Item 1. Community Tree Nursery case study interview guide

Dr Bianca Ambrose-Oji, Forest Research, Alice Holt Lodge, Farnham, Surrey GU10 4LH

1. About the CTN – a potted history

1. **What were the key driver(s) leading to the creation of the CTN?**
   - Objectives
   - Individual/organisational motivations
2. **Can you explain more about how the CTN was established?**
   - Who was involved?
   - How were the land and other resources found/sourced?
   - How were the people resources found and paid (or not paid)?
   - Was there personal investment? I.e., a person's savings?
   - Was there any reliance on specific grants or other forms of support?
   - What were and are the major costs of establishing and operating the CTN, e.g., land and building purchase, labour, admin, supplies and maintenance costs? (Could it be ranked by value and maybe estimated at least to the order of magnitude, e.g., in tens or hundreds of thousands?)
3. **Looking back over the years of operation what would you say have been the key challenges, and what types of support have been required at different stages in the CTN's development?**
   - Early design and establishment
   - Two or three years in
   - What future challenges do you anticipate?
   - Is there any information that would help the running of the CTN? Would any information or support have been useful in the past?

2. Community Engagement and any impacts

1. **How is the community involved and who (what type of people) is involved in the CTN?**
   - Has this changed over time?
   - Volunteers/paid staff (how many? How are volunteers organised, e.g., regularity and level of responsibility?)
   - Interns, apprentices, etc.
2. **Do you have specific objectives for community engagement?**
   - Have these been a requirement from funders?
3. **How do you feel the CTN benefits from community engagement (e.g. costs and plant quality)?**
4. **How do you feel the community benefits from engagement in the CTN?**
   - Probe for the range of benefits, e.g.:
   - 1. Physical Health, 2. Mental Health, 3. Social and Cultural, 4. Nature Connection. 5. Changes in ASB., 6. Inclusion of under-represented groups., and 7. Upskilling and employment.
   - Are any of these measured or monitored?

3. Growing and supplying trees

1. **Please could you explain more about your tree growing/production process?**
   - How are tree products used? (for own/local projects/for sale/other)
- Who is involved at what stage and why (seeds, plants, growing, and selling)?

- Production cycles (seeds (bought or collected) or bought-in plants? Length of time)
- Who is being supplied? How do/did you make connections with people to supply?
- Do you see any potential to increase production and how could that be supported?
- Do you produce any products in addition to trees?

2. **What biosecurity measures/practices do you employ if any?**
   - Seeds and stock
   - Water/soil/compost management systems
   - Purchased peripherals
   - Volunteers and visitors to the site
   - Onward supply chain

- **Are you aware of any plant health legislation/regulations? (e.g., notifiable pests and diseases, risk register, etc.)**
  - Are you aware of or part of Plant Healthy or other schemes, e.g., UKISG (UK, Ireland Sourced & Grown)?
  - What are your most important ongoing costs, and can you compete on price with products already available on the market?
- How do you set your price, and do you sell at breakeven/profit?
- If profit, how is that distributed (e.g., invested back into the CTN)?

4. **Business and governance model**
   - Do you have any kind of business plan or forward operating plan? Who takes part in developing, reviewing or implementing this?/Do you have a plan with, e.g., vision and aims?
   - Do you have a development plan or any other kind of strategic planning document? Who takes part in developing, reviewing or implementing this?
   - How are you managed in terms of governance, do you have advisory and/or supervisory boards, and what are the accountability arrangements (e.g., annual community meeting)?
   - Who makes the financial and other important day-to-day decisions for the CTN?
   - Do you have any income other than trees? Any funding? If so, how has it been provided and how vital is/was it?

5. **Sustainability**
1. Do you see the CTN developing as a long-term enterprise, or is it something that has a limited lifespan, e.g., connected with a project, person, etc.?
2. Are you actively developing (leadership) succession planning (capacity, capability and motivation of individuals) to secure the future of the CTN?
3. How do you rate the financial sustainability of the CTN (income generation and reliance on grants)?
4. How do you rate the sustainability of your supply and production (sources, biosecurity and contracts)?

Item 2. Pilot Project Community Tree Nursery Interview guide

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1.   About the CTN – a potted history to establish context

1.1. What were the key driver(s) leading to the creation of the CTN?

- Objectives
- Individual/organisational motivations

1.2. Can you explain more about how the CTN was established?

- Who was involved?
- How were the land and other resources found/sourced?
- How were the people/resources found and paid (or not paid)?
- Was there personal investment? I.e., a person's savings?
- Was there any reliance on specific grants or other forms of support?
- What were and are the major costs of establishing and operating the CTN, e.g., land and building purchase, labour, admin, supplies, and maintenance costs? (Could it be ranked by value and maybe estimated at least to the order of magnitude, e.g., in tens or hundreds of thousands?)
- How important was the funding from the Pilot Project to support the CTN setup? Would it have happened without the fund?

1.3.   Looking back over the years of operation what would you say have been the key challenges and what types of support have been required at different stages in the CTN development?

- Early design and establishment
- Two or three years in
- Longer term? What future changes do you anticipate?

2.   Engaging with the Shared Outcomes Fund CTN Pilot Scheme

2.1.   Why did your CTN approach/make an application to the CTN Pilot Scheme?

- How important has this funding/support been to the CTN—critical?

2.2.   What did you expect the outcomes of this support to be in the short and medium term?

- How far have these been achieved at this stage?
- Have there been any unexpected impacts?
- Have any other factors helped the CTN to achieve these outcomes?

3.   Community/Volunteer Engagement

3.1. Do you have specific objectives for community/volunteer engagement?

3.2. Which kind of people are involved in the CTN and how do they contribute?

- Has this changed over time? Probe for why and how.
- Volunteers/paid staff (how many? How did you find them? How are volunteers organised, e.g., regularity, time spent, in/formal agreement, level of responsibility?)

3.3. How do you feel the community benefits from engagement in the CTN?

- Probe for the range of benefits, e.g., 1. Physical Health, 2. Mental Health, 3. Social and Cultural, 4. Nature Connection., 5. Changes in ASB., 6. Inclusion of under-represented groups., and 7. Upskilling and employment.
- Are any of these measured or monitored?

3.4. Has the Pilot Scheme had any impact on your engagement with volunteers or the wider community?
- Probe for increased time, skills development, knowledge of biosecurity and other

4. Growing and supplying trees

4.1. Please could you explain more about your tree growing/production process?
- What is produced and who is involved at what stage and why (seeds, plants, growing, and selling)?
- Production cycles (seeds (bought or collected) or bought-in plants (where from, e.g., UK/ abroad)? Length of time)
- Who is being supplied? How do/did you make connections with people to supply?
- Do you see any potential to increase production and how could that be supported?

4.2. Has involvement in the CTN Pilot Scheme had any impact on your production?
- Probe for any changes to quantity, planned uplift in production, types of trees and quality of trees
- Have other factors facilitated change?
- Once the CTN is established, would they be interested in increasing production, would they need more support/funding to do that and would they be meeting demand/gaps in the market?
- How quickly do they think production could be scaled-up? When do they think they will be producing more trees?

4.3. What biosecurity measures/practices do you employ if any?
- Probe for detail (seeds and stock; water/soil/compost/waste management systems; Purchased peripherals, volunteers and visitors to the site and onward supply chain)
- Are you aware of any plant health legislation/regulations, and do they have an impact on your nursery? (e.g., notifiable pests and diseases, risk register, etc).
- Are you aware of or part of Plant Healthy or other schemes, e.g., UKISG (UK, Ireland Sourced & Grown)?

4.4. Has involvement in the CTN Pilot Scheme had any impact on your biosecurity practice or your biosecurity awareness and knowledge?
- Have other factors facilitated change?

5. Business and governance model and understanding of the sector

5.1. Do you have a development plan or any other kind of strategic planning document? Who takes part in developing, reviewing or implementing this?

5.2. How are you managed in terms of governance, do you have advisory and/or supervisory boards, and what are the accountability arrangements (e.g., annual community meeting)?

5.3. Who makes the financial and other important day-to-day decisions for the CTN?

5.4. Do you have any income other than trees? Any funding? If so, how has it been provided and how vital is/was it?

6.   Sustainability

6.1. Skills and training question—they need to establish where they feel they are at

6.2. How do you perceive the sustainability of the CTN at this time?

- Probe for particular areas of growth and planned uplift

6.3. Are there any challenges and barriers to the sustainability of the CTN in the medium and long term?

- Probe for particular areas and any potential solutions to these issues.

Item 3. Community Tree Nurseries, National Survey Questions

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1. Welcome and consent

2. Information about your community tree nursery

1. Please provide the name of your community tree nursery project. *

2. In which year was your community tree nursery established? *

3. Please indicate which of the following most closely describes how the community tree nursery is organised. *

☐ Enterprise (commercial or social). Tree sales are seen as an important component of sustainability.

☐ Network. A collective of tree growers based in different locations.

☐ Community-based. Managed and run by an established community group as a community-based initiative.

☐ Organisation- or project-based. Managed or supported by a local authority, charity, or partnership project.

☐ Other (please specify):

4. If you selected "Network" in Question 3 above, are you answering on behalf of: *

☐ the network of community tree nurseries

☐ one community tree nursery in the network

☐ not applicable

5. Where is your community tree nursery located? If possible, please provide the postcode of your community tree nursery. If your community tree nursery is part of a network, please provide the relevant town or county where the network is based. *

6. Over the past year, how many paid staff have contributed in any capacity to the running of the community tree nursery? We are asking about FTE—full time equivalents, so if you have two staff members that work 50% part-time that would equal 1 FTE. *

3. Production at the community tree nursery

7. Since the establishment of your community tree nursery, has tree production increased, decreased or remained stable? *

☐ Increased

☐ Decreased

☐ Remained stable

☐ Not sure

8. How many trees did the community tree nursery produce over the last 12 months? By 'produced', we mean the number of trees that became ready for distribution in the last 12 months (rather than the total number growing in the nursery). *

9. Looking back at the planting season October 2021–March 2022, approximately what proportion of the community tree nursery's production was distributed? By 'production', we mean the number of trees that became ready for distribution (rather than the total number growing in the nursery). *

☐ None

☐ Quarter

☐ Half

☐ Three-quarters

☐ Everything

☐ Not sure

10. Do you have plans to significantly (by 10% or more) increase production over the next 1-5 years? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

11. Over the past 12 months, what tree species has your community tree nursery produced? Please list the species your community tree nursery has produced and provide your best estimate of the number of units in brackets. For example, species (number of units).
Please note that if your community tree nursery produces a large number of species, there is the option instead to upload a file containing this information if you have these records available (see Question 12 below). *

[   ]

12. Species list file upload option.
If you have records available that you are willing to share, please upload the full list of species produced by your nursery over the past year (including details of units produced per species) using the 'choose file' button.

13. What size of trees does your community tree nursery currently produce? Please provide your best estimate for each category as a percentage. Your answers must total 100%. *

Bare root transplants	%
Cell-grown transplants	%
Maiden	%
Half standards	%
Standards	%
Total:	%

14. How does your community tree nursery currently source trees? Please provide your best estimate of the percentage of trees your community tree nursery produces using each of the below methods. Your answers must total 100%. *

Produced from seeds collected by a community tree nursery—within 20 miles of the nursery	
Produced from seeds collected by a community tree nursery—further than 20 miles from the nursery	
Produced from seeds sourced from commercial suppliers	
Produced from cuttings	
Bought-in stock	
Donations from members of the public/volunteers	
Other	
Total:	

If you answered "Other", please describe:

15. Is there a demand for species that your community tree nursery cannot provide (either as trees you have grown or trees you stock)? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

If yes, please tell us which species (list up to three).

16. Would you consider either increasing or shifting output to meet the demand for these species? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

17. What do you perceive to be the most significant barriers to increasing production or shifting production to meet demand for all species and from all customers and end users (e.g., barriers or

reasons that prevent or make increasing production difficult/undesirable)? Please select the 5 most relevant barriers. *

☐ Increased upkeep costs

☐ Consumable costs

☐ Uncertainty around anticipating future demand and funding needs

☐ Risks losing the original ethos of the community tree nursery

☐ Availability of seed sources

☐ Motivation of staff/volunteers

☐ Volunteer availability

☐ Time required

☐ Capital costs or reoccurring costs of community tree nursery infrastructure

☐ Staff capacity

☐ No barriers

☐ Access to land for the community tree nursery

☐ Other (please specify):

[   ]

4. How your Community Tree Nursery operates

18. We would really like to know more about where the trees you produce go. Thinking overall about how you distribute your trees, how important are each of the following channels? Please add a number between 1–5 to each box below, where 1= not at all important and 5 = extremely important.
If you answered 'other', please explain. You are free to add any scores to the boxes, rows or columns and they do not need to add up to a particular total. *

	Private individuals	Government and local authorities	Environmental charities and similar organisations	Other
On-site sales, i.e. unarranged retail sales	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Private individuals	Government and local authorities	Environmental charities and similar organisations	Other
Donations, i.e., gifting/giving trees to individuals and organisations	☐	☐	☐	☐
Growing to order, i.e. growing species and numbers of trees by prior arrangement for specific projects or organisations	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you answered "Other", please describe:

[ ]

19. What is the financial turnover generated by the community tree nursery on an annual basis? By turnover, we are asking about the total amount of money that comes into the community tree nursery from different sources including grants, tree sales, donations, etc.

☐ <£1,000

☐ £1,000–<£5,000

☐ £5,000–<£10,000

☐ £10,000–<£20,000

☐ £20,000–<£50,000

☐ >£50,000

☐ Not sure

20. What contributes to this income? Please score the relative importance of the following options by assigning points out of 10. For example, if tree sales and income from a café are the two sources of income, and the majority comes from tree sales with comparatively little coming from the café, you might score tree sales 9 and café income 1. Your answer must add up to 10. *

Tree sales [ ]

Other plant sales [ ]

Sale of other items [ ]

Providing training/learning [ ]

Café	
Grants	
Other	
Total:	

If you answered "Other", please describe:

21. Taking into account all expenditures and outgoings including overheads, what are the total costs that the community tree nursery has on an annual basis? *

- [ ] <£1,000

- [ ] £1,000–<£5,000

- [ ] £5,000–<£10,000

- [ ] £10,000–<£20,000

- [ ] £20,000–<£50,000

- [ ] >£50,000

- [ ] Not sure

22. What contributes to these annual costs? Please score the relative importance of the following options by assigning points out of 10. For example, if utilities and land/building costs are the two costs, and the majority comes from utilities with comparatively little from land and building costs, you might score utilities 9 and land/building costs 1. Your answer must add up to 10. *

Land/building costs including maintenance	
Utilities (e.g., heating, water and Internet)	
Infrastructure and equipment (e.g., greenhouses, polytunnels, tractors, fencing and irrigation system installation)	
Consumable items (e.g., compost, pots, root trainers, tree guards and irrigation replacement nozzles)	
Staff costs for employees paid annually (e.g., salaried staff)	
Staff costs for employees paid hourly	
Support for staff or volunteers not including training (e.g., expenses)	

Training for staff and volunteers

Marketing and promotion

Other

Total:

If you answered "Other", please describe:

23. Do you perceive any of the following to threaten the long-term continuation of your community tree nursery? Please select all that apply. *

☐ Maintaining a volunteer base

☐ Over-reliance on a small number of individuals

☐ Short-term grants

☐ Lack of demand

☐ Difficulty meeting biosecurity standards (e.g., Plant Healthy Certification or Forest Reproductive Material).

☐ Financial instability

☐ Access to land for the community tree nursery

☐ None

☐ Other (please specify):

24. Do you feel any of the following would support the development and/or long-term continuation of the community tree nursery? Please select all that apply. *

☐ Support for peer-to-peer learning and exchange with other community tree nurseries

☐ Support with finding and applying for grants

☐ Training on community tree nursery business planning and management

☐ Help with record-keeping, e.g., the origin of planta, plant movements, origin of materials, potting on dates etc.

☐ Training on community tree nursery regulations and biosecurity practices

☐ "How to" technical sheets for volunteers, e.g., pruning, seed collection, etc.

☐ Other (please specify):

[   ]

5. Volunteers

25. Over the past 12 months, how many volunteers have contributed to the running of your community tree nursery? *

[   ]

26. What are your main objectives for having volunteers? Please select all that apply. *

☐ Social capital and community cohesion brought about by social interaction at the community tree nursery

☐ Health and well-being benefits (e.g., through nature connection, physical exercise and socialising)

☐ Learning and skills development of volunteers

☐ Changing community attitudes and perceptions towards trees and nature

☐ Volunteers contributing to the management and maintenance of the community tree nursery itself

☐ Seed collection

☐ Flexible working patterns

☐ Other (please specify):

27. Over the past year, to what extent have volunteers contributed to community tree nursery activities? Please provide your best approximation of the number of volunteer hours. For example, 6 volunteer sessions x 4 hours x 15 volunteers = 360 volunteer hours.

[   ]

6. Biosecurity at the community tree nursery

28. Does the community tree nursery have an active biosecurity policy or plan in place? Please select one option. *

☐ Yes, a formal written policy/plan that all staff/volunteers are made aware of

☐ Yes, a formal written policy/plan that some staff/volunteers are aware of

☐ Yes, an informal policy/plan, e.g., some general principles commonly understood across the community tree nursery

☐ No

☐ Not sure

29. Do you have any interest in achieving Plant Healthy Certification? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

30. Do you perceive any of the below to be barriers to applying for Plant Healthy Certification? Please select all that apply for your community tree nursery. *

☐ Cost

☐ Motivation

☐ Access to advice

☐ Record keeping required

☐ Time required

☐ Office equipment/IT needed

☐ Not aware of Plant Healthy Certification

☐ No barriers

☐ Other (please specify):

[   ]

31. Do you currently have, or carry out, any of the following measures? Please select an answer for each measure. *

	Yes	No	Don't know
A quarantine area	☐	☐	☐
The ability to trace trees from source to sale	☐	☐	☐
Procedures for cleaning and sterilisation	☐	☐	☐
Pest and disease checks on incoming goods	☐	☐	☐
Regular monitoring for pests and diseases	☐	☐	☐
Regular attendance of biosecurity training	☐	☐	☐

32. Do you feel further biosecurity training would support your staff/volunteers? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

If yes, which topics or issues would be most useful?

___

7. Contact details

33. If you would like to receive a free copy of *The Tree Grower's Guide*, please provide us with i) a contact email address and ii) a postal address. Please note that by doing so, you are giving us permission to contact you for the purpose of organising the delivery of the book. These data will be deleted once the book has been delivered. Please also note that your free copy of *The Tree Grower's Guide* is limited to one per community tree nursery.

Name

Email address

Postal address

Postcode

34. If you provided us with an email address in Question 33 above, would you like to receive information about Community Tree Nursery training and grants?

☐ Yes

☐ No