

Project Update: August 2023

Updates: 1st update

A reconnaissance survey of four study sites (Essan-Apam Forest Reserve, Tain II Forest Reserve, Akwamu Gorge Conservation Area, and Atewa Range) has been completed, followed by demarcation of experimental plots for sampling multi-taxon biodiversity attributes in each threatened ecosystem. Prior to this, capacity-building programmes for project facilitators were carried out, followed by a series of workshops to select volunteers and school children for this year's citizen science project. In addition, focal group discussions were also carried out in some selected communities to solicit people's opinion on the potential threats (e.g., mining, logging, wildfire) to the various ecosystems. These focal group discussions also revealed some sustainable options (e.g., afforestation, alternative livelihood schemes) available to minimise the identified threats while conserving biodiversity in the various ecosystems.

Other major activities already carried out in this project includes the establishment of indigenous (e.g., *Terminalia superba*, *Khaya senegalensis*, *Ceiba pentandra*) model seed nursery (Figure 1) to supply seedlings for planting by citizen scientists in some selected degraded community forests, school compounds and marginalised landscapes (Figure 2-3). School children have also been exposed to plot demarcation, tree measurement, arthropod trapping with beating tray, malaise and pitfall traps (Figure 4 – 11).

Other major ongoing activities include camera trapping (for mammals), bird counts, forest tree inventory, arthropod sampling (using malaise traps, pitfall traps, and beating trays) and sorting, administration of questionnaires, community participatory mapping and information sharing.

Pictures below:



Figure 1: Community model indigenous tree seed nursery (species includes *Terminalia superba*, *Khaya senegalensis*, *Ceiba pentandra*).



Figure 2: Citizen scientists planting trees on school compound.



Figure 3: Tree planting exercise ongoing



Figure 4: Project facilitators explaining the benefits of forests to citizen scientists.



Figure 5: Project facilitator demonstrating to citizen scientists how to measure tree diameter.



Figure 6: Citizen scientists exploring tree dimensions measurement.



Figure 7: Demonstration of the use of a beating tray for trapping arthropods.



Figure 8: Citizen scientists having discussions on the importance of forests.



Figure 9: Demonstration with citizen scientists.



Figure 10: An interaction with citizen scientists.



Figure 11: Distance measurement.