE AID and Sahel Eco staff. The purpose of the meeting was to remind participants of Darwin's expectations and also their responsibilities in the project. During the meeting, Sahel Eco staff were trained in the Darwin and TREE AID narrative and financial reporting tool. At the end of the meeting, a detailed plan for the next quarter (Jul-Sep) had been developed.

The official launch of the project took place on 18th September 2017, under the chairmanship of the prefect of the circle of Tominian. It was attended by the mayors of the six municipalities involved in the project, representatives of the cooperatives of Farakunna and Hirosin, representatives of the Water and Forest services, NGOs involved in the circle of Tominian and local radio stations. The ceremony aimed to inform the different stakeholders of the project including: the context, the approach, the duration, the source of funding, the activities planned, etc. The event was also an occasion for the local communities to reiterate the support to the project.

2 Recruitment of new staff positions

The project team is composed of a part-time TREE AID Project Lead, a part-time Sahel Eco Coordinator (30%), 2 full-time Sahel Eco Forest Resources Management Advisors and part-time Sahel Eco and TREE AID administration staff (Finance and Administrative Officer, Executive Secretary, driver).

The majority of positions were filled with staff already working for TREE AID and Sahel Eco. Sahel Eco had only to recruit one new Forest Resources Management Advisor (Pobanou Dena).

Finally, the project lead and primary contact for this project (Maurice Kone) has resigned from his role at TREE AID to pursue a new opportunity outside of the organisation. Recruitment for his replacement has been completed and the new Country Manager (Amadou Tangara) began

in his role on the 16th October. Mr Tangara's CV is attached to this report (translated into English). His email contact is Amadou.tangara@treeaid.org.

3 Training/Induction for new staff

The induction and training was undertaken at the beginning of the project in July. It was the occasion to familiarise the staff with the details of the project and to the Darwin requirements. The induction of the new project lead took place in mid-October in the TREE AID regional office in Burkina Faso.

4 Baseline survey

The baseline will be done using the RHoMIS (Rural Household Multi Indicator Survey) methodology which required specific training from TREE AID UK staff. The training for TREE AID Mali and Sahel Eco will be undertaken between 30th October and 3rd November. The collection of data will take place the following week.

5 Sahel Eco field monitoring

From 11th to 15th September 2017, the Forest Resources Management Advisors conducted monitoring visits to a number of plantation sites. The objective of this mission was to determine the rate of recovery of the plantations. At the end of the mission, the recovery rate is estimated at 97%.

6 TREE Aid field monitoring

Following the resignation of the TREE AID Mali Country Programme Manager (the Project Lead) the Director of UK Operations and the Director of West Africa Operations visited the TREE AID office in Mali and the partners in order to recruit the new project lead, to organise this transition and to monitor project progress.

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.

On 8th October, an agent of the Ministry of Agriculture and a forest guide were murdered in the Fangasso commune. This commune is one of three that surrounds Duwa Forest – one of our project sites. The project team followed advice from local leaders and government officials and immediately stopped work in this area, whilst TREE AID proceeded with a full risk assessment. Investigations are currently still ongoing and the motive has yet to be confirmed, though terrorism is suspected. This does not affect our work in the Sutebwo forest area currently.

Our current plan is to postpone work in the Duwa forest area for up to two months during this period of heightened insecurity, with the hope of resuming work in the new year.

However, if further disruption is likely we may have to consider moving project sites. This could either mean working in the lower area of Duwa forest away from Fangasso commune or potentially relocating our work away from the Duwa forest entirely. On a previous project we worked at 3 forests in the region – Duwa, Sutebwo and Mio. We are exploring the potential of moving the second site to Mio. However, Mio is an area with a different forest categorisation, so our approach there would need to be different. It is also a greater distance away from the current forest sites.

This cessation of activity in the Duwa forest has also unfortunately affected our planned baseline work which is scheduled to take place in two weeks' time. As the plans are already in place, including international travel bookings, we will continue with the baseline work but focus this exclusively on the Sutebwo forest as our sample for the project. This is of course, not ideal as it will limit our sample to a specific zone, but for the importance of baselining early and cost effectively we believe this is the best option at this stage.

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
Formal change request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	N/A

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?

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**