Darwin Initiative Main: Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":
(https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/information-notes-learning-notes-briefing-papers-and-reviews/).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes)

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2023

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line

Darwin Initiative Project Information

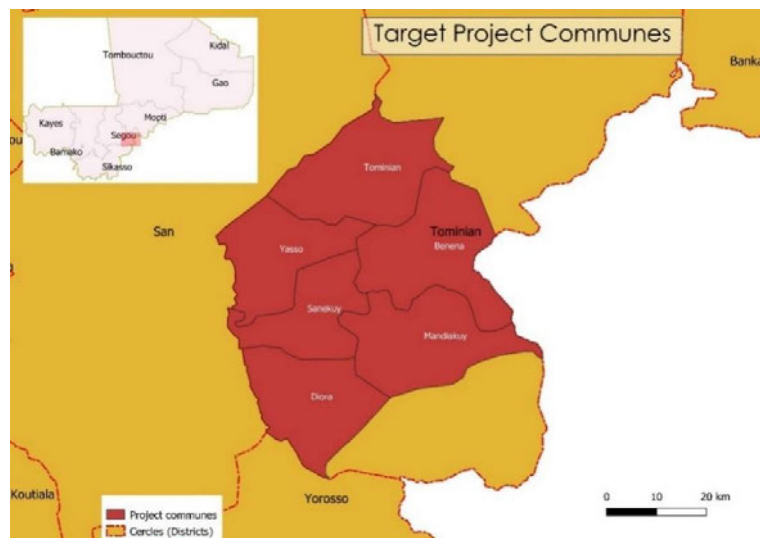|	
Project reference	28-023
Project title	Promoting Forest Governance for Resilient Ecosystems and Communities in Segou
Country/ies	Mali
Lead Partner	Tree Aid
Project partner(s)	Sahel Eco
Darwin Initiative grant value	£345,755
Start/end dates of project	November 2021 to October 2024
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2022 – Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2022 to March 2023
Project Leader name	Amadou Tangara
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.treeaid.org/projects/mali/promoting-forest-governance-in-segou/ https://www.facebook.com/treeaid/ https://www.linkedin.com/company/tree-aid https://twitter.com/treeaid
Report author(s) and date	James Benton, Rebecca Fletcher, 30 April 2022

1.   Project summary

Drylands, despite their relative aridity, contain a diverse range of biodiversity that is integral to the traditional livelihoods of many dryland communities. However, deforestation is posing a significant threat to the ecological functions and ecosystem services of these regions. High poverty levels, coupled with an increasingly erratic climate and rapid population growth, have resulted in overexploitation and degradation of natural resources. Mali, for instance, has lost 30% of its forest area between 1990 and 2015, with an additional 500,000 hectares of forest being destroyed annually. Moreover, the weakened socio-political context and security challenges in Mali have limited the state's capacity to implement interventions to combat deforestation. Consequently, rural communities play a crucial role in forest resource

conservation. In this regard, Tree Aid has been working in Segou since 2004 and has gained an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by communities in the region.

Tree Aid's prior experience has demonstrated that investing in pro-poor, environmentally sustainable initiatives enables the transfer of skills and incentivizes local communities to take ownership of forest resource management. Such initiatives increase forest cover and biodiversity, while also providing opportunities for improving livelihoods and reducing conflict.

In January 2019, Tree Aid's implementing partner Sahel Eco conducted consultations with stakeholders from the targeted communes, including village delegates, technical services, administrative, and political authorities. The consultations involved natural resource mapping, identification of constraints related to natural resource management (NRM), and prioritization of actions for mitigation. Participants showed support for the strategies discussed and were willing to participate in interventions.

The project aims to mitigate deforestation and desertification in the Segou region by strengthening and scaling-up decentralised forest management to protect and restore dryland forest ecosystems covering 25,000 hectares. This will be achieved by building organisational and institutional capacities for effective stewardship of forests. Additionally, 6,500 hectares of degraded agricultural land will be restored through tree planting and sustainable land management practices, alongside reduced anthropogenic pressures. Alternative livelihoods based on the viable use of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) will be promoted. The project location is shown in the map below:

2.   Project stakeholders/ partners

Created in 2004, Sahel Eco is a national NGO, previously operating as the SOS Sahel International UK Mali programme. Tree Aid has been working with SOS Sahel International UK since 1998 and formed a partnership with Sahel Eco after its creation. We have been working together in the Segou region since 2013. Together, we have led on the development of participatory forest management plans (FMPs) in Segou and Mopti regions, an innovative approach in the Mali context to improve community access, rights, and forest governance. Sahel Eco have expertise including agroforestry, sustainable agriculture, food security, sustainable management of natural resources and development of forestry and agricultural enterprises.

Sahel Eco supported the design of this project and is leading project implementation locally. They are responsible for mobilising local communities, frontline delivery of training, capacity building and engagement of key stakeholders, organisational and business development, and technical support for the cooperatives and monitoring brigades, liaison with local and regional stakeholders, data collection and monitoring of activities. Sahel Eco's team comprises a Project

Coordinator, 2 Forest Resource Management Advisors, Accountant, Finance and Administration Manager, and Executive Secretary. Please note that the project coordinator is now fully dedicated to the project and is no longer only contributing 50% of his time.

3.   Project progress

3.1   Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1: Strengthened governance, including increased women's participation, and the transfer of competences in the management of forest resources in four communes (Yasso, Tominian, Benena and Sanekuy) in Tominian circle.

Activity 1.1

In April 2022 the project was officially launched in the project participating villages. The project launch was an official opportunity to inform the key stakeholder of the project, provide an opportunity to ask questions and give suggestions, gain community buy-in, and officially mark the launch of the project. Delays in finance meant that the project was launched later than planned. This was explained to the project participants in April and the activity subsequently provided as a useful format to receive feedback on the first few months of the project.

Activity 1.2

A training session on Malian natural resource management law was held in November 2022, at Tominian Prefecture, led by the Chief of Forestry of Tominian. The training covered topics such as pastoral resource management regulations in Mali, roles, and responsibilities of stakeholders in the context of decentralisation, opportunities offered by decentralisation, forest management tools, bushfire management techniques, and surveillance mechanisms.

The training also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to exchange ideas and discuss existing challenges between surveillance committees, timber exploiters, elected officials, and technical services. It helped all stakeholders understand their roles in relation to the forest regulations in force.

The training was attended by a total of 84 key-stakeholders, including mayors, general secretaries of municipalities, representatives of village chiefs, surveillance brigades, product transformers from the project's intervention zone, technical services, and the project team.

Activity 1.3

Prefecture, aimed at enhancing the existing community-led resources management frameworks and setting up new management frameworks in the forests of Safienso and Sanekuy. The two-day workshops, which took place on November 25-26, 2022, were held at the conference room of the Tominian Prefecture and were attended by local stakeholders from the municipalities of

Benena, Diora, Mandiakuy, Sanekuy, Tominian, and Yasso. The workshops were chaired by the Prefect of the Tominian circle.

The workshops provided a platform for the existing management structures to discuss issues encountered to date and provided a forum for problem-solving. The two established management structures are the Sutebwo forest, currently managed by the municipalities of Diora, Mafouné, and Mandiakuy, and the Duwa massif, managed by the Fangasso, Koula, and Lanfiala municipalities. In addition, two new management frameworks were established for the management of Safienso forest, by the municipalities of Mandiakuy, Mafouné, and Diora, and for the forest Sanekuy, by the municipalities of Mandikuy, Safienso, Yaso, and Dora.

The two new groups established 'pilot' committees of local stakeholders, who discussed issues related to forest management and brainstormed potential solutions. The committees agreed to meet again in the future to initiate the process of formalizing the management. The meeting focused on the four new municipalities of Sanekuy, Yasso, Tominian, and Bénéna, where a framework had not been established before.

The two new management groups were officially established February 2023. Tree Aid is awaiting further information from the project partner on the details of the activity.

Activity1.4

This activity was completed in February 2023. Tree Aid is awaiting further information from the partner on the activity.

Activity 1.5, Activity 1.6 and Activity 1.14:

The project has identified the existing monitoring brigades of the two massifs. It was noted that there were no women who were members of the monitoring brigades. In early 2023, a workshop was held by Sahel Eco which involved updating the membership of the brigades and training the brigades. Following the workshop, 47 of the 155 surveillance brigade members were women (30.32%). Tree Aid is awaiting more information on the content of the workshop training, this will be provided in the next reporting period (Activity 1.6).

Activity 1.14: Conducting a visioning process for the identification of forest heritage and elaboration of a community action plan for restoration of the land.

The 'visioning' activity and the creation of community action plans has been fully completed across all (84) target villages, with a total 2321 people taking part. 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.

The data collected as part of this activity will feed into the creation of a community action plan and will also help guide decision-making as part of the project.

Activity 1.1.6

In November 2022, a conflict resolution training session was conducted at the Tominian Prefecture, with a focus on managing conflicts related to forest resources. The participants engaged in discussions on various aspects of conflict management, including identifying the types of conflicts, understanding conflict mechanisms, gaining knowledge of legislative and regulatory texts, and acquiring knowledge of local or traditional rules that govern access or control of natural resources. During the training, a film was showcased that highlighted measures to resolve conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, and organised debates on conflict resolution were held. In total, 40 key stakeholders participated in the training. This training assumes greater significance in the Segou region of Mali, where conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary farmers have impeded efforts to improve resource management.

Output 2: Promote the adoption of actions for the restoration of land, the reduction of pressure on forest resources through improved charcoal production and restoration of degraded land.

Activity 2.1

By April 2022 both the two community nurseries were fully established, with wire mesh fence, solar water point, equipment, pots, and seeds. In June 2022, the 4 nursery managers recorded over 23,000 seedlings produced.

N°	Species	Number of plants produced, by nursery manager.				Total
		Vincent Dakou	Syprien Kone	Rubin Keita	Vénikuy dakouo	
1	Eucalyptus	127	127	228	12000	12 355
2	Baobab	183	183	1050	12	1 428
3	Néré	133	133	152	82	500
4	Goyavier	2014	100	2051	250	4 415
5	Citronier	252	252	152	712	1 368
6	Manguier	213	213	309	200	935
7	Anacardium	231	231	279	103	844
8	Moringa	125	130	114	26	395
9	Karité	0	47	58	101	206
10	capokier	25	147	180	125	477
	Total	3 303	1 563	4 573	13 611	23 050

Activity 2.2

The team undertook the first step in the Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) process, alongside the community visioning activity (Activity 1.14). 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 annexed 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 and resulted in far fewer trees being planted this season. However, in the Safienso forest the activity was conducted in degraded land near the villages of Haneku and Kanian (see annex 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.

Activity 2.4

Training in grafting, pruning and transplantation took place in early 2023. Tree Aid is awaiting further information on the details of the training event.

Activity 2.12

Activity took place in January 2023, with 224 beneficiaries taking part in the training, of which 149 were women. The training covered a range of techniques required to restore land, including rapidly composting, pruning, planting techniques, traditional *zai* constructions, stone bunds and many others. The activity was undertaken across 14 villages. Following these trainings, 7,645.95 hectares of degraded land were restored. The restored sites were

georeferenced and located in 14 villages with 1,656 producers. More information can be found in the supplementary information table.

Activity 2.8, Activity 2.9 and Activity 2.10

The establishment of 4 charcoal producing and operating groups took place between February and March 2023. This involved the structing and formalisation of the groups (Activity 2.8), the training in how to improve coal burning and sustainable logging techniques (Activity 2.9) and equipping the groups with improved carbonisation equipment (Activity 2.10). Further detail on project activity will be provided in the next reporting period.

Activity 2.13

The project provided small equipment to 40 villages to restore 6,500 hectares of degraded farmland. Each village received a set of tools, including wheelbarrows, picks, shovels, and hammers. The project also provided training on various techniques, such as RNA, stony ridges, and direct planting, in 14 villages.

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 3.1 and Activity 3.2

In July 2022, 18 members of the Tree Aid and Sahel Eco teams were trained in enterprise development planning. The training was led by Tree Aid's in-house expert in NTFP Value Chains, Yassinte Dima. The training included 1) explaining the purpose of Enterprise Development Plans (EDPs), understanding marketing, and financial education, training on how to market NTFP products and monitoring the success of the EDPs.

In November 2022, all 40 groups participated in an NTFP product diagnostic study. The goal of the study was to understand the current value chain of the NTFP products produced in the project area. Once the diagnostic study was completed, with both the opportunities and constraints of the NTFP market being fully understood, the team was able to provide suggestions on how to reinforce the NTFP value chain.

Following the diagnostic study in November 2022, the selection of NTFP products took place in December. This involved the 120 people (80% women), representing all 4 communes selecting which products they would take forward.

As part of this process, two villages from each commune used a set criteria to select products. The criteria looked at 1) the pre-existence of groups, 2) facility to mobilise the forest resource, 3) engagement of groups in forest resource management, and 4) the abundance of the NTFP at the village level.

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.

Activity 3.7 and 3.8

The VTE groups which are specialising in honey received training and equipment in the months of February and March. The equipment provided includes 40 beehives and the equipment for harvesting the honey. More information on the is activity will be provided in the next report , once partner reports have been completed.

Activity 3.13

In December 2022, an NTFP market was organised in Manekuy. The market provided a platform to understand the different NTFP products available, expose NTFP products to potential financing, make business contacts and sell their products locally. The market was considerable success, with over £4000 of NTFP products sold

3.2   Progress towards project Outputs

3.3   Progress towards the project Outcome

No changes have been made to the project indicators and they are considered adequate for measuring the intended outcome.

Project Outcome: 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.

Despite delays in project implementation, the project remains on track to achieve the project outcome within the timeframe of the project. An updated project implementation schedule was agreed with the project implementing partner, Sahel Eco, and an updated budget was produced. The new plan condenses project activities over a shorter period and increases the budget for project implementation staff. The increased implementation staff's capacity will allow the team to increase the rate of project activity implementation.

To achieve the project outcome, it is necessary to preserve and restore the forests from which the NTFP's are sourced. Restoration of the forests can be monitored through forest cover change (Outcome indicator 0.11) and the biodiversity of the forests (Outcome 0.13). Monitoring these outcome indicators ensures the project is helping to reverse environmental destruction in the region and preserve the ecosystems on which people rely on for NTFP production.

The data was collected through the ecological survey August 2022, which would form the baseline of the project. The ecological survey was finalised in October 2022 and collected data on a range of ecological metrics. Regarding tree density, it was found that in the Safienso forest it was 17trees/ha, whilst the Sanekuy forest, the consultant divided the results into fragment 1, which had a density of 18 trees/ha and Sanekuy fragment 2, which had a density of 10 trees/ha. Dividing the data into three areas increases our ability to understand the impact of the reforestation and restoration efforts on a more local level. This data will be used as the baseline and will be used to compare to the data collected at the project close.

The data collected on biodiversity was also separated across the three fragments, and the data collected was as followed; Forest of Safienso (50 tree species), forest of Sanekuy, fragment 1 (46 tree species) and forest of Sanekuy (46 tree species). A more biodiverse forest is indicative of a healthier ecosystem and therefore a more productive source of NTFP products. It is expected that the targeting of endangered species through the enrichment planting will increase the biodiversity across all three forest fragments.

To understand the improvement of livelihoods of the project beneficiaries, we will monitor the household income and the percentage of the income which is derived from NTFPs (Outcome Indicator 0.12) and the percentage of households which are living below the poverty line (Outcome 0.15). The data was collected via the Tree Aid socio-economic bespoke data collection survey, Rural Household Multi-Indicator Survey (RHoMIS).

The RHoMIS baseline data collection took place in October 2022, collecting socio-economic data on 365 people, of which 335 were beneficiaries. The study found that average mean household income was $702.71, of which 10% was sourced from NTFPs ($68.73). The endline indicator will remain to increase total household income by 10% to, $772.98 and NTFP income to $137.46. This data is a useful metric for understanding the impact of NTFP production on livelihoods and our impact on poverty reduction.

Similarly, the monitoring the number of households living below the calories line (Outcome Indicator 0.14) and those living below the poverty line (Outcome Indicator 0.14) was collected as part of the RHoMIS study. It found that in October 2022, that 36% of all respondents were

living below the calorie line (2500 calories per adult male equivalent) and that 92% of project beneficiaries lived under the UN poverty line of less than $1.90/day.

It is important to monitor the changes in beneficiaries that live below both the calorie and poverty line, to understand the contribution of the project on sustainable improvements to livelihoods.

3.4   Monitoring of assumptions

All outcome and output level assumptions still hold true, and Tree Aid continues to monitor closely the critical conditions for the project success. The assumptions, risk and challenges are commented on below.

Outcome level assumptions

Outcome Assumption 1: Climate conditions do not disrupt activities
Within the context of climate change, there has been increasingly extreme climatic events within the project implementation area. Extreme rainfall in August 2022 impacted the reforestation efforts of the 2022 planting campaign. The rains prevented the cars and people from accessing the identified planting sites and the number of trees planted was therefore considerably lower that planned. Whilst this risk continues, the project team will being the planting season earlier this planting season (July 2023), reducing the risk of being impacted by extreme rain. The seedlings are already well developed, meaning it will not be necessary to wait until August to begin the planting this year.

Outcome Assumption 2: Communities and key stakeholders in the intervention area are willing to participate in the project
Tree Aid has not encountered any issues regarding community participation in the area. Both Tree Aid and Sahel Eco have a long history of working in the Segou region and relations between both organisation and local stakeholders remain strong. This has been further improved through the community consultations, meetings with local chiefs and sensitisation events which have taken place so far.

Outcome Assumption 3: Legislation of natural resource management remains favourable to the project.
The Malian government remains favourable to the aims of the project and there have been no changes in Malian legislation which has negatively impact the project.

Output level assumptions

Output 1 Assumption 1: National policy remains favourable for local forest governance
Tree Aid has developed strong links with the relevant government departments at local and regional level and will be training people at these levels in the importance of natural resource management. These groups will be encouraged to advocate for local forest governance. Tree Aid also has positive evidence from a previous Darwin-funded project to demonstrate the benefits.

Output 1 Assumption 2: Local chiefs are willing to sign conventions and/or agreements.
Local chiefs continue to be engaged in the project and have taken part in all activities. The local stakeholders were highly engaged and are key to the establishment of the 2 new forest management structures.

Output 1 Assumption 3: Access rights are respected by the wider communities.
On a community level, there has been range of activities which continue to improve understanding and management of access rights. This included the 'visulaisation' activity, the community sensibilisation activities and the community resource management workshops.

Output 1 Assumption 4: Men are accepting of changes resulting through the establishment of natural resources management structures

Gender equality sensitisation has been central to project activities. Female beneficiaries are central to project activities and are active members in every stage of the project. Male role models have been used to promote gender-equality amongst the community leaders.

Output 2 Assumption 1: Climatic conditions remain favourable to support land restoration

As mentioned, above, climatic conditions have posed a problem for the planting season of 2022. However, planting earlier and being better prepared this year means the team is hopeful that the same will not be repeated in the planting season of 2023. Farmers will be trained in climate-smart approaches, and the NRM promoted through this project will increase resilience to climate extremes.

Output 2 Assumption 2: Community members engage with new NRM practices

There is no indication that the community will not engage with the new NRM practices. Interest has been expressed as part of the community engagement activities and training has been completed in NRM practices.

Output 2 Assumption 3: No major bushfires, droughts or floods which will negatively affect tree survival.

No major events have impacted the survival of the plants. Although, as mentioned above, flooding has impacted the planting of the seedlings. The training in NRM continue to take place and over 90 km of firebreaks will be established in to the two forest areas this year.

Output 2 Assumption 4: Project can source or produce tree seedlings from nurseries when needed.

The nurseries have been able to produce enough seedlings for the upcoming planting season of 2023. The production of the seedlings for the year 2022 was limited due to slow project launch. Nurseries have now been fully equipped with tools needed to produce the required seedlings. Nursery staff have now also been trained on the skills needed.

Output 2 Assumption 5: The project can effectively engage lead farmers in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) who are subsequently willing to apply the practices

Training continues to take place and the follow-up will take place post-training.

Climatic conditions continue to favour the products selected by VTEs:

Output 3 Assumption 1: Enterprise Development Plan includes consideration for both current climatic conditions and potential changes in those conditions

The MA&D approach provided by Yassinte has given the enterprises the skills to research and select relevant products and importantly, the skills to adapt in case of climatic shift.

Output 3 Assumption 2: Financial institutions are willing to engage with VTE groups.

Activities targeting financial institutions to engage them in supporting enterprises have been planned. Investment in more professional labelling and sites to sell products strengthens the business plans.

Output 3 Assumption 3: Women want to and have the authorisation by their husbands to participate in project activities such as membership of the VTE groups.

The project has conducted broader training on the importance of gender-sensitive policies and access rights. Women are central to project activities and no concerns have been raised about the women's participation in project activities.

3.5 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty reduction

The impact of the project is: 'Sustainable forest management and tree-based livelihoods contribute to biodiversity conservation in the Safienso and Sanekuy forests, covering 25,000 hectares in Mali, and the poverty reduction of local people.'

By strengthening the natural resource management of the Safienso and Sanekuy forests, supporting the adoption of the sustainable land management practices and developing enterprises based on NTFPs, the project will protect and restore biodiversity while contributing to reduce poverty. We will work with local communities to restore forests while building their capacities in forest governance and NRM and developing enterprises to improve livelihoods and increase incomes.

During the reporting period, training on forest-related texts with 84 stakeholders took place and workshops on strengthening and creating resource management frameworks were held. These sessions will help stakeholders to understand their roles in relation to forest regulations and help to put plans in place to secure the future of the Safienso and Sanekuy forests, strengthening biodiversity in the long term. Furthermore, the onset of community action plan development has been initiated across all 84 target villages, with a total of 2,321 people in attendance, an essential step towards the achievement of sustainable forest management.

In addition, two community nurseries have been fully established and equipped with wire mesh fence, water points, pots and seeds. So far, the nurseries have produced 23,050 seedlings needed for land restoration. Planting of the seedlings has taken place in the Safienso forest with the Sanekuy forest to follow. Also in this reporting period, equipment and training has been provided to 40 villages to restore degraded farmland. To date, 7,645 hectares of degraded land has been restored.

All these activities are vital to set in motion in the restoration and protection of the biodiversity in Safienso an Sanekuy forests. The land restoration will also contribute to increase land productivity and therefore farm income for the project participants.

In addition, the project has set in motion the activities around enterprise development and value chains to increase and diversify the source of income in the area. In this reporting period, Tree Aid and Sahel Eco team members have been trained on Enterprise Development Plans (EDPs), marketing, financial education, and Market Analysis and Development (MA&D) to prepare them for training the project participants. A diagnosis of NTFP value chains in the area has been conducted to help assess and select the NTFP products to be produced by the enterprises, helping to increase confidence that their products will be well received on the local market. So far, one NTFP market has taken place in Manekuy with over £4,000 of NTFP products sold.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

Mali adopted a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for implementing the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the national level (revised and updated in 2014). The Strategy is divided into 19 ambitious but realistic and time-bound objectives that consider the Aichi Targets on biological diversity. The project contributes to these through its bottom-up approach, taking into account gender, poverty alleviation, and local community rights, including disabled people and marginalised people. Land restoration of dryland ecosystems will take place through improved forest management, the promotion of agroforestry tree planting, farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR), soil and water conservation (SWC) practices and increasing soil fertility and land productivity. In turn, it will reduce the desertification, increase the resilience of ecosystems to climate extremes and increase carbon sequestration in the area (Aichi D17 and article 10d). In this project period, training on ANR, seeding, and other topics has been delivered to 62 local champions who will roll out knowledge-sharing to 3,000 farmers, to facilitate tree planting and the rejuvenation of land. Also, 137 farmers have been identified to practice restoration activities on their own agricultural land.

The project has started to restore ecosystems by investing in institutional and organisational capacities, alongside the development of tools to support management of two forest areas (Aichi B5). The project has undertaken a visioning activity with 2,321 people from 84 villages to

aid the development of community action plans. This is an important step towards the realisation of competences in the management of forest resources across the targeted communes and a starting point towards the development and implementation of Forest Development Management Plans which will support protection and restoration of 25,000 ha of forest area (article 8f).

The project has begun to increase local knowledge on the forest resources, the sustainable use of trees for livelihoods, cultural purposes, and the importance of forests for wildlife (article 8d) through training on land restoration. Thus far, two community nurseries have been established, one in the village of Worolo and one in the village of Bokuy. These nurseries have produced over 23,000 seedlings so far. The planting of tree species such as *Acacia Senegalia*, *Parkia Bogoloa*, *Adansonia Digitata* and *Prosopis Africana* will reverse the decline in the population numbers (Aichi C12), a process which will continue with more endangered trees being planted next year.

5.   Project support to poverty reduction

The project seeks to increase total household income by 10% and total household income sourced from NTFPs by 100% for 3,000 households (outcome indicator 2). Alongside this, the project is aiming for a 14% reduction in the number of households below the poverty line (outcome indicator 5). The targeted beneficiaries are rural communities in the Segou region of Mali. The communities are reliant on NTFPs sourced from the land.

Participants in the project are being empowered to sustainably manage and use forest resources which will help to maintain them in the long-term and contribute to poverty reduction. In this project period, the project has undertaken direct restoration of 7,645 hectares of degraded agricultural land, with farmers in 40 villages equipped with training and a set of tools including wheelbarrows, picks, shovels and hammers. This will increase land productivity and availability of tree resources in the area, contributing to poverty alleviation.

Another of the vectors for reducing poverty in this project is through the development of entrepreneurial groups focused on the production and sale of NTFPs. Importantly, the project has trained staff on key elements of enterprise development to help the knowledge transfer to project participants later and has done a thorough investigation of current NTFP value chains to understand better the challenges, gaps and opportunities. This has helped to select the NTFPs which will be produced by the project which are shea butter and sumbala. The organisation of an NTFP market in Manekuy provided an opportunity for cooperatives to sell their products and increase their profile, with over £4,000 of NTFP products sold at this event. This has helped to increase the household income of cooperative members and to expose them to potential financing options and new business contracts. Women, who are the group most significantly impacted by poverty in Mali, will make up 75% of the membership of the VTEs. The VTE activities will directly lead to income generation for their members and their families. The additional household income generated through VTEs will help to address key basic needs. Communities will have a clear understanding of the link between forest resources and household income, embedding the incentive for sustainable forest management in the long-term. The increased and diversified income will increase communities' resilience to external shocks and stresses in the future.

6.   Gender equality and social inclusion

The project has adopted a proactive approach towards women's inclusion in project activities and outcomes, with the aim of overcoming barriers related to traditional gender roles. This has involved employing techniques such as sensitising community leaders and project stakeholders to gender issues, as well as scheduling activities at times and locations that facilitate women's attendance and effective participation. Additionally, the project will support women's active participation in governance structures to enhance their sense of ownership over natural resources. A target of 40% women in cooperatives has been set, which is deemed realistic based on the socio-cultural context of the area.

The project has empowered women through their participation in enterprise development, which will contribute to household income, skill development, and confidence-building through training. Furthermore, women will be encouraged to take up leadership positions within Village Tree Enterprise (VTE) groups, thereby increasing their voice in household decision-making and control over their lives. 75% of all members (equivalent to 300 women) of the VTE groups are women. During this reporting period, the project engaged 22 women artisans (48% of participants) who were trained on the benefits of fuel-saving stoves and how to construct them. These women artisans will disseminate this information within their communities and assist in promoting the use of mud stove construction.

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board[1].	0
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women[2].	0

7.   Monitoring and evaluation

Output indicators have been developed to monitor the implementation of the project activities. The defined outputs in the outputs will contribute to the project Outcome, as outlined the project logframe (See Annexe 2).

Tree Aid has used a range of tools to monitor the project output and outcome indicators. To monitor socio-economic data of the project beneficiaries, Tree Aid has used RHoMIS surveys, alongside. These tools have been used to collect data as part of the project baseline, which took place in October 2022. The data collected will allow the team to monitor outcome and output indicators which relate to the socio-economic data, e.g. % of the population living below the poverty line. A statistically significant portion of the participants participated in the survey. A detailed Powerpoint presentation of the project baseline RHoMIS data can be found annexed.

Output indicators have been devised to oversee the execution of the project activities. The agreed project outputs will contribute to the project Outcome, as highlighted in the project logframe (refer to Annxe 2). To ensure that project output and outcome indicators are closely monitored, Tree Aid has employed a range of tools.

RHoMIS surveys have been utilized to gather socio-economic data of project beneficiaries. These tools were implemented as part of the project baseline, which was conducted in October 2022. The data collected will enable the project team to track outcome and output indicators related to socio-economic data, such as the percentage of the population living below the poverty line. A statistically significant proportion of participants was used to collect the information. A detailed presentation of the project baseline RHoMIS data has been included in the annexes (refer to Annexe).

Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) and Value Chain ODK forms are two tools which have been used to monitor the performance of the VTEs. As part of the baseline, each VTE group is assessed using these tools. The ODK survey assesses each VTE group according to different metrics which are weighted and used to create a composite indicator. The composite indicator is used to quantitatively monitor the performance of the VTE. These tools allow for the monitoring of Output indicators related to VTE establishment, such as Output Indicator 3.2 (average turnover for active VTEs established and increased).

---

[1] A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

[2] Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

The Land Use ODK survey and project records, along with an external ecological survey, help monitor output and outcome indicators pertaining to landcover, biodiversity, and ecology. Specifically, the Land Use ODK survey tracks the progress of land restoration efforts and the various methods employed in the process. Meanwhile, the ecological survey provides valuable data on forest biodiversity and tree density.

The maintenance of project records and beneficiary lists is another tool used to monitor project progress towards the Outcome. The management of this data is a collaborative effort between Tree Aid and Sahel Eco. To monitor certain activities, such as the establishment of two community-led management structures (Output 1.2), the project has documented meeting notes, signed agreements and taken photos of meetings. Both Tree Aid and Sahel Eco maintain these records. Beneficiary lists, on the other hand, are compiled and managed by Sahel Eco, and Tree Aid utilises this data to track the involvement of project participants in various project activities.

Incorporating focus groups at the project end will provide a valuable qualitative means of verifying that the desired outcome has been reached. No other qualitative data collection is planned for this project. Tree Aid will also look at breaking the income data down between High, Medium, and Low groups when looking at income changes. Evidence from similar projects suggests that it can be useful way of measuring the impact NTFP income on the most financial vulnerable groups.

8.   Lessons learnt

Having a 'train the trainer' approach to activities has proven to be most efficient and successful form of training. This has allowed training to continue in a context where access to the project communes can be impacted by threats to security and by poor weather. This approach has been applied for the land restoration training as well as the training in improved stoves. Having well-trained and reliable project participants is key to a successful project exit strategy. This approach will continue to be applied to the project and will allow for an increase in project implementation speed.

9.   Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

The comments from the previous report were discussed internally and shared with the project partner. Tree Aid Mali and Sahel Eco met in January 2023 to discuss project performance, review progress, and discuss comments from the previous report. The comments and actions are discussed below.

1) A revised budget should be attached to the next report, showing the allocation after the second (February 2022) CRF.

An updated budget has been provided by Tree Aid (see Annexe). The updated budget reflects the changes in funding allocation for RFC 4. These changes include more funding for the last year of the project and reallocating expenditure from underspent activities to activities which remain to be completed.

2) Greater clarity on the method and results of the baseline would be helpful, in the next half-year report. Clarification of the baseline should also include clarification of the number of communities that are to be targeted by the project.

The section on Monitoring and Evaluation (Section 7) provides greater information on the methodology and results of the baseline. The project is targeting a total of 84 villages across 10 communes. This information was not able to be provided in the previous yearly report due to the delays in project launch. A list of all project groups and communes has been annexed.

3) It will be valuable for demonstrating progress towards impact if the trajectory from previous work can be clearly expressed in the baseline and projected forward with the expected achievements of this current project.

The data has now been collected as part of the baseline and the logframe has been updated (see annexe).

4) It is recommended that more is done to prepare and present an exit strategy in the next annual report.

Project design is grounded in strengthening the capacity of stakeholders, to be fully functional and able to independently operate following project-end. The project has made worked towards this goal through the capacity building workshops and the establishment of the new management structure for the two new forests of Sutebwo and Sanekuy. The project will continue to work towards this goal through further training of the key stakeholders in these management structures and the training of the monitoring brigades.

Training in land restoration, through the train the trainer approach continues to take place. This will increase the self-reliance of the farmers, allowing them to improve productive and reliance to climate change. The target communities will therefore have the management structures as well as the necessary skills to sustainably use the land after project completion.

Similarly, the benefits seen through the project, including supply of NTFPs to support livelihoods, will incentivise the continuation of practices promoted through the project. Capacity building of enterprises will empower the groups to continue with income generating activities, long after project completion. By linking enterprises with financial institutions and buyers, the project will enable groups to be self-sustaining, continue to grow, invest in themselves, and financially benefit in the long-term. Data collected in 2023 shows that VTE groups established by Tree Aid in a previous project in Segou have continued to increase profit and income after project closure.

10. Risk Management

There have not been new risks identified over the last 12 months. And updated risk register has been annexed which contains the project risks.

11.   Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

12.   Sustainability and legacy

The exit strategy as presented in the proposal is still valid. The project design is grounded in strengthening the capacity of stakeholders, to be fully functional and able to independently operate following project-end. The surveillance brigades will be established within cooperatives and collaborate with the cooperatives, mayors, and technical services to monitor the forests. After the project, the town halls will ensure the continuing functioning of the cooperatives, and therefore the surveillance brigades also. Brigade members will participate in VTEs, providing the incentive to commit to monitoring activities. The restoration of farmland will improve productivity, building community self-reliance.

Capacity building of communities in sustainable land management will also ensure protection and sustainable use is maintained beyond project completion. Increased land productivity will in turn reduce pressures on natural resources on which communities depend. The benefits seen through the project, including supply of NTFPs to support livelihoods, will incentivise the continuation of practices promoted through the project. Capacity building of enterprises will empower the groups to continue with income generating activities, long after project completion. By linking enterprises with financial institutions and buyers, the project will enable groups to be self-sustaining, continue to grow, invest in themselves, and financially benefit in the long-term.

13.   Darwin Initiative identity

The project has made efforts to increase the publicity of the project through increasing the number of posts on social media regarding the project (via Twitter), as well as updating the Tree Aid website to include information on the project.

Understanding of the Darwin Initiative in Mali is increasing. The project uses the Darwin Initiative logo in all panels and event, which is increasing the visibility of the project.

14. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	No
Have any concerns been investigated in the past 12 months	/No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes *: Amadou Tangara* ████████████████
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	No
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 100% (11) Planned: 100% (11)
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses. None	
Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify. All and any new staff, including partner staff, will receive safeguarding training	

15. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure <u>during the reporting period</u> (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2022/23 Grant (£)	2022/23 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)	████	████	████	████
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				

Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	£158,326	£159,992		

Table 2: Project mobilising of matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

	Matched funding secured to date	Total matched funding expected by end of project
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project.		
Total additional finance mobilised by new activities building on evidence, best practices and project (£)		

16. **OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes**

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption, country and credit	Online accounts to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

Unfortunately, there is currently no material available for this project. Insecurity in the project area has partly resulted in the team not prioritising content-searching missions.

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2022-2023

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact Sustainable forest management and tree-based livelihoods contribute to biodiversity conservation in the Safienso and Sanekuy forests, covering 25,000 hectares in Mali, and the poverty reduction of local people			
Outcome Strengthen promotion of local forest governance, investments in forests and valorization of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) for sustainable improvement of livelihoods for 3,000 rural households in Tominian circle, Mali	0.1. 10% increase in vegetation cover and production potential of forests in the project area by the end of the project from project baseline Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects in Segou Region: Darwin Initiative project: 24-022/Internal ref: MB2; 2018): Tree Density: 6.3 m3 per hectare Trees over 30cm diameter: 17% (To be confirmed at project baseline) 0.2. 10% increase in total household income, and a 100% increase in the household income sourced from NTFPs from project baseline by the end of the project (across 3,000 project households) Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects in Segou Region: Darwin Initiative project: 24-022, Internal ref: MB2) Total Annual Household Income: $432.60 (Median) Annual NTFP Income: $9.00 (Median) (To be confirmed at project baseline)	0.1: Through the planting of 23,000 seedlings and direct planting, Tree Aid able to contribute to increasing vegetation cover. Similarly, the restoration of the land (7,645.95) following the RNA training will contribute to the increase in vegetation cover. The land restored will be verified using the ODK land restoration forms and the vegetation cover change will be monitored by the ecological survey. 0.2: The establishment of the 8 VTE groups and subsequent training is the first step in increasing household incomes. There has also been support for the VTE groups to access markets and buyers. 0.3: The nurseries have prioritised the production of endangered species, which will be used to enrich the two forests in the planting season of 2023. 0.4 – The activities related Outcome indictor 0.2 also apply to Outcome Indicator 0.4.	0.1: The planting season of 2023 will see the over 100,000 trees being planted, increasing the vegetation cover. Similarly, the land restoration activities will continue to undertaken by the project beneficiaries over this period of time. 0.2 - The training in product transformation and the MAD training will help the VTE groups to further their ability to monetise NTFP products. Further markets will take place and kiosk establishment will help to further increase participants incomes. 0.3 : The planting season will take place in July/August 2023, and will see more endangered trees being planted in the project area, increasing biodiversity. 0.4 – The activities related Outcome indictor 0.2 also apply to Outcome Indicator 0.4.

	0.3. 15% increase in tree species diversity in forest areas from project baseline by the end of the project Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects in Segou Region: Darwin Initiative project: 24-022/Internal ref: MB2) Project saw an increase in tree species diversity from 37 to 43 (To be confirmed at project baseline)	0.5 – The activities related Outcome indictor 0.2 also apply to Outcome Indicator 0.5	0.5 – The activities related Outcome indictor 0.2 also apply to Outcome Indicator 0.5
	0.4. 5% reduction in the number of households below the Calorie Line from baseline by the end of the project (i.e., reducing from an estimated 20% (600hh) to 15% (450hh)) Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects): Darwin Initiative project: 24-022/Internal ref: MB2) (To be confirmed at project baseline)		
	0.5. 14% reduction in the number of households below the Poverty Line from baseline by the end of the project (i.e. reducing from an estimated 92% (2,760hh) to 78% (2,340hh)) Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects): Darwin Initiative project: 24-022/Internal ref: MB2) (To be confirmed at project baseline		
Output 1. Strengthened governance, including increased women's participation, and the transfer of competences in the management of forest resources in four communes (Yasso, Tominian, Benena and Sanekuy) in Tominian circle	1.1. 60% of community members, as calculated from baseline, satisfied with local governance of their forest (disaggregated by gender), by the end of the project (year 1:10%, year 2:40%, year 3:60%) Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported	1.1: Forest Governance Composite Indicator: On average, beneficiary households rate their local forest governance as medium (37%) based on access to, control of, and development of local management tools. (42% for male beneficiaries, 34% for female beneficiaries) 1.2: 2 Established (March, 2023). Awaiting further detail (e.g., on the composition etc) 1.3: 0 forest management plans finalised.	

	projects): (FCDO funded project/internal ref: MB6); Communes of Guihoyo & Ouolodo in Mali; Apr-Jun2020)	1.4: 2 established and have been changed to include more women. Now 30% women.
	☐ 8% (Believe the municipality is well engaged)	
	☐ 19% (Believe the village is well engaged) (	
	To be confirmed at project baseline)	
	1.2. Establishment of two community level management structures (cooperatives); One per forest; Estimated 500 members per coop (40% women)	
	1.3. Two forest management plans, each benefiting one of the forest areas, developed, representing 25,000 ha, by the end of year 2 (year 1:1, year 2:2)	
	1.4. Establish two monitoring brigades (100 members per brigade, 50% women) one for each forest area, by the end of year 2 (year 1:1, year 2:2)	
Activity 1.1 Official project launch	In April 2022 the project was officially launched in the project participating villages.	Activity completed
Activity 1.2 Training of 80 local stakeholders from 10 communes (elected officials, general secretaries of town halls and technical services agents (subject matter specialists)) on Malian regulatory texts for natural resource management and decentralization in the forestry sector	A training session on Malian natural resource management law was held in November 2022, at Tominian Prefecture.	Activity completed
Activity 1.3 Support to community operations for local governance of forest resources within the framework of transferred competences	In November 2022, a series of workshops were held in Tominian Prefecture, aimed at enhancing the	The committees agreed to meet again in the next quarter to initiate the process of formalizing the management.

	existing community-led resources management frameworks.	
Activity 1.4 Organization of an exchange visit for 35 local stakeholders on the experiences of decentralized forest management in the "Programme de Gestion Décentralisée des Forêts" (GEDEFOR) intervention areas	No progress to date.	Activity planned for the next quarter.
Activity 1.5 Establishment and training of members of the monitoring brigades of the two forest areas in four new communes on their role and responsibility in the decentralization in the forestry sector	The monitoring brigades have been identified, training has taken place and the membership of the brigades has been updated.	No activity planned for next quarter.
Activity 1.6 Capacity development for brigades' members on ecological monitoring (changes in plant cover and biodiversity of target species, bush fire management.)	Training has taken place in February 2023 (awaiting update from the partner)	No activity planned for next quarter.
Activity 1.7 Training of 40 members of the local consultation framework on participatory conflict management	In November 2022, a conflict resolution training session was conducted at the Tominian Prefecture, with a focus on managing conflicts related to forest resources	No activity planned for next quarter.
Activity 1.8 Establishment of two management cooperatives for the intermunicipal massifs of the communes of Tominian, Benena, Yasso and Sanékuy	In November two new management frameworks were established and in massifs of Safienso and Sanekuy	Management framework formalisation remains to be completed in the next quarter.
Activity 1.9 Training of the cooperative members on governance, organisational management, market access and developing marketing mix and improvement of services to its members	Tree Aid and Sahel Eco teams have been trained in delivering the necessary training to the cooperatives.	Activity planned for the next quarter.
Activity 1.10 Training of members of the two cooperatives on management tools for new forest areas and the implementation of Forest Development and Management Plans	Forest Development and Management Plans have been prepared by Tree Aid but not yet finalised.	Finalisation of the Forest Development and Management Plans.
Activity 1.11 Drawing up two Forest Development and Management Plans for the Safienso forest massif in the communes of Bénéna and Tominian and the Sanekuy forest massif in the communes of Sanékuy and Yasso	Forest Development and Management Plans have been prepared by Tree Aid but not yet finalised.	Finalisation of the Forest Development and Management Plans.
Activity 1.12		

Drawing up and signature of partnership protocols between communities, technical services and cooperatives (Malian regulatory texts for natural resource management and decentralization in the forestry sector provides an overall framework for management between local authorities and communities and a work contract between communities and cooperatives)				
Activity 1.13 Digitalisation of training modules, translation into local languages and distribution through various communication channels (commented video programmes, radio, WhatsApp Group)			Training modules have been completed and digitalised. Radio transmissions have begun.	Distribution of the training modules to continue through video programmes and radio transmissions next quarter.
Activity 1.14 Conducting a visioning process for the identification of forest heritage and elaboration of a community action plan for restoration of the land			The 'visioning' activity and the creation of community action plans has been fully completed across all (84) target village	No activity planned for the next quarter.
Activity 1.15 Elaboration and translation into local languages of a forest surveillance procedure manual, validated by the local technical services, for the benefit of the surveillance brigades				No activity planned for the next quarter.
Activity 1.16 Materialization of the limits of the two forests (geo referencing, demarcation beacons)			Activity completed, awaiting the data from the field.	Tree Aid UK will digitiase the data from the field in the next quarter.
Activity 1.17 Support to the two cooperatives and the surveillance brigades in equipment for the development and surveillance of the forests				No activity planned for the next quarter.
Output 2. Promote the adoption of actions for the restoration of land, the reduction of pressure on forest resources and restoration of degraded land	0. 1. 2. 2.2. 2.3.	6,500ha of degraded agricultural land reclaimed and restored through soil and water conservation, agroforestry and assisted natural regeneration by the end of the project (year 1: 1,500ha, year 2:4,500ha, year 3:6,500ha) 100,000 trees* planted in forest areas with over 70% survival rate by the end of the project	*2.2 7,645.95 ha restored. In Yr . Only 150 ha have been confirmed by the ODK survey to date. This is due to issue surrounding data collection in an area of conflict.* *2.3: 2900 trees planted (2146 trees georeferenced). 100,000 planned for yr 2. No update on tree survival at this stage.* *2.4: Baseline data collected and shows that in October 2022 that 5.48kg per day per household* *2.5: 0 km. 90 km planned in October.*	

		(year 1: zero, year 2:80,000, year 3:100,000) *including endangered species: Pterocarpus erinaceus, Terminalia habeensis. Vulnerable: Afzelia Africana, Khaya senegalensis. Near threatened: Dalbergia melanoxylon	
	2.4.	30% reduction in the average quantity of fuel wood consumed in households from baseline (year 2:10%, year 3:30%) Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects): BB6 (Centre Nord, Nord, Centre Sud and Est; Apr-Jun2018) & GB1 (Northern Region; Ghana; Apr-Jun2018) 16kg/day/household (To be confirmed at project baseline)	
	2.5.	Creation of 150km of access roads and firebreaks 150km access roads developed (year 1: 40km year 2: 90km year 3: 150km)	
Activity 2.1 Support for the installation of two community nurseries (wire mesh fence, solar water point, equipment, pots and seeds) for the production of 100,000 seedlings for planting in the two forest areas		By April 2022 both the two community nurseries were fully established.	No activity planned for the next quarter.
Activity 2.2 Carry out water and soil conservation / defence and soil restoration measures in the forest to promote regeneration of local tree species (including stone bunds and other locally adapted techniques)		Identification of the locations of the restoration area took place in 2022. The trainer were trained in soil and water conservation techniques in January 2023	Implementation of restoration measures is on-going.

Activity 2.3 Planting of 100,000 trees and direct seedlings of local forest species in the forests	Activity 23% completed.	Planting for the 2023 year is forecast to commence in July.
Activity 2.4 Training of actors (nurserymen, VTE members, cooperative members) on techniques (grafting, sanitary pruning and transplantation)	Training in grating, pruning and transplanting has taken place in January 2023.	Activity is ongoing.
Activity 2.5 Creation of access feeder roads and firewalls in the two forest areas	Activity not completed	Activity planned for September 2023
Activity 2.6 Broadcast radio programs to raise awareness on the use of improved cookstoves	First radio campaign completed (see annual report 1)	Second radio campagin planned for April 2023.
Activity 2.7 Training of 40 artisans on how to make improved cookstoves	Training completed (see Annual Report 1)	No activity planned next quarter.
Activity 2.8 Structuring and formalization of four groups of charcoal producers and coal operators	Activity not completed.	Activity planned for next quarter.
Activity 2.9 Training of 40 charcoal and wood operators on improved charcoal burning and sustainable logging techniques	Activity not completed.	Activity planned for next quarter.
Activity 2.10 Equipping four groups of charcoal and wood operators with improved carbonization equipment	Activity not completed.	Activity planned for next quarter.
Activity 2.11 Assistance to four charcoal and wood harvester groups in the acquisition of logging maps and the first charcoal production permits from the forestry services	Activity not completed.	Activity planned for next quarter.
Activity 2.12 Training of 3,000 farmers on soil and water conservation / defence and soil restoration	Activity completed in January 2023. 7,645.95 ha restored.	Those trained are continuing the activity through training further people.
Activity 2.13 Support in small equipment for the treatment of 6,500 hectares of degraded agricultural land in villages bordering forests by agroforestry techniques (compost, soil and water conservation / defence and soil restoration), planting, assisted natural regeneration (ANR)	Activity completed in 2022	No further activity planned.

Activity 2.14 Organize an annual competition to reward the communities with the best rates of adoption of agroforestry and sustainable land management practices		No progress towards this activity yet.	Activity planned for June 2023.
Output 3. Increased income for eight (8) Village Tree Enterprises (VTEs) (50 members per group = 400 members; 75% women = 300 women) through the economic development of forest resources	3.1. Eight VTEs established and develop appropriate Enterprise Development Plans (EDPs) by the end of year 2 3.2. Average turnover for active VTEs established and increase to $TBC Indicative sales of newly established VTE groups (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects): Burkina; Ethiopia and Ghana • $3,373 per VTE per annum • $67 per member per annum (To be confirmed at project baseline) 3.3. Three contracts signed with buyers by the end of the project	3.1 8 VTE established. Awaiting finalisation of the 8 EDPs Results form OCAT survey: 8/8 graded 3/5 on OCAT Composite indicator score of 50% Production and profit: 43.75% Equipement: 51.88 Finance: 56.25 Business management: 46.48 Access to Market: 52.34% Governance + inclusion: 46.88% 3.2: Average turnover at baseline is $0 3.3 0 contract signed with buyers	
Activity 3.1 Carrying out a diagnosis of the actors and value chains of promising non-timber forest products (NTFPs)		Completed in November 2022	No further activity planned.
Activity 3.2 Organization of value chain validation workshops by commune		Completed in November 2022	No further activity planned.
Activity 3.3 Creation of forestry enterprises (based on MA&D and farming as a business training package) in the four communes		Completed in December 2022	Completed in December 2022
Activity 3.4 Elaboration of business plans for Eight Village Tree Enterprises, based on NTFP		The process has begun with the selection of NTFP products and the establishment of the different VTE groups.	Finalisation of the VTE groups enterprise development plans to be completed next quarter.
Activity 3.5		Training has begun in NTFP product processing and conservation.	Activity ongoing and to be completed in the next quarter.

Training of groups/cooperatives on techniques of processing and conservation of NTFPs to improve the quality of the products		
Activity 3.6 Installation of two mini solar multifunctional platforms (solar mills) for various non-timber forest product (NTFP) processing uses	Activity not completed.	To be completed in the next quarter.
Activity 3.7 Training of beekeepers in modern beekeeping techniques	Activity not completed.	To be completed in the next quarter.
Activity 3.8 Equipping producers with 40 modern hives and other beekeeping equipment (hives, overalls, smokers, gloves, boots, etc.)	Activity not completed.	To be completed in the next quarter.
Activity 3.9 Training of VTEs on marketing techniques, simplified financial management, entrepreneurship, etc	Sahel Eco and Tree Aid staff have been trained on how to deliver the training.	To be completed in the next quarter.
Activity 3.10 Development of a Simplified Market Information System (SIM) to facilitate the marketing of non-timber forest products	Activity ongoing.	Activity ongoing.
Activity 3.11 Installation of 4 sales points/stores for non-timber forest products installed to promote the marketing of NTFPs	Activity not completed.	Construction forecast to begin next quarte .
Activity 3.12 Equipping NTFP processing groups with modern packaging and labelling materials to facilitate the packaging and marketing of their products	Activity not completed.	To be completed in the next quarter.
Activity 3.13 Support to producers and processors for their participation in various local and national fairs and other trade events	One market attended by the VTE groups	Another market to ttake place next year.

Annex 2: Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Sustainable forest management and tree-based livelihoods contribute to biodiversity conservation in the Safienso and Sanekuy forests, covering 25,000 hectares in Mali, and the poverty reduction of local people			
Outcome: Strengthen promotion of local forest governance, investments in forests and valorization of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) for sustainable improvement of livelihoods for 3,000 rural households in Tominian circle, Mali	0.1. 10% increase in vegetation cover and production potential of forests in the project area by the end of the project from project baseline Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects in Segou Region: Darwin Initiative project: 24-022/Internal ref: MB2; 2018): Tree Density: 6.3 m3 per hectare Trees over 30cm diameter: 17% (To be confirmed at project baseline) 0.2. 10% increase in total household income, and a 100% increase in the household income sourced from NTFPs from project baseline by the end of the project (across 3,000 project households) Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects in Segou Region: Darwin Initiative project: 24-022, Internal ref: MB2) Total Annual Household Income: $432.60 (Median) Annual NTFP Income: $9.00 (Median) (To be confirmed at project baseline) 0.3. 15% increase in tree species diversity in forest areas from project baseline by the end of the project Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects in Segou Region: Darwin Initiative project: 24-022/Internal ref: MB2) Project saw an increase in tree	0.1. Forest resource mapping of project intervention sites (GPS); Forest ecological/inventory; Permanent Monitoring Plots (PMPs) 0.2. RHoMIS survey (Rural Household Multiple Indicator Survey) 0.3. Forest resource mapping of project intervention sites (GPS); Forest ecological/inventory; Permanent Monitoring Plots (PMPs) 0.4. RHoMIS (Rural Household Multiple Indicator Survey); Composite indicator based on multiple sources of nutrition 0.5. RHoMIS (Rural Household Multiple Indicator Survey); Composite indicator based on multiple sources of cash income	Climatic conditions do not disrupt activities. Mitigations: Farmers will be trained in climate-smart approaches, and the NRM promoted through this project will increase resilience to climate extremes Communities and key stakeholders in the intervention area are willing to participate in the project Mitigations: Tree Aid has a long history in the Segou Region during which we have developed strong links to key stakeholders including local authorities and government departments. A community consultation took place in Jan 2020 to engage the community who showed support for the planned intervention Legislation of natural resource management remains favourable to the project. Mitigations: Tree Aid has developed strong links with the relevant government departments at local and regional level and will be training people at these levels in the importance of natural resource management. Management agreements will be put in place to protect the local forest governance process Political situation remains stable enough for project activities to take place. Mitigations: Steps to mitigate include managing project inputs from government and organising activities

	species diversity from 37 to 43 (To be confirmed at project baseline)

0.4. 5% reduction in the number of households below the Calorie Line from baseline by the end of the project (i.e., reducing from an estimated 20% (600hh) to 15% (450hh)) Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects): Darwin Initiative project: 24-022/Internal ref: MB2) (To be confirmed at project baseline)

0.5. 14% reduction in the number of households below the Poverty Line from baseline by the end of the project (i.e. reducing from an estimated 92% (2,760hh) to 78% (2,340hh)) Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects): Darwin Initiative project: 24-022/Internal ref: MB2) (To be confirmed at project baseline) | | around any elections. The project is working with local level administration, which is expected to be less impacted. There may be a need to reduce travel in areas where security is poor and to adapt activities (e.g., remote delivery) accordingly

COVID-19 pandemic does not disrupt the implementation of project activities. Mitigations: Project staff will closely follow national guidance and implement activities in a manner deemed safe for staff and beneficiaries. Budget reallocations may be needed to modify plan for delivery of activities e.g. pay for equipment to deliver training remotely (mobile phones/tablets), and purchase PPE, soap and sanitiser gel. New approaches for delivering activities in smaller groups and remotely have been tried by Tree Aid during the first set of restrictions in 2020. These can be used should further restrictions come into place

No significant changes to international, national, or local NTFP markets. Mitigations: The market analysis and development (MA&D) approach used teaches about doing research into markets and selecting relevant products that will enable businesses to adapt. Contracts will be signed with potential buyers to reduce exposure to sudden falls in prices |
| **Output 1**

Strengthened governance, including increased women's participation, and the transfer of competences in the management of forest resources in four communes (Yasso, Tominian, Benena and Sanekuy) in Tominian circle | 1.1. 60% of community members, as calculated from baseline, satisfied with local governance of their forest (disaggregated by gender), by the end of the project (year 1:10%, year 2:40%, year 3:60%) | 1.1. Household survey (RHoMIS) on knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of forest governance

1.2. Project records; Project Beneficiary List | National policy remains favourable for local forest governance. Mitigations: Tree Aid has developed strong links with the relevant government departments at local and regional level and will be training people at these levels in the importance of natural resource management. These groups |

	Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects): (FCDO funded project/internal ref: MB6); Communes of Guihoyo & Ouolodo in Mali; Apr-Jun2020) • 8% (Believe the municipality is well engaged) • 19% (Believe the village is well engaged) (To be confirmed at project baseline) 1.2. Establishment of two community level management structures (cooperatives); One per forest; Estimated 500 members per coop (40% women) 1.3. Two forest management plans, each benefiting one of the forest areas, developed, representing 25,000 ha, by the end of year 2 (year 1:1, year 2:2) 1.4. Establish two monitoring brigades (100 members per brigade, 50% women) one for each forest area, by the end of year 2 (year 1:1, year 2:2)	1.3. Project records; Land Use Survey (ODK form) Project records	will be encouraged to advocate for local forest governance. Tree Aid also has positive evidence from a previous Darwin-funded project to demonstrate the benefits Local chiefs are willing to sign conventions and/or agreements. Mitigations: Tree Aid will be working with local chiefs from the outset to explain the benefits of local forest governance Access rights are respected by the wider communities. Mitigations: Community sensitisation on the importance of sustainable exploitation and the benefits this will bring for people, will take place Men are accepting of changes resulting through the establishment of natural resources management structures: Mitigations: Gender equality sensitisation will be mainstreamed into project activities. Tree Aid will apply its experience working in the region and with women. We will engage the men in the community to discuss the benefit they and their household will have if they let their wife participate in the project. We will use male role models
Output 2 Promote the adoption of actions for the restoration of land, the reduction of pressure on forest resources and restoration of degraded land	2.1. 6,500ha of degraded agricultural land reclaimed and restored through soil and water conservation, agroforestry and assisted natural regeneration by the end of the project (year 1: 1,500ha, year 2:4,500ha, year 3:6,500ha) 2.2. 100,000 trees* planted in forest areas with over 70% survival rate by the end of the project (year 1: zero, year 2:80,000, year 3:100,000) *including endangered	2.1. Activity reports; Forest inventories; Forest management plans (FMPs); Forest maps; Land Use Survey (ODK form) 2.2. Project records; Permanent Monitoring Plots (PMPs); Land Use Survey (ODK form) 2.3. Kitchen Performance Test (KPT) 2.4 Project reports, GPS data, photos	Climatic conditions remain favourable to support land restoration: Mitigations: Farmers will be trained in climate-smart approaches, and the NRM promoted through this project will increase resilience to climate extremes Community members engage with new NRM practices: Mitigations: The project team will sensitise the farmers in the long-term benefits of assisted natural regeneration and the soil and water conservation techniques for the

	species: Pterocarpus erinaceus, Terminalia habeensis. Vulnerable: Afzelia Africana, Khaya senegalensis. Near threatened: Dalbergia melanoxylon		productivity of their farm land. In addition, the project staff will follow up with the trainees after the training to ensure their good adoption of the techniques
	2.3. 30% reduction in the average quantity of fuel wood consumed in households from baseline (year 2:10%, year 3:30%) Indicative baseline (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects): BB6 (Centre Nord, Nord, Centre Sud and Est; Apr-Jun2018) & GB1 (Northern Region; Ghana; Apr-Jun2018)

16kg/day/household

(To be confirmed at baseline) | | No major bushfires, droughts or floods which will negatively affect tree survival. Mitigations: The NRM promoted through this project will increase resilience to of the land to manage climate extremes. Firebreaks will be established in to the two forest areas

Project can source or produce tree seedlings from nurseries when needed. Mitigations: Nurseries will be fully equipped with tools needed to produce the required seedlings. Nursery staff will be trained on the skills needed |
| | 2.4. Creation of 150km of access roads and firebreaks 150km access roads developed (year 1: 40km year 2: 90km year 3: 150km) | | The project is able to effectively engage lead farmers in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) who are subsequently willing to apply the practices. Mitigations: Lead Farmers feedback is collected after training, and six months post training, and their use of techniques is tracked annually |
| **Output 3**

Increased income for eight (8) Village Tree Enterprises (VTEs) (50 members per group = 400 members; 75% women = 300 women) through the economic development of forest resources | 3.1. Eight VTEs established and develop appropriate Enterprise Development Plans (EDPs) by the end of year 2

3.2. Average turnover for active VTEs established and increase to $TBC

Indicative sales of newly established VTE groups (sourced from similar Tree Aid supported projects): Burkina; Ethiopia and Ghana

• $3,373 per VTE per annum

• $67 per member per annum | 3.1. Enterprise Development Plans (EDPs); Organisational Capacity Assessments (ODK form)

3.2. VTE sales records; Enterprise Development Plan (EDP) assessment survey (ODK form)

3.3. Enterprise Development Plans (EDPs); Organisational Capacity Assessments (ODK form) | Climatic conditions continue to favour the products selected by VTEs. Mitigations: Enterprise Development Plan includes consideration for both current climatic conditions and potential changes in those conditions. MA&D approach gives enterprises the skills to research and select relevant products

Financial institutions are willing to engage with VTE groups. Mitigations: Activities targeting financial institutions to engage them in supporting enterprises have been planned. Investment in more professional |

	(To be confirmed at project baseline)		labelling and sites to sell products strengthens the business plans
	3.3. Three contracts signed with buyers by the end of the project		Women want to and have the authorisation by their husbands to participate in project activities such as membership of the VTE groups. Mitigations: The project will conduct broader training on the importance of gender-sensitive policies and access rights

Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

1.1. Official project launch

1.2. Training of 80 local stakeholders from 10 communes (elected officials, general secretaries of town halls and technical services agents (subject matter specialists)) on Malian regulatory texts for natural resource management and decentralization in the forestry sector.

1.3. Support to community operations for local governance of forest resources within the framework of transferred competences

1.4. Organization of an exchange visit for 35 local stakeholders on the experiences of decentralized forest management in the "Programme de Gestion Décentralisée des Forêts" (GEDEFOR) intervention areas

1.5. Establishment and training of members of the monitoring brigades of the two forest areas in four new communes on their role and responsibility in the decentralization in the forestry sector

1.6. Capacity development for brigades' members on ecological monitoring (changes in plant cover and biodiversity of target species, bush fire management.)

1.7. Training of 40 members of the local consultation framework on participatory conflict management

1.8. Establishment of two management cooperatives for the intermunicipal massifs of the communes of Tominian, Benena, Yasso and Sanékuy.

1.9. Training of the cooperative members on governance, organisational management, market access and developing marketing mix and improvement of services to its members

1.10. Training of members of the two cooperatives on management tools for new forest areas and the implementation of Forest Development and Management Plans

1.11. Drawing up two Forest Development and Management Plans for the Safienso forest massif in the communes of Bénéna and Tominian and the Sanekuy forest massif in the communes of Sanékuy and Yasso.

1.12. Drawing up and signature of partnership protocols between communities, technical services and cooperatives (Malian regulatory texts for natural resource management and decentralization in the forestry sector provides an overall framework for management between local authorities and communities and a work contract between communities and cooperatives).

1.13. Digitalisation of training modules, translation into local languages and distribution through various communication channels (commented video programmes, radio, WhatsApp Group)

1.14. Conducting a visioning process for the identification of forest heritage and elaboration of a community action plan for restoration of the land

1.15. Elaboration and translation into local languages of a forest surveillance procedure manual, validated by the local technical services, for the benefit of the surveillance brigades

1.16. Materialization of the limits of the two forests (geo referencing, demarcation beacons)

1.17. Support to the two cooperatives and the surveillance brigades in equipment for the development and surveillance of the forests

2.1. Support for the installation of two community nurseries (wire mesh fence, solar water point, equipment, pots and seeds) for the production of 100,000 seedlings for planting in the two forest areas

2.2. Carry out water and soil conservation / defence and soil restoration measures in the forest to promote regeneration of local tree species (including stone bunds and other locally adapted techniques)

2.3. Planting of 100,000 trees and direct seedlings of local forest species in the forests

2.4. Training of actors (nurserymen, VTE members, cooperative members) on techniques (grafting, sanitary pruning and transplantation)

2.5. Creation of access feeder roads and firewalls in the two forest areas.

2.6. Broadcast radio programs to raise awareness on the use of improved cookstoves.

2.7. Training of 40 artisans on how to make improved cookstoves

2.8. Structuring and formalization of four groups of charcoal producers and coal operators.

2.9. Training of 40 charcoal and wood operators on improved charcoal burning and sustainable logging techniques

2.10. Equipping four groups of charcoal and wood operators with improved carbonization equipment

2.11. Assistance to four charcoal and wood harvester groups in the acquisition of logging maps and the first charcoal production permits from the forestry services

2.12. Training of 3,000 farmers on soil and water conservation / defence and soil restoration

2.13. Support in small equipment for the treatment of 6,500 hectares of degraded agricultural land in villages bordering forests by agroforestry techniques (compost, soil and water conservation / defence and soil restoration), planting, assisted natural regeneration (ANR)

2.14. Organize an annual competition to reward the communities with the best rates of adoption of agroforestry and sustainable land management practices

3.1. Carrying out a diagnosis of the actors and value chains of promising non-timber forest products (NTFPs)

3.2. Organization of value chain validation workshops by commune

3.3. Creation of forestry enterprises (based on MA&D and farming as a business training package) in the four communes

3.4. Elaboration of business plans for Eight Village Tree Enterprises, based on NTFP

3.5. Training of groups/cooperatives on techniques of processing and conservation of NTFPs to improve the quality of the products

3.6. Installation of two mini solar multifunctional platforms (solar mills) for various non-timber forest product (NTFP) processing uses

3.7. Training of beekeepers in modern beekeeping techniques

3.8. Equipping producers with 40 modern hives and other beekeeping equipment (hives, overalls, smokers, gloves, boots, etc.).

3.9. Training of VTEs on marketing techniques, simplified financial management, entrepreneurship, etc.

3.10. Development of a Simplified Market Information System (SIM) to facilitate the marketing of non-timber forest products

3.11. Installation of 4 sales points/stores for non-timber forest products installed to promote the marketing of NTFPs

3.12. Equipping NTFP processing groups with modern packaging and labelling materials to facilitate the packaging and marketing of their products

3.13. Support to producers and processors for their participation in various local and national fairs and other trade events

M&E 1. Training of agents on monitoring and evaluation tools

M&E 2. Recruiting new agents

M&E 3. Tree Aid field follow-up

M&E 4. Sahel Eco field follow-up

M&E 5. Kick-off workshop

M&E 6. Ecological Survey (including forest inventory); baseline & endline

M&E 7. Permanent Monitoring Plots - establishment & monitoring

M&E 8. Baseline (RHoMIS survey, focus group discussions, consultant)
M&E 9. Final evaluation (RHoMIS survey, focus group discussions, consultant)
M&E 10. Project Audit

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

Table 1   Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
E.g. DI-A01	E.g. People who attended training on CBD Reporting Standards	E.g. Number of officials from national Department of Environment who attended training on CBD Reporting Standards	People	Men	20			20	60
E.g. DI-C17	E.g. Articles published by members of the project team	E.g. Number of unique papers published in peer reviewed journals	Number	None	1				

Table 2   Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the **correct template** (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and **deleted the blue guidance text** before submission?	X
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	X
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	X
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 16)?	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	X
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	