

SECO funded Allanblackia Project

IUCN Management response to recommendations made in the mid-term evaluation report

February 2012

	Summary of Recommendation	Response	Intended Result	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe
Recommendations to SECO project							
1.	<p>Forest Landscape Restoration: Refocus output 4 to focus more specifically on on-farm trials and demonstration centres from which lessons and experiences can be shared with the wider community (and neighbouring ones). Ensure that NDGL are actively invited to participate in the outcomes of the on-farm trials. Create a closer and more collaborative link between this output and the FORM Ghana work being supported through the Novella Partnership with a view to capturing and communicating workable FLR business models</p>	<p><i>Agree with recommendation but not the logic behind decision;</i> the understanding of FLR techniques has evolved within the project team over the course of the last 2 years. In the first year this focused on revisiting progress of Phase 1 field sites (woodlots) but as these were in poor condition then the overall process was revisited to focus more on the on-farm trials. Therefore, the focus has moved towards on-farm trials and will continue to be with communities who are keen to work with these trials (N.B: it is important to realize that FLR methods also include restoration of farmlands / agroforestry systems). This has a twofold benefit – increases the number of trees in the ground (future supply) and also generates much needed data on growth and seeding patterns.</p> <p>NDGL will be informed of all the on-farm trials and FORIG / IUCN will liaise with them on different production systems and also for seedlings. Data coming from the sites will be shared. There should also be cross learning from farms which have older plantings of Allanblackia – from either project sites or NDGL sites</p> <p>Although there is already collaboration between FORM and FORIG this needs to be scaled up to capture learnings and share learnings from both on-farm and larger scale production systems.</p> <p>Data collection on Phase 1plots will end along with further establishment of demonstration plots (woodlots).</p>	<p>The establishment of on-farm FLR trials.</p> <p>Best FLR models identified for wider adoption - based on information sourced from project sites, NDGL sites and FORM.</p> <p>An M&E system developed with NDGL and FORM to capture more data on growth and seeding patterns.</p>	<p>Supply seedlings to farmers.</p> <p>Expansion of on-farm trials by increasing the number of farmers currently engaged in the trials.</p> <p>In conjunction with FORM and NDGL develop an M&E system to monitor growth and seeding rates of Allanblackia trees across project sites, NDGL sites and FORM sites.</p>	<p>FORIG – with a written agreement on the supply of seedlings to FORIG by NDGL for the farmers within the project target communities.</p> <p>FORIG with support from the FORIG domestication Team</p> <p>FORIG in close liaison with IUCN, NDGL and FORM</p> <p>Consideration should be given to contract FORM for some of the on-farm trials and seedling supply to FORIG</p>	<p>Number of seedlings supplied to farmers</p> <p>Number of farmers participating in the trials increased from the current level. Total area involved.</p> <p>Best practices included in “business models” work.</p>	<p>During the first quarter of the 2012</p> <p>During the first quarter of 2012</p> <p>M&E system in place by June 2012</p> <p>Best practices captured and disseminated by project end.</p>

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2.	<p>Community-managed tree nurseries: Use balance of funding from this output to provide support the development and promotion of community-managed tree nurseries. These nurseries will operate on a “contract basis” initially (whereby the project or NDGL will guarantee to purchase the seedlings at an agreed cost. Specific inputs from the project could include work to develop a business models for private or group-run nurseries, communications work, identifying and training individuals and groups and supporting NDGL to take this work forward after the project is completed.</p>	<p><i>Agreed;</i> As identified by the evaluation and the Novella Partners over the last year the supply of Allanblackia seedlings (thereafter, seeds, then oil) is a critical element of establishing a sustainable supply chain. Due to the focus of the project (systems support) and the timeframe for remaining funds the project cannot support “nursery establishment”, as this requires intensive training, infrastructure development and a whole year to go through the process from seed to seedling. However, there can be a focus on working with existing private and community nurseries to develop business plans and knowledge for them to introduce Allanblackia in the nurseries, best practices and identifying new avenues for additional nurseries (SAMARTEX for example).</p> <p>Funds will be balanced between output 2, 3 & 4 to ensure activities are undertaken with respect to nursery information generation.</p> <p>This reflects the activities in the communication strategy to improve the knowledge base to create community nurseries as businesses, and create business ventures for rapid expansion of nurseries.</p>	<p>In Allanblackia endemic areas private, company and community nurseries are identified and made aware of potential for Allanblackia production.</p> <p>An increase in nurseries producing Allanblackia seedlings.</p>	<p>Working with NDGL and FORM identify nurseries and potential operators who are interested in growing Allanblackia seedlings.</p> <p>Based on experiences from other producers (NDGL) develop and disseminate information on nursery practices and business models, and undertake training.</p>	<p>FORIG in close collaboration with FORM and NDGL.</p> <p>ICA to support dissemination of information and training.</p>	<p>At least 4 nurseries (private, community or company) are growing Allanblackia seedlings.</p>	<p>Nurseries identified by end May</p> <p>Nurseries growing Allanblackia by end of project</p>
3.	<p>Market Diversification: Agree a coherent strategy and approach for addressing Activity 2.3 (Market diversification) including goals (ie where and how the supply chain could be diversified) and clearly identify who is doing what and how responsibilities could be shared between NDGL, TNS and UEBT. Liaise with other African organisations based on collection and processing of wild-harvested products such as Phytotrade to ensure best practices and lessons learned are captured. Consider modifying Allanblackia portal to aid in promotion and marketing of Allanblackia oil to new markets.</p>	<p><i>Agreed;</i> This is a critical aspect that was identified in the project design. TNS (Ghana) and UEBT (International) have undertaken some work regards this but it now needs to be scaled up. With the volumes being low they are very unlikely to satisfy Unilever’s requirements but there are other potential buyers who may require smaller amounts such as for cosmetics or natural food products.</p> <p>IUCN will work with UEBT, TNS, and the Novella Partners to develop an action plan to increase the scale of this intervention.</p> <p>UEBT also has links with Phytotrade so can bring lessons from their work into the market diversification work.</p>	<p>Additional buyers are identified and committed to purchasing Allanblackia oil from the Novel Companies.</p>	<p>Develop an action plan for national and local strategies to access new markets.</p> <p>Nationally, TNS will host an “Allanblackia day” to bring in potential buyers and highlight the potential uses of Allanblackia oil.</p> <p>Internationally, UEBT will continue their work with UEBT members and partners to identify opportunities.</p>	<p>National – TNS</p> <p>International – UEBT</p>	<p>One local and one international buyer is identified and has negotiated purchase of oil from one of the Novel companies</p>	<p>By end of project</p>
4.	<p>Allanblackia Portal: Provide technical support to NDGL to upgrade the Allanblackia website, make it more “live”, strengthen links to members of the wider Novella Partnership, update web pages to reflect the current situation and upload recent reports. Improve overall appearance and graphics.</p>	<p><i>Agreed;</i> NDGL (on behalf of the Novel Companies) and ICA agreed to work together to use project resources to redesign and enhance the Allanblackia website. However, this has been troubled by difficulty in locating web providers and access codes which had become out of date. Therefore, in order to speed up the process it is necessary to identify a new consultant to help with the process and redesign the site to highlight the value of Allanblackia and share information / documentation.</p>	<p>An effective and efficient web portal up and running, with number of hits measured.</p>	<p>Identify consultant to work with partners to redesign and update information on the site,</p>	<p>IUCN; ICA & NDGL</p> <p>NDGL to administer the portal</p>	<p>A revised or new Allanblackia portal</p> <p>Up to date and uploaded information on the portal</p>	<p>June 2012</p> <p>By end 2013</p>

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5.	<p>Collaboration between the project and NDGL: Clarify the relationship and collaboration between the project and NDGL. Where necessary move from “informal” communications to a more systematic system for co-ordinating project activities with NDGL.</p>	<p><i>Agree with recommendation but not the logic behind decision;</i> NDGL have been included at all stages of the planning process. At the initial planning meeting early 2010 NDGL were key partners in the meeting where it was stressed that the implementing partners should be in contact constantly to make sure the project activities align with the work of NDGL – they have also been invited to many other meetings including regular planning, work with UEFT and development of the communication strategy - as examples. However, that is not to say all activities proceed within this foreseen alignment and this needs to be strengthened with targeted alignment, where appropriate, made between the activities of NDGL and the project to ensure a consistency of both, to benefit the development of the supply chain.</p> <p>Links should also be strengthened to ensure the implementing partners can also provide support, when requested, to the work plan NDGL has committed to as part of their membership to UEFT.</p>	<p>Strategic alignment of project activities to NDGLs work plan.</p>	<p>Continued discussion with NDGL and specific support as requested by NDGL.</p>	<p>IUCN</p>	<p>Number of appropriate project activities undertaken in agreement with NDGL</p>	<p>Partners 2012 work plans reflect support to NDGL as appropriate</p>
6.	<p>Business models: Based on the work that is being developed by TechnoServe on providing business “models” for Allanblackia production, develop communication “packages” on the various approaches/models and market these different approaches to like-minded organisations in the NGO, private sector and government (such as Cocoa Board, MoFA, Forest Services Division, Rainforest Alliance, Samartex, CARE, WWF and CREMAs) as well as businesses and communities. Communication materials should include economic, as well as social and environmental considerations, and cover a wide range of systems (including wild harvest, FLR and private/community nurseries).</p>	<p><i>Agreed;</i> the work undertaken by TNS has served as a good basis for understanding the economic opportunities for different Allanblackia production systems. However, there is a need to take this further to add the key social (benefits / risks) and environmental aspects to provide a knowledge base for future decision making process on establishing Allanblackia in different systems. IUCN and TNS will work together to develop a package of models that can then be used as part of the communications work.</p> <p>This is reflected in the communication strategy to sell “new” models of agroforestry systems that integrate economic species; creating awareness among small-scale entrepreneurs / transports on potential opportunities</p>	<p>A knowledge base on the economic, social and environmental benefits of engaging in Allanblackia production available for different systems.</p> <p>This knowledge is packaged and disseminated at key decision makers and entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>Based on the economic work undertaken by TNS and the field work on FLR and equity issues, develop a set of models that demonstrate the opportunities available from different farming systems.</p> <p>Develop creative briefs for each model, a communications action plan and implement accordingly.</p>	<p>TNS & IUCN</p> <p>TNS & IUCN</p>	<p>Production of communication materials.</p> <p>An increased level of actors involved in Allanblackia production.</p>	<p>August 2012</p> <p>Measured at the end of the project</p>

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7.	Micro-finance: Following on from the work conducted by TNS on MFIs, provide focussed training and capacity building on developing rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) within existing groups of collectors. Where possible, roll-out tried and tested approaches developed by other organisations working on this (eg the CARE experience across West Africa). Promote groups to existing MFIs following capacity building work.	<i>Agreed;</i> There is now a need to take the next step with regards to the micro-financing report. It should be recognised that the project is not a micro-credit project i.e. does not provide funds but the access to funds is vital for farmers to invest in Allanblackia. These rotating schemes allow capital development from farmers personal income and hence provide funds with which those interested can invest into Allanblackia. However, to support the development of the supply chain and increase farmers actually planting Allanblackia, this should be done in conjunction with dissemination of the information Allanblackia production models.	Community groups trained on developing rotating savings and credit associations. Increased local investment in Allanblackia seedlings.	Identify target communities in Allanblackia endemic areas (may be a need to reach out further to realise opportunities of farmers not engaged in Allanblackia). Organise trainings with community groups – supported through NGOs with experience in the proposed schemes.	TNS	Number of communities with established and functional saving schemes	Activities to be undertaken throughout the project year.
8.	Radio communications: Explore alternative formats to radio communications – including a return to radio drama, which was popular in the first collection season. Implement key strategies laid out in the draft communications strategy and undertake periodic review of progress in implementation.	<i>Disagree;</i> It is not clear in the report why there should be a return to the radio dramas, especially when the docudramas are having as much effect as part of the community outreach programme. <i>Agree;</i> The communication strategy addresses many aspects and the implementing partners must now agree on which of the HIGH priority communication actions they can actually undertake within the last year of the project. This will be agreed upon as part of the 2012 planning process. A few key actions have been mentioned as responses to other recommendations.	As per Output 3 Increased awareness of decision makers (funding sources), industry and farmers on the value, potential and improved production practices required for a sustainable supply chain.	Continue with docudramas as per overall project work plan. Identify key communication actions that can be undertaken in addition to the ones specifically needed to address other recommendations. Develop creative briefs for the communication actions and implement accordingly.	ICA ICA with IUCN; NDGL and TNS	Number of community sensitization programmes (docudramas) undertaken Number of communication products produced in line with communication strategy.	Completed by year end Creative briefs and action plans developed by end June. Communication materials disseminated by year end
9.	Review of Allanblackia supply chain: Undertake analysis of supply chain to identify potential points of diversification and potential actors or institutions that could assume roles (both within and outside Ghana), where applicable. The study should also assess the overall performance of the current supply chain and identify areas of improvement and new opportunities to raise volumes and improve cost efficiency overall.	<i>Agree;</i> As part of the UEBT system, in particular the specific Allanblackia application guide, there is a need for constant reflection on how the standard is being applied and monitoring systems functioning. Over the last 2 years new actors have engaged in the supply chain, such as FORM International, and other potential international buyers, whom may have an impact on the applicability of the Allanblackia application guide. Hence, a review of the overall performance of the supply chain, areas of improvements and new opportunities will enable UEBT and the Novella Partners to provide specific inputs for continued support for the development of a sustainable supply chain.	An overall assessment of the performance of the supply chain. Recommendations integrated into project activities as appropriate	Analysis of the Allanblackia supply chain at national, regional and international levels, including identification of new opportunities. Integration, where appropriate, of recommendations into project activities	UEBT IUCN	Report on the strategic analysis of the Allanblackia supply chain. Action plan developed for recommendations and implemented as feasible / appropriate – recommendations would be good for a possible third phase	End May 2012 - Will there be funding to let UEBT extend this study to Tanzania and Nigeria End June 2012

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10.	Strategic planning: Provide institutional support from TNS to develop a strategic / business plan and vision for NDGL, and focusing on issues such as identity (whether an NGO or limited company, or alternatively a body that would embrace both of these entities) market diversification and domestication / production.	Agree; In the Ghana MTR debriefing meeting NDGL indicated that they do not need support (or want) a strategic plan / business plan for the development of Allanblackia in Ghana. NDGL indicated that if they need the assistance they will ask for it as and when they decide to do a strategic plan. However, one issue identified by many Novella Partners is that NDGL is suffering from being involved in too many aspects of the supply chain and this is distracting their focus on the core business which should be the processing and selling of the oil. The recommendation is proposing to support NDGL in breaking down their business and seeing what aspects can be supported by others e.g. nurseries and community development – of which many donors may be prepared to fund NGOs to support.	The development of a strategic / business plan for NDGL to enable them to make strategic decisions on how to focus on their core business, and potential forms of out sourcing.	Dependent on NDGL agreeing to the support provided to develop the plan. A business consultant can be contracted to undertake this work.	NDGL if they agree to this recommendation	Strategic / business plan drafted and NDGL implementing actions.	By end September 2012 to enable project to provide and appropriate support to NDGL
11.	Phase III? If there are options for a future phase of support from SECO (or other donors), ensure that NDGL (or other private sector players engaged in the supply chain at that time) are fully integrated into the design of proposed activities, even if they are not direct recipients of financial support, with a shared vision prepared and roles / responsibilities clearly spelled out. The project design should be based on a shared vision of the Allanblackia sector beyond 2013. Consider how planned support to “Investing in Locally Controlled Forests” by IUCN could be used to take activities forward.	If there was to be a phase 3 then this would take on a completely different form. Phase 2 will have established systems that will help support the development of a sustainable supply chain. What would be needed is investment into Allanblackia, this could be through investment into the Novel companies (NDTL have already expressed interest in some potential investment opportunities), investment through REDD+ packages to benefit the farmer, or investment into local forest businesses e.g. nurseries. IUCN have various work streams on investing locally controlled forests, FLR / REDD+ investment packages that could help shape the broader integration of Allanblackia into restoration, climate change and investment strategies. These could form the basis of an different intervention much more closely linked to investment. There may be options to also assess opportunities for Allanblackia supply across the region – particularly Liberia and Cameroon. The projected budget forecast means that the project will be able to continue with substantial activities into 2103.	Options for continued support to Allanblackia identified and funded Agreement with SECO for use of funds in 2013	Further develop concepts for investment opportunities that include Allanblackia. Final 2012 budget reflects balance available for 2013. Key priority areas of intervention identified for activities into 2013.	IUCN and Novella Partners IUCN	Concept discussed with SECO SECO acceptance to fund a possible third phase	Concepts produced by end August 2012
Recommendations to the wider Novella Partnership which are not Addressed within the project recommendations (only comments provided here and links identified to project recommendations)							
Constraint 1: Current pricing levels of Allanblackia seeds, although rising slowly, are yet to drive wide-scale collection of on-farm or wild-sourced seeds.							
12.	Unilever to clarify its short, medium and longer term plans within the Allanblackia supply chain based on an analysis conducted with all partners.	At present Unilever are undergoing a process of reviewing their role in the development of the Allanblackia supply chain. Therefore, the work identified for recommendation 9, to be undertaken, becomes critical to ensure the overall performance of the supply chain is understood and new opportunities identified. It also links into the market diversification work – recommendation 3.					
13.	Developing partnerships with multi-national companies operating in Ghana, with established interests and expertise in plantation production.	Links already established with FORM will be strengthened over the coming year (see recommendation 1 actions).					

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14.	Allanblackia may be one important element within various IUCN initiatives and additional incentives could be created for its propagation and planting when linked to anticipated REDD financing through government	See comments against recommendation 11.					
Constraint 2: An inability to scale-up collection of seeds to un-served Allanblackia-endemic areas.							
15.	Identify communities, or clusters of communities with suitable densities of Allanblackia trees (either on farm or within forest reserves) and which are currently un-served by NDGL. In discussions with NDGL as part of this review, one such potential area might be Sefwi Wiawso District, in Western Region.	<p><i>Agreed</i>; Although there is a need to be careful not to spread the resources of the project too thin it is important to respond to this through the project as an increase in sources of Allanblackia seeds is vital for the development of the supply chain.</p> <p>The communications work outlined in recommendation 9 should be targeted to a wider audience and with potential follow ups by ICA.</p> <p>However, although wild harvesting may be an option (if the pricing of the oil acts an incentive for increased farmer involvement), on-farm planting may be limited due to availability of seedlings.</p>	Increased number of communities involved in Allanblackia production.	<p>In conjunction with NDGL use communication materials to facilitate an increase in farmers involved in Allanblackia production.</p> <p>ICA to support NDGL to follow up with discussions with interested farmers</p>	ICA	An increase in Allanblackia sourced from wild harvesting and seedlings planted	On going through out the final period of the project
16.	Using donor funds, engage an NGO to build community-level supply chains. This would involve training on economic, environmental and social aspects, and generally raising awareness around collection and planting. If NDGL was able to clearly separate itself into two entities – one for profit (limited company) and one non-profit (NGO), then theoretically, the NGO-arm of NDGL could do this.	<p>This recommendation covers many aspects of the supply chain. It is our understanding that the reviewer is recommending to focus on community training and awareness raising and to identify how this can be expanded through additional donor funds. As donor funds are generally not available to companies then it is being recommended that a specific NGO can support or NDGL could form a NGO arm.</p> <p>The community awareness raising would be covered by the roll out of the communications strategy (recommendation 8). Whilst to support NDGL to set up and NGO arm would require them to agree to recommendation 10.</p>					
Constraint 3: Challenges faced in domestication and multiplication of Allanblackia seedlings.							
17.	It is proposed that tree nursery production should be outsourced to an external service provider , using donor funding, if NDGL were to make a clear division between for-profit and non-profit arms of its activities, this could easily fall under the non-profit section. Samartex, or FORM may also be suitable alternatives.	See recommendation 2 on the development of community nurseries, plus the response to recommendation 1 can be expanded to engage with FORM on increasing nursery production.					