



THE RAINFORREST ALLIANCE & RICK STEVES' EUROPE
CLIMATE SMART COCOA IN GHANA
SECOND QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL 1 – JUNE 30, 2020

Project timeline: October 31, 2019—December 31, 2020
Climate Smart Commitment Grant: \$50,000

JULY 3, 2020

**RAINFORREST
ALLIANCE**



INTRODUCTION:

The Rainforest Alliance is proud to present this progress report to Rick Steves' Europe on work conducted during the second quarter of our shared Climate Smart Cocoa in Ghana project.

Unsustainable cocoa production is a key driver of deforestation in Ghana, responsible for close to half of forest loss in Ghana's high forest zone. While we must protect this necessary landscape, cocoa is also a vital cash crop that hundreds of thousands of people rely on for their livelihoods. A solution to this complex environmental and socio-economic reality is to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices that improve soil conditions, restore tree cover and shade, and increase biodiversity, all while growing farmers' income and food security. This project, funded by Rick Steves' Europe, focuses on climate-smart agricultural practices that result in higher yields and support farmers' livelihoods. We hope that, in turn, this will reduce encroachment on the surrounding forests.

This quarter, despite the challenges of COVID-19, the Rainforest Alliance and our community partners were able to open a fifth nursery and plant and cultivate 20,000 new tree seedlings. Our five nurseries contain a total of 84,030 thriving tree seedlings, which includes seven different tree species that are ready for transplanting in the coming weeks. This is an important feat that demonstrates the success of our capacity building efforts and the dedication of our community partners to sustainable agricultural techniques.

The following pages provide greater detail on the Rainforest Alliance's activities and achievements during the second quarter of the project.

PROJECT UPDATES:

- **Establishing a fifth nursery site:** This quarter, we've established a fifth nursery site with 20,000 tree seedlings, in partnership with the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) that is well equipped with water, supplies, and staff support from the Cocoa Health Extension Division (CHED). The nursery site is designed to support the National Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme of the COCOBOD, which aims to remove all cocoa trees that have been infected by the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Disease and replant with improved cocoa crop strains. With these additional tree seedlings, farmers will have greater access to timber shade trees, that protect the cocoa plants from heat and water stresses.
- **Healthy growth of tree seedlings:** The Land Management Boards (LMBs) and cluster executives have been effectively leading the monitoring and supervision of the trees and the seedlings at all five nursery sites—Amafie, Kwafukaa, Kojokrom, Nkwadum, and COCOBOD. They are thriving and ready for transplant in the coming weeks (early to mid-July). This includes the seedlings of a seventh tree species that farmers introduced during this quarter at the Amafie and Kwafukaa nursery sites to increase tree diversity.



- **Conducting farmer trainings:** To build the capacity of tree nurseries and farm management techniques, the Rainforest Alliance field staff organized a 2-day training on seedling establishment, management, and maintenance for 18 nursery workers. We are thrilled that the training successfully encouraged female participation and included 12 females and 6 males. The attendees were trained on 11 topics from general knowledge of the trees, to best practices for handling and planting the seedlings, to careful maintenance of the newly rooted trees after planting. Many of the trainings focused on techniques that contribute to higher success rates for the plants such as selecting the highest quality seeds and transplanting the strongest plants, as well as disease prevention and contamination reduction methods. Farmers were also trained on nursery record keeping, overcoming some challenges posed by a lack of materials and experience in book-keeping that were reported in the first quarter of the project.



A photo taken of farmers during a training at the nursery site.

SUCCESSES:

- Collectively, the nursery sites have exceeded the expected target of producing 50,000 tree seedlings and have produced 84,030 seedlings, which include seven different tree species—Mahogany, Opronon, Kokrodua, Prekese, Ofraam, Emire, and Dahoma. This enables us to meet the demand of farmers outside of the project scope.
- The Director of Strategic Projects approved a proposal for supporting diseased and aged cocoa farms through planting indigenous tree seedlings. This will further enhance the collaboration between the Rainforest Alliance and the Ghana Cocoa Board within the Cocoa and Forest landscape, leading to higher cocoa yields to support farmers' livelihoods.



- We produced high quantities of Mahogany and Ofram tree species, which showed germination success rates of 98% and 90% respectively. This indicates that farmers are committed to caring for the tree seedlings in the nurseries. It also enables farmers to have greater access to healthy trees that create good conditions for cocoa growth.



The photos above show thriving tree seedlings at the nursery sites.

CHALLENGES:

- The Emire species seeds had the lowest germination rate of 10% in almost all the nursery sites. To offset this low success rate, the team provided additional seeds to all sites.
- Heavy rains caused the Kojokrom and Amafie site structures to collapse. Fortunately, there was no destruction to the seedlings and the team was able to strengthen the fence and shade structures.
- A goat herd destroyed a fence and seedlings at one nursery site requiring fence reinforcement and reseedling with the available seed stock.

IMPACTS OF COVID-19:

- At the end of March, the government of Ghana placed restrictions that ban large trainings, workshops, and conferences. A more recent increase in case count has resulted in a partial lockdown of Greater Accra and Kumasi. To mitigate the effects of the pandemic, farmers are communicating more effectively and more often through technology including WhatsApp, phone calls, audio recordings and other modes of information sharing. For farmers who do not have internet access, we've recorded audio trainings as well as health and safety recommendations that can be broadcasted over the public speaker systems and radios used in many rural communities.
- Due to restrictions limiting trainings and workshops, we have not been able to train farmers in taking the coordinates of trees for the process of tree registration. Although tree registration has not progressed as planned, when the government



lifts restrictions, we will continue with these trainings. We anticipate that the process of tree registration will take up to 5 months and should be completed by the end of this year.

CONCLUSION:

We are grateful to Rick Steves' Europe for your commitment to supporting climate smart practices in Ghana and around the world. Your support has a major impact in conserving the cocoa forest landscape and in sustaining the livelihoods of communities in Ghana. Thus far, this project has enabled the setup of five tree nursery sites successfully growing 84,000 seedlings of seven different species that are ready for transplanting, which will take place in next quarter of this project. Additionally, these funds have contributed to greater collaboration with Land Management Boards and increased capacity of tree nurseries and farms through farmer trainings on sustainable agricultural practices. The project has been successful in building community ownership that is crucial to driving sustainable, long-term results. Thank you for investing in our mission—we are grateful for your continued support.

