Training report – safe use of chemicals

COODIG and DAKUA – June 14-16, 2023

Content

- Introduction

- Training schedule and content

- Training attendance

- Field observations

- Challenges

- Conclusion

Introduction

Ivory Coast is the biggest cocoa producer in the world with around 40% of the cocoa production. The use of agrochemicals in agriculture and particularly in the cocoa sector is not always mastered by cooperatives and cocoa producers. Producers do not know the perfect dilution, some of them combine different agrochemicals without taking any advices. Furthermore, agrochemicals that are forbidden are sometimes used, exposing these producers and consumers to danger. In this perspective, ONEM set up in 2020 its sustainability policy encompassing three key pillars that are: (i) people, (ii) planet and (iii) products.

The human being aspect is important in ONEM's sustainability journey. For this reason and along with Earthworm Foundation, ONEM and the subsidiary company FILDISI have set up in 2022 their procedure for a proper use of agrochemicals in their supply chain. The overall objective of this training (first module) was to share the basic information around the proper use of agrochemicals. Specifically, it was also to present the procedure and listen to the farm leaders about what they are already doing and the best way of doing it. Some plantations were also visited as to confront the theory to the reality on the ground.

# II- Training schedule and content

Dates of the training	Location	Content
From June, 14th to 15th, 2023	COODIG	- Definition of agrochemicals - Danger of chemicals - Storage of agrochemicals - Storage of empty bags
June, 16th, 2023	DAKUA	- Safe use of agrochemicals - Use of bio stimulants and biopesticides as alternatives to agrochemicals - The ONEM procedure - Visit of the plantations

EF trainer: Gerome Tokpa

Attendance to the training
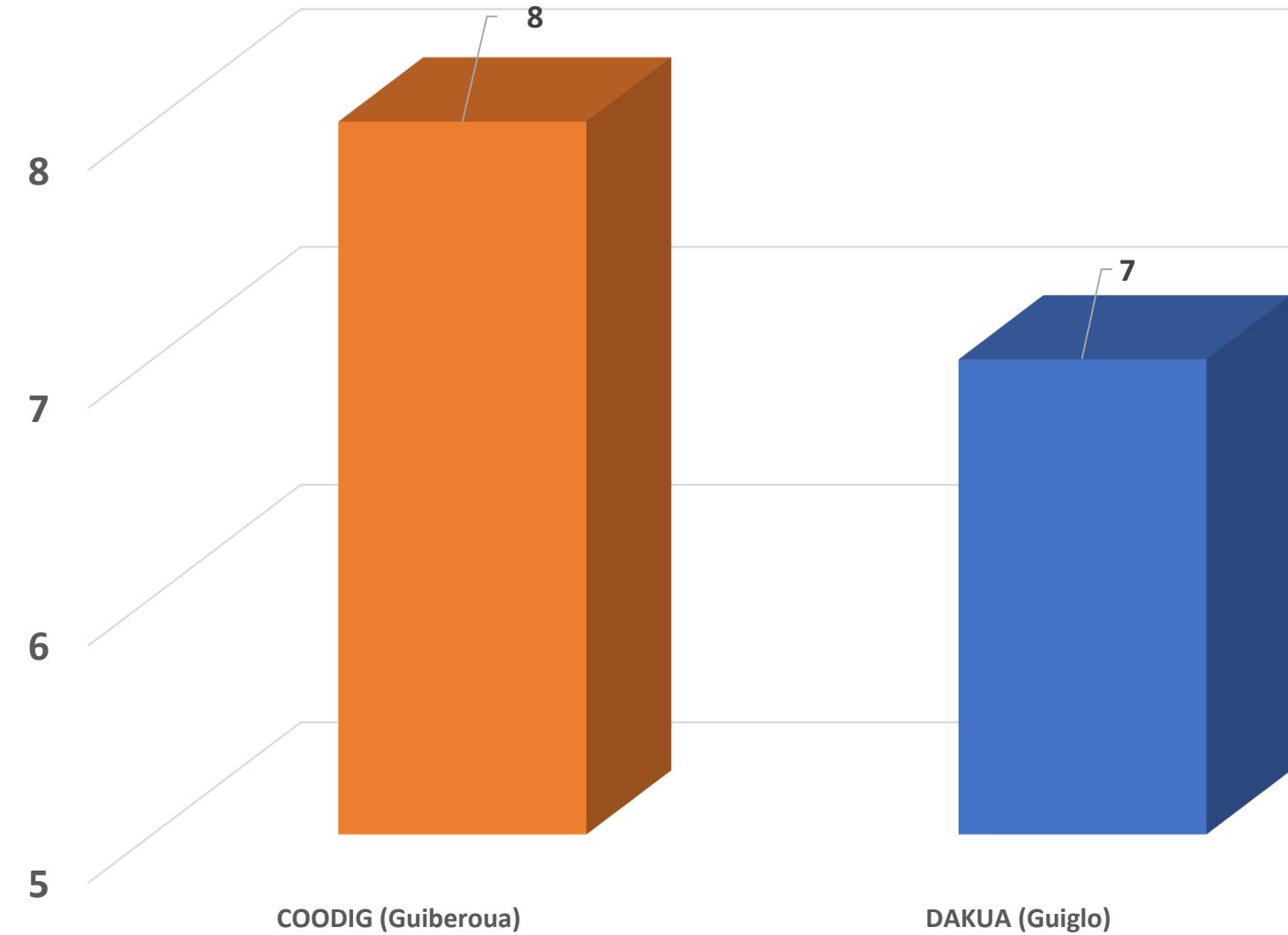
At COODIG, 8 persons attended the training. The group was composed of lead farmers and the two persons who are currently in charge of child labor monitoring (Olive for FILDISI and Sahi for Sucden).

At Dakua, there were 5 lead farmers, a warehouseman and the Director (a lady) of the cooperative attending the training.

Observation of chemical storage

Picture shows the chemicals storage room for COODIG. However, the staff did not have the key to enter, which prevented EF to observe how chemicals are stored.

The storage has no windows.

Entry is blocked by a pile of sand.

PPE are not present for the people who are entering the storage room.

In Dakua, it was not possible to visit the storage room. The team was told that the key is missing.

Visits of plantations
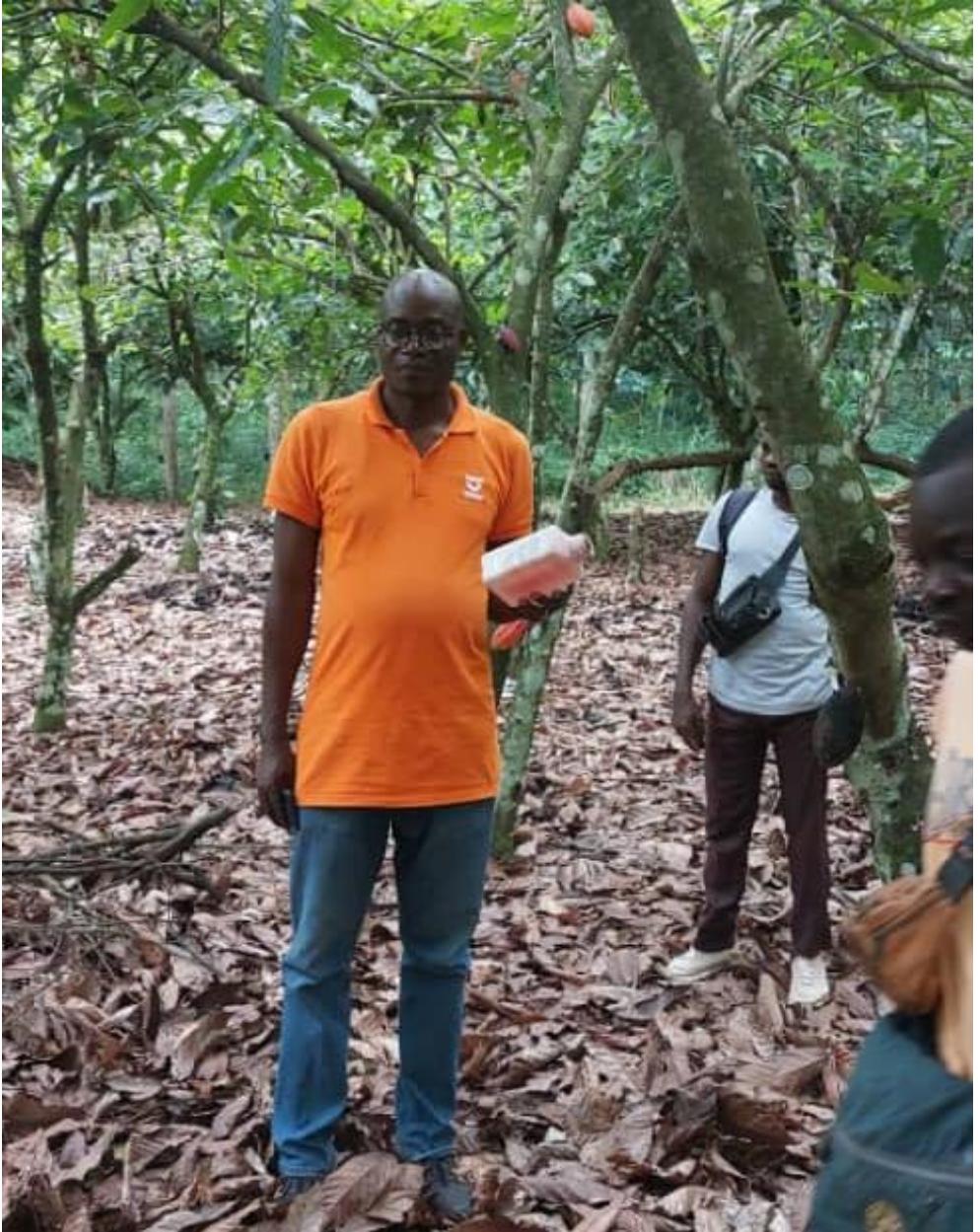
EF and FILDISI team visiting a plantation

Empty containers were observed in the plantations

Production of compost was observed. However, the way the compost is used cannot help the cocoa tree. Cocoa pods are getting spoiled. Composts should be at least at 80 to 100cm from the cocoa trees.

Several challenges were identified during the trainings:

1. The fact that the cooperative is not the employer of the implementation staff at DAKUA is a source of frustration and concern. All the current staff (in charge of traceability, farmer coaching, child labor monitoring, etc.) are subcontractors of a trader, paid by the trader. The consequence is that everything that the staff does is the property of this trader, not DAKUA. Things that may go beyond its (trader) own requirements could eventually not be implemented. Technically, the workers are not DAKUA staff and there is no incentive/obligation to implement any additional requirement that would come from FILDISI/EF. Even attendance to the training was an issue as the staff did not see the incentive or direct link with their obligations (half of them did not attend the second day). There is a real governance and structural issue that ONEM/FILDISI should be aware of and that prevents the implementation of the program.

2. Similar issues were observed at COODIG where the staff (lead farmers) were busy conducting farm polygon mapping for another trader (paid work). They are paid 1500 FCFA/polygon to conduct this work for FILDISI's competitor and did not see the incentive to attend EF training, although they appreciated the information shared. The question here is how can FILDISI be sure that the implementation of the procedure will really take place if the lead farmers are occupied with other tasks that are directly paid by other traders buying from this coop? The same way we have Olive who is dealing with the CMLRS, it seems that the implementation of such actions on the ground will need also staff at COODIG as well to be sure that we are not just ticking the box (training on the use of pesticides done). Another possibility will be to clearly engage the management of the cooperative and agree on the way forward.

Conclusion

- The training and sharing of the procedure was well received by the lead farmers, despite the structural challenges observed in the two cooperatives. There are issues that ONEM/FILDISI need to solve in order to ensure that the theory and program requirements are actually implemented on the ground. It be at COODIG or at DAKUA, the question of incentives to ensure implementation at farmer level was put on the table and FILDSI was directly challenged.

- At DAKUA, the entire staff are currently paid by another trader. It poses here the question of sustainability of the work that is being done by FILDISI since it is another trader and competitor that is paying the LF. Furthermore, all the information gathered by the trader are transferred directly to his database in Abidjan and not kept at the cooperative level.

- It was also obvious to see that both cooperatives are led by a Libanese Manager, M. Nabil, the owner of SCCG who also owns the cooperatives. From our point of view, it is important to start engaging with him directly on these issues in order to find the best way forward.

Earthworm

Thank you