

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

Project reference	25-014
Project title	Landscapes and Livelihoods: Participatory Restoration of the Mt Bamboutos Ecosystem
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cameroon
Lead organisation	International Tree Foundation (ITF)
Partner(s)	Environment and Rural Development Foundation (ERuDeF); University of Buea
Project leader	Paul Laird
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	https://internationaltreefoundation.org/mount-bamboutos-initiative/ https://erudef.org/itf-erudef-partner-to-restore-35000ha-degraded-mt-bamboutos-in-15-years/

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).

Progress has been made during this period in the following areas towards establishing the framework for land use planning and sustainable management of Bamboutos ecosystem, through stakeholder engagement and tangible progress towards reforestation, sustainable farming, and improved livelihoods.

- Formation of local institutions to support forest conservation and restoration
- Building a coalition of local stakeholders towards participatory land use planning
- Identification of priority areas for restoration interventions (both agroforestry and forest restoration)
- Training and involvement of farmers in agroforestry and forest restoration
- Strengthening our gender approach
- Strengthening engagement and training of women, youths and members of the pastoralist community
- Production of tree seedlings at nurseries
- Tree planting on farms (agroforestry)
- Tree planting for forest restoration

The following activities were carried out under each output during this reporting period.

Output 1: Farming systems diversity, soil fertility and sustainable productivity for at least 1,330 households (50% women participants) in 9 villages and the pastoralist community increased over baselines through capacity building and agroforestry establishment by 2021 (200,000 agroforestry trees planted on farms by 2021)

Activity 1.1: Sensitization, mobilisation and selection of 1500 farmers plus species identification in 6 villages

- During this period, 182 households (140 women and 42 youths) were sensitized on the importance of women and youth involvement in ecosystem management and biodiversity restoration, through workshops for women and youth groups in Bafou, Babadjou, Bangang, Menka, Buchi and Magha-Bamumbu.

- Volunteer women and youth leaders were selected by the participants to continue the sensitisation and mobilization of women and youths in their various villages.
- This brings the total number of farmers sensitized to 930 (521 women, 409 men) and strengthens the focus on women and youth engagement
- These people are now aware of the negative effect of some anthropogenic factors on the ecosystem and the importance to restore the ecosystem. 512 local people (266 women, 246 men) are participating in tree planting on farms and community degraded lands, while some are volunteering as village forest management committee members.

Activity 1.2: Training of 2,000 farmers (50% women) on sustainable diversified farming systems (agroforestry, contour farming, fruits and NTFPs tree growing).

- During this period, 172 farmers (65 women, 107 men) in Bafou, Menka and Pinyin gained skills in sustainable diversified farming systems during four training workshops. Skills included agroforestry techniques: alley cropping, live fencing, contour farming, terrace farming and NTFPs/Fruit trees growing.
- This brings the total number of farmers trained to 512 (266 women, 246 men) and completes this process in hard to reach areas in NW region affected by ongoing insecurity
- 125 farmers (59 women, 66 men) have started practicing agroforestry techniques by planting bio-fertilising and economic trees in their farms.

Activity 1.3: Training of 2,000 farmers (50% women) to establish their own small agroforestry nurseries: pegging, grafting, marcotting, composting, harvesting, and tree treatment.

- During this period, 200 farmers (76 women, 124 men) in Bafou, Menka and Pinyin gained skills in agroforestry nursery establishment and management, and other tree propagation techniques during four training workshops. Propagation techniques included grafting, marcotting, cutting and layering.
- This brings the total number of farmers trained to 512 (266 women, 246 men) and completes this process in hard to reach areas in NW region affected by ongoing insecurity
- This has enabled 105 farmers (36 women, 69 men) in Bafou, Bangang, Babadjou and Menka to set up their own individual nurseries and actively participate in grafting avocado seedlings planted on their farms.
- Individual tree nurseries will contribute to the total number of seedlings raised for tree planting and will enable farmers to get easier access to seedlings of their priority species.

Activity 1.4 Purchasing of agroforestry seeds

- During this period seeds of the following agroforestry tree species were supplied and sown in the six central nurseries and the pastoralist community nursery: *Leucaena leucocephala* (15,000); Avocado (1,000) and Red Kola (1,000) for the pastoralist nursery; *Dacryodes edulis* (3,500 seeds and 3000 cuttings).
- The seeds have started germinating. The seedlings will be planted out in April 2020.
- The six central nurseries produced 32,424 seedlings of agroforestry tree species of which 15,596 seedlings of Avocados, Leucaena and Kola were planted by farmers in agroforestry farms in the 2019 season.
- This was the first planting season for agroforestry trees. A report is being prepared on 'Lessons Learned before and after Planting of Trees'. This covers: seed sourcing and germination; tree planting; and species choice, and will provide practical guidance for the next planting season.

Activity 1.6: Establishment and training of a local structure for extension and participatory monitoring and evaluation.

- During this period 36 members of three village forest management committees (VFMCs) in Babadjou, Bafou and Bangang gained knowledge and skills on how to conduct participatory monitoring and evaluation of trees planted in degraded community forests, riverine forests, and water catchment areas. The VFMC members also learned about M&E data collection and how to implement the M&E framework for forest monitoring.
- The VFMC members are now volunteering in monitoring tree seedlings planted in degraded riparian forests, catchment areas, sacred forests and water catchment areas. They will also carry out survival counts of seedlings transplanted. They are working in collaboration with the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife to ensure the sustainable management of forested lands.

Activity 1.11 Support farming groups with tools and equipment for the planting of at least 200,000 agroforestry trees

- During this period 125 individual farmers from six villages (25 in Bafou north, 15 in Bangang, 35 in Babadjou, 18 in Menka, 22 in Pinyin and 10 in Buchi), were supported with the following tools purchased by the project: 25 cutlasses, 50 diggers with wooden handles, 25 sharpshooter spades and 25 dibble bars with metallic handles.
- This enabled them to plant 15,596 seedlings of agroforestry, fruit and NTFP tree on farms. This will help improve crop yields and increase income from diversified farming.

Activity 1.12 Planting of 200,000 agroforestry trees on farmers' fields

- During this period 125 farmers planted 15,596 seedlings of Avocado, Leucaena and Kola on 125 farms in six villages. This will help improve soil fertility and crop productivity, and increase household income from NTFPs and fruit trees.
- This was the first season of agroforestry tree planting, and we are learning from the process so far.

Output 2: Improved farming systems productivity and agroforestry incorporating fruit and NTFP trees enables at least 1,330 households (70% women participants) to take steps towards increased incomes and employment.

Activity 2.2 Conduct consultations in the 6 villages on identification of potential new income sources and cottage industries, constraints, opportunities and value chain development

- Two consultation meetings were held with 49 pastoralists (25 women, 24 men) in the Mbororo pastoralist camps in Bangang and Balepo Mbororo.
- They listed the following as potential new income sources: harvesting and selling of Prunus bark, and the rearing and selling of cows, goats and sheep
- They expressed the wish to set up a cottage industry for the processing of milk and beef.
- Lack of green pasture and water for their cattle during dry season, lack of electricity and refrigerators to store their produce were some of the constraints raised by the pastoralists.
- This adds to six other consultation meetings held so far in six villages. This process is helping MBI develop its programme to meet local priorities.

Activity 2.3 1,500 farmers (70% women) are trained on NTFPs and fruit tree cultivation in the 6 villages

- During this period 52 pastoralists (27 women, 25 men) from the Mbororo camps in Bangang and Balepo Mbororo gained knowledge and skills on how to grow NTFP and fruit trees. They were trained on how to prepare seed beds, source quality seed, nursery management, transplant bare root and potted plants, care for the transplanted plants, and methods of vegetative propagation such as grafting.
- We have now trained 512 farmers (266 women, 246 men) so far.
- This has enabled 105 farmers (36 women, 69 men) in Bafou, Bangang, Babadjou and Menka to set up their own individual nurseries and actively participate in grafting avocado seedlings planted on their farms.
- Individual tree nurseries will contribute to the total number of seedlings raised for tree planting and will enable farmers to get easier access to seedlings of their priority species.

Activity 2.4 Training of 1,500 farmers on value addition opportunities in the 6 villages

- During this period, 149 farmers (63 women, 86 men) from Bangang and Babadjou gained knowledge and skills on value addition opportunities, during six workshops in each of the six sub-villages (Mekoup, Baleleu, Tsopeua, Bawa, Balepo, Bamelou). This activity is ongoing in Year 2.

Output 3: Community-led planting and regeneration of 300,000 native trees in degraded areas of Community, Riverine and Sacred Forests, and increased tree cover in farmland (200,000 agroforestry trees) launch the restoration of 3,000 ha of forests and biodiversity habitat in the degraded Mt. Bamboutos ecosystem by 2021

Activity 3.1 Purchase of material/equipment for the construction and management of 7 central nurseries and the Lebialem forestry center (shading nets, binding wires, wheelbarrows, trowels, iron rods, polythene bags etc)

- Local materials (bamboos and palm fronds) were purchased for reinforcement of three nurseries in Bafou, Babadjou and Bangang.
- Six rolls of plastic pipes (100m each) and six plastic drums of 250 litres capacity each, were purchased for the storage of water in the six central tree nurseries. This is to facilitate the watering of seedlings in the nurseries, especially during the dry seasons. Twenty four packets of 100 poly bags for potting of seedlings/seeds were supplied to the nurseries.

Activity 3.3 Purchasing of other tree species

- The following tree seeds and material were purchased for sowing in the six central tree nurseries:

- 14,000 seeds of *Cordia platythyrsa*, 4,000 Scions of avocado, 10,000 seeds of *Voacanga bracteata*, 15,000 seeds of *Maesopsis eminii*, 12,000 seeds of *Ricinodendron heudelotii* (Njangsang), 20,000 seeds of *Kigelia africana* and 6,000 seeds of *Garcinia kola*
- Some of these seeds such as *Maesopsis* and *Cordia* have started germinating. These seedlings will be ready for planting in 2020.

Activity 3.6 Support nursery management operations (weeding, watering, spraying, thinning etc) for nurseries to be established by the project.

- Six nursery attendants (tree planting technicians) in Mezet-Bafou, Mekoup-Bangang, Balepo - Babadjou, Pinyin, Menka and Buchi villages were supported to manage the six central tree nurseries established, by weeding, watering, filling polythene bags, potting and sowing seeds in the nurseries.
- They in turn were supported in their work by volunteers from the local community.
- The six central tree nurseries raised 66,328 seedlings of forest restoration tree species seedlings and 32,424 seedlings of agroforestry tree species: a total of 98,752 tree seedlings.
- Out of these, 43,510 seedlings were planted for forest restoration and 15,596 for agroforestry, leaving a balance of 22,818 forest seedlings and 16,828 agroforestry seedlings, total 39,646 seedlings, which will be ready to plant in April 2020.

Activity 3.7: Planting of 300,000 trees in priority degraded sites in community and riverine forest

- Tree planting was launched in June 2019, in all the nine villages and pastoralist community. This led to the planting of 43,510 seedlings of different tree species in about 47.51 hectares of community forest lands, riverine forests, sacred forests and water catchment areas.
- This will contribute towards the restoration of about 3,000 hectares of the degraded landscape.

Activity 3.8: Support Village Forest Management institutions with tools and equipment for the planting of at least 450,000 native trees.

- Six village forest management committees in Bangang, Buchi, Babadjou, Bafou, Pinyin and Menka were supported with tree planting tools to enable them plant trees in designated community forests, riverine forests, sacred forests and water catchment areas.
- The six VFMCs were given a total of 42 cutlasses, 80 tree planting bags, 42 sharpshooter bars and 42 dibble bars to support tree planting in priority degraded areas.

Activity 3.9 Identification of priority areas for restoration intervention through the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology (ROAM) (also activity 4.7, Output 4)

- During this reporting period, a ROAM exercise was carried out in Menka and Pinyin villages, completing the ROAM exercise that was carried out in seven other villages.
- During the exercise, priority areas for restoration intervention were identified. Fifty farmers' plots, making a total of 300 hectares in Menka and Pinyin villages, were identified for agroforestry interventions. Five water catchments with total surface area of 143 ha were identified as sites for restoration. Three community forests, one in each of the three villages with total surface areas of 600 ha were identified. Three sacred forests amounting to 180 ha, and degraded riparian forests 189 ha were identified for restoration.
- The restoration interventions discussed with stakeholders included agroforestry through planting for soil improvement and economic tree species; planting of timber tree species as well as medicinal tree species in degraded riparian and community lands. Legal protection of community land as community forest, and formulation of local laws for protection of sacred forests were also discussed as restoration intervention approaches.
- Farmers, VFMC members and other community members have taken steps towards restoring these areas by planting native and agroforestry trees. 49,820 native trees were planted in degraded sacred forests, community forest lands, water catchment and riverine forests. 15,596 agroforestry trees were planted in 125 farmers' fields. This is to launch the restoration of 3,000 ha of forests and biodiversity habitat in the degraded Mt. Bamboutos ecosystem.

Output 4: Framework, coalition, consensus and conditions established for land use planning and sustainable management of Mt Bamboutos ecosystem, supported by shared outputs from research and ongoing M&E

Activity 4.2 Training and consultation of 2,500 people from 9 villages and the pastoralist community on the management of ecosystem and biodiversity, the links to better and more sustainable livelihoods, the challenges and how to address them.

- In May 2019, 112 additional people (38 women, 74 men) from two villages (Menka and Pinyin) gained skills and knowledge on ecosystem and biodiversity management.
- The total trained so far has reached 312 people (150 women, 162 men). They gained knowledge on ecosystem functions, importance of biodiversity to their livelihoods and the link between a healthy ecosystem and sustainable livelihoods. Management measures were proposed based on the identified causes of ecosystem degradation.
- As a result of this training, 125 people (62 women, 63 men) are now taking steps towards the sustainable management of the ecosystem by raising tree seedlings in individual and central tree nurseries and planting them out in degraded riparian forests, water catchment areas and community forest lands. They are now practicing agroforestry as a sustainable farming method.

Activity 4.5 Building a coalition of stakeholders in order to reach agreement on the process for participatory land use planning for the Mt Bamboutos eco system (this include chief association, common platforms for forest management institutions)

- A process of building a coalition of stakeholders in order to reach agreement on the process for participatory land use planning was initiated during a meeting held with all the 12 members of the Mount Bamboutos Fons' Association.
- The Fons now understand the process of participatory land use planning, based on existing protocols, and have agreed the existing procedures. They cautioned on the respect of village customs/culture and traditional authorities during the process. They will, with their respective communities, and based on local specificities, come up with practical modalities for the process.
- Other stakeholders such as VFMCs, village development associations, pastoralists, municipal councils and relevant government ministries shall be brought together to reach an agreement on the process, during the second half of Year 2.

Activity 4.6 Six consultation meetings with different stakeholders in 6 villages to identify key institutional barriers to participatory land use plan and how to address them.

- A consultation meeting was held with all the 12 members of the Mount Bamboutos Fons' Association in order to identify key institutional barriers to participatory land use plan and how to address them.
- Some key institutional barriers to participatory land use planning were identified by members of the Mount Bamboutos Fons' Association. The key barriers raised were: the lack of clear boundaries between different villages and land use types; limited land in relation to the growing population; and land conflicts amongst community members.

As a means to address some of the barriers, the team was cautioned to respect village customs/culture during the process, and to use traditional authorities as entry points.

Activity 4.7 Identification of different land use systems and priority areas for restoration intervention through the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology (ROAM). This will include analysis of land tenure systems and land use policies in the project area, analysis of the role of women and girls in the management of the Mt Bamboutos ecosystem and participative land use mapping.

- During this period, a ROAM exercise was carried out in Menka and Pinyin villages, completing the ROAM exercise that was carried out in seven other villages. During the exercise, priority areas for agroforestry and restoration intervention were identified as follows: Fifty farmers' plots, making a total of 300 hectares in Menka and Pinyin villages were identified for agroforestry interventions. Five water catchments with a total area of 143 ha were identified as sites for restoration. Three community forests, one in each of the three villages with total areas of 600 ha were identified for restoration. Three sacred forests (180 ha) and degraded riparian forests (189 ha) were identified for restoration.
- The exercise also revealed that, apart from the policies governing land use in Cameroon, land use policies do not exist in the villages. Ownership of land in the villages is by customary tenure system. Only a few people follow legal and administrative procedures for land ownership. Land is mostly acquired by inheritance. Land can also be acquired through lease, donation or bought.
- Farmers, VFMC members and other community members have taken steps towards restoring these areas by planting native and agroforestry trees. 49,820 native trees were planted in degraded sacred forests,

community forest lands, water catchment and riverine forests. 15,596 agroforestry trees were planted in 125 farmers' fields. This is to launch the restoration of 3,000 ha of forests and biodiversity habitat in the degraded Mt. Bamboutos ecosystem.

- With consultations on the process for participatory land use planning, community members are now more aware of the need for land use planning as a tool for sustainable land use management and conflict resolution. For example some chiefs now refuse to acknowledge private land ownership in riparian forest areas and water catchment areas.

Analysis of the role of women

- During this period, the Gender Officer carried out an assessment in the project area to analyse the role of women in land use, barriers to women participation, women leadership and existing opportunities for women participation in the MBI.
- The role of women in leadership and land management in the project area is greatly hindered by the customary tenure system that is widely respected in the area. Women are deprived from owning land when their husbands are still alive. However, women are the principal exploiters of agriculture land in the area and can play a greater role in the management of the Mt. Bamboutos ecosystem.
- Women can be excluded from the project due to information bias. Information on project opportunities is not equitably disseminated across the gender lines.
- However, there exist opportunities for actively integrating women into the project activities. A gender action plan was developed for implementation by the gender officer, field staff and local institutions involved in the project delivery. The implementation of the plan is leading to a significant 10% increase in the level of women participation in project activities.

Publications, Newspapers, documentary, short films, bill boards, websites, radio programs, newsletters etc

- Two billboards were produced and installed in two strategic locations along the highways around the project area: at Carrefour Kombou along the Baffoussam-Bamenda highway and Carrefour Mbou along the Dschang Baffoussam highway.
- This has increased local awareness and visibility of the MBI project to different stakeholders and the public at large. It has also increased number of interested participant farmers how and by how many more.

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 major challenge faced in delivering this project continues to be the insecurity created by the Anglophone crisis. General strikes (or 'ghost towns') are called in the NW and SW each Monday, with additional days in May and October. There have been multiple clashes between the Cameroonian security forces and armed groups over the past year in many places in the NW and SW.
- A three week lockdown early in 2019 stopped access to project sites in NW and SW. This slowed down the execution of project activities and hence altered the project timeline. There were delays in project implementation in NW which have only recently been overcome. The project team have successfully negotiated access currently to all project sites. ITF has only been able to visit sites in West Region.
- All other constraints faced form part of the ongoing challenge of trying to introduce participatory land use planning and sustainable land use in the particular situation of Mount Bamboutos.
- Landscape restoration projects require a lot of collaboration and commitment from the community members to be successful. There is need for a strong commitment of the local people and institutions. This requires constant sensitization and mobilization of the local stakeholders for local ownership and buy-in. This cannot be done by simply organizing one or two sensitization meetings in a community. MBI continues to develop awareness raising methods.
- The role of women in leadership and land management is greatly hindered by the customary tenure system that is widely respected in the area. Women are deprived from owning land while their husbands are alive.
- Women are the principal exploiters of agriculture land in the area and can play a greater role in the management of the Mt. Bamboutos ecosystem.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on project opportunities is not equitably disseminated across the gender lines. However this is being tackled through the implementation of the gender action plan that has been developed by the gender officer, and increased engagement of women is already observable. - Seedling growth in tree nurseries is slow due to cold climatic conditions. Production of seedlings is also affected by the seed collection calendar. The combined effect is that some species were not ready for the 2019 planting period. This constraint is being tackled through careful tracking of the tree seed calendar and early production of seedlings for 2020. We are still studying tree species adaptability, and the effect of climatic conditions on germination and growth rate of seedlings. This will enable best choices to be made of species to be raised. - Tree planting in mountainous areas can be affected by surface runoff during heavy rain which can sweep away the planted seedlings. - Significant resources need to be allocated to follow up, monitor and evaluate trees planted in different categories of land. 	
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:	No
Formal change request submitted: Yes – relating to staff changes and agreed changes to log frame targets	
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Not yet

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £10,000	
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?	
We will review the rate of spending, which has been affected by the insecurity situation, to see if we need to request a carry over to Year 3.	

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 R25 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 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: 25-035 Darwin Half Year Report**