



### **Rainforest Alliance & Rick Steves' Europe**

Climate Smart Cocoa in Ghana

First Quarterly Report: March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Project Timeline: October 31, 2019 – December 31, 2020

Climate Smart Commitment Grant: \$50,000

#### **Introduction & Funding Objectives:**

The Rainforest Alliance is deeply grateful to Rick Steves' Europe for its commitment to fund *Climate Smart Cocoa in Ghana*. This investment helps conserve the cocoa forest landscape and sustain the agricultural livelihoods of communities in Ghana. Funds support tree planting, tree nursery establishment, tree registering, and support for Landscape Management Boards (LMBs)—who are responsible for managing landscapes and restoring deforested areas. These activities will improve soil conditions, restore tree cover and shade, protect biodiversity and increase the cocoa yield. In turn, these actions increase farmers' income and food security while expanding climate smart agricultural practices.

#### **Project Updates:**

The project is progressing on schedule with the successful implementation of the first quarter's project activities. These activities include (1) identifying degraded land to include in the restoration sites, (2) establishing four community tree nurseries, (3) training 44 Landscape Management Board members while prioritizing gender equality and social inclusion, (4) conducting a lead farmer training survey. To reinforce these activities, we are also strengthening our partnership with government and the private sector to address farmers' biggest challenges from a wholistic approach.

##### **1. Identifying Degraded Land:**



*An area of degraded land that has been selected as a restoration site.*

The Landscape Management Board members identified two regions of degraded land to include in the 4,000 hectares for restoration. One region, located in the southern part of the community in Ackaakrom, was once an important rice farming region that became unusable due to extreme flooding. The second region, Chorichori, is a sacred grove located near the Sui River forest reserve. This area hosts natural habitats for unique flora and fauna species, but is threatened by climate change, farm expansion and tourism. The Rainforest Alliance team and LMB members, in partnership with Olam, visited these two areas, identified the extent of degradation and constructed a plan to concentrate efforts on restoring the buffer zones and surrounding the areas with native seedlings.

## **2. Tree Nursery Establishment:**



Seedlings growing at the Kuafukaa tree nursery.

Four nurseries have been successfully established and are at full capacity cultivating 60,000 trees in total. The nurseries, known by their local names



Kwafukaa, Amafie, Kojokrom, and Nkwadum, are fully operational with staff, water, and supplies on site. Transplanting is expected to take place in June/July 2020. Additionally, the Rainforest Alliance-Olam team met with officials from the Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC) to discuss modalities for tree registration to secure proof of tree ownership for farmers within the Sefwi LMBs to commence actions in the next quarter.

**3. Training Landscape Management Boards (LMBs) and prioritizing gender equality and social inclusion:**



*Farmers planting seedlings at the Kojokrom tree nursery.*

We have successfully trained 44 LMB members from four different communities in nursery establishment and management. The Rainforest Alliance ensures that women are included in the farming and management trainings. Forty eight percent of trainees were female, and fifty-three percent were male, of whom thirty-nine percent were youth between 18 – 36 years of age. Five of the trained LMB members were selected to oversee the daily management of the nurseries. The Rainforest Alliance developed an action-oriented approach to encourage female participation in Climate Smart Agriculture by scheduling meetings in alignment with women's daily schedules and holding female-only trainings.

**4. Lead Farmer Training Survey:**



*Farmer training conducted at the nursery site.*

To build the capacity of lead farmers, those who train other farmers, in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and Cocoa Agronomy, we surveyed lead farmers to better inform future trainings and provide greater insight on how we can best support farmers throughout this project. The survey reported an average of 4 trainings conducted by lead farmers in their communities with an average participation rate of 34 people per training. Lead farmers trained a total of 2,584 people and plan to surpass the original target of training 10,000 farmers in the landscape. In addition to these trainings, the Rainforest Alliance's partner, Olam has also conducted trainings for 9,996 farmers through its Sustainability Technical Assistance program.

#### **Successes:**

- Positive feedback from trainings increased training demand and enrollment.
- Trainings informed farmers of new ways to use agricultural chemicals to help save money and limit environmental impact.
- Trainings highlighted the benefit of agroforestry as a natural climate solution. Many farmers witness negative impacts of climate change on cocoa trees. The need to plant more trees to provide shade for cocoa trees is more evident now than ever before.

#### **Challenges:**

- Difficulty engaging all community members to participate in the trainings.

*Solution:* Moving forward, we will encourage regular participation of project officers in community meetings to more effectively establish alignment on how farmers can most benefit. We will continue to expand our reach to include the entire farmer population, rather than just the cooperative members and farmers in Olam's supply chain.

- Farmers often expect immediate benefits such as farm inputs, in-kind grants and/or cash.

*Solution:* Focus technical assistance on delivering tangible incentive packages to help farmers understand the long-term benefits of improved productivity, additional livelihoods activities, access to finance including interest-free loans by Olam and payments for deforestation free certified cocoa.

- A lack of materials and experience in book-keeping.

*Solution:* The Rainforest Alliance will provide additional trainings on bookkeeping and provide basic materials.

**Conclusion:**

Thanks to the generous funding of Rick Steves' Europe, the Rainforest Alliance is already witnessing project results including 2 reforestation sites identified, 4 established tree nurseries with 60,000 seedlings, 44 trained LMB members, and 2,584 farmers trained by lead farmers. The project has a strong foundation and clear objectives moving forward. We are grateful to Rick Steves' Europe for placing a focus on climate-smart agricultural practices in the developing world.

Thank you for your continued support.