

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

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

**Submission Deadline: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

<b>Project reference</b>	<i>DARCC037</i>
<b>Project title</b>	Growing threatened trees' restoration capacity in Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa landscapes
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Côte d'Ivoire
<b>Lead partner</b>	ICRAF-CIFOR – International Centre for Research in Agroforestry
<b>Partner(s)</b>	CNF – Centre National de Floristique BGCI – Botanic Gardens Conservation International
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Jean Claude Nzi</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	<i>HYR1</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	This LinkedIn post announced what the project intends to do and why it is important, receiving 6488 impressions: <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/posts/cathy-watson-99a62828_darwin-defra-biodiversity-activity-7088565153801150465---MZ?utm_source=share&amp;utm_medium=member_ios">https://www.linkedin.com/posts/cathy-watson-99a62828_darwin-defra-biodiversity-activity-7088565153801150465---MZ?utm_source=share&amp;utm_medium=member_ios</a> @CWatsonICRAF also made multiple tweets and posts on Facebook.

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

- The project Steering Committee (SC) was established with representatives from ICRAF, CNF and BGCI and a first meeting held 24 July 2023 to introduce the project; Divo Botanical Reserve/Forest and past/ongoing initiatives; BGCI's role in tree and seed conservation and planning; and CNF's role and planning for inventory.
- Multiple activities have been carried out on the ground: 15-16 July ICRAF-CNF scoped Jardin Botanique de Bingerville under Ministry of Water and Forests (MINEF), ORSTOM botanical garden under National Agricultural Research Service (CNRA), the botanical garden at University of Felix Houphouet-Boigny. Their managers will be invited to BGCI's botanic garden orientation in November. National Forest Tree Seed Centre and a botanic garden for Raphia and Rattan in Divo were also contacted.
- July 17-21 saw a ICRAF-CNF team in Divo. It introduced the project to the regional MINEF office, led by forester Colonel Ansah Banga and spent time with MINEF staff in the reserve, who welcomed the project and learnt about the inventory. The team interviewed nine nursery operators supplying seedlings and trained by ICRAF; visited ANADER, the national agricultural extension agency, in Divo; and held an inception meeting with cocoa farmers resident within the Reserve, who expressed dislike for exotic species such as Teak and stated that it is now hard to find native medicinal trees.

- The trip's aim was to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders of the Botanic Reserve. The team collected information on the reserve, land uses, challenges and main threats and explained about trainings offered by the partners.
- CNF analysed the nursery survey, finding 33 different tree species propagated, of which 20 were native. Of those, 16 were on the IUCN Red List: 7 of minor concern, 3 near threatened (*Entandrophragma angolensis*, *Irvingia gabonensis*, *Albizia ferruginea*) and one endangered (*Teighemella heckelei*). Nursery operators identified 10 native species for which mother trees are absent, few or only at great distances. Most difficult to obtain seeds for was *Tieghemella heckelei* then *Milicia regia*, *Garcinia kola* and *Irvingia gabonensis*. Nurseries welcomed capability and capacity development.
- An initial land use map was shared among partners, but will be updated after the inventory. CNF is already sensing that the botanical reserve is more converted to agriculture and has less forest than originally hoped.
- The inventory will end mid-October. The methodology was developed by CNF and discussed and agreed by all partners; BGCI provided a data collection form and guideline on "How to survey an area for threatened tree species". To be surveyed in the 6800ha Reserve will be about 29 plots of 100m x 25m, 5 plots of 50mx100m, and 33 plots of 100mx100m, varying with biotopes to identify the maximum of plant species.

Table 1: Detail of the sampling

Type of Land Use	Chosen sampling surface	Number of sampling units	Area sampled
Cocoa	10.000 m <sup>2</sup>	14	14 ha
Low ground and young fallow	10.000 m <sup>2</sup>	9	9 ha
Rubber palm grove	10.000 m <sup>2</sup>	7	7 ha
Forest plantation	5.000 m <sup>2</sup>	5	2,5 ha
Secondary forest	2.500 m <sup>2</sup>	24	8 ha
Aged fallow	2.500 m <sup>2</sup>	5	1,25 ha
Mosaic cultures	10.000 m <sup>2</sup>	3	3 ha
<b>Total</b>		<b>67</b>	<b>42,75 ha</b>

All species with a DBH greater than five will be inventoried. For woody regeneration and herbaceous plants, quadrants will be 5x5m or 25m<sup>2</sup>. Confusing species will be identified in the National Floristic Center's Herbarium. To collect tree that are not encountered in the plots during the surface surveys and to take their geographical coordinates, itinerant surveys will traverse the reserve in all directions. Data processing will focus on the qualitative (total of plant species, genera, families, chorology, ecological and IUCN status of each species) and the quantitative, calculating the Shannon Weaver diversity index (1948), the Pielou equitability index (1966), the index of value of importance of families, of similarity, of floristic richness, species diversity and floristic equitability of the reserve.

- A literature review of threatened species is underway. BGCI analysed the conservation status of 121 plant species thought to be in the Reserve: 111 are native, of which 65 are trees of which 7 are globally threatened and 3 near threatened.
- BGCI shared a check-list for stakeholder analysis to be filled in November.
- CIFOR-ICRAF submitted a blog to the Darwin communication unit.

**2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

The Divo Botanical Reserve survey was to start in late August. But, due to elections in September, it was postponed. Results from the inventory are essential for next steps and will be documented in the annual report. During the November visit, partners will revise the work plan and submit a change request if needed. The only assumption giving cause for reflection is

that the project can boost sales of indigenous tree seedlings. The nursery survey found demand for seedlings depressed due to uncertainty about agroforestry in the cocoa sector.

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

Discussed with NIRAS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance

Change request reference if known:

**4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)**

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

**4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2024)?**

Yes  No  Estimated underspend: £

**4c. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.** Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

**If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

**NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.**

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

None

**If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.**

**All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with NIRAS through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

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