

# SOCFIN 2021 ANNUAL membership REPORT





# Our work in Africa

The EF-SOCFIN partnership started in April 2017 to support implementation of Socfin's Responsible Management Policy. The work has continued throughout 2021, despite challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Socfin sites in the following countries were visited by the EF teams in 2021: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone.



**Sierra Leone**

**Liberia**

**Cameroon**

**RDC**



# | Global impact in 2021: Socfin and Earthworm



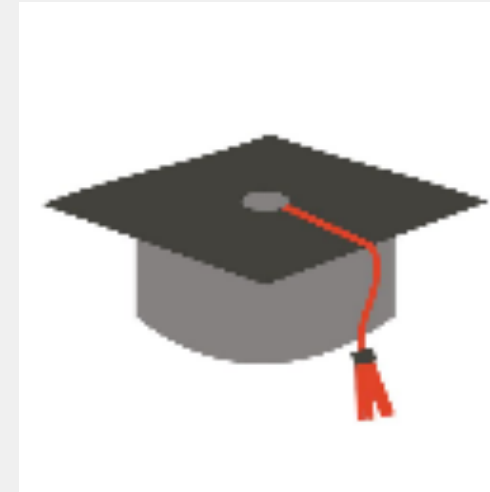
## **4 countries**

Engaging Socfin team in four countries Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Liberia and DR Congo.



## **6 plantations and 6 mills**

Engaging teams of 6 plantations and 6 mills on the development and implementation of the stakeholder engagement strategy, training on FPIC and participatory mapping.



## **2 CSE Students**

Two students trained as Social Practitioners at Earthworm's Centre of Social Excellence (CSE) graduated after completing their internships in Socfin operations in SOCAPALM Kienké (Cameroon) and LAC (Liberia). The 10-month CSE training program was funded by the UK government.

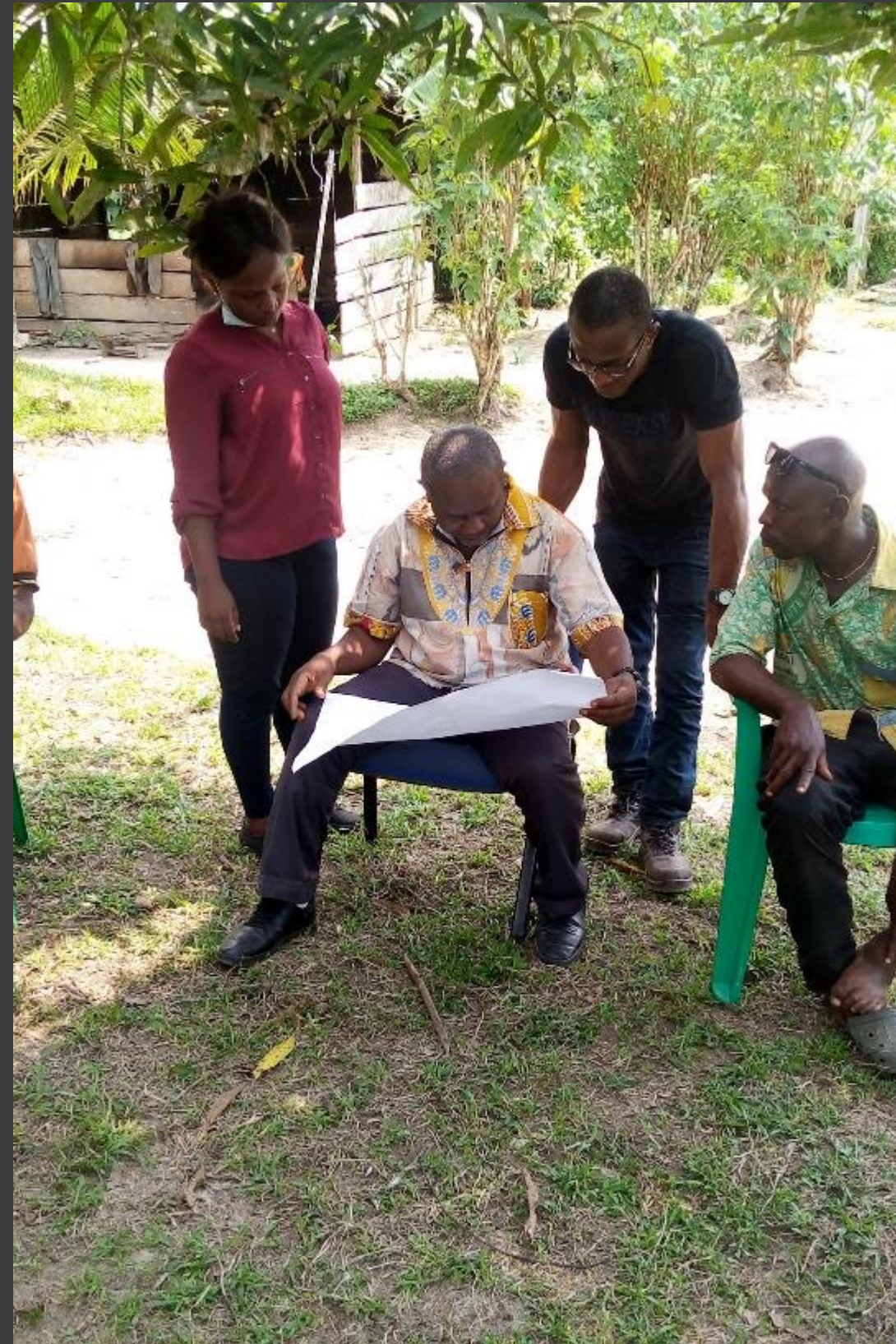


## **Forests**

Socfin committed to a restoration project of 1568 ha of degraded forest in Cameroon in collaboration with EF and the Cameroon National Forestry School.

In 2021, the Remediation and Compensation Procedure concept note (Annex 7) for that restoration project was approved by RSPO.

## | Key 2021 achievements



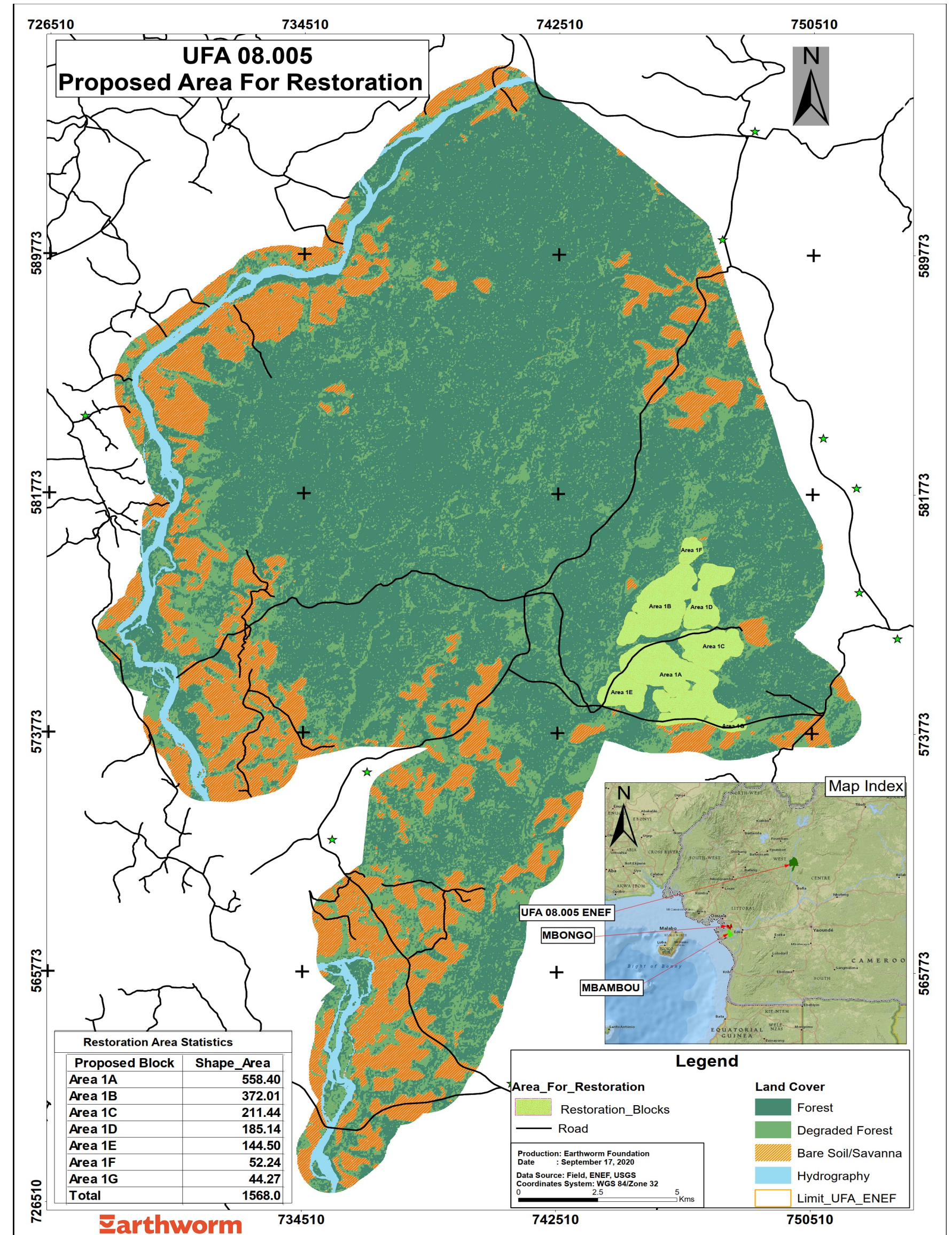
## Cameroon/SOCAPALM

- Stakeholder engagement strategy developed and shared with SOCAPALM for validation
- The composition of the internal stakeholder engagement committee has been proposed to each site visited in 2021
- SOCAPALM team trained on how to conduct participatory mapping with communities
- The oral defense of CSE trainee done in SOCAPALM Kienké after 6 months of internship

# Key 2021 achievements

## Cameroon / SOCAPALM

- The development of a concept note for the restoration of 1568 hectares of degraded forest located in the Central region of Cameroon, to submit as Annex 7 of SOCAPALM's submission to the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil's Remediation and Compensation Procedure.
- The RSPO approved this concept note in August, 2021.
- The compensation plan (Annex 8) was also developed, and approved by RSPO in January 2022.



# | 2021 Key Activities: Trainings and workshops

## Cameroon/SOCAPALM



- In June 2021, two staff training/workshops were conducted online on the following topics:
  - Evaluation of the implementation of the internal grievance management system.
  - HCS-HCV-FPIC concept and Participatory Approach to Land Use Planning.
- A practical training session on participatory mapping was completed for SOCAPALM Dibombari, SOCAPALM Kienké and SOCAPALM Edea.

# | 2021 Key Activities: Stakeholder consultations

## Cameroon/ SOCAPALM



In 2021, EF held meetings with the following stakeholders to discuss SOCAPALM's progress on implementing its Responsible Management Policy:

1 , BACUDA, a local NGO that works with indigenous people.

The objectives of the meeting was to speak about their collaborations with SOCAPALM. For BACUDA it was clear that some activities have been conducted with the support of SOCAPALM, e.g. distribution of school clothes and textbooks to Bagyéli children, salaries of school's teachers are paid by SOCAPALM. SOCAPALM also conducted trainings on the RSPO standard for local communities, and set up a bipartite dialogue between the company and indigenous Bayéli communities. The NGO remains open to collaborate with SOCAPALM and wishes to have long term commitments with well-defined targets.

2 , The Divisional Officer of the local province (Ocean).

The exchanges were essentially based on two aspects:

- A presentation of EF and its activities
- Feedback of the Divisional Officer on the evolution of the SOCAPALM Kienké file related to the Boundaries of the concession. This work is still awaiting validation from the authorities.

The Divisional Officer informed EF that he appreciated the efforts made by SOCAPALM to improve its relations with the neighboring communities.

# | 2021 Key Activities: Action Plan Implementation

## Cameroon / SOCAPALM

EF conducted three visits of three days each in 2021 at SOCAPALM's Dibombari, Kienké, and Edea sites. Activities completed during those visits include:

- Assessing the level of ownership and implementation of the action plan developed in 2019.
- Developing the stakeholder engagement strategy.
- Establishment of an internal stakeholder engagement committee.
- Conducting the oral defense of the CSE trainee based in SOCAPALM Kienké





# EF | 2021 Key Activities: Oral defense of CSE trainee – DFID 2020/2021

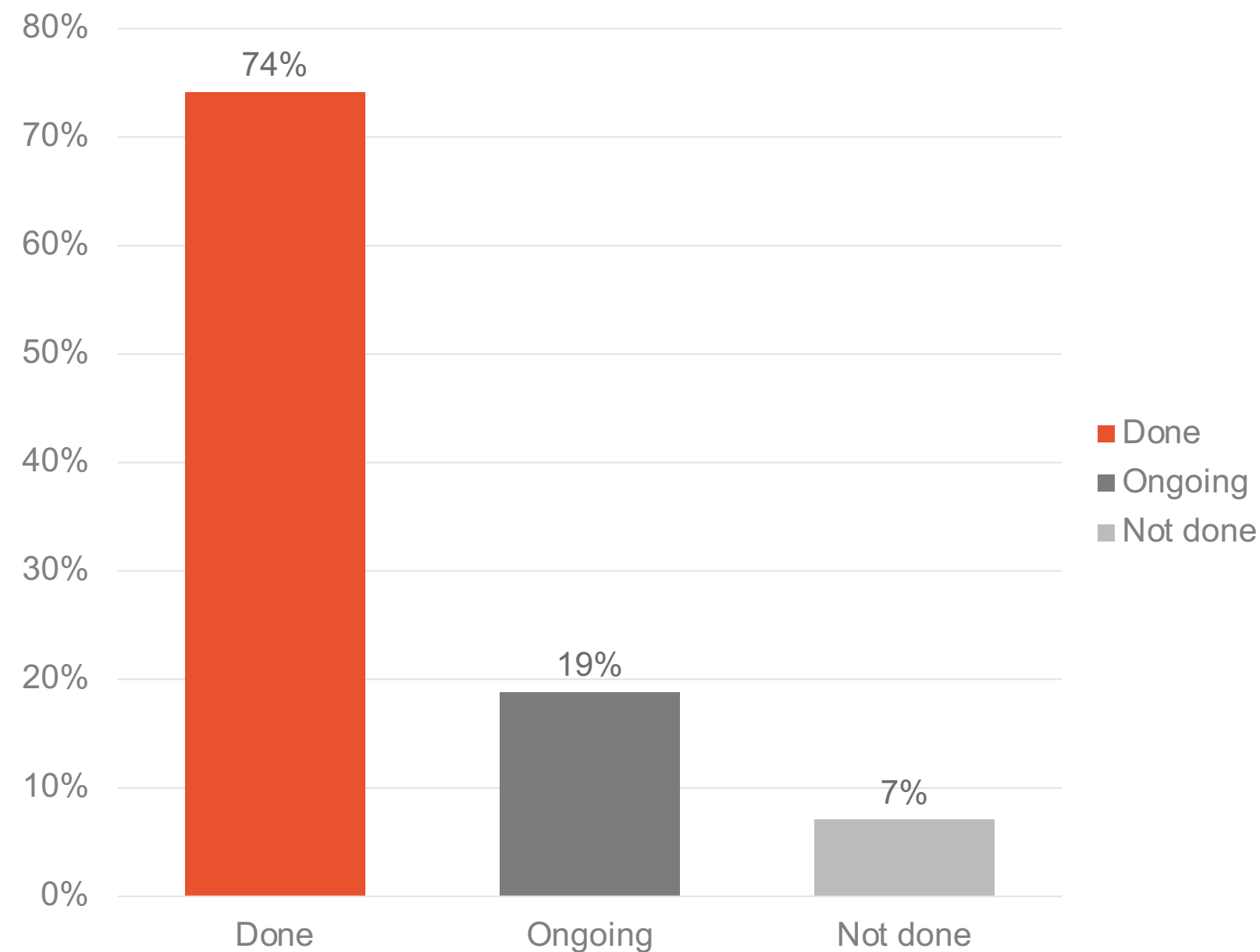
## Cameroon / SOCAPALM

- During EF's visit to SOCAPALM Kienké in July 2021, the team conducted the oral defense of Yvie Lako, a CSE trainee and sociologist, on her thesis. During her 6-month internship, Yvie was involved in preparing the RSP0 pre-audit process in Kienké, and facilitated the participatory designation of community representatives (youth, women, elders) designation process among 20 riparian communities of the Kienke site.
- Socfin has supported the CSE programme as part of its approach to strengthen its capacity to implement its social commitments.





# SOCAPALM Kienké: Progress in implementation of the Action Plan related to SOCFIN's Responsible Management Policy



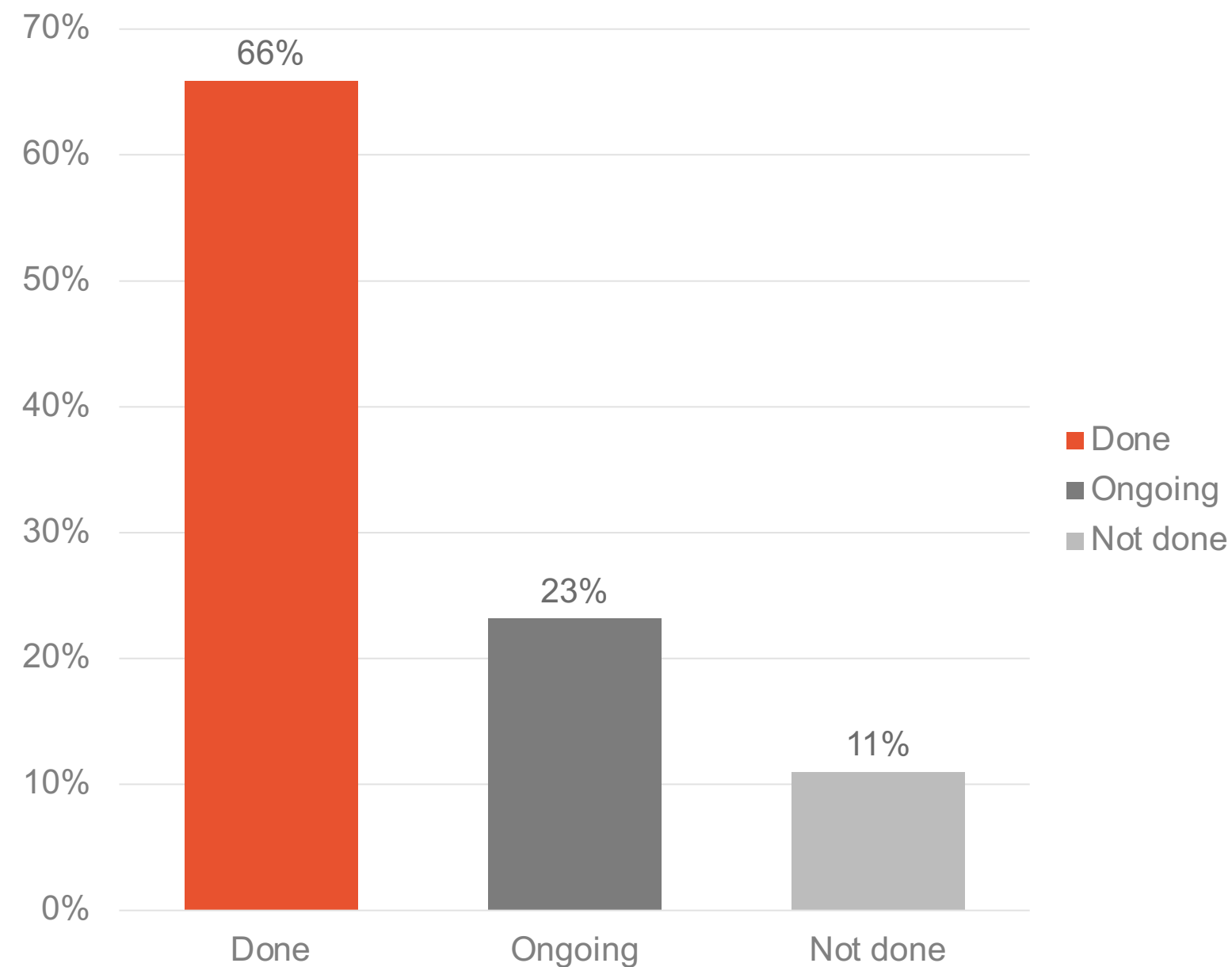
**Health and safety:** The increase in the number of activities completed is observed mainly in the areas related to occupational health and safety (fire extinguishers present and accessible, medical surveillance of contractual/interim staff, etc.). The implementation of joint visits/inspections (doctors and HSE) of workplaces is still not carried out.

**Stakeholder engagement:** The grievance mechanism is in place; what remains to be done is to consolidate the periodic analysis of complaints in order to implement improvement actions if necessary.

**Concession Boundaries:** The survey report has been sent to MINDCAF (Ministry of state property, surveys and land tenure) by the Divisional Officer of the Ocean department; MINDCAF's feedback is still pending.



# SOCAPALM Edéa: Progress in implementation of the Action Plan related to SOCFIN's Responsible Management Policy



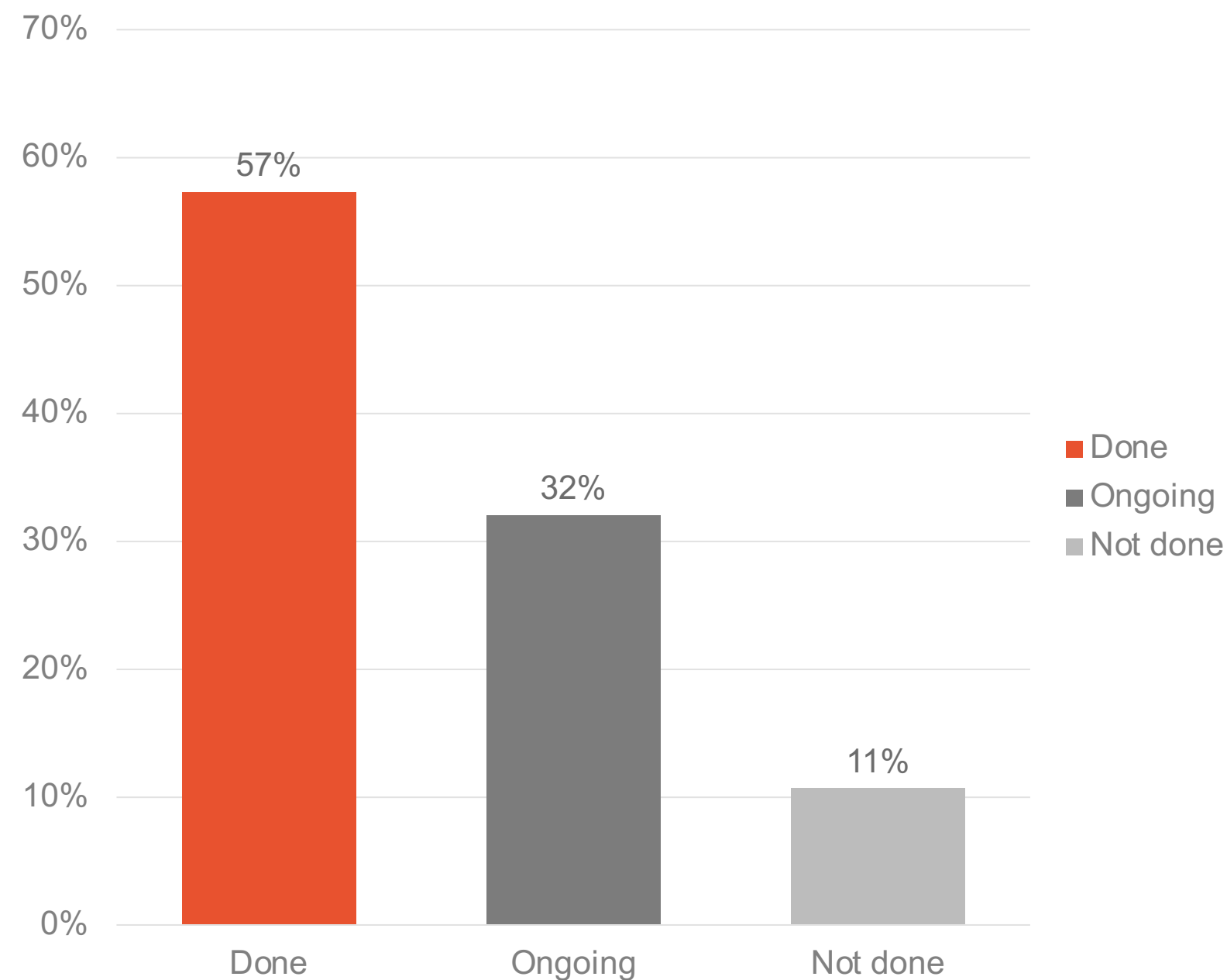
**Health and safety:** Progress has been made in the areas of occupational health and safety (provision of PPE, periodic check up, etc.). Some aspects that have not been achieved are the materialization of the evacuation plan in case of emergency and the implementation of joint visits/inspections (doctors and HSE) of the workplaces.

**Stakeholder engagement:** The complaints management procedure is available and communicated to external stakeholders. In addition to tripartite meetings, the company also holds bipartite meetings with local communities. It remains to consolidate the periodic analysis of complaints in order to implement improvement actions if necessary.

**Environment:** The construction of chemical mixing areas is completed. The identification and the securing of the landfill area is not yet done.



# SOCAPALM Dibombari: Progress in implementation of the Action Plan related to SOCFIN's Responsible Management Policy



**Worker housing :** The renovation of workers houses is ongoing. Efforts remain to be made on the development of a housing policy for workers.

**Health and safety:** There has been an increase in completed activities, particularly with the renovations carried out at the health center and the improvement of transportation conditions. The construction of changing rooms for workers at the factory is not yet done.

**Environment:** The sensitization of families on the sorting of household waste was carried out.

## | Key Messages: SOCAPALM



- The creation of a cross-site, centralized Head of Human Resource has improved the speed of management of workers requests and grievances.
- A Sustainable Development Department has been created within SOCAPALM with new headcount. There is a need to formally define the responsibilities of each actors in order to improve the coordination of activities.
- Through its journey, the company has gained a lot of experience. EF recommend SOCAPALM to set up a tool box of SOCAPALM good practices in order to share experience with other Socfin sites.
- In the context of RSPO certification, there is a need to train teams on RSPO principles and criteria in order to promote better adoption.
- The land boundary issue is progressing in a participatory manner among the Company, the local communities and the local authorities. The government needs to validate the result of the work done; once complete this revision to the 2005 land lease should mark the end of allegations commonly raised in the past.
- Gender committees have now been established in all sites; there is a need to strengthen the capacity of the member of the gender committees
- The inclusion of smallholder in the SOCAPALM supply chain still needs to be improved. Geo-location of farms and full mapping in future years will be key, as well as training smallholders on Socfin policies, and SOCAPALM staff on RSPO/Socfin/buyer policy requirements regarding third-party suppliers.

# | 2021 Key Activities: Action Plan Implementation



## DRC / BRABANTA

In May 2021, EF conducted a field visit of Socfin's Brabanta operations and conducted the following activities:

- Assess the level of implementation of the action plan
- Development of the stakeholder engagement strategy
- Establish an internal stakeholder engagement committee
- Conduct a participatory mapping of the socio-economic infrastructure of the villages bordering the concession
- Support the implementation of internal grievance management
- Train staff in occupational health and safety risk assessment

## | Key 2021 achievements



## DRC / BRABANTA

- Stakeholder engagement strategy developed and shared with BRABANTA for validation
- The composition of the internal stakeholder engagement committee has been proposed to each site visited in 2021
- BRABANTA team trained on how to conduct participatory mapping with communities
- The following documents were developed in a participatory manner with the HR team:
  - Grievance registration form
  - The internal grievance register was reviewed and its structure improved





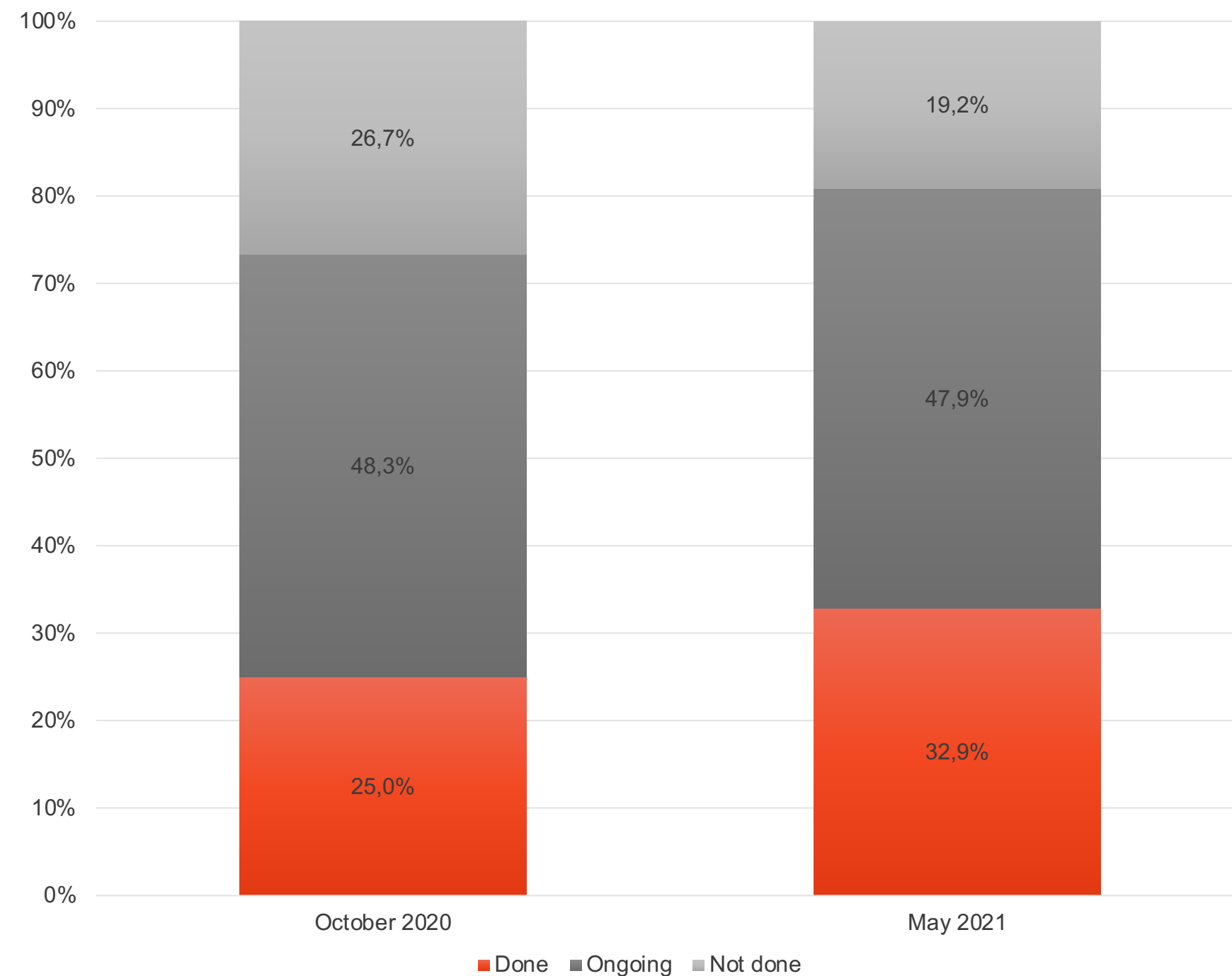
# | Key 2021 achievements: BRABANTA



- BRABANTA team trained on occupational health and safety (OHS) risk assessment.
- A committee made up of the training participants was set up in order to manage the implementation of the OHS risk assessment within the company.
- A workshop to present the first results of the analysis and evaluation of OHS risks was held by the committee and the analysis and evaluation of OHS risks completed in collaboration with EF.



# BRABANTA: Progress in implementation of the Action Plan related to SOCFIN's Responsible Management Policy



**Worker housing** : this remains the central issue; construction projects are still ongoing, but it remains important to ensure good planning and compliance with legal requirements.

**Health and safety**: Progress has been made (distribution of boots, construction of showers for agents in charge of chemical treatment, etc.), but it is important to ensure the quality of deliverables. Earthworm recommends that anti-venom be made available at the hospital.

**Workers' rights**: progress has been made in several areas (development of a training plan, etc.), but not in the evaluation of workers. Challenges remain to consistently implement human resource policies.

**Environment**: Notable efforts in terms of spill management, but the treatment of effluents from the lagoon remains a major concern.

## | Key Messages: BRABANTA



- Although some items in the action plan have been advanced, there is still significant work to do on some social and environmental issues (improvement of housing conditions for workers, staff evaluation, management of effluent from lagoon, etc.).
- The presence of the social team in the communities need to be strengthened.
- The collaboration between the different departments regarding their roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the responsible management has to be improved.
- For more efficiency there is a need to better structure the departments in charge of sustainable management with clear responsibilities and authorities.
- The Earthworm team recommends that Brabanta:
  - Boost the commitment and involvement of the management team by setting up KPIs related to responsible management and periodically evaluate the level of achievement of the objectives in order to take appropriate decisions.
  - Train RSPO internal auditors and conduct internal audits.
  - Finalize and validate the stakeholder engagement strategy
  - Finalize the construction of appropriate showers for workers in charge of chemical treatment.

# | 2021 Key Activities: Action Plan Implementation

## | Liberia / LAC

In December 2021, EF conducted a field visit of LAC operations in order to assess the level of implementation of the action plan developed in 2019, and define next steps.



# | Key 2021 achievements: Action Plan Implementation

## | Liberia / LAC

- Stakeholder engagement strategy developed and shared with LAC for validation
- LAC team has been trained on conflict analysis and resolution, including grievance management
- The oral defense of CSE trainee done in LAC after 8 months of internship



## | 2021 Key Activities: trainings/workshops



## Liberia / LAC

In December 2021, trainings were conducted on the following topics:

- Conflict analysis and resolution, including grievance management in order to prepare the team on handling internal and external conflicts and grievances adequately.
- Proactive mechanism to detect risk of child labor within the plantation.

A workshop was also conducted on stakeholder engagement strategy

# | 2021 Key Activities: Oral defense of CSE trainee – DFID 2020/2021

## Liberia / LAC

- During EF's visit in December 2021, the oral defense of Roger B. Wilson, CSE trainee, was conducted on the following topic: "Evaluation of LAC internal stakeholder engagement its strengths and weaknesses ". Roger is an agronomist; during his 8-month internships he helped the sustainability team in developing and monitoring several small projects related to improving health and safety for employees.

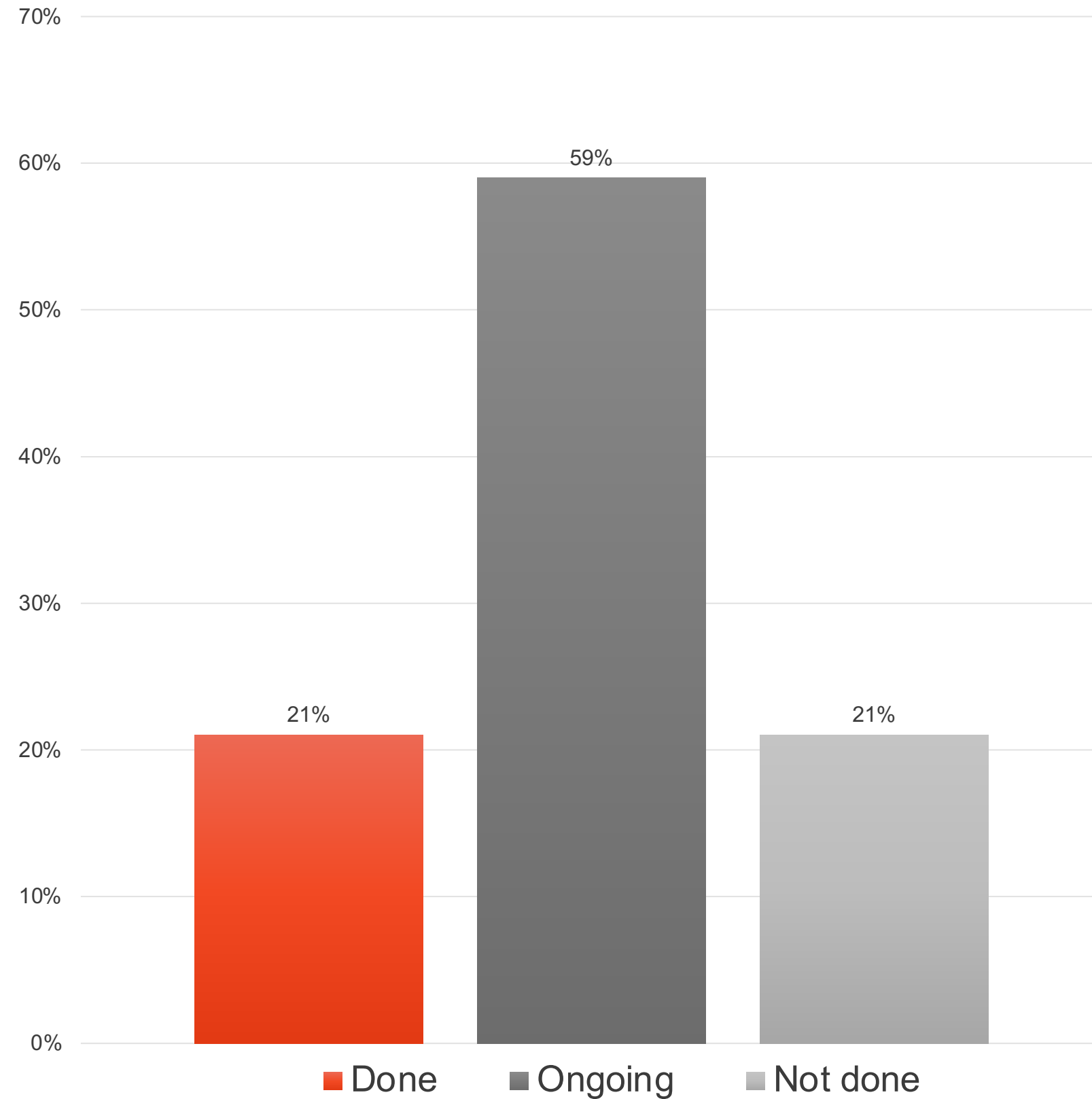








# LAC: Progress in implementation of the Action Plan related to SOCFIN's Responsible Management Policy



**Worker housing :** There is a 5-year housing renovation plan and workers housing renovation is ongoing.

**Health and safety:** One of the key achievements is the annual medical examination conducted for chemical workers. There is need to improve accident investigation and reporting processes.

**Stakeholder engagement:** Setting up a robust grievance management system and the external stakeholders engagement strategy remain the key areas to be improved.

**Environment:** Dumping site has been secured, but solid waste from previous construction work is still visible in workers' camps, presenting risks to residents. Improvements also need to be made in documenting the monitoring of buffer zones.

## | Key Messages: LAC



- Most activities in the plan are underway (burial site identified, mapped and fenced, dumping site has been secured with fencing). More efforts suggested on external stakeholder engagement, grievance management and worker housing.
- LAC will benefit from strengthening the presence of its social team in the communities through the allocation of additional human resources.
- There is a need to reinforce the accident investigation process with a clear accident investigation protocol (responsibilities and authorities of accident investigation team, steps to follow...) and also ensure that causes of all the accidents are integrated in the report so that appropriate corrective actions can be implemented
- During the construction/renovation of workers' accommodations, the company should ensure that cooking kitchens and bathrooms are also built.
- During the allocation/new construction/renovation of houses for workers, LAC should consider the minimum (See T2 standard) number of bedrooms for families with children and the position of the doors because putting all the doors on the front side of the houses can make more difficult the monitoring of children by their parents
- Improve the design and the construction of the washing facilities for the agents in charge of chemical treatment taking into consideration the following aspects:
  - Changing rooms with a place where workers can store clean clothes and the place for dirty clothes,
  - Good practices related to circulation of people in order to avoid cross-contamination.

# | 2021 Key Activities: Action Plan Implementation

## Sierra Leone/SAC

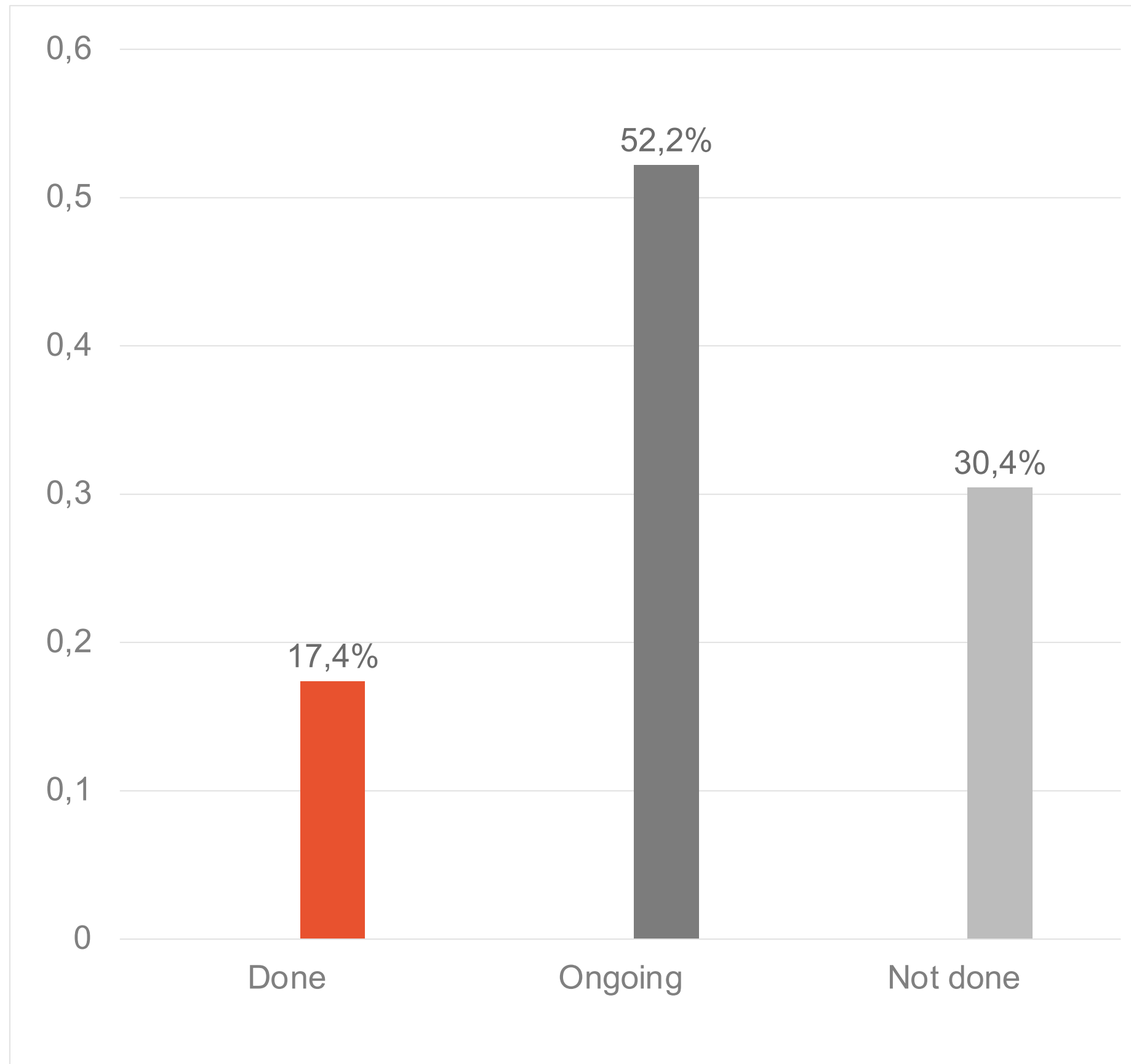
EF visited SAC's operation in September 2021. During that visit, the following activities were conducted:

- Assess the level of ownership and implementation the action plan.
- Review stakeholder strategy and mapping to identify any further needs, priorities
- Meetings with communities





# SAC: Progress in implementation of the Action Plan related to SOCFIN's Responsible Management Policy



**Health and safety:** Medical examination for workers still needs to be done. Inconsistent reporting and potential under-reporting of accidents was observed. Safety rules not always followed by workers.

**Stakeholder engagement:** Progress has been made to close a number of key community commitments. Clear list of past community benefits available and maintained. A review of all outstanding social commitments is completed

**Environment:** Robust waste management procedures and practices are in place. HCV areas are mapped, demarcated and the monitoring program has commenced in collaboration with communities.

## Sierra Leone/SAC

- Stakeholder engagement strategy developed and shared with SAC for validation.
- A full community diagnostic questionnaire has been drafted by EF with the Community Liaison team, along with a summary of the rationale for the study, the scope of survey, estimated time and budget.
- A new template for monitoring community projects and outstanding commitments has been created by EF together with the Community Liaison team.



## | Key Messages: SAC



- A clear open door policy at SAC and the efforts to engage the community and a range of stakeholders is certainly contributing to a period of peace.
- There is a need to strengthen the company's safety culture, as a lack of accountability to basic safety protocols has contributed to serious incidents.
- A growing population is placing more pressure on land availability across the communities within the concession. This can lead to increased tension, conflict and also impact on areas set aside for conservation. SAC has collected basic information and has a strong Community Liaison team, however a more robust approach to map and understand this challenge is needed. SAC is not responsible for solving these problems alone, but having a clear picture of the issues and the leadership they show will have a big impact on how this pressure could be mitigated and effective solutions tested.
- Theft of palm fruit bunches (FFB) remains a challenge. SAC has implemented a community-based approach as part of the solution but also relies on contracted security teams. There is a need to continue working on achieving a good balance between security and policing with community engagement and continued community development.
- Responsibilities and authorities need to be reinforced at different levels in the company so that everyone can be held accountable:

# | Global 2021 achievements and challenges to be addressed in 2022: Socfin Group

## 2021 Achievements

- 1 Stakeholder engagement strategy developed for SOCAPALM, LAC, SAC and BRABANTA.
- 2 The approval by RSPO of the concept note (Annex 7) for the restoration project for SOCAPALM.
- 3 Training conducted in SOCAPALM and BRABANTA on participatory mapping.
- 4 Two CSE trainees completed internships which contributed to sustainability efficiency in LAC and SOCAPALM Kienké.

## 2022 Challenges

- 1 The stakeholder engagement strategies need to be approved and implemented.
- 2 There is a need to proactively share updates with stakeholders on progress being done to address some allegations and grievances.
- 3 There is a need to strengthen SOCFIN's social team with more people skilled on social aspects.
- 4 Develop and implement a strategy for ensuring that third party suppliers comply with Socfin's sustainability policies.