

Tropenbos International Ghana's footprint in the forestry sector



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Foreward

Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana, a non- governmental organization headquartered in the Netherlands was established in 2001 in response to problems confronting the forestry sector of Ghana. These problems included the over-exploitation of forest resources leading to degradation, deforestation and the impoverishment of forest communities whose livelihoods depend on forests. To help address these, it is the goal of TBI Ghana to ensure that stakeholders in the forestry sector deploy sound and adequate information to promote policies and activities that increase forest cover, enhance forest dependent livelihoods, reduce conflicts associated with forest management and ecosystem services. To achieve this goal, TBI Ghana seeks to bridge the gap between forest policy, management and science by carrying out research, building capacities, providing platforms (both at local and national levels) for discussing topical forestry issues and sharing lessons and experiences at international forums.

TBI Ghana has gone through three successful five year phases. We have collaborated with government institutions such as the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resource, Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, Forestry Commission. As we get to the end of the third phase we take stock of our achievements and contributions to good forest governance, productive landscapes and enhance forest dependent livelihoods in Ghana. In this publication, we present a collection of stories on how we have made knowledge work for forests and people.

Samuel Kwabench Nketiah

Contributing to good forest governance



Working together for domestic lumber supply

Local demand for legal lumber could soon be met through a joint effort of former rivals in the timber industry. During a ground-breaking ceremony held on July 17, 2013 at the District Assembly Hall in Goaso, two artisanal milling groups in Sankore and Akrodie in the Brong Ahafo Region and the Logs and Lumber Limited (LLL), a saw milling company and forest concession holder in the Ashanti Region signed a partnership agreement to produce legal lumber for the domestic market. Under the agreement, LLL will supply logs to the artisanal milling groups and in return, have the groups protect its forest concessions against illegal chainsaw milling.

This arrangement comes on the heels of a project that sought to pilot a partnership agreement between forest dependent communities and forest concession holders to produce legal lumber for the domestic market. The successful implementation of the project engendered the interest of Logs and Lumber Limited to willingly partner artisanal millers to produce legal lumber for the domestic market. The EU chainsaw project being implemented by TBI Ghana was on hand to facilitate the signing of a , Forest managers, partnership agreement between Sankore and Akrodie Artisanal Milling Associations and LLL to produce lumber for the domestic market.

The signing ceremony was attended by sixty-two people including politicians, traditional authorities the media and forest fringe communities. The political head of Asunafo North Municipal Assembly, Mr Mohammed Kweku Duku was full of praise for the initiative; indicating government's keen commitment in combating illegal chainsaw milling in the country. He encouraged the chiefs and communities to desist from the activity and pledged governments support to the initiative. The LLL's representative was appreciative of TBI Ghana's effort and saw the initiative as long overdue.

The Programme Director of Tropenbos International Ghana, Mr Nketiah said the agreement if successfully implemented will be scaled up to cover the entire country. He added that a chain of custody procedure for monitoring lumber from artisanal milling is still in preparation and a technical committee meeting would be held to look at sustaining artisanal milling. To show commitment, the Timber Industry Development Division had already donated two portable bansaw mills in support of the initiative. All stakeholders at the signing ceremony pledged their commitment to support the initiative and applauded the two parties for taking a bold step to address the problem of local lumber demand.



Supplying legal lumber to the domestic market

Ghana is close to finding a solution to the dilemma of supplying legal lumber to the domestic market as indicated by a just completed pilot project by Tropenbos International Ghana. TBI Ghana has devised and successfully tested new models that link artisanal millers directly to forest concession holders to access logs to produce lumber for the Ghanaian market.

Since 1998 Ghana has banned the use of chainsaw to convert logs into lumber for commercial purposes. Alternative arrangements for supplying lumber have failed largely because conventional millers prefer to sell their products on the export market, creating a huge supply gap on the domestic market. Through a multi-stakeholder process, a domestic lumber policy was formulated as one of the first steps to deal with the unmet demand for legal lumber on the domestic market. The policy however hinges strongly on giving opportunity to artisanal millers to also produce lumber for the domestic market, alongside the conventional millers. The problem however has been how to get legal logs to the artisanal millers since most of the resource is now in the hands of forest concession holders who invariably sell to the conventional millers.

To make logs available to artisanal millers, TBI Ghana came up with models that link artisanal millers directly to forest concession holders who currently have legal access to the resources but mostly do not have processing facilities.

Through this 'marriage' artisanal millers are able to have legal access to the resource and thereby produce legal lumber for the domestic market. The pilot project also developed a wood tracking system which enables producers and traders to verify legal compliance. The result of this pilot has attracted such interest that the Forestry Commission has already invested in two artisanal mills to further refine the findings of the pilot for up-scaling.

This pilot project was part of the broader ACP-FLEGT Support Programme (*The Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Support Programme for African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries*); a collaborative effort amongst the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the European Commission (EC) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) to address forest law enforcement, governance and trade issues in ACP member countries.



Artisanal Milling defined

The process for defining Artisanal Milling as part of operationalising a policy option to supply legal lumber to the domestic market has been concluded during the 9th National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) meeting on 7th November, 2012 at the Forestry Commission (FC) Auditorium in Accra.

In the quest for a viable alternative to illegal chainsaw milling in Ghana, stakeholders of both the EU Chainsaw milling project and a parallel process led by the Timber Industry Development Division (TIDD) of the FC decided that both sawmills and artisanal millers supply the domestic market with legal timber obtained from sustained yield. This option has been elaborated in a policy proposal for the supply of legal lumber to the domestic market.

What has been missing in the policy, however, is a stakeholder consensus on the definition of Artisanal Milling (AM). This definition is critical: without defining what AM is, it will be difficult to develop an effective policy. Several MSD meetings have been held toward defining AM. A parallel process led by the TIDD of the FC also aimed at supporting the definition of AM. None of the two processes could yield a definition of AM acceptable to all national stakeholders. Nevertheless, after two years of desperate search the dust finally settled when a number of proposed definitions was consolidated into one that is widely acceptable to key

stakeholders, including the Forestry Commission, Ghana Timber Millers Organisation, Chainsaw Operators and the Domestic Lumber Traders' Association.

The agreed definition which will feed into the national policy is:

"Artisanal milling is small-medium scale milling of timber from specified legal sources by a trained, certified, registered and licensed Ghanaian artisan, using licensed mobile sawmilling equipment that excludes any form of chainsaw machines, capable of recovering at least 50% of dimension lumber from logs, for the domestic market only. This may be processed in-situ or ex-situ".

The EU chainsaw milling project aims to find sustainable solutions to the problems associated with the production of lumber for local timber markets by involving all stakeholders in dialogue, information gathering and the development of alternatives to unsustainable chainsaw milling practices. In Ghana this project is being carried out by Tropenbos International (TBI) in collaboration with the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) and the Forestry Commission (FC).



A giant step towards formalizing Artisanal Milling

To support the continuous training and operations of artisanal millers to curb illegalities and conflicts associated with chainsaw milling, whilst addressing livelihood and VPA issues, the EU Chainsaw milling project supported the Forestry Commission to purchase a modern wood processing equipment, an LT 40 Wood Mizer. The equipment has been installed at FCTC which will now become the national training center for artisanal millers. The equipment was out-doored at the 13th Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue meeting of the project at FCTC in Kumasi.

The outdooring was attended by about a hundred and ten (110) people from over twenty (20) stakeholder groups within the forestry sector in the country. Notably among them was the Director of forest operations, Mr Alexander Buadu, who mentioned that it has become critical to transform the activities of chainsaw operators to work legally to save Ghana's remaining forests. The director of FCTC, Mr Joseph Boakye, was happy to receive the equipment and said that aside using it for training, the center will also open the use of the machine to the general public. *'We will also be interested in assisting members of Domestic Lumber Traders Association – who can purchase their own logs and we'll process it for them and those who have their own plantations, if they harvest, can bring it here and we'll process it for them at a reasonable fee'* he added. Illegal chainsaw milling has over the years been a threat to sustainable forest management, however meeting

domestic lumber demands. Through the project's multi-stakeholder discussions, Artisanal milling was identified and accepted by stakeholders as an alternative to illegal chainsaw milling. And, also to serve as an alternative livelihood for illegal chainsaw operators. The concept of Artisanal milling was developed and its piloting rolled out. Before and during the pilot, the capacity of potential artisanal millers was built in the areas of group dynamics and leadership, the techniques of timber milling and business management and marketing. Currently, there are five artisanal milling groups in the country; two in the Brong Ahafo Region (Akrodie and Sankore), one in the Ashanti Region (Obogu), one in the Western Region (Insusiding) and one in the Eastern Region (Apoli Ningo). These groups have been accepted by forest concession holders to provide legal timber for their mills and therefore producing for the domestic market. However, some challenges have been identified in the previous pilots that need to be addressed. These include the access to raw material, elite capture of artisanal milling concept, abuses of the system, corruption and dwindling timber resources.

With this new equipment and an established training center, it is expected that more artisanal millers will be trained to join the piloting after which it will be institutionalized as the major means of feeding the local markets with legal lumber in the light of Ghana's VPA implementation.



Artisanal millers implore Ghana government for timber concessions to supply legal lumber to domestic market

Artisanal millers who have been trained to use legal equipment in wood processing have appealed to the Government of Ghana to grant them access to timber concessions to enable them produce legal lumber for the domestic market. The request comes amidst concerns from Ghana's Forestry Commission (FC) about the high level of illegal wood from chainsaw operators on Ghana's domestic market which is estimated at about 80 percent.

The appeal was made during a working tour of Small and Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFEs) by the Timber Legality Compliance and Advocacy Project (TILCAP) team to ascertain their ability to comply with Ghana's Legality Assurance System (LAS) as enshrined under the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA)

During the, access to legal timber emerged as the main stumbling block to the adoption of Ghana's LAS by SMFEs. The Sankore Artisanal Millers Association made up of former illegal chainsaw millers who ditched their chainsaws for the Wood Mizer following an intensive education on the negative impact of chainsaw milling on Ghana's forest cover by the Chainsaw Milling (CSM) Project lamented their inability to access timber for their work on a regular basis. Both TILCAP and the CSM Project are being implemented by Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana with funding from the European Commission. The association which was constituted in 2013 and has been sourcing timber from Timber Utilisation

Contract (TUC) holders in the Brong-Ahafo Region mentioned among other things the delay in the supply of timber to the association after a request has been made to the TUC holders and documentation has been finalised as a major hindrance to their work. This leads to their equipment lying idle for long periods of time thus depriving association members of work and a regular source of income.

Similarly, Rabwood Enterprise at Akrodie in the Brong-Ahafo Region, a registered artisanal milling enterprise, identified lack of access to timber concessions to produce legal lumber for the domestic market as a major stumbling block to their work and appealed for help in this dimension.

Some of the SMFEs who were visited by the project team also made a suggestion that government should subsidize the cost of acquiring legal lumber from saw millers while tax on the importation of lumber should be waived to enable individual trade associations to import some and sell on the domestic market at an affordable price to SMFEs.

They also recommended that the Artisanal Milling Concept should be up-scaled nationwide to make legal lumber more available on the domestic market while government considers creating a lumber depot in the northern sector to enable SMEs in the area have access to legal lumber.



Artisanal millers about to supply legal lumber to the market in Ghana

The artisanal milling group of Sankore in the Goaso Forest District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana has received its first consignment of logs from the company Logs and Lumber Limited (LLL) in December 2013. The group which entered into an agreement with LLL for the supply of logs will be able to place legal lumber on the domestic market which used to be supplied for more than 80% with illegal chainsaw milled lumber.

Although a banned activity, illegal chainsaw milling has persisted due to its contribution mainly to rural employment and the supply of lumber for domestic use. However, the activity is accompanied by conflicts, loss of revenue and deforestation. Ghana's Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the European Union requires that the country not only trades in legal lumber internationally but also locally. In view of this, the EU Chainsaw Milling Project in Ghana has been engaging stakeholders to find sustainable alternative to illegal chainsaw milling in the country. Out of the dialogue came the use of artisanal milling in which former chainsaw operators receive adequate training and are able to source and mill lumber legally for the domestic market.

Meanwhile, some Timber concession holders claim to be underutilizing their harvesting rights resulting in substantial volumes of un-removed yields causing revenue loss to the state.

To make use of un-removed yields, LLL entered into a Business Partnership Agreement as a joint effort to put legal lumber on the domestic market. In December the company supplied the Sankore group with 81 m³ of logs from various tree species.

The artisanal milling group in Sankore, comprising former illegal chainsaw operators, has been trained to become artisanal millers within the framework of the EU chainsaw milling project. Within the agreement with LLL, the group pledged their commitment to supply legal lumber to the domestic market. They will also monitor illegal chainsaw milling activities and report them to the appropriate authorities. It is foreseen that the continued supply of logs to the artisanal milling group and the signing of more Business Partnership Agreements will gradually transform Ghana's domestic market to a legal business, supporting the implementation of the VPA.



Overland export of timber from Ghana: a silent cancer

Aside Ghana increasing its efforts to secure legal timber supply to the domestic market, the country has to pay special attention to overland export of timber. Ghana has a long history as a major supplier of high-value hardwood timber and wood products to European, Asian and African markets. As a signer of the Voluntary Partnership agreement with the EU, Ghana has a commitment not only to export legal wood but also source and trade in legal timber on the domestic market. A study conducted by the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana has brought to the limelight the overland trade in wood and wood products as a vibrant one but largely illegal.

The study was conducted under the EU Chainsaw Milling Project 'Securing the integration of legal and legitimate markets into Voluntary Partnership Agreements' being implemented by Tropenbos International Ghana and partners. The study aimed at estimating the size of the trade and its implications for policy to supply legal timber to the domestic market.

Through a multi-stakeholder dialogue process under the project, a domestic lumber supply policy has been developed as one of the first steps to deal with the unmet demand for domestic lumber. The policy places emphasis on the overland export of timber from Ghana which affects the volumes of wood available for local consumption and therefore it is also a driving force for illegal

chainsaw milling. The conservative estimated volume of wood exported annually across the northern borders of Ghana alone is 250,000 m³ (mainly illegal chainsaw lumber) which is equivalent to some 825,083 m³ of round logs. At least 130,000 m³ of overland lumber exports comes from the major timber markets alone. This implies that some 120,000 m³ of lumber may be exported overland directly from production sites and from minor timber markets.

The main markets for these overland exports are Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. Nigeria's importation of mainly plywood and lumber from 2005 to 2012 has averaged an annual volume of 78,000 m³ valued at over Euros 24.04 million. These exports go through approved exit points at the borders, particularly at Aflao on the south eastern corridor as well as Paga, Hamile and Tumu all on the northern frontier of the country.

The study pointed out that the main trade of lumber occurs at recognized timber markets, mainly Techiman and Kumasi-Sokoban, as well as direct procurement from producers at loading sites closer to production areas. The study revealed that about 62% of the volume of timber traded in these two major markets (mainly illegal chainsaw lumber) was exported overland. In the context of VPA implementation, the overland export trade presents a challenge, in terms of how chainsaw lumber transported across the border can come under a legality regime.



DOLTA gets funding for advocacy and capacity building

With Support of the EU chainsaw milling project, the Domestic Lumber Traders Association (DOLTA) in Ghana has been able to source funding from the Business Sector Advocacy Challenge (BUSAC) Fund. With this support, DOLTA, a key stakeholder in the ongoing Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) process, will undertake capacity building and advocacy activities in support of the agreed policy option: Sawmills and artisanal mills supply the domestic market with legal lumber obtained from sustainable source.

Throughout the discussions on the policy options for addressing illegal chainsaw milling, stakeholders observed that a few powerful stakeholders were not in favour of the consensus reached and feared that they might lobby government to reject the agreed policy option. DOLTA expressed the need to seek funding to advocate and lobby Government to accept and support the policy option agreed by the majority of stakeholders. DOLTA applied to BUSAC for support to undertake capacity building and advocacy action which was approved in October 2011. The objectives of the action are to:

- Educate and create awareness among policy makers, forest resource managers, government, general public etc on the simplification of the VPA on the domestic market, livelihoods and related enterprises under current forest policies and law;

- Engage policy makers to accept and support the agreed policy option for addressing illegal CSM and supply of legal lumber to the domestic market;
- Form a one association/federation of all lumber traders in Ghana to give more voice and impact; and contribute to the implementation of actions for supply of legal lumber to the domestic market.
- Build capacity of Lumber Traders to benefit under the agreed policy direction.

DOLTA has so far visited all the major lumber markets in Ghana to create awareness on the agreed policy option and the proposed policy for supply of legal lumber to the domestic market. As part of the action's activities, selected members of DOLTA, with a delegation from Ghana Forestry Commission supported by the EU chainsaw milling project visited Guyana where chainsaw milling is legal and regulated. During this tour the organization of the Guyanese domestic timber trade was studied and practical lessons learned. It is envisaged that the action will result in a strong national lumber traders association capable of engaging with policy makers on issues on the domestic lumber market; representing the domestic lumber trader interests in decision making bodies, and; supporting actions for supply of legal lumber to the domestic market.



Harmonisation of stakeholder processes in Ghana

On 9th April, 2014 the national executive committee of the National Forestry Forum of Ghana (NFF-G) and the steering committee of the multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD SC) under the EU Chainsaw milling project agreed to harmonize these two stakeholder platforms. Since the establishment of the MSD in September 2009, the MSD SC has been working to establish favourable conditions to sustain a multiple stakeholder process approach to policy-making. Many stakeholder processes with similar objectives as the MSD are active in Ghana. Since its start, the MSD has been aligned with the NFF-G and has now moved on to harmonise the two processes. This is a first step towards institutionalisation of stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes in the Ghana forest sector.

For complex issues such as natural resource management, where there are a range of views, competing interests and expectations, well-managed multi-stakeholder processes can bridge the differences in perceptions of the diverse participants and help them reach agreement. Multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) has been the main strategy used by the EU Chainsaw milling project to achieve its successes such as bridging the differences between antagonizing actors within the domestic timber sector and agreeing on a draft policy for supplying legal lumber to the domestic market as well as a public procurement policy on wood and wood products.

Sustaining this structured stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes after the life span of the project has urged the MSD SC to seek for the harmonization or more appropriately institutionalization of the MSD platform into existing ones. There are a lot of stakeholder platforms discussing issues on sustainable forest management in the country: there is much to gain from streamlining and coordinating these initiatives. NFF-G is a nationwide platform with same focus as the MSD and has formal government recognition.

The actual harmonization of the two platforms will be implemented gradually. For a successful integration, there are certain areas that need further discussion such as mutual recognition, facilitation, administration, structure in terms of stakeholder representation and financial support. To support this process, a five member committee was inaugurated to develop a working document with inputs from district level stakeholders and a discussion paper to be prepared by a consultant.



Embedding the MSD in Ghana's forest sector

The EU chainsaw project implemented by TBI Ghana and partners has organised a three-day training workshop on 'Institutionalising multi-stakeholder engagement in the forestry sector of Ghana' for project staff and partners. Since its inception, a key strategy for implementing the EU Chainsaw project has been the establishment of a multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) to share information, reduce conflict between stakeholders and generate jointly agreed solutions for addressing illegal chainsaw milling in Ghana.

This approach has yielded tremendous results including a policy recommendation made jointly with the Timber Industry Development Division of the Forestry Commission that artisanal millers should be allowed to join sawmillers in supplying legal lumber for the domestic market in a sustainable manner. This recommendation has since been taken up by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources for consideration.

Over the years, the MSD has emerged as a useful national platform for soliciting and incorporating varied views of stakeholders in decision making and implementation of jointly agreed solutions. However, it has not been formally embedded in national institutions within the forest sector. Even though the platform comprises actors from state institutions, civil society organisations and the timber industry, its operation beyond the EU Chainsaw project is at the moment not guaranteed.

If the potential that the MSD offers in fostering multiple views for joint solution is not harnessed and institutionalized, the forest sector risks losing it altogether with the expiration of the EU Chainsaw project in 2015. The need to institutionalize and profit from the prospects of the MSD is especially crucial now as Ghana is exploring and implementing several multi-stakeholder processes in support of initiatives like FLEGT/VPA, REDD+ and the FAO's National Forest Programme.

To proactively respond to this need, the EU Chainsaw project mobilized project staff and partners and other relevant forest actors in a brainstorming and capacity building workshop towards institutionalising the MSD within the forest sector. The workshop which took place on the 11th-13th July 2012 in Koforidua was facilitated by the Wageningen University Centre for Development Innovation in the Netherlands. Participants provided requisite guidance for supporting and receiving legitimacy to the embedding process and its eventual implementation.

Following from the workshop outcome and other related issues, the Technical Committee and the MSD Steering Committee of the project would be meeting in August to further discuss and make recommendations to move forward the process of institutionalising the MSD in Ghana's forest sector.



Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue in Ghana formally institutionalised

A culture of stakeholder consultation in decision making in the forestry sector is gaining space through the institutionalization of the multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD). During the 13th MSD meeting of the EU Chainsaw Milling project which took place at the Forestry Commission Training Center in Kumasi on 16th July, 2015 the National Forest Forum- Ghana (NFF-G) accepted to merge with the MSD platform established by the EU Chainsaw milling project.

The MSD has been the main strategy used by the project. It is an interactive and learning platform that involves all types of stakeholders within the forestry sector, has proved to be an effective tool for decision making on the project amidst, diverse views, competing interests and expectations. Through the well-managed MSD, the project has bridged the differences between antagonizing actors (chainsaw operators and forest managers) within the domestic timber sector. Two tangible outputs from the platform discussions are a policy for supplying legal timber to the domestic market and a public procurement policy on wood and wood products. It was also through the platform that Artisanal milling was identified as the alternative to illegal chainsaw milling.

Since its establishment in September 2009, the MSD Steering Committee has been working to establish favourable conditions to sustain a multiple stakeholder approach to policy-making.

This is because there is much to gain from streamlining and coordinating similar initiatives. Although there are many active multi-stakeholder processes with similar objectives as the MSD in the country, NFF-G was chosen because it is a neutral nationwide platform with good reputation and recognized by government.

The institutionalization of the platform was witnessed by over one hundred and ten (110) participants from about twenty (20) stakeholder groups across the country. Amongst them were Forestry Commission staff, chainsaw operators, wood workers and traders, academia and research institutions just to mention a few. The stakeholders were happy about the harmonization, with the belief that they can contribute to forestry reforms.



Identifying synergies between FLEGT/VPA and REDD+ initiatives in Ghana

Forests are not just an assemblage of trees, a reservoir of carbon stocks or mere items for economic exchange but possess an inherent value for forest fringe communities; such values should be recognised and taken into consideration when drafting laws and policies on forest governance.

These were the views of the National Synergy Workshop organised by Tropenbos International Ghana to tease out synergies between the Forest law Enforcement, Governance and Trade / Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT/VPA) and the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). The workshop which took place in Accra on November 12, 2015 was attended by 50 participants drawn from both the FLEGT/VPA and REDD+ Secretariats of the FC, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the Energy Commission, industry, the Timber Validation Department (TVD) and the Climate Change Unit (CCU) of the FC, Forestry Research Institute (FORIG) and people from research and academia. It was sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

At the workshop, it was pointed out that forest resource governance as a concept focuses greatly on the human element and is therefore crucial for sustainable forest management. In addition, parallels exist between FLEGT/VPA and REDD+ that offer enormous challenges for synergy and complementarities which will

eschew duplication of activities, allow for the sharing of knowledge and experience across the two initiatives, and offer a joint effort in planning and implementing action in areas of overlap.

It spelt out a series of measures for identifying legality and safeguard issues under both initiatives which include; compliance with sustainable level of timber harvests and restoration of degraded forests to safeguard the forests capacity to serve as carbon sinks, as well as conserve biodiversity, and the promotion of deforestation free cocoa . Other measures include strategies to address chainsaw milling, instituting equitable benefit sharing arrangements under REDD+ to reduce conflicts and ensure the protection of forests, the implementation of tree tenure reforms to enable farmers derive benefits from trees on their farms, plantation development schemes by both the FC and the private sector and the promotion of alternative livelihoods by the FC with support from CSOs.

Key safeguard issues identified under Ghana's REDD+ include; developing environmental and social safeguards instruments, clarifying tree and carbon tenure for equitable benefit sharing, mainstreaming gender issues, institutionalising and sustaining multi-stakeholder consultation and engagement in the sector, and implementing dispute resolution mechanisms.



Workshop on social safeguards in FLEGT/VPA process in Accra, Ghana

Ghana was the first country to sign a Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the EU for contributing to the FLEGT objectives. It is envisaged that improved legal timber trade will also stimulate good governance and poverty alleviation.

However, such co-benefits are not automatic. For instance, the law is often incompatible with small-scale forest activities, and these social practices are then considered illegal. The question of how best to integrate legality and livelihood concerns in timber production forms the basis of the research project, 'Illegal or Incompatible (Iol): Managing the consequences of timber legality standards on local livelihoods.' The Iol project assesses how the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between Ghana and the European Union (EU) will impact on the livelihoods of forest dependent people, and searches for governance mechanisms to mitigate any adverse impacts.

On October 8&9, 2009 TBI Ghana organised a workshop on the Iol project in Accra, Ghana on the theme, 'Social safeguards in the Ghana-EU VPA: Jointly developing a research and development agenda for improved forest governance'. The objective was to facilitate information exchange and dialogue among forest stakeholders on the possible impacts of VPA on livelihoods. About forty national and international participants shared views on

possible impacts of VPA on local livelihoods and possible mitigation measures. These participants were drawn from research institutions, academia, policy institutions, development partners, timber industry, civil society and the Forestry Commission.

The following were highlighted as issues to be considered when developing social safeguards.

- Capacity building in local communities to monitor and evaluate the process and impact of VPA implementation.
- Improved arrangements for guaranteed access to forest resources as well as to timber benefit sharing mechanisms for communities that depend on forests.
- Development of alternative livelihoods for groups of poor people who are negatively affected by the FLEGT/VPA scheme, especially chainsaw operators.
- Increased efficiency, added value and, hence, sustainable employment in the forest sector.
- Expanding the forest resource base in Ghana for example through plantation, etc.



TBI Ghana pilots Wood Tracking System for the domestic market

Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana has developed and started piloting a Wood Tracking System (WTS) for the domestic timber production and trade. This domestic WTS is part of the implementation of a project that aims to link local communities with forest concession holders to produce legal lumber for the domestic market. The project is supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (“FAO”) under the “ACP-FLEGT Support Programme”.

This effort comes on the heel of Ghana committing not only to export legal lumber to the European Market under a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (EU) but also to ensure that the domestic timber market is supplied with legal timber. However, currently about 84% of the domestic market supply is from illegal chainsaw milling. To satisfy the legality assurance criterion of the VPA, Ghana needs to address the trade in illegal chainsawn lumber.

With support from the EU, TBI Ghana has over the years, in collaboration with the Forestry Commission and the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, and through broad multi-stakeholder processes, supported the development of a new policy for supply of legal timber to the domestic market. The policy introduces a concept of artisanal milling that will supply the domestic market with legal timber. To guarantee legal production and trade of

artisanal milled lumber a Wood Tracking System is necessary. Under the FAO supported project, TBI Ghana trained artisanal millers in pilot regions in business and technical skills and developed different models for producing legal lumber for the domestic market. The WTS is now being piloted with some artisanal mills in the Juaso and Goaso Forest Districts. A team of young officers are now in the field to monitor the process of producing and trading legal lumber, using the developed Wood Tracking System.

The Wood Tracking System (WTS) will provide the mechanism for tracing wood products from their source in the forest, through processing to the point of sale in the domestic market. It will also provide an elaboration of the minimum processes which domestic market operators must adopt during conversion, processing and manufacturing in order to identify the timber, ensure that it is tracked throughout conversion, and also generate supporting data and information in a timely manner for the issuance of a legality license.



Knowledge on VPA shared with three West African countries

Master craftsmen and organisational leaders of Small and Medium Forest Enterprises from Senegal, Mali and Gambia have received training from Mr Erasmus Philip Ahorlu a craftsman and entrepreneur from Ghana on the Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS).

Mr. Ahorlu, who benefited from training programmes conducted nationwide by the Timber Legality Compliance and Advocacy Project (TILCAP) was invited to train his counterparts in these three West African countries by the Gambian Tourist Board. The one month training programme which begun on May 24, 2016 and ended on June 18, 2016 took place at the Mansea Hotel in Banjul, Gambia. It was funded by the Organisation of Islamic States (OIC) and implemented by Ace Executive located in the Gambia.

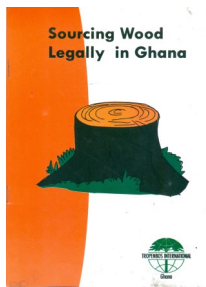
While these three countries have not yet signed onto the VPA agreement with the European Union, the training was meant to prepare them in readiness for the agreement in the future and also help exporters of timber products to meet current standards for the exportation of their products.

Mr Ahorlu who is also a member of the Peer Guidance Teams set up by TILCAP as a conduit for continuous training of employees of SMFEs took the participants through topics such as International Wood legalities (TLAS, VPA, and The Lacey Act), Global Warming: Causes and Prevention, Safety Precautions within the Craft Industry, and Tools Selection.

Other topics were Strategic Material Sourcing, Product Planning and Adaptation, Product Development, Product Designing, Creative Finishing, Export Marketing, Leadership and Cluster Facilitation and Business Commuting.

Due to the training he received under TILCAP, Mr Ahorlu who is the immediate past President of the Aburi Craft Village in the Eastern Region of Ghana was a key supporter for the extension of the VPA to cover the work of woodcarvers and engaged with the Forestry Commission (FC) in meetings brokered by TILCAP together with his counterparts to push for reforms that would capture handicrafts under Ghana's TLAS.

The project "Supporting Intermediaries with Information and Guidance to Comply with the Timber Legality Assurance System and Engage in Advocacy on the Domestic Market Reforms", otherwise known as TILCAP was implemented by Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana over a two year period to provide information and guidance to intermediaries in the timber industry made up of representatives of trade associations of Small and Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFEs) and Civil Society Organisations on Ghana's TLAS as enshrined under the VPA. The project ended on May 5, 2016.



TILCAP launches training manuals to disseminate information on Ghana's VPA

The implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) signed between Ghana and the European Union (EU) would pave the way for a more effective forest governance system in Ghana. This would halt illegal logging and its associated revenue loss to the Government of Ghana and also ensure an equitable distribution of forest resources.

In this regard, the EU sponsored “Supporting Intermediaries with Information and Guidance to Comply with the Legality Assurance System and Engage in Policy Advocacy on the Domestic Market Reform in Ghana” project; otherwise known as the Timber Legality Compliance and Advocacy Project (TILCAP), has developed training manuals aimed at educating members of Small and Medium Scale Forest Enterprises (SMFEs) on the VPA to assist in its successful implementation.

This is in line with the project’s mandate to provide timber industry associations with the information and guidance that they need to comply with the Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS) as outlined in Ghana’s VPA and also build their capacity to engage in policy advocacy on the domestic market.

The training manuals, entitled “Understanding Ghana’s Timber Legality Assurance System” and “Sourcing Wood Legally in Ghana” together with their local language (Twi) translations were

launched on June 17, 2015 at a colourful ceremony that brought together chiefs, representatives from the EU and the media, members of SMFEs, the Forestry Commission (FC), the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) as well as Non-governmental and Civil Society Organisations working in the forestry sector.

The two training manuals that focus on key timber resource rights recognised by the VPA and how they can be acquired were launched by Barbara Serwaa Asamoah, Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR).

The Deputy Minister in her launching address noted that Ghana loses millions of cedis to illegal logging annually and by signing the VPA agreement Ghanaians have committed themselves to trading in only legal timber both on the domestic and export markets.

She said it was impossible for government to carry out the needed training exercises to educate, create awareness and sensitize actors in the timber industry on the VPA processes and congratulated TBI Ghana for undertaking this herculean task to improve forest governance in Ghana.



Woodcarvers push for a place in Ghana's voluntary partnership agreement amidst risks of being excluded

Woodcarvers in Ghana are pushing for their products to be certified under the VPA because they sell majority of their products in the export market.

In response to their concerns, the Timber Legality Compliance and Advocacy Project (TILCAP), being implemented by Tropenbos International Ghana with funding from the EU, brokered a meeting between representatives of the Aburi Industrial Woodcarvers Association and top ranking officials of the Forestry Commission (FC) to discuss ways by which the Wood Tracking System (WTS), a tool for tracking wood from its origin to the point of export to ascertain its legality, can be used to track the legality of the wood from which the artefacts are made so that they can be exported. The meeting was held on the premises of the FC in Accra on March 30, 2016.

The exportation of artefacts proved to have eluded the discourse on the VPA and consequently, the design of the Wood Tracking System which does not track materials that are not produced from regular timber. Most artefacts are carved from tree stumps and dead wood from off-reserves which are not captured under the Wood Tracking System since the FC has no mandate over materials outside the forest, especially when those materials are not trees.

In addition, the materials in consideration are widely scattered hence it would be difficult for the FC to visit their locations and

certify them while the cost of inspection, which is normally borne by the business owner, might prove to be too high given the quantity of materials involved. Also, before artefacts from a timber product can be considered legal, there is the need to determine what the Importing countries would accept as enough proof for the legality of an artefact.

The view of the FC is that the list of materials that require a Forest law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) license should be reviewed to include artifacts. Consequently, there is the need to design a special tracking system for artefacts to ascertain their legality which will also demand that the list of items that require FLEGT Licenses under the VPA be expanded to cover artefacts. This calls for a wider discussion after which the issue can be referred to the Joint Negotiation Table between the EU VPA Team and the Ghana VPA Team to negotiate for artefacts to be covered by Ghana's LAS and to define what constitutes the legality of wood from which artefacts are made from.

In this regard, the Aburi Industrial Woodcarvers Association has been advised to write officially to the FC voicing their concerns about the implications of being excluded from the VPA for action to be taken on the issue since the issuance of FLEGT Licenses for certified wood products under the VPA is expected to commence from the last quarter of 2016.



Tropenbos International Ghana links outcomes of Chainsaw Milling Project and Timber legality Compliance and Advocacy Project

Tropenbos International Ghana has begun an initiative to link the outcomes of the Chainsaw Milling (CSM) Project with that of the Timber Legality Compliance and Advocacy Project (TILCAP) by building a symbiotic relationship between the two projects that would ensure that they support each other. Both projects are being funded by the European Union (EU).

Under the initiative, artisanal millers who have been trained to produce legal lumber for the domestic market under the CSM project will sell their produce to Small and Medium Scale Forest Enterprises (SMFEs) who have received training on the Voluntary Partnership under the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade and are thus familiar with the requirements and processes for using legal lumber for their businesses.

Such an initiative has become necessary in view of the fact that the domestic market is still flooded with illegal wood from chainsaw millers which sell at a far cheaper price than legal wood from artisanal millers and hence attracts more buyers. This makes legal wood uncompetitive on the market.

In a similar vein, SMFEs trained under TILCAP who want to use legal wood for their businesses find it difficult to procure the quantity of wood they need due to its scarcity on the domestic market. Most of these SMFEs are involved in tertiary wood production including all categories of furniture, canoes and

handicrafts among several others. By linking SMFEs under TILCAP with artisanal millers under the CSM project, artisanal millers will have a ready market for their lumber whilst SMFEs will be assured of legal lumber for their enterprises.

The initiative is designed to forestall the event of SMFEs trained under TILCAP being forced to use illegal wood due to their inability to find legal wood on the domestic market, and at the same time, curtail the risk of artisanal millers falling back on illegal chainsaw milling as a source of livelihood because they are unable to sell their legal wood on the domestic market.

As a first step, team members from both projects on November 10 initiated discussions with two artisanal milling sites, namely, Tornado Wood Processing Limited and Dovton Wood Processing at Obogu in the Ashanti Region of Ghana on the possibility of supplying legal lumber to the SMFEs trained by TILCAP.

Both sites welcomed the idea of being linked to a ready market, especially, in view of the fact that they have in stock suitable lumber for tertiary wood production such as carpentry and joinery.

Further meetings have been scheduled for the introduction of wood workers to artisanal millers to foster business arrangements that will ensure the supply of legal wood to SMFEs.



A boost for new EU Chainsaw project districts

The EU Chainsaw milling project being implemented by TBI Ghana and partners has successfully held a capacity building session for the leadership of stakeholder groups and members of steering committees of district-level multi-stakeholder dialogue (DLMSD) platforms in two new project districts: Tarkwa and Nkwanta in the Western and Volta Region respectively.

Since 2007, the EU Chainsaw milling project has been implemented in eight forest districts including Goaso and Sunyani in the Brong-Ahafo Region, Juaso and Nkawie in the Ashanti Region, Kade, Oda and Begoro in the Eastern Region and Assin Fosu in the Central Region. The two new districts were added to broaden the frontiers of district-level multi-stakeholder participation in decision making in support of efforts toward finding alternatives to illegal chainsaw milling in Ghana.

Thus, the extension of the project to the forest districts meant setting up new multi-stakeholder platforms and steering committees to support the on-going national discourse for finding sustainable options for supplying legal lumber for the domestic market. To be able to fulfill this function, the EU Chainsaw milling project organized a special training for key actors to shore up their knowledge, skills and general capacity to effectively manage and support the district-level dialogue process.

The training took participants through relevant subjects such as facilitating multi-stakeholder process, dealing with power relations, group management, leadership development and adaptive management. It also provided the requisite technical backstopping on the implementation of the EU Chainsaw milling project in the various districts.



Forestry extension service: a missing link in Ghana's reforestation efforts

The need for a formal forestry extension service for the forestry sector in Ghana has become crucial in the light of massive reforestation and plantation development by both smallholder farmers and commercial entities. This was the subject of an essay competition organized by Tropenbos International Ghana for tertiary students in natural resource management as part of its capacity building efforts.

The winner of the competition, Master Kumeh Mensah is a final year student of the Faculty of Natural Resources Management of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. He was awarded a new laptop. Consolation prizes were awarded to the first and second runners up.

Over the years Ghana has tried different models of forestry extension services but for some reason none has been sustainable. Currently there is a massive drive towards reforestation and plantation establishment. There is however no proper system in place to provide technical support and other needed back-up services to support the reforestation efforts. There is therefore the need to examine past initiatives with the view to putting in place a workable extension service scheme. In the light of this the essay competition was organized to kick off the process of analyzing past efforts and garner stakeholder views on the issue.

Speaking on the receipt of the award, Master Eric Kumeh Mensah said 'my first impression on reading the notice that called for the essay was, does forestry extension really work?' Yet after I was contacted as the ultimate winner, I was convinced'. He added that 'today I leave the office of Tropenbos International Ghana not only with an award but also a lot of knowledge about the issue, knowledge that will propel me to greater heights'. He concluded by saying 'thanks to TBI Ghana for making knowledge work for forests and people'. As a follow-up to the essay competition TBI Ghana proposes to carry out empirical studies and stakeholder consultations to eventually come up with a proposal for a workable forestry extension service



Forest Investment Programme to train tree extension officers

Guidelines for the training of staff members of the Forestry Commission (FC) to provide extension services to tree growers are being developed under the Forest Investment Programme (FIP): Enhancing Natural Forests and Agro-Forest Landscapes Project being implemented in Ghana.

This is in recognition of the fact that providing tree extension services is important for promoting plantation establishment to help meet wood demand. Consequently, developing the capacity of field staff of the FC to provide such essential services would ensure the realization of the goal of the project which is aimed at reducing forest loss and degradation in selected landscapes in Ghana's High Forest Zone in order to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, abate poverty and conserve biodiversity.

This information was disclosed by the FC at an "Expert Consultation Workshop on Options for improving Smallholder Forest Plantations In Productive Landscapes" organised by Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana under its Landscape Restoration Project (LRP) in Kumasi

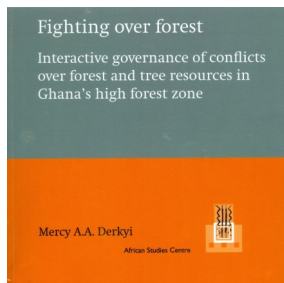
The FIP has four components. The first is policy reforms and institutional strengthening aimed at advancing the implementation of reformed policies to create an enabling environment and also strengthen the institutional means for achieving sustainable landscape and forest management.

The second is piloting investments for improved forest and landscape management with communities designed to establish and demonstrate improved forests and landscapes management practices that would be replicated countrywide.

The third is innovations, capacity building and communication under which communities would be engaged and provided with relevant information for improved landscape management practices and the last is project management, monitoring and coordination.

After the capacity of FC staff has been built, piloting of tree extension services will be carried out in the Brong-Ahafo and Western Regions where local communities working in forest and agro-forest landscapes will be engaged in REDD+ activities and subsequently up scaled to the rest of Ghana. One major challenge however is how lessons learnt would be applied to the savannah parts of the country due to the difference in landscape.

The project which is managed by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) is being funded under the global 789 million dollar FIP, a funding window of the 8.1 billion dollar Climate Investment Fund (CIF) established to support developing countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and promote sustainable forest management and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) that is currently active in eight pilot countries including Ghana.



Establish a conflict management unit within Ghana's Forestry Commission

Conflicts over the use and management of forest and tree resources often led to loss of incomes, livelihoods and forests, and sometimes resulting in injuries and even deaths. But establishing a specialised unit within the Forestry Commission for forest conflict management could offer the necessary leverage for better managing them. This is according to Dr. Mercy Derkyi, a TBI Ghana supported PhD graduate of the University of Amsterdam.

In her PhD thesis entitled 'Fighting over forest – Interactive governance of conflicts over forest and tree resources in Ghana's high forest zone' – Derkyi noted that illicit forest activities especially illegal timber exploitation and chainsaw milling, excessive exploitation of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), illegal farming in forest reserves due to population increase and the need for fertile soils for crop cultivation play an important but not exclusive role in forest conflicts in Ghana.

She found that unresolved forest tenure issues in Ghana – some of which date back to colonial times – impede the proper implementation of national forest policy; and that hierarchical governance – a top-down style of state-citizen relationship – still prevails despite national policy initiatives which are intended to embrace more participatory approaches. The researcher bemoaned the lack of strict enforcement of legal sanctions and low fines for forest offences in Ghana. She therefore calls for more

effective cooperation between the Forestry Commission, the Ghana Police Service and the Judicial Service to improve forest law enforcement. She also advocates a reform of the judiciary system in a way that recognises the importance of forest offences and argues that Ghana's Forestry Commission should be handed a prosecution mandate in order to facilitate the adjudication of forest offences.

Derkyi makes a case for the integration of non-violent conflict management strategies into forest policy and management as a key to ensuring better forest governance. This requires the establishment of a specialised unit for forest conflict management within the Forestry Commission (FC) which could be integrated in the Legal Division of the FC. In addition, the conflict management capability of frontline staff such as forest guards, district managers and (where applicable) customer service officers should be enhanced, as well as those of community leaders and timber operators. Derkyi calls for the recognition and utilisation of the conflict management role of traditional authorities. She recommends the embracing of interactive forest governance principles as a new governance culture. However, she contends that the most important thing is the recognition among all forest actors that conflict management is a key building block of effective forest governance and management



Stakeholders ready to reduce conflicts associated with chainsaw milling in Ghana

Conflicts abound in chainsaw milling operations in Ghana which pose serious setbacks to sustainable forest management efforts in the country. Although the conflicts have received some attention, duty bearers have not sufficiently dealt with them partly due to lack of adequate conflict management skills. To address this deficiency, Tropenbos International organised a training programme on conflict management to provide the requisite skills, attitude and knowledge for properly dealing with chainsaw related conflicts.

The training which was held on June 24-28, 2013 was organised under the framework of the EU chainsaw milling project that aims at contributing to sustainable solutions to the problems associated with the production of legal lumber for the domestic markets. Key targets of this training were Forestry Commission frontline staff, participating as community forestry workers on the project, as well as chainsaw operators and managers of district-level multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms in ten forest districts.

Twenty-six (26) participants were trained in recognising forest conflict dynamics in Ghana, applying conflict management strategies as well as negotiation and communication skills for effective process facilitation. The training was facilitated by the Centre for Development Innovation of the Wageningen University.

Participants pledged their commitment to work with other stakeholders to better manage chainsaw conflicts in their localities. It is hoped that the training will help reduce the level of conflicts associated with chainsaw milling in Ghana.



Effective benefit sharing arrangements for the proposed Atewa National Park identified

The Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) has been identified as the best Benefit Sharing Arrangement for managing the Atewa Forest Reserve, which is on the verge of being converted into a national park, by a research study conducted by Tropenbos International Ghana at Atewa and its environs in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

CREMA entails the incorporation of sustainable wildlife management within the livelihood activities of forest fringe communities who also receive economic incentives through sustainable income generating activities compatible with wildlife management. These incentives are normally developed along the values, needs and perceptions of equity of stakeholders involved.

Perceived benefits under CREMA could be in the form of employment as tour guards, revenue collections, or selling essential commodities around the park when the Atewa Forest Reserve eventually becomes the Atewa National Park.

The study which was conducted under the “Strengthening Local Communities for Improved Participation in Decision Making Processes Project”; a component of the “Living Waters From the Mountain Project” being implemented by A Rocha Ghana, was on the theme ‘The Policy and Institutional Setup Related to Participation, Socially Just Access and Benefit Sharing’ with

regards to forest fringe communities. It was carried out in 10 forest dependent communities along the fringes of the Atewa Forest Reserve from five political districts, namely; the East Akyem, West Akyem, Atewa, Ayensoano, and the Denkyembuso Districts of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The Atewa Forest Reserve lies within the semi-deciduous forest zone of Ghana covering a landmass of twenty-three thousand, six hundred and sixty –five hectares (23,665 ha). The study identified the possible barriers to effective benefit sharing as land tenure related issues, difficulties in determining the amount of benefits in monetary terms due to individuals and groups and a suitable distribution mechanism for ensuring a fair distribution of benefits.

Other barriers include transparency in sharing, accountability and auditing of the fiscal amount of benefit shared to ensure that benefits actually reach the appropriate benefactors and are used for the intended purposes, especially, those meant for collective purposes, and the lack of established institutions for resolving conflicts arising from benefit sharing. Elite capture was also identified as a major threat to the success of Benefit Sharing Arrangements. The study revealed that, in general, existing Benefit Sharing Arrangements for forest fringe communities in Ghana remain silent on ‘Just Access’, despite the fact that it is a key determinant of their source of livelihoods and thus impacts on their standard of living.



TBI Ghana supports the revision of the Adwenase Forest Management Plan

The Adwenase Forest Management Plan has received a massive facelift following its revision by the kind courtesy of the EU Chainsaw Milling project implemented by Tropenbos International Ghana and partners. The plan, first drafted in 1995 by the Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC) of the Forestry Commission and the Assin-Akropong community, was revised to keep step with current forest management practices.

A key result area of the EU Chainsaw Milling project focuses on supporting communities in project areas that have significant forests intact to sustainably manage their resources. The Assin-Akropong community being one of such was adopted and supported to revise their forest management plan. The revision was accomplished through a participatory approach involving the community, the RMSC and TBI Ghana.

The management plan is expected to help regulate community forestry activities for the period (2013 – 2023) through the application of prescriptions that specify targets, actions and control arrangements. In this regard, the revised plan will form part of the general forest management system that regulates protection, inventories, yield determination, harvesting, silviculture, conservation, development, monitoring and other operations.

Moreover, the plan will provide continuity in managerial operations over time to formalize administrative arrangements and provide a basis for monitoring forest activities in the community. Moving forward, other deserving forest communities have been targeted to receive similar support by the project. It is envisaged that the support will help forest communities to better manage their forest resources to meet their needs and aspirations.



Governance arrangements for sustainable charcoal production in Ghana.

Production of charcoal in Ghana is very often unregulated and unsustainable resulting in forest degradation and deforestation. To assess charcoal production in Ghana, TBI Ghana with support from IIED, started the project “Supporting Small and Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFEs) for Sustainable Livelihoods: Facilitating Sustainable Charcoal Production in Ghana”.

Within the framework of this project, local governance arrangements have been drafted to guide the activities of three charcoal producing associations at Atebubu in the Brong-Ahafo Region where charcoal production is a major source of livelihood.

The workshop was attended by members of three charcoal associations, some chiefs and elders of the producing communities. The participants discussed and concluded these governance arrangements that cover seven critical areas related to the production and marketing of charcoal:

- Production and trade associations
- Acquisition of access rights to wood for charcoal production
- Sustainability of (charcoal) resource base
- Integrated woodlot/plantation establishment

- Benefit sharing arrangements in respect of charcoal production from natural woodlands
- Dealing with unauthorized producers
- Pricing of charcoal

Additionally, the beneficiary communities, Kokofu, Kumfia and Fakwasi, have been sensitized on the impact of their activities on the environment and why the present mode of charcoal production is unsustainable. As a result, the communities expressed the desire to establish woodlots and tree plantations to provide a sustainable resource base for the production of charcoal.



Stakeholders gain faith in Ghana's forestry sector

There is hope for Ghana's forestry sector after several years and endless efforts of battling illegal chainsaw milling and its associated international and local trade which had the potential to march Ghana's Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union under the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiative. This hope was given at a closeout workshop of the EU funded project 'Supporting the integration of legal and legitimate domestic timber markets into Voluntary Partnership Agreements' held at the Coconut Regency Hotel – Accra on 9th March 2016.

The project after, five years of successful implementation developed a policy for the supply of legal lumber to the domestic market in consultation with stakeholders and has piloted the Artisanal milling concept under the policy. The concept is an alternative to illegal chainsaw milling and currently eight groups made up of 277 former illegal chainsaw operators have been registered under the concept. Again, some project communities in the Assin Fosu, Begoro and Juaso forest districts have been supported to reforest degraded portions of the Supong, Wurobong and Dome River forest reserves respectively.

At the end of the project, 166 ha of degraded forest (56% of allocated portion) have been planted with indigenous and exotic tree species. In realising the potential and benefits of

multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD), the main strategy used by the project, the project has embedded multi-stakeholder engagements within the sector through the institutionalisation of the MSD platform with a legitimate national platform; National Forest Forum-Ghana.

The workshop which was attended by over 70 participants from 40 stakeholder groups, including a member of the EU head of delegation to Ghana, Herve Delso, were full of praise for the project's achievements especially in tackling illegal chainsaw milling in the light of VPA implementation. The Forestry Commission of Ghana pledged their support in sustaining the plantation programme and moving the artisanal milling concept forward.

In a speech by the Technical Director for the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the ministry pledged its commitment to implement the recommendations and lessons learnt from the project. The ministry also applauded TBI Ghana and partners for their collaboration with the sector ministry to address topical forestry issues such as illegal chainsaw milling and together with the director of TBI Ghana showed their appreciation to the EU for their financial support to the sector.



Embedding INRM principles in university education in Ghana

Under the coordination of Tropenbos International and partners, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) is incorporating Integrated Natural Resources Management approaches and principles into its strategy and curricula for education in agriculture and natural resources in Ghana. The aim is to build CANR as an institution capable of addressing complex problems related to natural resources and environment. The initiative has been executed under the NPT-GHA 278 project supported by the Dutch government through the NUFFIC.

A significant aspect of the project is the continued stakeholder engagement that allows for the integration of stakeholder needs, expertise and knowledge into plans and the design of attractive and relevant academic programmes. The project which started in 2008 has resulted in the training of staff of CANR and stakeholders to support the design and delivery of new programmes based on INRM principles. Three short courses, two new MSc programmes, and one new BSc programme are outcomes of the project. TBI Ghana has supported the project with requisite technical backstopping.

On March 14-15, 2012, an International Conference was held to share lessons on the use of INRM principles for improving higher education in agriculture and natural resources to round up the

project. Staff of Tropenbos International were again on hand to support the coordination and facilitation of the conference which recorded over 100 participants. The CANR is expected to offer learning programmes prepared in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders and distinguish itself as a centre of excellence in principles of Integrated Natural Resources Management.



TBI Ghana ends PhD proposal writing workshop

As part of its programme development process, Tropenbos International Ghana (TBI Ghana) in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam (UvA) in the Netherlands has organised a four-day training workshop for prospective PhD candidates, ending July 26, 2012 in Kumasi. The workshop aimed at supporting participants to develop bankable projects with topics within the TBI Ghana research framework. TBI Ghana and the UvA have a long standing relationship of building the capacity of mid-career professionals in forest governance, livelihoods and development.

The workshop moderated by Dr. Mirjam A.F. Ros-Tonen of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, UvA, took participants through cutting-edge issues in research proposal development for post-graduate studies.

Participants, who mainly expressed interests in registering their PhD study with UvA, were selected from TBI Ghana partner organisations including the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, Resource Management Support Centre of the Forestry Commission, Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources and the Faculty of Forest Resources Technology, both of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Others include Civic Response, a civil society organisation and a member of Forest Watch Ghana, and the Ghana Telecom University College.

When successfully completed, the research outcomes of the candidates would be expected to contribute relevant knowledge and information to forest policy, management and practice in Ghana.



Spotlighting Ghana's natural resources and environment sector

Ghana's natural resources and environment sector would soon receive the requisite spotlight following a training programme organised by Tropenbos International Ghana for journalists in environmental reporting in Kumasi. The aim of the training was to improve information gathering and dissemination as well as public awareness of, and interest in, relevant environmental issues that affect quality of life.

The training held on June 26, 2013 was a sequel to a media encounter held earlier by TBI Ghana in an effort to increase public awareness of the domestic lumber supply situation, and to create a permanent working relationship with the media in highlighting and addressing the illegal chainsaw-milling problem in Ghana. During the encounter, journalists requested support to facilitate the generation and broadcasting of relevant information about the environment, including those related to forests and water. TBI Ghana responded by sponsoring the capacity building session for 20 journalists in environmental reporting.

Participants were upbeat about the relevance of the training. They noted that in a country like Ghana where the quality and quantity of media coverage of the environmental and natural resources issue is low, a sustained and carefully orchestrated environmental reporting would ensure that people get informed about vital environmental issues, and become fully empowered to make the .

right choices. Moreover, participants remarked that, the role of journalists in environmental education is of particular importance because of the complex scientific and technical arguments, which envelop most environmental issues. Public participation in decision making relating to these issues is, therefore, largely dependent on the extent to which arguments, analysis and evidence relating to such issues are explained and disseminated.

At the end of the training, the participants initiated a process toward establishing a network of environmental journalists. Participants mandated a three-member task team to help mobilize interest of other journalists in support of environmental coverage and to steer the affairs of the fledgling network. TBI Ghana pledged continuous collaboration with the media in making knowledge work for forests and people.

Contributing to productive landscapes



Illegal chainsaw operators to increase the forest cover in Ghana

The continuous education and awareness on the impacts of illegal chainsaw milling and deforestation on Ghana's economy and environment by the EU Chainsaw project being implemented by Tropenbos International Ghana has created a change in attitude amongst some illegal chainsaw operators.

People formerly involved in the illegal chainsaw lumber production and supply chain in four chainsaw milling communities namely Obogu, Assin Anwhiam, Feyiase and Kyekyewere have taken a bold step to go into tree plantation establishment as an alternative livelihood option. They have organised themselves into registered groups and together with the project identified tree plantation establishment as the most appropriate alternative livelihood in terms of income, sustainability and the opportunity to give back to society what they once destroyed.

With support from the project, two of the communities: Obogu and Assin Anwhiam have acquired portions of degraded forests from the Forestry Commission of Ghana to plant trees under the Modified Taungya System. This will allow for food crop production at the initial stages of the plantation establishment and those who tend the trees to maturity will have an agreed percentage of the trees when logged.

Again, the project has built the capacity of these groups in tree nursery and plantation establishment, provided starter equipment and seeds for the establishment of tree nurseries and together with the communities develop management plans for the plantations.

The portions of degraded forest released are Compartment 34 of the Dome River Forest Reserve under the Juaso Forest District and Compartment 32 of Supon Forest Reserve under the Assin Forest District, totalling 222 hectares. The successful establishment of these plantations is going to add to the national food basket (due to its agroforestry component), increase the forest cover and provide livelihoods for a considerable number of rural folks.



Forestry Commission to lease out degraded forests to tree growers

Members of the newly inaugurated Offinso Tree Growers Association will be leased degraded portions of the Opro River Forest Reserve and the Asufu East Forest Reserve to establish tree plantations under the Modified Taungya System.

This assurance was given by an Official of the Forestry Commission (FC) in response to enquiries as to how Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana, which inaugurated the association under its Landscape Restoration Project on July 5, 2016 is going to assist its members to acquire land for plantation development.

Under the Modified Taungya System, tree growers are expected to receive 40 percent of the produce, the FC will take 40 percent while 20 percent would be given to landowners and the communities in which the forest reserves are located.

The action which is geared towards involving smallholder farmers in the reforestation of degraded forests in Ghana will allow beneficiaries to adopt the agroforestry concept whereby food crops would be cultivated alongside trees. This will ensure that farmers derive short term benefits by having access to food and also enhance food security in forest fringe communities.

The 80 members of the association who attended the inaugural ceremony also asked for logistical support in the form of farm implements and access to extension services.

Tree growers in the Offinso Forest District were organised into an association as a key output of the 'Landscape Restoration Project' being implemented by TBI Ghana in an attempt to organise smallholder plantation farmers at the grassroots in anticipation of the formation of a national tree growers association to oversee the affairs of smallholder plantation formers.

The association which draws its members from the Samproso, Kayera/Aduana, Anyinasuoso and Koforidua is the third to be inaugurated recently after the Diaso Tree Growers Association in the Dunkwa Forest District and the Nkoranza Tree Growers Association in the Kintampo Forest District.



Forest Investment Programme to supply free tree seedlings to tree growers in Ghana

Tree seedlings will be supplied free of charge to tree growers in the Brong-Ahafo and Western Regions by the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) to boost plantation development in Ghana. The FIP is being funded by the Climate Investment Fund at the cost of 10 million US dollars under the REDD+ initiative which is being implemented by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources through the African Development Bank for off-reserve forests in Ghana.

The tree seedlings, which include Wawa (*Triplochiton scleroxylon*), Mahogany (*Khaya senegalensis*), Odum (*Milicia excelsa*), Ofram (*Terminalia superba*), and Cassia (*Senna sianea*) among others, will be made available to tree growers after their farms have been inspected by forestry officials, who will measure the land to determine the number of tree seedlings to supply them and also examine the soils on their farms to determine which kind of seedlings they will best support.

Tree growers will then be given direction on how best to prepare their land for planting after which seedlings would be transported free of charge to their various sites by the FIP. This was announced at the inauguration of the Nkoranza Tree Growers Association at Nkoranza in the Brong-Ahafo Region on July 1st 2016 under the auspices of the Landscape Restoration Project (LRP) being implemented by Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana where tree growers expressed concern about access tree seedlings.

The inauguration was attended by 103 tree growers made up of farmers who grow trees on their farms and smallholder plantation developers from four communities in the Kintampo Forest District; namely, Chiradeaso, Nkwaese, Donkro, Nkwanta, and Asuano.

The tree growers were urged to pick up their application forms from the nearest office of the Forest Commission (FC) and apply to the FIP for seedlings. They were also asked to make good use of the seedlings, which are available to individuals, communities and organisations, by not restricting themselves to tree plantations but also utilising them as boundaries, hedges, windbreaks, firebreaks and for the protection of watersheds among several other uses.

A key issue raised by the tree growers during an open forum was the tendency for buyers to abscond with their produce and money after paying just the initial deposit after an agreement on the price of their trees had been reached.

To this end, one of the functions of the association is to help tree growers enter into written contractual agreements with buyers, spelling out the terms of payments so that they can be apprehended if they breach their contracts, instead of relying on verbal contracts and the goodwill of buyers which are often breached.



Women in Ghana urged to get involved in plantation development to ward off climate change

Ghanaian women have been urged to venture into tree plantation development since it is the only means by which the country can increase her forest cover to mitigate the effects of climate change.

This is especially critical in view of the fact that women stand to bear the brunt of the effects of climate change which may dry up available water resources and shrink existing sources of firewood, forcing women to wander further in search of water and firewood. Climate change is also certain to lead to a reduction in crop yields; this would put a bigger task on women as food providers in their quest to put food on the family table.

The advice was made at the inauguration of the male dominated Diaso Tree Growers Association where only eight women formed part of the 51 members who showed up to grace the occasion on June 22, 2016 at Diaso in the Dunkwa Forest District of the Eastern Region. It was carried out under the auspices of the 'Landscape Restoration Project' being implemented by TBI Ghana with funding from the Royal Dutch Embassy.

A previous study on plantation development undertaken under the same project had already indicated that plantation development remains a male dominated activity in Ghana with only six percent of women involved.

The association made up mostly of smallholder plantation developers and farmers who grow trees on their farms were drawn from five communities in the Dunkwa Forest District, namely, Diaso, Ntom, Bethlehem, Nkronuo, and Amobaka.

The association would serve as a platform for tree growers to receive relevant education on silvicultural practices associated with plantation development, lobby for the supply of inputs such as tree seedlings, fertilizers, pesticides and farm implements and also position themselves for financial assistance from financial schemes geared towards plantation development such as the Forest Plantation Development Fund and financial institutions.

This is in response to previous findings from research during which tree growers identified lack of knowledge of silvicultural practices as a major hindrance to their work and also showed that more than half of the population of tree growers were unaware of the Forest Plantation Development Fund.

The inauguration of the Diaso Tree Growers Association is therefore meant to open a new chapter for tree growers by offering them the capacity to lobby for support to make tree plantation development in Ghana a successful business.



EU Team visits reforestation activities at Supon Forest Reserve, Ghana

On August 6th the Breman-Anwiam Artisanal Milling Association had the opportunity to show their newly established plantation to a delegation from the EU. Mr. Ignacio Burolo and Mr. Herve DeSol from the EU-delegation in Accra were very impressed with the achievement of the Association in replanting Ghana's degraded forests and pledged EU's support in combating deforestation and forest degradation in Ghana.

With support of the EU chainsaw milling project, the Breman-Anwiam Artisanal Milling Association, comprising 45 former illegal chainsaw operators, machine owners and lumber carriers, was allocated 128 hectares of the Supon Forest Reserve. In 2013 it replanted 25 hectares of this compartment using the Taungya system (agroforestry). For that purpose the association raised 30,000 seedlings of various tree species including *Tectona grandis*, *Terminalia superba*, *Khaya* species and *Nauclea diderrichii*. The tree seedlings were intercropped with various food crops including maize, plantain and cocoyam.

The forest area was allocated to them by the Forestry Commission in 2013 through facilitation of the EU chainsaw milling project. The project also supported the association in building their capacity in managing the plantation through trainings ranging from tree nursery and plantation establishment and management, group

dynamics and leadership to conflict management and business plan preparation. The association was also supplied with nursery and plantation equipment including seeds, wellington boots, cutlasses, watering cans, overalls, water pumps and financial assistance for the construction of sheds at the nursery site.

The reforestation activities of the Breman-Anwiam Artisanal Milling Association will be continued as an alternative livelihoods strategy for people who were previously involved in illegal chainsaw milling under the guidance of TBI Ghana, partner of the EU chainsaw milling project.



Award winners of the national schools drawing competition in Ghana go on a study tour to key forestry locations

Twenty school children from the Choggu Demonstration Primary School in the Northern Region, the Kultamise Junior High and the Ghana Senior High schools in the Upper East and Eastern Regions respectively which came first in a competition on Climate Change for Ghanaian school children. They were afforded a study tour of some key forestry locations by Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana as part of their prize award.

The contest was organised by the European Union (EU) in Ghana in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) and the Embassies of France and Norway.

Over 800 schools across the ten regions of Ghana participated in the drawing contest which was under the theme “Seed for Change – Plant an idea to deal with climate change in Ghana”. It was launched in September this year ahead of the Conference on Climate (CoP21) which was held in Paris this year.

The two-day tour which begun on November 30 ,2015, included a visit to the Seed Centre and Bio-Technology laboratories of the Forest Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) at Kumasi in the Ashanti Region where the students received lectures on how to identify viable tree seeds, how to store seeds to preserve their viability as well as modern technologies being used to ascertain the viability of seeds and develop seeds with desirable traits.

The children also visited the FORIG nursery where they were treated to a demonstration on how to nurse tree seedlings and transplant them without damaging them.

The study tour also took the school children to the Bobiri Forest Reserve in the Ejisu Juaben Municipal of the Ashanti Region to visit the Aboretum where they undertook a tour of the forest and were introduced to indigenous tree species, their uses as well as the local myths surrounding them.

Enhancing forest dependent livelihoods



Promoting legal livelihoods in Ghana

Providing alternatives to illegal chainsaw milling practices through the EU Chainsaw Milling Project. Illegal logging in Ghana is partly a problem of poverty. Changing the policy environment — especially enforcement to combat illegal logging — has proved to be important over the years, but needs to be complemented by offering alternative income opportunities to illegal activities to the rural poor in forest communities. The Chainsaw Milling Project, initiated by the Ghana Forestry Commission, the Forest Research Institute of Ghana and Tropenbos International, with funding from the European Commission, involves stakeholders in dialogue, information gathering and the development of alternatives to illegal and unsustainable chainsaw milling practices.

The project has piloted three alternative forest-related income opportunities: artisanal milling, plantation development and charcoal production. This publication describes, discusses and assesses these economic activities using four case studies. Following the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, the study shows that these economic activities can be viable alternatives to chainsaw milling and can contribute to the sustainable livelihoods of communities living in and around forests in Ghana. However, a number of conditions for success needs to be in place, such as: the presence of an adequate regulatory framework for artisanal milling; secure access to legal logs, land and other resources; adequate skills and capacity of community members; and effective law enforcement.

These conditions for success require urgent attention on three aspects of forest governance in Ghana: land and tree tenure and the inequitable sharing of benefits; access to forest land that favours big companies; and the persistent corruption that jeopardizes any attempt towards sustainable forestry. The existing forest governance regime negatively affects the potential for small- and medium-scale processing of timber and related industries that could offer economically viable alternatives to illegal chainsaw milling.



Chainsaw milling project undertakes capacity building activities to enhance alternative livelihoods

A total of two hundred and twenty-five (225) people living in forest fringe communities received training in various skills last year under the Chainsaw Milling (CSM) Project being run by Tropenbos International Ghana with funding from the European Union.

This is to ensure that people living in forest fringe communities acquire the relevant skills to undertake successful alternative livelihoods to dissuade them from engaging in illegal chainsaw milling that promote deforestation and forest degradation.

A hundred (100) people drawn from the Feyiase Agroforestry Association working in the Begoro Forest District in the Eastern Region, the Breman Anhwiam Agroforestry Association in the Assin Fosu Forest District of the Central Region, and the Obogu Agroforestry Association in the Juaso Forest District of the Ashanti Region received training in Cocoa Agroforestry to enable them carry out reforestation activities in degraded forests that have been allocated to them.

The training covered topics such as agroforestry of multipurpose trees and shrubs, designing an agroforestry system, components of an agroforestry system, agroforestry practices, managing an agroforestry system, economic considerations in agroforestry, linking agroforestry to livelihood, and challenges in the adoption of agroforestry among several other topics.

In addition, thirty-five (35) members of the Insu-Siding Artisanal Milling Association in the Tarkwa Forest District of the Western Region and the Akyem Apoli Artisanal Milling Association in the Oda Forest District of the Eastern Region were trained in technical skills necessary for operating the Wood Mizer and for carrying out maintenance activities.

The skill training exercise focussed on subject areas such as introduction to milling, operating sawmilling equipment, sawmilling hygiene, health and safety measures, log milling techniques, wood storage and treatment, and equipment maintenance.

In order to help Small and Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFEs) in beneficiary communities to run their businesses more effectively, ninety (90) members of the Wood Workers Association of Ghana (WAG) at Ejura in the Mampong Forest District of the Ashanti Region, the Breman Anhwiam Agroforestry Association and the Assin Fosu Artisanal Millers Association were trained in leadership and business skills.

Topics covered included group dynamics, leadership development, business networking, record keeping and basic business management. It is anticipated that at the end of the CSM Project in March this year, beneficiaries under the project would have acquired enough skills to undertake successful alternative livelihoods.



More former chainsaw operators embrace the artisanal milling concept

Artisanal milling which has been proposed as the legal alternative to illegal chainsaw milling by stakeholders under the EU chainsaw milling project is gaining momentum amongst former chainsaw operators in Ghana.

This was observed when two groups made up of former illegal chainsaw operators at Insusiding a community in Bogoso under the Tarkwa Forest District and Akyem Apoli in the Oda Forest District called on the project secretariat to provide them with the requisite skills and training to enable them operate legally under the concept of artisanal milling.

The proposed concept of artisanal milling requires that the miller has been trained, registered, licensed and certified to carry out the activity. Within the framework of the EU chainsaw milling project artisanal milling trainings have been given to similar groups in other forest districts. The project secretariat has agreed to provide these new groups with training in group dynamics, business management, appropriate machine use and routine maintenance, occupational health and safety and entrepreneurial skills.

The secretariat will also provide assistance to these groups in their registration and licensing as well as sourcing for legal logs mainly through partnership agreements with forest concession holders. In return, the groups will supply legal lumber to the domestic market by engaging in artisanal milling.

The increased capacity and coming into business of these groups will reduce illegal logging and provide livelihood support to these former chainsaw operators. It is anticipated that the concept of artisanal milling will continue to gain more prominence in the Ghanaian forest sector. It is a step forward in implementing Ghana's obligation to address domestic timber market issues under the Voluntary Partnership Agreement.



Mills offer hope for legal lumber supply

The communities of Sankore and Brewaniase in Ghana, have received artisanal mills donated by the Timber Industry Development Division (TIDD) of the Forestry Commission under the EU Chainsaw project implemented by Tropenbos International Ghana and partners. The mills will be used by the communities to process raw materials acquired from legal sources through a partnership arrangement between chainsaw-dependent communities and forest concession holders.

The donation was made in support of the development and promotion of artisanal milling for the supply of legal lumber to the domestic market. Through the TIDD, the Forestry Commission (FC) has been keenly interested in national processes that seek to find a viable alternative to the illegal chainsaw milling. For instance, the TIDD was involved in the multi-stakeholder deliberations and consensus that favoured the artisanal milling concept as a suitable option for supplying legal lumber to the local market. Since then, the Forestry Commission outfit has actively supported the definition of the concept and preparations for its operationalisation.

Besides the two communities that received the mills, TBI Ghana had successfully facilitated a partnership arrangement between chainsaw-dependent communities and forest concession holders toward the acquisition of legal lumber to pilot artisanal milling at Akrodie (Brong Ahafo Region) and Obogu (Ashanti Region).

Stakeholders have defined artisanal milling as a small-medium scale milling of timber from specified legal sources by a trained, certified, registered and licensed Ghanaian artisan, using licensed mobile sawmilling equipment that excludes any form of chainsaw machines, capable of recovering at least 50% of dimension lumber from logs, for the domestic market only.



Seventeen former chainsaw millers undergo training

Seventeen former chainsaw millers who now constitute the Insu Siding Artisanal Millers Association have undergone a 12 day Practical Training Workshop aimed at equipping them with modern technical skills in artisanal milling to foster their transition from using illegal chainsaws to modern milling equipment.

The training which took place at Insu Siding in the Tarkwa Forest District of the Western Region of Ghana from October 5th to 17th, 2015 was organised by the Chainsaw Milling (CSM) Project with resource persons from the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) and Royal RABMILL.

Topics covered included; Introduction to milling, Operating sawmilling equipment, Sawmill hygiene, health and safety measures, Equipment maintenance, Log milling techniques and Wood storage and treatment.

To support the training workshop, the Tarkwa Forest Division of the Forestry Commission (FC) donated ten cubic metres (10 m³) of legal timber for the practical training sessions. During a demonstration of the milling techniques that they had acquired, the trainees milled at an efficiency rate of 65 to 87 percent.

A government team made up of the District Chief Executive Officer of the Prestea/Hunni Valley District Assembly, Robert Wisdom Cudjoe and representatives of the Business Advisory Centre and

the Department of Community Development visited the workshop to acquaint themselves with the training activities.

The team reiterated government's support for the Artisanal Milling Concept and the Insu Siding Artisanal Millers Association and urged them to liaise with the district assembly for future training workshops to explore possible sources of funding for their trainings, especially from financial institutions.

The artisanal millers expressed their gratitude to the CSM Project for the new skills imparted on them by the training workshop since they now possess the ability to mill legal lumber for the domestic market. They were also of the view that milling with the Wood Mizer, which was utilised during the training session, was much more efficient and economical than using chainsaws which have wasted the country's timber resources over the years.



Chainsaw operators gear up for tree plantation establishment

Converted chainsaw operators are warming up to establish forest plantations as an alternative livelihood to illegal chainsaw milling. This is because in April 2013, the EU Chainsaw Milling project implemented by Tropenbos International Ghana and partners provided the requisite starter kits to four chainsaw-dependent communities. The kits comprise seeds of commercial tree species for nursery establishment, protective clothing and requisite implements and materials for plantation development.

One key result area of the EU Chainsaw Milling project is that of developing and providing viable alternative livelihoods for chainsaw operators who are willing to quit the illegal activity for other livelihood options that are compatible with sustainable forest management. In keeping with this, TBI Ghana jointly conducted a comprehensive livelihood needs assessment with the operators during which tree plantation development and nursery establishment among others, emerged as an acceptable viable option.

To prepare chainsaw operators for this activity, TBI Ghana organised them and held a series of trainings to build their capacity. To make land available for this, the various Forest Services Divisions of the Forestry Commission with oversight in the project communities have agreed to release portions of degraded-forest reserves for the operators to plant and grow the trees. It is the expectation of TBI Ghana that these efforts can wean

chainsaw operators off their illegal activities by meeting their immediate livelihood needs while contributing to sustainable forest management.



Registration of farmers towards benefit sharing ends

Tropenbos International Ghana has completed registration of beneficiary farmers of the Modified Taungya System (MTS) in the Offinso and Mampong Forest Districts of the Ashanti Region. The exercise which forms part of the Forestry Commission's (FC) partnership arrangement with civil society groups in acquiring credible data towards the signing of benefit sharing agreements with farmers is supported by the National Forest Programme Facility of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Over the past five months, TBI Ghana has undertaken the compilation of comprehensive data of over 8,000 individual farmers, most of whom own multiple farms. The registration covered 170 communities in 17 forest reserves in the two Forest Districts. The exercise was preceded by sessions to create awareness and sensitize farmer groups on their responsibilities, rights and benefit sharing arrangements under the Modified Taungya System.

Under the Modified Taungya System (MTS), farmers receive portions of degraded forestlands to grow food crops alongside planted timber tree species during the early years of plantation development. Farmers are entitled to 100% of the benefits from the food crops. However, benefits accruing from the sale of timber trees are shared as follows: Forestry Commission (40%), the

farmers (40%), the traditional landowners (15%) and the forest-adjacent community (5%).

Currently, it is estimated that nearly 100,000 hectares of MTS plantations have been established across the country through the involvement of over 100,000 rural farmers since the launch of the MTS in 2002.

TBI Ghana is of the opinion that when well executed, this registration exercise can help secure farmers' renewed commitment in support of sustainable forest development in Ghana.



Experimental agroforestry plot yields 10 mini bags of rice

Reformed Chainsaw Operators now engaged in agroforestry have reaped a total of ten (10) mini bags of rice from a one acre experimental plot established to assess the viability of the agroforestry project being promoted as an alternative livelihood for former chainsaw operators by Tropenbos International Ghana.

Presently, the 40 member association based in Breman Anwhaim in the Assin Fosu District of the Central Region is harvesting plantain intercropped with tree species such as teak and *Cedrela* on part of the 67 hectare plot comprising compartment 31 of the Supon Forest Reserve.

The compartment was released to the association last year through the intervention of TBI Ghana under its European Union Sponsored Chainsaw Milling (EU CSM) Project which is promoting the adoption of alternative livelihoods as a means of curtailing illegal chainsaw activities as a source of income for forest fringe communities.

This was revealed when a group of journalists paid a working visit to the plantation on November 19, 2014 as part of activities being organised by the project for its Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members to acquaint them with the progress of their projects.

The association has since planted tree seedlings on a total of 46 hectares of the forest between last year and this year and plans to plant tree seedlings on another 20 hectares next year.

The agro-forestry project has been lauded by the Forestry Commission (FC) as the most viable method to check forest degradation, enhance soil fertility and curb illegal chainsaw activities in the community.

Meanwhile, illegal chainsaw activities have reportedly gone down in the community since the introduction of the agroforestry /plantation project and other alternative livelihoods by the EU CSM project.



Peer guidance teams give training to small and medium forest enterprises

A total of one thousand, one hundred and eighty-seven (1,187) employers and employees of Small and Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFEs) benefited from training workshops on Ghana's Legality Assurance System (LAS), Advocacy and Networking. The training is to enable them to comply with Ghana's LAS as stipulated under the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), embark on advocacy on emerging policies and laws in the forestry sector and also promote networking and sharing of knowledge and information amongst associations of SMFEs.

The workshops organised nationwide in the year 2015 were led by 29 Peer Guidance Teams (PGTs) under the Timber Legality Compliance and Advocacy Project (TILCAP) being implemented by Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana with funding from the European Commission. The Peer Guidance Teams form the main conduit for reaching out to people working in SMFEs due to their vast population and spatial distribution.

The teams also constitute an instrument for ensuring the sustainability of the project long after it has folded up since they have received adequate training on Ghana's Legality Assurance System (LAS), advocacy issues and networking. They are thus in a position to pass on this knowledge to others. Consequently, continuous education to ensure compliance with Ghana's LAS among SMFEs is assured. The Peer Guidance Teams consist of two

groups, one for the Northern Zone and the other for the Southern Zone of Ghana. They were drawn from key industry associations with a representative from each Civil Society Organisation (CSO).

In the Ashanti Region, three training workshops were organised at Kumasi, Obuasi and Ejura, whilst in the Brong-Ahafo Region, the workshops were organised at Sunyani, Doorma and Techiman. In the Northern Region, the workshops took place at Tamale, Damongo and Yendi; in the Upper East Region, the workshops took place at Bolgatanga and Novorongo whilst in the Upper West Region, the workshop took place at Wa, the regional capital.

Other workshops were organised at Koforidua, Asamankese and Oda in the Eastern Region, Ho, Sogakope and Nkwanta in the Volta Region, and Assin Fosu, Agona Swedru, and Mankesim in the Central Region. Other workshop venues included Accra Central, Ashiaman and Amasaman in the Greater Accra Region, and Takoradi, Begoso, Enchi and Sefwi Wiaso in the Western Region.

Participants for the various workshops were drawn from the Domestic Lumber Trade Association (DOLTA), Woodworkers Association of Ghana (WAG), the Furniture and Wood Workers Association of Ghana (FAWAG), the Ghana Timber Association (GTA), wood sellers groups, carpenters associations, Aburi Industrial Centre (AIC), Artisanal Millers Associations, and lumber sellers.



Communication facility inaugurated at the Sokoban wood village

A communication facility has been established at the Sokoban wood market, the largest in West Africa, for information sharing on the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) (and also for capacity building of wood workers at the market on pertinent issues relating to safety at work, need for protective clothing, personal and environmental hygiene at the work place and disease prevention and control among several others.

The activities of the communication facility will be overseen by a newly inaugurated executive committee of the Wood Workers Association for the Sokoban Wood Village in Kumasi. Both the executive committee, made up of representatives of carpenters and other wood workers, lumber traders, the Ghana Road Transport Union (GPRTU) and food vendors operating in the market, and the communication facility were inaugurated at Kumasi on June 29, 2016.

The Communication Facility, valued at 45,000 Ghana Cedis was donated by Tropenbos International (TBI) Ghana to the wood village under the auspices of the European Union (EU) funded "Supporting Intermediaries with Information and Guidance to Comply with the Timber Legality Assurance System and Engage in Advocacy on the Domestic Market Reforms" Project, and commissioned in April 2016.

Ghana in response to the low level of knowledge amongst Small and Medium Forest Enterprises (SMFE's) on the VPA and new and emerging policies in the forestry sector.

The donation of the communication facility therefore forms part of the efforts to sustain the work of TILCAP, which focussed on providing trade associations of SMFEs with information and guidance on Ghana's Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS) and also established conduits in the form of Peer Guidance Teams (PGT) to serve as channels for sustained education of members of the various trade associations for them to comply with the dictates of Ghana's TLAS under the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA).

The Communication Facility will be managed by the Information Centre Sub-Committee of the newly inaugurated Executive Committee who would provide monthly reports on its activities to TBI Ghana.

The inauguration of the executive committee also coincided with the commissioning of the Bosh Power Box at the wood market by the Germany based Bosch Company. The Bosch Power Box is intended to provide training for artisans, craftsmen and small contractors on the usage of Bosch wood working tools and also provide maintenance services and repairs of the tools in a bid to assist them to produce high quality and durable wood products so as to avoid wood wastage.



A boost for sustainable charcoal production

Illegal chainsaw operators in forest communities could soon depend on improved charcoal production as a viable alternative livelihood. This is because Tropenbos International Ghana has concluded arrangements with the Forestry Commission (FC) and the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) to work together to enhance the contribution of charcoal production to local livelihoods and poverty alleviation while preserving environmental quality.

Charcoal production is reckoned as a lucrative venture and a major source of income to most rural households in the production areas and to other actors in the commodity chain. However, if charcoal production is to be managed as a sustainable and lucrative small or medium forest based enterprise to wean off illegal chainsaw lumber actors particularly in rural areas, it would be necessary to know the characteristics of the sub-sector, understand how it works and the nature of its challenges. It is against this backdrop that TBI Ghana and partners, by means of a joint project, will be generating pertinent information to help formulate relevant and realistic policies that ensure sustainable use of forest resources to improve the livelihoods of forest dependent people.

Under this partnership, the Timber Industry Development Division and the Resource Management Support Centre both of the Forestry Commission commit to providing raw materials (tree resources) and

metal kilns while TBI Ghana and the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana pilot charcoal production as a viable livelihood option for chainsaw-dependent communities.

The project will build the capacity of chainsaw-dependent communities in charcoal production using the metal kilns as well as the establishment of woodlots. The capacity of existing stakeholder groups involved in the charcoal production and trade will also be strengthened. Beyond the multiple institutional collaboration, the project will also have the benefit of multi-donor support, drawing particularly on the kind assistance of the European Union, the International Institute for Environment and Development, the Dutch Directorate-General for International Cooperation and the Forestry Commission.



A boost for honey production in Atebubu-Amantin District of Ghana

Honey producers in the Atebubu-Amantin District of Ghana could soon be licensed and certified by national regulatory bodies to produce honey for the market. This is because Tropenbos International Ghana on Friday June 29, 2012 donated a honey press and a refractometer to the Atebubu-Amantin Honeybee Keepers' Association to aid the production of high quality honey for the market.

Most honey producers in Ghana including the Atebubu-Amantin Honeybee Keepers' Association are not licensed and certified by the Food and Drugs Board and the Ghana Standard Board due partly to their inability to use approved methods to process and package honey. The donated equipment will be crucial in the processing and testing of honey to meet the standards required for producing and marketing honey in Ghana.

The occasion was also used to launch two sourcebooks that provide relevant information on small and medium scale forest enterprise characteristics, activity centres, product markets, support institutions and service providers. The publications have been produced under the Forest Connect Ghana project implemented by TBI Ghana. The intention behind the sourcebooks is both to introduce some of the issues facing small and medium forest enterprises (SMFEs) in Ghana today and to increase the visibility of SMFEs and service providers

to each other – with the hope that this might prompt a greater quest for support service on the one hand, and a greater incentive to provide such support on the other – given the scale at which SMFEs operate.

The launching, which was done by the District Chief Executive of the Atebubu-Amantin District Assembly, Hon. Sanja Nanja, was attended by over 50 participants drawn from Non-governmental Organisations including World Vision International Ghana, the Atebubu-Amantin District Assembly, Atebubu-Amantin Honeybee Keepers' Association, The Energy Commission, The Business Advisory Centre of the National Board for Small Scale Industries, Ghana Wildlife Society and Atebubu Traditional Council and the media.

The Forest Connect Ghana Project forms part of an international Forest Connect alliance that seeks to support small and medium forest enterprises by linking them better to each other, to markets, to service providers and to decision-makers. Forest Connect is active in 13 countries under the coordination of the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

By making knowledge work for forests and people, Tropenbos International contributes to well-informed decision making for improved management and governance of tropical forests. Our longstanding local presence and ability to bring together local, national and international partners makes us a trusted partner in sustainable development.