

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2022

Project reference	28-023
Project title	Promoting forest governance for resilient ecosystems and communities in Segou
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Mali
Lead Partner	Tree Aid
Partner(s)	Sahel Eco
Project leader	<i>Tree Aid</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR2</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>N/A</i>

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

The activities in this HY have focused on the activities related Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, as well as conducting the baseline assessment. Overall, the project remains behind in the progress of activities in this HY, but this is being addressed through an updated activity plan.

Outcome 1: Strengthen promotion of local forest governance, investments in forests and valorisation of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) for sustainable improvement of livelihoods for 3,000 rural households in Tominian circle, Mali.

Activity 1.14: The visioning activity and the creation of community action plans has been fully completed across all target villages, with a total 2321 people taking part (see beneficiary list attached). During this process the coordinator 1) identified and coded all villages, 2) mapped and classified natural resources, 3) identified problems; 4) explained regreening concepts, 5) identified realistic indicators for regreening, 6) identified strategies of regreening and 7) developed a community regreening plan for each village.

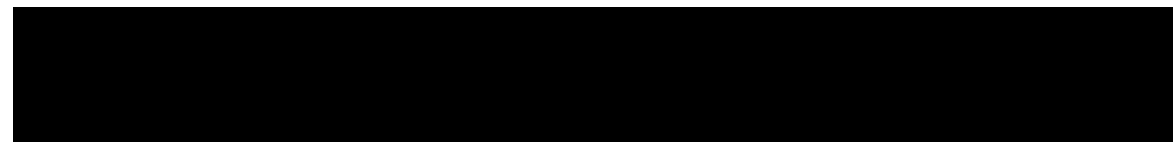


Classification of
household wealth.pdf

Outcome 2: Strengthened governance, including increased women's participation, and the transfer of competencies in the management of forest resources in four communes (Yasso, Tominian, Benena and Sanekuy) in the Tominian circle.

Activity 2.2: Alongside the visioning activity, the team undertook the first step in undertaking the Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) process. This involved identifying and estimating the size of the degraded land associated with each village and then discussing the causes and what could be done to restore the land. These results are presented below and are being used to inform the next step of the ANR process.

Activity 2.3: Extreme weather prevented tree planting in the Sankuy forest. The trees planted this season is therefore much fewer than planned. However, in the Safienso forest the activity was conducted in degraded land near the villages of Haneku and Kanian (see attachment below). The two planting activities involved planting several species trees such as *Acacia Senegalia*, *Parkia Bogoloa*, *Adansonia Digitata* and *Prosopis Africana*. The planting season for next year intends to also focus on endangered trees (Activity 2.1.1), as evidenced by the table seedlings produced in the project nursery (see attachment below).



Output 3: Increased income for eight (8) Village Tree Enterprises (VTEs) (50members per group = 400members; 75% women= 300 women) through the economic development of forest resources.

Activity 3.3: The Tree Aid and partner project team received training in Market Analysis and Development (MA&D). This was brought forward so that it could take place simultaneously to another project, reducing costs. The training focused on 1) creating enterprise development plans, 2) training in NTFP marketing, 3) financial and technical training, 4) training in monitoring and evaluating NTFP enterprises. The training covered both theory and practical exercise and took place over two days.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

M&E1: Training of facilitators in georeferencing and RHoMIS tools took place in June 2022 (not mentioned in previous report).

M&E6: The ecological survey was completed in August 2022. The report (in French) is attached as well as some key information, below.



Rapport de l'étude
écologique MC2_vers

M&E7: 60 Permanent monitoring plots were established across the 3 forests to monitor the changing ecology.

M&E8: The baseline study took place in September 2022 and was analysed in October 2022. The data collected provides socio-economic reference data for the project data on 1) household income productivity and food availability, 2) Food security and poverty, 3) farm and household characteristics, 4) Natural resource management, 5) agricultural practices, 6) NTFPs and 7) female empowerment.

The updated logframe and a presentation containing the results of the baseline study is found below.



2. 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.

Financial system: delays in transferring finances to our Malian partner have been experienced since the economic sanctions, imposed at the beginning of 2022. Whilst the sanctions have been lifted, Tree Aid has continued to provide funding to partners in Mali via Tree Aid Mali bank accounts. However, some difficulties have been experienced in the time it has taken from sending payments and the partner receiving funds. We will revert back to paying the partner directly again to avoid any delays. Financial transfers are now running as planned.

Security: The region of Segou remains dangerous due to insecurity and a presence of jihadism and banditry within the region. Project activities have been rescheduled and reorganised to respond to changing security threats. Sahel Eco uses local staff with tacit knowledge and avoids open displays of wealth (i.e. ODK phones used instead of the more obvious tablets).

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS-LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: Yes/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

Change request reference if known:

4a. 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: £

4b. 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget 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.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

N/A.

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response 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 NIRAS-LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**