

Project Update (August – October 2025)

Conservation Initiatives for the Threatened African rosewood *Pterocarpus erinaceus* in Weppa Communities, Agenebode, Southern Nigeria.

A. Engagement with Stakeholders

I. On August 29, 2025, the project team visited the Farm Director of Weppa Farm Limited (Sunvit Agro Ltd.) to officially announce the start of the project. During the meeting, the Director received a comprehensive briefing on the project's objectives, with an emphasis on biodiversity conservation. Expressing enthusiasm for the initiative, the Farm Director reaffirmed management's strong support and commitment to the project's success. He highlighted the farm's past efforts to protect the Weppa Woodland and encouraged the team to build on the longstanding positive relationships between the farm and the project communities of Osomegbe and Iviare. Furthermore, he pledged to update other management staff about the project and arrange a meeting for the team to address them directly.



L-R: Imoisime Igbode (Project team lead), Mr. Simeon Kayode (Weppa Farm Director) and Dr. Samson Da'an (Project team member).

II. The second meeting took place on September 5, 2025, with key members of the management staff in attendance, including the Farm Director, the Assistant General Manager responsible for Weppa Woodland protection, and leaders of the Education and Extension departments. Notably,

these individuals are also active stakeholders in the “*Aloagbaye*” Community Development Association, the primary grassroots organization for the development of Weppa communities. During the meeting, we presented the project’s goals focused on conserving the endangered African rosewood and detailed the areas where their collaboration would be essential, such as the availability of staff during the questionnaire’s sessions. We also shared plans for conservation education workshops and scheduled lectures for the Weppa Farm Management team. By the end of the meeting, the stakeholders assured us of their full cooperation and support for the duration of the project.



L-R: Mr. Kenneth Momoh (AGM Arable), Mr. Paul Omoaka (AGM, Rice Production/ Conservation), Mr. Simeon Kayode (Farm Director), Dr. Samson Da’an, Mr. Abdul Akagbosu (AGM Education), Mr. Martin Ayansor (ICT) and Mr. Imoisime Igboode.

III. The project team paid a courtesy visit to His Royal Highness, Moses Akpamuka, the paramount ruler of Weppa land (Onogie of Weppa). After discussion on the project's objectives and its importance for conserving endangered species and biodiversity in the community forest, he pledged his full support. Additionally, he expressed his profound appreciation for the project

implementation underscoring the importance of the expected outcomes of the project for his community and humanity. We visited the Iviare and Osomegbe community heads, who in like manners welcomed our team and pledged their total support for the project.

B. Field Survey

I. A week-long reconnaissance field survey was conducted by the project team in the Weppa Woodland and the buffer zones. During the period, we marked some sampling points and transects for data collection to enhance our study design. Also, we tested the constructed soil auger for soil sampling at the study sites.



Testing of the constructed soil auger for soil sample collection by the project team at the Weppa Woodland.

II. We can confirm the purchase and arrival of the camera and GPS needed to mark the distribution of the Africa rosewood species during our field survey.



Nikon Coolpix P950 and Garmin GPSMAP 65s