



REDD Readiness Requires Radical Reform

Prospects for making the big
changes needed to prepare for
REDD-plus in Ghana

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REDD Readiness Initiative

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Prospects for making the big changes needed to prepare for REDD-plus in Ghana

Co-chairs' summary of an international
REDD readiness dialogue in Ghana

James Mayers, Stewart Maginnis
and Emelia Arthur

The Forests Dialogue

www.theforestdialogue.org

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Executive Summary

Forests may be about to get a lucky break. If opportunities are seized and problems ironed out, international mechanisms to support reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhanced forest carbon stocks (“REDD-plus”) will give efforts to sustain forests and the livelihoods linked to them their best-ever chance of success.

But preparations for making such mechanisms work on the ground have generally been unimpressive. Initiatives are needed to get REDD-plus protagonists from different contexts to work together on common challenges.

In Ghana, some of the key building blocks are in place for REDD-plus and a vibrant debate on the issue is under way. The Forests Dialogue—an organization that fosters useful dialogue on tricky issues in forest conservation and use—offered to work with Ghanaian stakeholders and others to explore local and international insights and dilemmas that might help in Ghana’s REDD-plus preparations. Accordingly it convened an international REDD-plus readiness dialogue in Busua, Ghana in November 2009.

The fundamental changes needed for sustainable forest management in Ghana have been known for years, and many large projects have been instigated accordingly. Yet real change has proved elusive. The key challenge now is to get REDD-plus right so that it makes a difference. Dialogue participants found that, at last, the time may be right for key improvements to be made. They also noted that Ghana has some key assets for moving forward on REDD-plus, including: an approved REDD-plus Readiness Preparation Proposal, which outlines proposed actions for REDD-plus and prepares the ground for a REDD-plus readiness plan; and a range of active government agencies and civil-society organizations.

The dialogue identified the following five main challenges for REDD-plus readiness in Ghana and ways of tackling them:

- ➔ **Challenge 1:** Access to, and use and availability of, information and its use in capacity-building

Ways forward:

- provide education and training programs on REDD-plus
- develop information centres on REDD-plus and related issues
- undertake coordination and policy development

- ➔ **Challenge 2:** Effectiveness of multi-stakeholder participation and engagement mechanisms and processes

Ways forward:

- prepare a comprehensive budgeting and resourcing package
- map stakeholders and engagement mechanisms
- establish a multi-stakeholder platform
- build on and integrate existing mechanisms
- engage internationally on REDD-plus

- ➔ **Challenge 3:** Reform of policy and legislative frameworks, particularly those on tree and carbon rights

Ways forward:

- conduct an analytical review of key legal and political stumbling blocks
- develop legally robust and practically secure rights for landholders to all trees outside reserves
- secure carbon rights—linked to rights to trees, vegetation and soil
- improve the capability for legal reform

- ➔ **Challenge 4:** Establishment of a revenue and benefits distribution system

Ways forward:

- canvass local views on legitimate benefit distribution mechanisms
- develop a framework for REDD-plus under share-cropping arrangements
- develop dispute-resolution procedures and capacity
- learn from other countries’ experiences

- ➔ **Challenge 5:** Integration of REDD-plus policies with broader land-use plans and other sector and development plans

Ways forward:

- develop an effective cross-sectoral awareness and engagement mechanism
- differentiate REDD-plus plans by land-use system
- identify conflicts and synergies with other sectoral land-use plans
- periodically re-assess land-use change processes
- focus on forestland restoration and agricultural enhancement
- install REDD-plus in key national development frameworks

Dialogue participants also identified and listed the initial actions needed to address each of these challenges by the following key stakeholder groups: the Forestry Commission and other government agencies; non-governmental organizations; researchers; the private sector; and community-based organizations.

As the dialogue showed, there is much to be done. But there is also a well-founded hope that long-needed radical reforms can be sparked by a process of getting prepared for REDD-plus in Ghana, and that REDD-plus itself can make real and lasting improvements to forests and the people dependent on them.

Acronyms

CREMA	community resource management area
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FIP	Forest Investment Program
GSBA	globally significant biodiversity area
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MRV	monitoring, reporting and verification
NGO	non-governmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
R-PIN	Readiness Plan Idea Note
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
REDD	reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
REDD-plus	reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, including through conservation and the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks
SESA	strategic environmental and social assessment
TFD	The Forests Dialogue
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	voluntary partnership agreement

Introduction to The Forests Dialogue and its REDD-plus Readiness Field Dialogues

The Forests Dialogue and Forest/Climate Issues

The Forests Dialogue (TFD)¹ aspires to foster useful engagement on forest conservation and the sustainable use of forests through dialogue. It is a group of people with varied interests and from diverse regions who participate in TFD as individuals rather than as delegates of their countries or organizations.

Since 1999 TFD has steered several dialogue streams on key issues. These are either “fault lines” in existing forestry debates on which dialogue is sorely needed, or areas of opportunity in which dialogue may be helpful. The streams involve periods of stakeholder interaction using electronic communication means punctuated by face-to-face “dialogues.”

Beginning in December 2007, TFD has led an intensive multi-stakeholder process to understand, discuss and seek consensus on pressing issues related to the use of forests in mitigating climate change. In October 2008 it launched its consensus-based Statement on Forests and Climate Change,² which was produced after four international multi-stakeholder dialogues involving more than 250 leaders from around the world. This led to calls for TFD to explore key issues in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and what became known as REDD-plus.

REDD and REDD-plus

The term REDD was recognized formally in international climate-change negotiations in 2007 through a decision (Decision 2/CP.13) agreed at the 2007 Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bali, Indonesia. This decision acknowledges that forest degradation leads to greenhouse-gas emissions and needs to be addressed when reducing emissions from deforestation. REDD is also included in the Bali Action Plan (Decision 1/CP.13) as a component of enhanced action on climate-change mitigation.

Parties to the UNFCCC have agreed to consider policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to REDD in developing countries and “the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.” It is this last clause on the role of conservation, sustainable management and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks that has added the “plus” to the REDD debate.

REDD-plus Readiness Dialogues

Between April and September 2009 TFD focused its dialogue process on the elements of a framework for REDD-plus financing and implementation and organized three international dialogues and one knowledge synthesis workshop that engaged nearly 100 leaders of a wide spectrum of forest stakeholder groups. The consensus-based document on financing and implementation for REDD-plus produced by these dialogues³ was launched during the UNFCCC climate-change talks in Bangkok in October 2009 and also fed into the processes of the Informal Working Group on Interim Finance for REDD.

In the meantime, concerned stakeholder groups have been trying to address the gap between a country's interest in participating in a future REDD-plus mechanism and its technical and institutional capacity to do so. Many countries would like to prepare for REDD-plus but the monetary and technical resources being made available to do so are limited. To bridge this gap between willingness and know-how and to ensure that stakeholder voices are heard throughout the process, TFD initiated, in late 2009, a series of nationally focused REDD-plus readiness field dialogues.

This new dialogue stream recognizes that while many of the potential fault lines in REDD-plus planning and implementation (such as land tenure, stakeholder participation, and a lack of clarity on distributional mechanisms) are common to many tropical countries, their resolution will be situation-specific. Therefore, the REDD-plus readiness field dialogues, while still international in nature, have been convened in tropical countries actively undertaking REDD-plus readiness activities and are designed primarily to promote exchange and learning among stakeholder groups in those countries. Through this initiative, TFD aims to fill an important gap in current international REDD-plus developments by supporting a multi-stakeholder “community of learning” that draws the majority of its participants from REDD-plus candidate countries. The dialogue series is promoting discussion on ongoing national REDD-plus strategies and the building of solution-oriented agreements, both across countries and within countries, on issues that community, indigenous peoples', private-sector and governmental stakeholder groups collectively define as priorities.

The REDD-plus readiness dialogue stream is being conducted as part of the project “Scaling up voices for influencing a post-2012 climate-change regime: shaping pro-poor REDD options.” The Ghana REDD-plus readiness field dialogue, which was held in Ghana's Western Region on 16–19 November 2009, was the second in the series. TFD implements this project, which is supported financially by Norad, in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Ghana Dialogue on REDD-plus Readiness and this Report

Governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in Ghana have been active in stimulating and fuelling discussions on REDD-plus, both internationally and within Ghana. Ghana's Forestry

Commission is steering a planning process with a view to gaining substantial support from the World Bank to prepare for REDD-plus. The Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) submitted by Ghana to the World Bank was approved in July 2008. Subsequently, a US\$200,000 grant from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) enabled the development of a Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP).

Although concerns had been voiced by several stakeholder groups that the R-PIN and earlier stages of the R-PP were not as rigorous as previous national forest initiatives⁴ in promoting stakeholder engagement,⁵ the R-PP was presented and approved at a meeting of the FCPF in Gabon in March 2010. The approved R-PP (Forestry Commission 2010) gives Ghana access to the remaining FCPF grant of US\$3.4 million. Thus, Ghana will become one of the first African countries to fully develop a national REDD-plus strategy. Moreover, Ghana has been recommended as one of five countries to receive further support through the Forest Investment Program—a multi-donor trust fund designed to facilitate the transformational policy and institutional reform processes necessary to help countries address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation.

Welcomed by the governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in REDD-plus discussions, the Ghana REDD-plus readiness field dialogue attracted leaders from various in-country stakeholder groups as well as participants from Brazil, Cameroon, Guatemala, Guyana, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia, Nepal, Norway, Switzerland, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States.⁶ On the first two days participants visited various locations and initiatives in Wassa Amenfi West District and, in the last two days in Busua, exchanged learning and experiences on REDD-plus readiness in plenary and working groups.

This report builds on the outcomes of that dialogue. Chapter 2 captures the context and status of REDD-plus readiness in Ghana. Chapter 3 highlights lessons learned from international and local experiences. Chapter 4 explores the challenges and ways forward for REDD-plus readiness in Ghana identified by the dialogue and concludes with a list of key actions that stakeholder groups need to undertake.



Co-chair Emelia Arthur leads the discussion

Ghana and REDD-plus Readiness Planning

This chapter summarizes Ghana's past and current policy and institutional context and the progress made on REDD-plus readiness, based on a review of the literature and expert presentations made during the dialogue.

Ghana's Land-use and Policy Context Relevant to REDD-plus

Historical Context: The Evolution of Forest Policy in Ghana and its Impact on Deforestation and Forest Degradation

Ecologically, Ghana is dominated by dry savannas in the north and east and a “high forest zone”⁷ in the southwest. The remnant high forests are part of West Africa's Guinean forests, one of 25 biodiversity hotspots worldwide (Hall and Swaine 1981; Kotey *et al.* 1998). About one-fifth of the estimated remaining forests in Ghana's high forest zone are officially gazetted as forest and wildlife reserve. Forests play a crucial socioeconomic role in Ghana, providing employment and subsistence resources for many of the country's 24 million people; the forest sector is the country's fourth-largest earner of foreign exchange.

While early colonial foresters such as H. N. Thompson and Thomas Chipp are often credited with establishing a policy framework for protecting Ghana's forests, recent scholarly reviews are more critical. For example:

“... Colonial forest policies were not aimed at conservation for the sake of the environment and the well being of the indigenous population, but rather, at preservation, the control and management of the resources therein so as to guarantee immediate and long-term supplies of timber to British industries.” (Asante 2005)

Many of the early colonial legal enactments (e.g. the 1894 Crown Land Bill and the 1897 Lands Bill) were aimed at securing wholesale control over “waste and uncultivated” forestlands. These were resisted successfully by local activist groups and ultimately overturned. In 1911, however, the colonial government enacted the Forest Ordinance, which established procedures for gazetted forest reserves and set out a long list of prohibitions and restrictions on forest use by local communities. After much opposition from traditional landowners a new ordinance was enacted in 1927 that maintained the rights of local chieftaincies over forest reserves but clearly established the role of the colonial government's agent—the Gold Coast Forest Department—in supervising and managing the forest reserves (Amanor 1999).

The upshot of colonial policy was that it established the conditions for large-scale deforestation in Ghana, which commenced in the first half of the 20th century with the state-sanctioned conversion of forested land to farmland. Inside the forest reserves the emphasis was on forest management by the state, but beyond their boundaries the main focus was on maximizing the exploitation of forest in the expectation that it would be converted to farmland. Since then, the production of palm oil, rubber and especially cocoa has been the major driver of land-use change in the high forest zone.

Deforestation accelerated in the second half of the 20th century and the stock of trees outside forest reserves declined rapidly (Forestry Commission 2010). At least part of the reason for this was a change in the way that tree ownership was defined and revenues were shared. Prior to 1962, landowning communities were entitled to no less than two-thirds of the gross revenue generated in forest reserves. Under the 1962 Concessions Act, however, that entitlement was cancelled and revenue was used to first pay the running costs of the Forestry Department, with a proportion of any remaining money returned to local authorities and communities (Treue 2001). Even more significant, perhaps, was a provision in the Concessions Act to “vest of all timber resources in the Office of the President.” As Amanor (1999) pointed out, this effectively institutionalized the myth that farmers had no rights over naturally occurring timber trees growing on their own land. As described below, both these provisions present fundamental challenges to the process of REDD-plus readiness in Ghana.

Deforestation and forest degradation were exacerbated in the 1980s by a push from Ghana's donors for economic “structural adjustment” that supported the acceleration and expansion of timber exports to increase revenue (Benhin and Barbier 2000; Kotey *et al.* 1998). More recently, deforestation has resulted from the expansion of food crops, tree crops such as cocoa, and logging, underpinned by drivers such as over-capacity in the forest industry, market and policy failures, and burgeoning urban and rural populations. In addition, the relatively recent introduction of full-sun cocoa varieties, which perform well without the shade trees required by traditional cocoa production systems, combined with other factors such as the lack of clear tree-ownership rights, has significantly reduced the presence of on-farm trees.

Despite reforestation and afforestation projects and participatory forest management practices, deforestation occurred at an annual rate of 1.8% between 1990 and 2005, and Ghana currently loses about 65,000 hectares of forest per year (Marfo 2010). A recent IUCN analysis (Förster 2008) showed that most of the substantive blocks of forestland outside forest reserves that existed in Ghana's Western Region in 1990 had been converted to other land uses by 2007 (Figure 1).

Estimates of the total annual timber off-take in Ghana range from 3.3 to 4 million m³. Some 70% of this off-take is unrecorded (and by implication illegal) and it is uncertain what proportion is derived from reserve forests (only 600,000 m³ according to official figures although the real figure is likely to be substantially higher). This estimated off-take is 3–4 times greater than the volume considered by the Forestry Commission to be sustainable

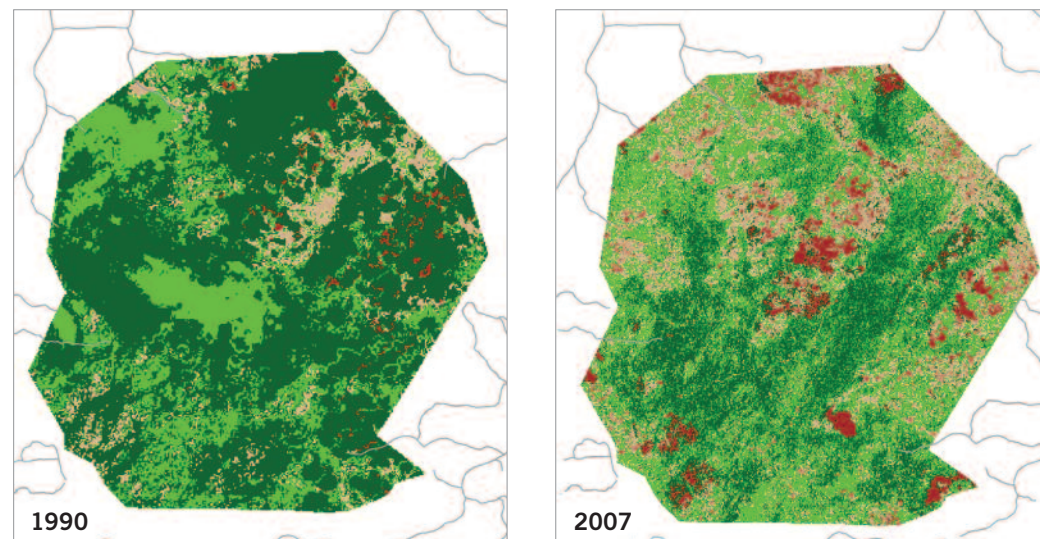
FIGURE 1: LAND-USE COVER CHANGE IN THE WESTERN REGION, GHANA, 1990–2007



Source: Förster (2008)

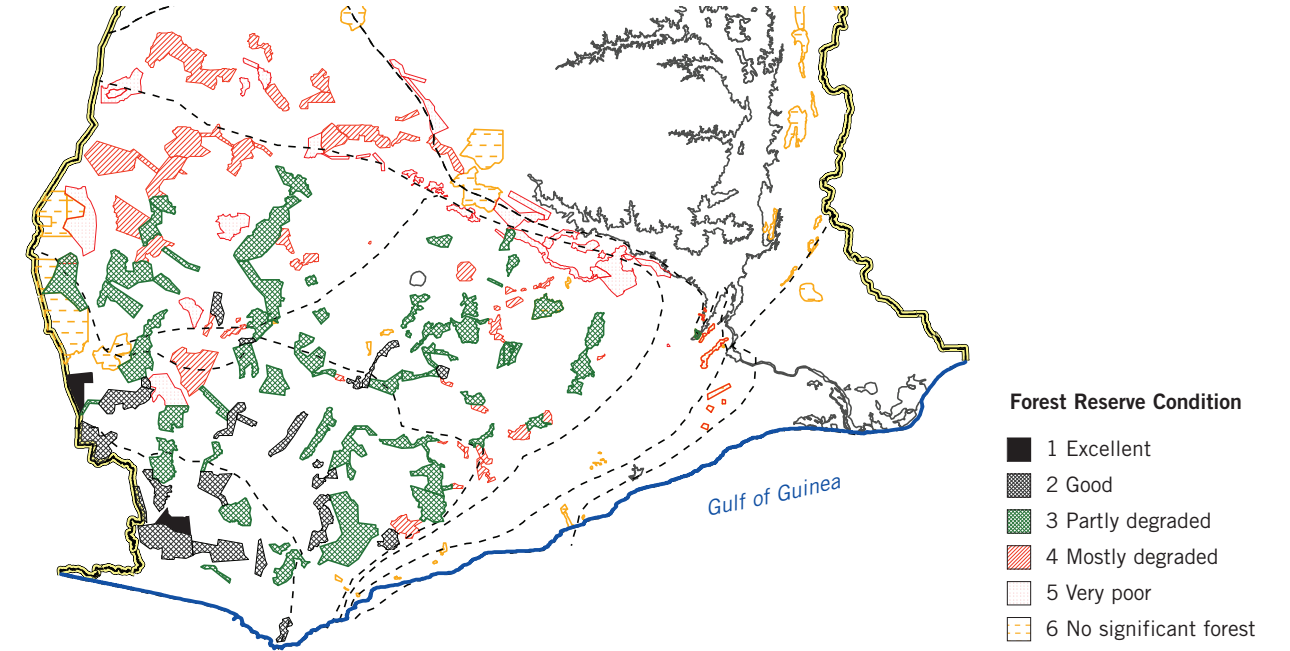
(Parren *et al.*, 2007, Nketiah *et al.* 2009). In drier areas and transition zones, wildfire is a major problem, with charcoal production and fuelwood collection also contributing to deforestation in off-reserve areas (Katoomba 2009a). The demand for agricultural and wood products is growing locally as well as internationally; farming systems have undergone only

FIGURE 2: DEGRADATION OF DOME RIVER FOREST RESERVE, 1990–2007



Source: CERSGIS, University of Ghana, Legon

FIGURE 3: FOREST CONDITION MAP OF GHANA'S HIGH FOREST ZONE



Source: Hawthorne W.D. and M. Abu-Juam (1995)

limited technological development, however, and there remains a high dependency on swidden agriculture (Forestry Commission 2010).

Hawthorne and Abu-Juam (1995) estimated that the majority of Ghana's forest reserves, particularly those in the drier areas of the high forest zone, were degraded due to over-logging, alien invasive species such as *Chromolaena odorata*, and frequent forest fires. The process has continued: in the Dome River Forest Reserve, for example, two-thirds of the forest that existed in 1990 had been lost by 2007, while the non-forest area had expanded four-fold (Figure 2).

As far back as 1995, Hawthorne and Abu-Juam indicated that less than 16% of Ghana's high forests remained in good condition mostly in the wetter southwestern corner of the country (Figure 3). It is reasonable to assume that this percentage may have further declined in the intervening years.

In a report commissioned by the Forestry Commission, Mayers *et al.* (2008) concluded that:

"... Policy has always played a large part in shaping action in Ghana's forests. Indeed some of the deeper roots of Ghana's current forest problems lie in policy moves of the past. Whilst this situation is depressing, it also shows how dramatic policy effects can be and gives hope that, with the right changes, the situation might be greatly improved. Yet key policy moves that might be made to ensure that some of Ghana's existing forests

have a future, and that Ghanaian livelihoods benefit more from them, have been known about for 10–15 years or more. While much has been done in the past 10 years to improve forest and wildlife policies, it has proven difficult to really improve governance in practice and law enforcement has been weak.”

The report suggested that without substantial governance reform, current economic players in the forest sector are in for a “hard landing” as the sector dwindles, resources crash, ecosystem services become degraded and communities marginalized, rampant illegality continues and conflict and local governance problems proliferate. If, on the other hand, capacity and preparedness could be fostered—with rights, responsibilities and capacity located in the best places to ensure good management and local benefit—the sector could stabilize (Mayers *et al.* 2008).

There is much hope that the current constellation of initiatives aimed at changing the forest sector will achieve the critical mass of effort that has previously been missing. Valuable initiatives include the government’s commitment to export only legally sourced wood products as part of the voluntary partnership agreement (VPA) negotiated with the European Union; an on-going Forest Stewardship Council Forest Certification Program; activities supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) under the Non Legally Binding Instrument on Forests; and potential land-use projects under the Clean Development Mechanism. A review of forest-sector policy and legislation is also taking place as part of the five-year Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Program, with the support of a range of donors. Policies that contribute to the rehabilitation of degraded forests and the creation of new forests are being supported by the private sector and by the Community Forestry Management Project, which is funded by the African Development Bank.

Implications of Key Legal, Policy and Institutional Issues for Implementing REDD-plus in Ghana

Government agencies and forest stakeholder groups in Ghana are exploring key opportunities for and challenges posed by carbon finance and REDD-plus. The development of a workable policy framework for REDD-plus is a challenge because longstanding legal and institutional gaps need to be bridged. For example, issues of tree tenure, carbon tenure and rights over carbon storage must be resolved. Ghana has four main tree-tenure contexts:

- 1) production forest reserves
- 2) protection forest reserves
- 3) off-reserve areas—mainly trees on farms
- 4) community forests (under the forest law) or (under the wildlife law) community resource management areas (CREMAs) in off-reserve areas.

Under current legal arrangements, carbon stored in trees would, like timber, be classified as an economic resource and commodity. This poses a challenge for the development of a

framework that aims to accommodate carbon emissions from agricultural soils and wetlands. The fact that the state effectively owns the timber in the first three of the four tenure contexts listed above is an additional challenge. Moreover, state-managed protected areas in the high forests have land-tenure problems related to the long-term existence of cocoa farms within them. A major issue, therefore, is who will have the rights to carbon credits and thus the incentive to conserve forest carbon.

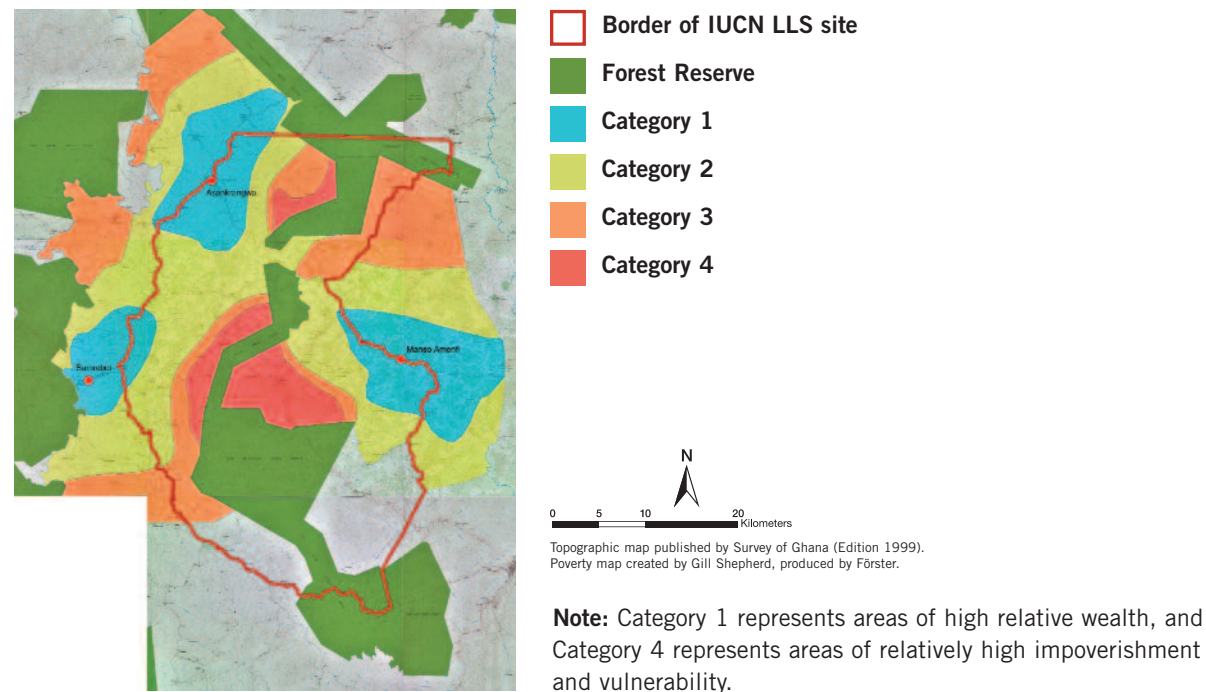
As discussed above, the Concessions Act gives the government the management rights over all naturally growing trees, and landowners and users cannot cut trees for commercial reasons. Landowners and farmers thus have an incentive to remove trees from off-reserve land, particularly given the usually uncompensated damage that logging companies cause to cocoa and other crops when they harvest timber. For any project-based carbon trading, therefore, the clarification of carbon tenure is vital, both for the effective and equitable distribution of benefits and to guarantee the permanence of any emissions reductions achieved.

Encouragingly, several important laws and experiences exist on which REDD-plus action could be built. These include the rights people have over trees they planted themselves; the right of farmers, under the 1997 Timber Resources Management Act (amended 2002), to veto timber felling; and, as part of the 1979 Economic Plants Protection Decree, the protection of timber stands in cocoa plantations. The 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy, and commercial plantation agreements, require the involvement of local stakeholders in decision-making about resource management.

Nketiah *et al.* (2009) highlighted a range of other key governance issues relevant to REDD-plus design, as follows:

- ➔ In “off-reserve areas,” measures such as Community Resource Management Agreements (CREMAs) and other provisions designed to support dedicated community forests could be key mechanisms for local control and participation in natural resource management, but their potential depends in part on how carbon property rights are resolved and on greater legislative backing.
- ➔ More effective coordination between sectors and institutions will be needed, such as the strengthening of partnerships between district assemblies and traditional authorities.
- ➔ Accountability and transparency in law enforcement needs to be increased and focused in particular critical areas, notably logging in forest reserves.
- ➔ Ways in which REDD-plus can be a stimulant for progress in other critical cross-sectoral areas—such as farm productivity, alternative sustainable livelihoods, wildfire management, land-use zoning, livestock and grazing corridors, energy pricing policies, and biomass energy—need early and active exploration.

FIGURE 4: POVERTY DISTRIBUTION MAP, WASSA AMENFI WEST



Source: IUCN (2008)

- ➔ Benefit-sharing arrangements for REDD-plus need careful development, with similar emphasis on accountability and equity.
- ➔ Productivity and income on farms in degraded forest reserves need to improve.

With respect to the last two points—on benefit-sharing arrangements and on-farm productivity and incomes—Sandker *et al.* (2010) modelled the factors that would determine whether REDD-plus payments would act as an incentive for reducing forest loss. They found that the issue was not only whether farmers initially embraced REDD-plus but also whether, in the longer term, the incentives would be sufficient to counteract any temptation farmers might have to break their contracts.

Indisputably, lower prices for carbon and, critically given Ghana’s history, a lower share of benefits going directly to farmers would both act as major disincentives. It would therefore appear important that sufficient consideration is given not only to the policy and institutional arrangements that clarify land owners’ and farmers’ rights but also to those that will govern the distributional mechanisms for REDD-plus payments. This is particularly important because the most impoverished—and therefore the most risk-averse—citizens tend to live closest to the forest resource, as the poverty distribution map for Wassa Amenfi West (Figure 4) illustrates.

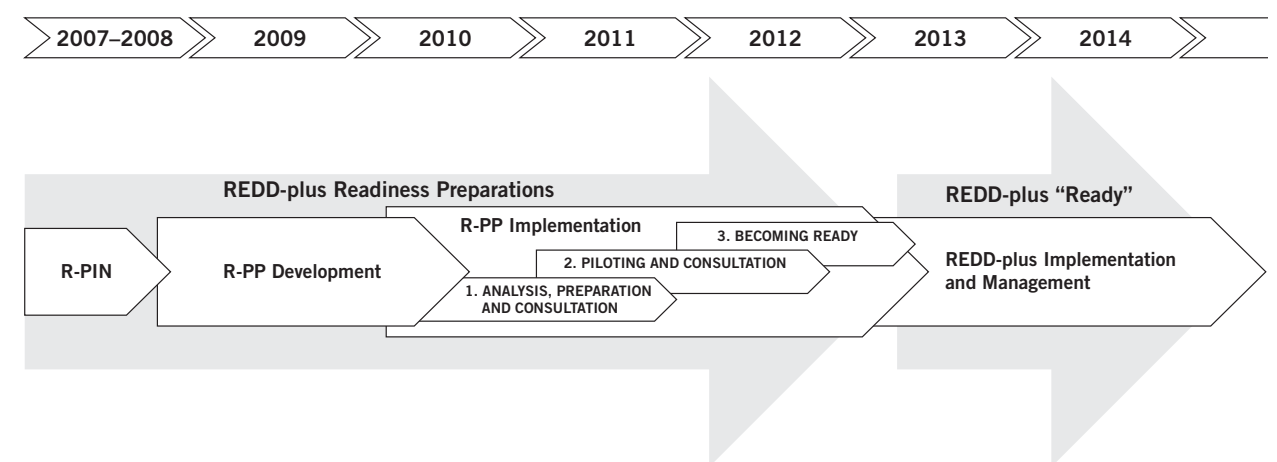
Many design proposals have been put forward globally for REDD-plus activities. Typically, such proposals seek to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions at a minimum cost, while also contributing to sustainable development. An inventory of design proposals that are under discussion or available in Ghana would be helpful, as would a methodology for evaluating them in Ghana’s context.

A related issue is that of scale. Generally three approaches to the geographical scale of REDD accounting and incentive mechanisms are under discussion: direct support to projects (sub-national level), direct support to countries (national level), or a hybrid approach combining the two. A sub-national or project approach gives room for early involvement and wide participation, and is attractive to private investors—but “leakage” is a constant threat as projects will struggle to address the broader forces driving deforestation and forest degradation. A national approach creates country ownership but has to contend with many broad sets of policies of national and international relevance—and is thus exposed to governance failures and may be unattractive to private investment and local government. A hybrid approach may be the most flexible approach—allowing countries to start with a project approach and gradually scale up to the national level—yet the challenges in harmonizing a sub-national and national approach to REDD-plus are great.

Ghana’s Readiness Preparation Proposal

The development of Ghana’s R-PP, which follows the format laid down by the FCPF, was steered by the head of the Forestry Commission’s Climate Change Unit. A range of consultancy inputs were commissioned and stakeholder consultations were held on issues such as

FIGURE 5: PHASING GHANA’S PROGRESS TOWARDS REDD-PLUS READINESS



Source: Forestry Commission (2010)

governance, tenure and rights, benefit-sharing and possible REDD-plus action. Figure 5 shows the main phases of the REDD-plus readiness and implementation process proposed in the R-PP. The process is designed to accommodate the complexity of the forest-related institutional environment in Ghana, comprising as it does a variety of ministries and services, local chiefs and smallholders as forest landowners, industry and development boards as land users, and an active civil-society movement. The R-PP notes that because of the complexity of demographic, economic and policy influences on the various drivers of deforestation, REDD-plus strategies are not self-evident and need broad cross-sectoral cooperation between agencies.

Sector coordination and conflict-resolution structures also receive attention in the R-PP. A number of committees in various ministries are described, such as the Natural Resource and Environmental Advisory Council in the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, which has entrusted its Forestry Commission with the role of coordinating and implementing REDD-plus, and the National Climate Change Committee, a multi-stakeholder committee under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology that is developing national strategies for climate-change mitigation and adaptation, including forests.

The R-PP has the following features:

- ➔ **Stakeholder consultation and participation:** the R-PP identifies four stages in the consultation and participation process: increased awareness; participatory decision-making; involvement in implementation; and integration with safeguards measures. It notes that the participation of traditional authorities and forest communities requires particular attention. The R-PP anticipates the strong participation of the ten regional houses of chiefs and district environmental committees in promoting innovative approaches based on traditional land-use practices and developing adequate norms and by-laws at the local level to support REDD-plus. It also notes that consultation can help to identify innovative norms and practices that could support carbon stock enhancements.
- ➔ **Assessment of land use, forest policy and governance:** the R-PP assesses the major land-use trends, the drivers of deforestation and degradation in the sectors most relevant to REDD-plus, and key issues related to land tenure, natural resources and governance. Some research priorities are to be pursued in the early stages of the REDD-plus preparation process. The R-PP also notes that a clearer focus is needed on emerging innovative land-use pilots conducted in CREMAs.
- ➔ **REDD-plus strategy options and implementation framework:** the R-PP describes three steps in implementing the R-PP: 1) analysis, preparation and consultation; 2) piloting and testing; and 3) becoming ready—that is, making the necessary changes in policy, procedures and capacity. Six consultative mechanisms are proposed to help in the development of the REDD-plus strategy: two national expert consultations—one on timber supply and another on carbon rights; and four expert working groups—one on ecosystem-

friendly cocoa production, one on local market timber supply, one on charcoal and fuelwood and one on low-carbon agro-industry development. A seventh mechanism—a challenge fund for fire control—is also proposed. The implementation framework describes management approaches for the integration and coordination of REDD-plus actions and decisions with broader climate-change, environment, forestry and land-use decision-making.

The development of a central management information depository is proposed to bring transparency to the REDD-plus process and to streamline information to reduce overlaps and inefficiencies in the management of the system. The R-PP proposes the monitoring of carbon emissions through a central carbon-accounting registry, with credit “buffer” systems to insure forest credits from risks and losses. A designated authority is proposed to give permits for REDD-plus actions and to clarify criteria for credits. The establishment of a conflict-resolution system would require the training of lawyers, government officials and others. The R-PP suggests that demonstration activities be used to test revenue distribution mechanisms to determine the best way to manage funds in local conditions. The development of a fiscal regime with fiduciary expertise and distribution mechanisms is proposed to facilitate the management of REDD-plus readiness funds and, eventually, REDD-plus payments.

- ➔ **Social and environmental impacts:** the FCPF recommends strategic environmental and social assessments (SESAs) to help avoid negative impacts and to enhance positive impacts, including the co-benefits of biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation. Ghana’s R-PP proposes that a SESA be undertaken through national working groups to promote the integration of social and environmental issues into the upstream policymaking process and to conduct ongoing monitoring. The SESA would address issues such as the winners and losers in REDD-plus and the tradeoffs between risks. It would aim to ensure effective and equitable stakeholder consultation and community participation, respect for environmental and social safeguards, and the creation of adequate instruments for dealing with adverse impacts.
- ➔ **Reference and baselines:** in order to track REDD-plus progress, reference levels or baselines will need to be agreed upon. The R-PP proposes that, in the absence of credible data on historic emissions, existing data on forest area be used. The Government of Ghana reported to FAO’s Forest Resource Assessment that its forest area was 6.1 million hectares in 2000. Deforestation between 2000 and 2006 has been estimated at 115,000 hectares per year. Satellite imagery for Ghana in 2001–02 was used for the design of an inventory of high forest reserves. When estimating historic land-cover change it is proposed that canopy cover be used to assess emissions from both deforestation and degradation—as suggested in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)’s *Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry* (Penman *et al.*

2003). Definitions are critical when establishing where deforestation has occurred. For example, what canopy-cover threshold should be used in which forest zones? The R-PP notes that enhanced in-country capacity is essential for collecting and analyzing data on forest area and carbon stocks for estimating Ghana's historic levels of emissions, as are new software and hardware for analyzing imagery and other spatial data.

- ➔ **Monitoring:** the R-PP describes a monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system that would be designed for tracking deforestation, forest degradation and the enhancement of carbon stocks. It would be adapted over time as international discussions and future technologies develop. The IPCC framework would be followed, as would the UNFCCC principles of consistency, transparency, comparability, completeness and accuracy. The R-PP notes that the MRV system should encompass the monitoring of rural livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, key governance factors, and the impacts of the REDD-plus strategy.

Non-governmental REDD-plus Initiatives

NGOs are active in the REDD-plus debate in Ghana. Some are sceptical of potential future REDD-plus mechanisms based on a carbon-credit market. Others are working to develop possible land-use models for REDD-plus. For example, the Nature Conservation Research Centre—a leading NGO in Ghana—is developing a cocoa-carbon initiative with the international NGO Forest Trends and the Katoomba Group, an international alliance. The Katoomba Group has also supported a scoping exercise for land-use options appropriate for REDD-plus and an analysis of tenure issues for REDD-plus (Katoomba 2009a and 2009b). Forest Trends is also working with the Forestry Commission on a “carbon map” of Ghana, and the International Institute for Environment and Development is working with the Ghanaian NGO Civic Response on an economic analysis of potential REDD-plus “supply” in Ghana. IUCN is working with partners on distributional mechanisms and pro-poor REDD-plus issues.



(l-r) Stewart Maginnis and Vanda Radzik

International and Local Insights from the Dialogue

This chapter presents observations made by participants on the key common issues identified in preparing for REDD-plus internationally, and on the issues encountered during the two-day field visit to Wassa Amenfi West.

Key Common Questions in Preparing for REDD-plus

The participants in the dialogue included people from ten countries directly engaged in their own national REDD-plus processes. By sharing these experiences and drawing on previous TFD dialogues the group identified the following 12 critical questions:

- 1) **Why will it be different this time?** In many national situations there is, and has been, a broad understanding of what needs to change to make forest management more sustainable and to improve livelihood opportunities. The bigger challenge is how to overcome political inertia and particular vested interests. The promise of additional resources is important but not necessarily unique. Governments and international organizations should be more explicit about what constitutes the unique value proposition of REDD-plus and should articulate more clearly what is special about the opportunity and timing that will allow REDD-plus to succeed where other initiatives have failed.
- 2) **How can information access and flow be improved?** Outside a small group in government charged with guiding the REDD-plus readiness process, REDD-plus and related issues are poorly understood. Without improved information it will be difficult for communities, indigenous peoples, the private sector and local governments to engage properly in the process. The awareness-raising program of the Government of Guyana provides an interesting template.
- 3) **Whose voice is heard in shaping the international and national REDD-plus regimes?** There has been little attempt to meaningfully engage local and national voices in developing the basic notion of REDD-plus internationally, and the international REDD-plus dialogue is shaped disproportionately by a limited number of actors. The same applies at the national level: there has been only minimal engagement of stakeholders in developing in-country working definitions of, and approaches to, REDD-plus. Although the discussions surrounding REDD-plus involve large amounts of money, the actual resources made available by donors and multilateral agencies for in-country REDD-plus readiness activities are insufficient for effective stakeholder engagement. (For example, of the US \$200,000 provided to prepare the RPP, the specifications of

the grant typically require that the vast majority of this sum is spent on activities normally provided by international consultants.)

- 4) **Why has stakeholder awareness and engagement been so feeble to date?** Even where local capacity to support actions that would deliver credible REDD-plus initiatives is large (e.g. among forest-user groups in Nepal) there remains a critical lack of awareness about REDD-plus within these stakeholder groups. Moreover, few key players (donors and multilaterals) have made a significant effort to address this situation, as indicated by the lack of resources that have been available to support bottom-up engagement.
- 5) **How can key issues with tree tenure and carbon rights be clarified and addressed?** In some ways, REDD-plus exacerbates the risks and uncertainties surrounding ill-defined or unjust land-tenure arrangements; this, in turn, presents practical and fundamental constraints to REDD-plus readiness in many contexts. Notably, REDD-plus contracts and agreements will be impossible to negotiate and enforce if carbon rights are undefined, yet in many countries major challenges remain with respect to the prerequisite step of clarifying tree and land tenure.
- 6) **Where and when will REDD-plus be worth it?** There is a strong need for better information on the cost of production/supply of REDD-plus. There still appears to be a general assumption that, more often than not, REDD-plus will present a win-win solution. This is not assured, however, as highlighted by Sandker et al. (2010) in studies in Wassa Amenfi. Several participants felt that the cost of REDD-plus will vary significantly and under some scenarios may be prohibitive. In many of the countries currently undertaking REDD-plus readiness activities, the question of when REDD-plus will actually be worth it, and to whom, still needs to be answered.
- 7) **How will distribution mechanisms work and who will benefit?** Insufficient attention has been paid so far (perhaps deliberately) to how REDD-plus benefits will flow both vertically (i.e. how much will end up with communities and farmers) and horizontally (i.e. will REDD-plus benefits be distributed fairly or will they be captured by those with power and influence?).
- 8) **Whose capacity needs to be better recognized and strengthened?** If REDD-plus relies, by definition, on people doing things differently, then a clear understanding of what capacity needs to be exercised by whom is critical. But the whereabouts of capacity, and how it can be strengthened, is often poorly recognized. Honest assessments are needed that go beyond standard institutional organograms and capacity that exists only on paper. Often, this will mean greater recognition of, and an identification of ways to strengthen, community forestry networks and other alliances that engage and connect with on-the-ground realities.
- 9) **What roles does government need to play?** Governments are not monolithic—they consist of multiple agencies, each with their own perspectives, powers and tensions. REDD-plus needs government leadership, which means that the diversity within

government must be managed and the tensions resolved. Otherwise, government could easily become the main obstacle to effective and equitable REDD-plus. Governments should not be planning to be the main actors in REDD-plus, but they should plan its facilitation and will need to be its guarantor.

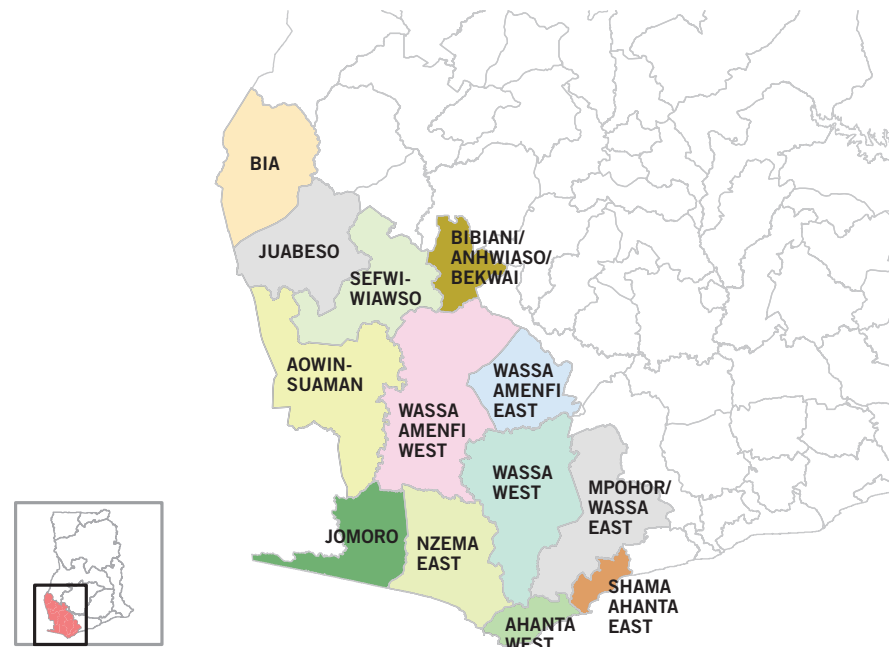
- 10) **How can adaptation to climate change be weaved into REDD-plus?** Forests change as the climate changes, and forests may help humans adapt to climate change. Efforts to manage forests with climate-change adaptation in mind may also have important co-benefits for mitigating climate change. Conversely, mitigation strategies such as REDD-plus could help or hinder the prospects for adaptation. Thinking through the pitfalls and opportunities when preparing for REDD-plus is critical.
- 11) **Who will integrate REDD-plus with wider land-use and development strategies?** Sometimes actions in the forest sector affect the practice and prospects of wider land use, and almost always the reverse is true. There is little point in managing carbon in forests wisely if similar wisdom is not applied in agriculture and other land uses. REDD-plus will therefore require the integration of forest use, agriculture and other land uses, and such integration will need unorthodox champions. Not only must REDD-plus be accommodated in key national planning frameworks and cross-sectoral engagement processes, a high degree of collaboration between diverse interests will be needed to ensure that national planning is translated into action on the ground.
- 12) **Why wait?** REDD-plus is an arena for pioneers who cannot wait for perfect policy and capacity because on-the-ground work must begin as soon as possible. But the ears and eyes of those pioneers must be open and they should learn by doing. Experimental and exploratory methods should be used to enable best judgments to be made on existing information, to increase understanding of the processes involved, to foster engagement, to ensure transparency and accountability, and to learn from experience and adapt accordingly.

Conversations and Observations from Wassa Amenfi West

Dialogue participants spent two days visiting the Wassa Amenfi West District, located in Ghana's Western Region, about 160 km (3 hours drive) from the port city of Takoradi (Figure 6).

Like many other districts in the Western Region, Wassa Amenfi West was relatively sparsely populated until the 1950s. Since then, however, it has experienced significant off-reserve deforestation—particularly in the latter quarter of the 20th century, when the deforestation rate was about 2% per year. The high rate of deforestation was due primarily to the influx of migrant farmers from elsewhere in Ghana; it is declining now because most of the large blocks of off-reserve forests have been deforested (Figure 7).

FIGURE 6: THE WESTERN REGION, GHANA



Source: CERGIS, University of Ghana, Legon (2010)

Approximately 186,000 people live in the district, the majority in rural areas. Cocoa farming is the main source of rural income and the main driver of the local economy. The land-tenure system is shaped by customary law (which is legally recognized in Ghana), although the large number of migrants who farm land through tenancy or share-cropping arrangements means that land-tenure arrangements are complex.

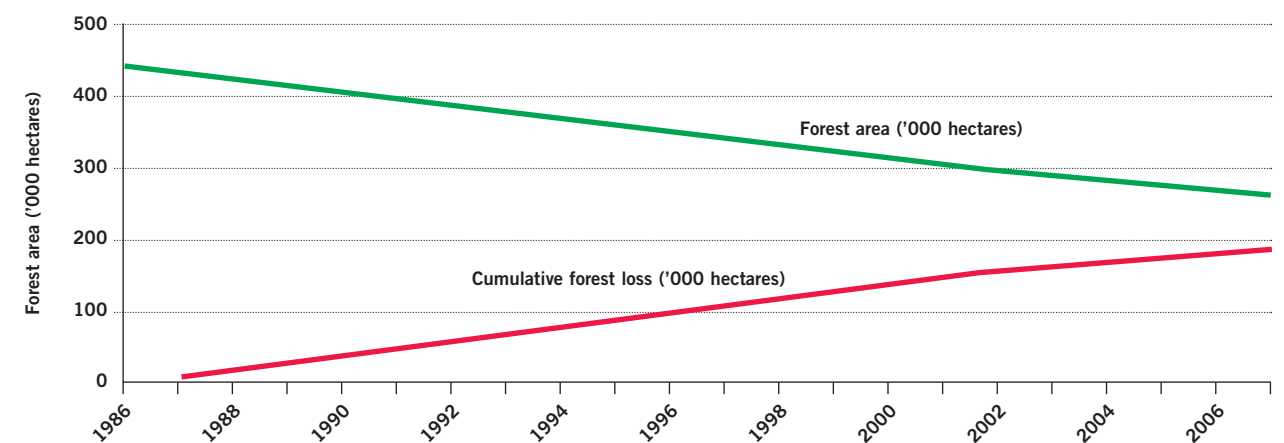
While Wassa Amenfi West has seen large-scale deforestation in recent decades, about 38% of the land is still under forest cover, mostly in forest reserves. The majority of these reserves are logged for timber and, compared with other working forests in Ghana, are still in reasonable condition and have not been subject to widespread degradation. The district also contains three “globally significant biodiversity areas” (GSBAs), which are *de facto* protected areas from which both industrial and artisanal extractive activities are excluded. Forest still play a major part in the livelihoods of rural people; recent studies indicate that while the district is a major cocoa-producing area, non-timber forest products and bush meat account for over one-third of the average rural household’s cash and non-cash income (IUCN 2010). In addition, one of Ghana’s largest sawmills operates in the area, providing a substantial number of jobs as well as health and education facilities for the district’s second-largest town.

Dialogue participants visited and spoke with several local communities, managers of a large sawmill, and several members of the district administration about their understanding of REDD-plus readiness, the challenges they face with respect to land-use and forests, and

the opportunities they see for the future. The following five key lessons emerged from these local discussions:

- 1) **Local ideas and models for distributional mechanisms are strong:** local people already have direct experience with forest-related distributional mechanisms, most notably those earmarked to support communities close to the GSBAs. Although they may not have heard of REDD-plus (see below), local people have remarkably clear ideas about the framework they would like to see deployed to facilitate the distribution of benefits associated with good forest stewardship. The preference expressed was the establishment of community-managed trust funds that would facilitate revolving loans for individuals so that credit is available when required. There appeared little appetite for schemes predicated on individual payments.
- 2) **Effective local self-organization models are established:** local communities already have well-established systems of self-organization that have delivered tangible results from the sorts of activities that would qualify for REDD-plus, such as tree-planting, forest restoration and on-farm, tree-based diversification. In particular, there appeared to be strong interest in CREMAs.
- 3) **Knowledge of REDD-plus is very weak:** community and local government officials do not have a clear understanding of REDD-plus or knowledge of the progress that has been made on the issue at the national level. To close this information gap there is an urgent need for educational materials on REDD-plus that are easily understandable and accessible locally.
- 4) **Community capacity exists but needs strengthening:** while existing distributional models and institutional structures offer much to build on in REDD-plus, a range of capacities

FIGURE 7: CHANGE IN FOREST AREA, WESTERN REGION, GHANA, 1986–2007



Source: Förster (2008)

will need strengthening—with the help of government and NGOs—if local communities are to manage costs and benefits effectively. For example, more capacity is needed in forest management practices that allow communities to sustainably manage their forest resources for carbon as well as other goods and services.

- 5) **Safeguards for marginalized stakeholders must be built in:** depending on the type and scale of REDD-plus projects there are likely to be many small, forest-dependent groups and communities whose access to forests becomes more constrained. Safeguards will be essential to ensure that this is recognized and managed so that the livelihoods of such marginalized groups are not threatened by the implementation of REDD-plus.



(l-r) Mario Escobedo, Kwame Asamoah and James Mayers

Challenges, Ways Forward and Key Actions for REDD-plus Readiness in Ghana

This chapter summarizes the main points of discussion on the challenges and opportunities facing REDD-plus readiness in Ghana and identifies ways forward. It concludes with the key actions that need to be undertaken by stakeholder groups in Ghana.

Five Main Challenges and Ways Forward for REDD-plus Readiness in Ghana

The ratio of Ghanaian to international participants in the dialogue was roughly one to one—thus ensuring that the dialogue’s experiential breadth was balanced by local depth. Together, participants built on the shared experiences and lessons of ten countries and used their conversations and interviews with local Ghanaian stakeholders during the two-day field visit to Wassa Amenfi West to address Ghana’s REDD-plus readiness experience.

Ghana’s R-PP has the potential to provide a solid basis for moving forward into REDD-plus readiness, although participants also noted that the R-PP needed to better define stakeholder awareness-raising and participatory processes and to be more specific about how the necessary policy changes might unfold. In particular, participants noted the implicit assumption in the R-PP that REDD-plus readiness was concerned primarily with addressing technical constraints and that policy-related and institution-related activities would only begin once the readiness phase was completed. There was broad consensus that such an approach has an inherent flaw: delaying the policy and institutional reform processes until after the readiness phase could mean that REDD-plus activities would be shaped unduly by the current policy framework.

It was generally agreed, therefore, that addressing the policy and institutional framework needs to begin during the REDD-plus readiness phase. Some participants also observed that while the R-PP was relatively strong on problem identification and analytical needs it contained fewer details on how transformational changes might be initiated. Another view was that this might not be a weakness if the formal REDD-plus readiness phase is truly transparent and participatory and if all major stakeholder groups are engaged in defining the nature of the change process.

Based on these observations, participants identified five main challenges that stakeholders in Ghana should consider prioritizing and resolving as they initiate and work through the REDD-plus readiness phase:

- 1) Access to, and use and availability of, information to meet local capacity-building needs
- 2) Establishment of multi-stakeholder participation and engagement mechanisms and processes
- 3) Reform of policy and legislative frameworks, particularly those on tree and carbon rights
- 4) Establishment of a system for distributing revenue and benefits
- 5) Integration of REDD-plus policies with broader land-use plans and the development plans of other sectors.

These challenges are further explored below.

Information, Education and Capacity

The lack of reliable, accurate and consistent information, the shortage of education opportunities on REDD-plus, and a dearth of capacity to implement REDD-plus readiness cut across the other four challenges listed above and has been a shortcoming in most past and ongoing forest-governance intervention programs in Ghana. There remains a lack of understanding of the concept and implications of REDD-plus. Moreover, there is little appreciation of the benefits of REDD-plus or the responsibilities that REDD-plus activities might entail for different stakeholders at the local level, including among district and local governments, business, and forest-dependent communities.

It is not yet clear what land uses in Ghana will be appropriate for REDD-plus; there is a lack of cost-benefit analyses of land uses in Ghana that could help in understanding how much of a landscape could benefit from REDD-plus policies. Knowledge of legal rights, and the responsibilities that go with them, is often much weaker than it should be at the local level, as is knowledge of silviculture and other know-how for sustainable forest management on locally controlled land. Training and communicating with communities on these issues takes time, patience and continuous effort—and should be a central plank of any strategy for REDD-plus.

Observations from the field visit to Wassa Amenfi West clearly indicated that a broad understanding of REDD-plus and what it might require still resides only in Accra, the national capital. It was felt that the dissemination of basic REDD-plus materials, using various media channels, should now be a priority. In particular, investments will be required to inform various stakeholder groups about the implications that REDD-plus might have for current tenure and timber rights laws and, by extension, about the options for new legal and policy reform.

Good-quality information is fundamental. With its emphasis on expert working groups the R-PP gives the impression that the information and knowledge base is weak in all relevant areas. This is not the case. On a range of key issues there are myriad programs, consultancy reports and histories of experience with initiatives that need to be excavated and used. On some issues,

“what needs to be done” has been known by many for years. In other areas, new analysis is certainly needed. In all cases, “readiness” must be understood to be more than the generation of information—it also means using that information to improve and change the situation.

Similarly, concerted work will be needed in the REDD-plus readiness process to avoid a common trap for external initiatives that aim for big changes—that is, focusing exclusively on developing a national plan or strategy, which itself becomes marginalized. Even if such a strategy is “mainstreamed,” it may often be a case of “REDD-plus words written into plans.” A clear focus on capacity and not just plans will therefore be needed. A focus on capacity can deal with real issues both upstream and downstream of the plan—and should be specific about *whose* capacity to do *what*.

Ways forward might include the following:

- ➔ **An education and training program on REDD-plus:** design an education and training program on REDD-plus appropriate for the local context. The language used in education and training materials should be easily understandable and the information should be relevant to various stakeholders. Two types of materials will be needed—those that can be used without training, and those that can be integrated into training programs. Once designed, the former should be disseminated immediately through diverse but easily accessible channels, such as leaflets, posters, local newspapers, radio and television. The training program should adopt a standard curriculum and its materials should help communities to understand their full rights and to negotiate with others to protect those rights.
- ➔ **Information centres on REDD-plus and related issues:** improved channels of communication and information flow among various levels of government and different stakeholder groups are needed. Information centres—some of them in existing governmental or non-governmental bodies, others set up as independent entities—could be established as resource bases, collecting and leading the dissemination of information relevant to REDD-plus to all stakeholder groups. There may be advantages in mandating and resourcing an independent information centre to design and implement a national REDD-plus information-provision and capacity-building strategy.
- ➔ **Coordination and policy development:** the Climate Change Unit of the Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology have particular roles—that need strengthening—in coordinating all related efforts in information collection and dissemination and capacity building. A particular effort is needed here to identify and make best use of existing analyses and information and in spelling out capacity-building needs. Together with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, these institutions should cooperate continuously with others in steering policies developed for REDD-plus at both the national

and international levels. Finally, the costs of providing high-quality educational materials and training should not be underestimated and a major and continuous fundraising drive will be needed (see below).

Participation and Engagement Mechanisms and Processes

Insufficient means exist to enable local forest-dependent communities to join the REDD-plus debate. It is crucial that such means be developed because without the participation of these communities REDD-plus plans will lack access to vital local knowledge and opinion and consequently will have little credibility. Government needs to recognize this gap, prioritize the participation of communities and of district officials, and reform the current language and approaches of REDD-plus with this engagement in mind.

Dialogue participants noted that while the R-PP development process was criticized initially, the Forestry Commission had its hands tied—the funds granted by the FCPF for the R-PP were modest (about US\$200,000) and the conditions attached to them meant that around 90% was spent on foreign consultancies. Little money was available to invest in more inclusive processes that involved and garnered the input of other Ghanaian stakeholders.

Yet there is much to integrate with and build on. A trick was missed in linking the R-PP development process with the stakeholder-participation mechanisms that had matured during the preparation of the VPA. Ghana has a well-deserved reputation for establishing credible multi-stakeholder processes on contentious natural resource issues. Such participatory processes need to be strengthened by bringing additional stakeholder groups on board, particularly around the issues of tenure, tree and carbon rights reform.

A range of other initiatives are currently under way in the sector, all generating or anticipating stakeholder involvement. REDD-plus strategies for stakeholder participation need to find their own niches but they must also integrate with such initiatives. Among them is the new Forest Investment Program (FIP), an international program backed by funding for climate-change mitigation funding; in March 2010 Ghana became one of five pilot countries for this program. The FIP requires a national steering committee and the development of an investment strategy.

Ways forward might include the following:

- ➔ **A comprehensive budgeting and resourcing package:** now that Ghana has secured significant resources from both the FCPF and the FIP, a comprehensive budget should be constructed that is adequate to run a comprehensive and inclusive process. The need to invest in the technical and methodological side of REDD-plus must not come at the expense of the involvement and participation of Ghanaian communities, civil society and private sector.

- ➔ **Mapping stakeholders and engagement mechanisms:** those stakeholders who should be engaged in REDD-plus processes in Ghana should quickly be mapped, particularly in those districts that may host the pilot and testing activities foreseen in section 2c of the R-PP. Past, current and anticipated means by which stakeholders engage with issues relevant to REDD-plus should also be mapped, such that the optimum mix of integration and new effort can be identified.
- ➔ **Multi-stakeholder platform establishment:** at the national level, a multi-stakeholder platform needs to be established outside the National REDD-plus Steering Committee. This new national platform could liaise between the Steering Committee and its participants' own constituencies based on a self-selection process. Clear terms of reference for this multi-stakeholder platform will be needed—with functions including coordination and advocacy as well as collective planning and advice.
- ➔ **Building on, and integration of, existing mechanisms:** ownership of REDD-plus through the active involvement of stakeholders in decision-making is the goal here. At the local level, existing decentralized structures will be critical for REDD-plus. For example, district forest forums are potential key platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement in decision-making at the local level and should be supported. Government has a critical role to play in these mechanisms by ensuring that different platforms are coordinated and that any agreements made are followed up.
- ➔ **International engagement in REDD-plus:** the understanding of REDD-plus, and the negotiation and advocacy skills of policymakers and leaders of different stakeholder groups, should be enhanced so that such people can engage in the REDD-plus debate and communicate and promote the positions of their constituencies more effectively at the international level. It would be valuable for these stakeholders to visit and learn from experiences in other countries where REDD-plus readiness is being developed. TFD's proposal to establish a community of learning, through which a group of REDD-plus protagonists from different countries stay in contact, continuously share experiences and work towards real in-country solutions, should be pursued.

Tree and Carbon Rights Security, and Other Key Policy/Legal Reforms

The prospects for effective REDD-plus in Ghana are intricately tied to issues of tenure and rights. In addition to the particular challenge of rights to trees outside forest reserves, carbon rights are a key bone of contention. How carbon rights can be legally defined, and how they will relate to underlying land and timber rights, can be expected to play a determining role in public attitudes to REDD-plus, and to payments linked to carbon in particular. Further development of this issue internationally (e.g. in guiding definitions and measurement principles and protocols that might be developed under the UNFCCC), and learning from evolving experience in other countries, would assist Ghanaian stakeholders.

The Government of Ghana recently initiated key policy and legal reform processes in the forest sector and, in 2010, announced a review of the Constitution. Stakeholders involved in REDD-plus should seize these opportunities by working together to help ensure legally robust and practically secure tenure rights over trees and carbon.

Ways forward might include the following:

- ➔ **Analytical review of key legal and political stumbling blocks:** since REDD-plus success will be contingent on the resolution of longstanding and politically sensitive issues pertaining to tree tenure, the Forestry Commission, with other stakeholders, should make the case to government, at the earliest opportunity, for a formal review of tenure, tree and carbon rights along with possible scenarios for policy and legal reform, including through the constitutional review.
- ➔ **Legally robust and practically secure rights of landholders to all trees outside reserves:** it is time for government to review the provisions of the Concessions Act, in which the control of commercial trees outside forest reserves is vested in the state. It is also time for those with the long-term right to manage the land (not necessarily the ultimate landowner) to have control of those trees and of all other trees on the land. Without such changes it is unlikely that a workable legal basis for implementing off-reserve REDD-plus contracts can be defined. Current constitutional, policy and legal reform opportunities should be used to legally enshrine this change, and an information campaign should be developed to help put the change into effect. The REDD-plus process can contribute to this.
- ➔ **Secure carbon rights—linked to rights to trees, vegetation and soil:** a synthesis of the implications of carbon rights policies in the local context is needed; it can be accomplished by reviewing all existing analyses and developing a series of position papers by different stakeholder groups. Stakeholders will need to consider rights and ownership aligned with use and access rights—carbon rights linked to rights over trees, vegetation and soil. Wide dissemination and debate of this information will also be needed.
- ➔ **Capability for legal reform:** all concerned stakeholder groups should be involved in the processes to change the constitutional, policy and legal frameworks for the above rights issues. Syntheses of relevant analyses and experience, and briefing and position papers, will be needed. A framework may need to be developed to help clarify carbon rights where the landowner and the farmer are not the same person (i.e. the situation with *abusa* and *abunu* share-cropping arrangements). Current forest forums in Ghana could be further supported to make progress in these areas.
- ➔ **Build the capacity of key stakeholders to negotiate effectively:** securing tree and carbon rights and other key policy reforms will undoubtedly require arduous negotiation among many stakeholders, some of whom have been excluded from decision-making processes

in the past. The best outcomes will be achieved when all key stakeholders have effective negotiation skills; in many cases, improving these among farmers and small landholders will be essential.

Revenue and Benefit Distribution

The issue of who benefits and by how much will undoubtedly be sensitive in all national REDD-plus readiness processes, not least Ghana's. Before addressing it, it is important to determine precisely how the terms "revenue" and "benefit" will be applied in a national REDD-plus strategy. It was suggested during the dialogue that "revenue" should be understood as both more limited and more precise in its meaning than "benefit", signifying demonstrable financial outcomes. The meaning of "benefit" is broad, encompassing an array of potential tangible and intangible gains which may or may not include financial gain. It can also be used to signify (or—if there is a lack of transparency—to disguise the fact) that the beneficiary is not going to receive very much in terms of direct reward.

Any REDD-plus readiness process must therefore be clear from the outset on the types of benefits that will be on offer to those who are being requested to modify their land-use practices. Moreover, once the nature of the benefits has been defined it will be necessary to evaluate the opportunity costs and "REDD-plus rent" of activities to ensure that individuals and local communities are compensated fairly. An initial analysis by Sandker et al. (2010) in Wassa Amenfi West indicated that, under several scenarios, REDD-plus may not produce win-win outcomes. This reinforces the importance of making adequate provisions for information and participation, as discussed above, because potential beneficiaries need to be able to judge properly whether what is on offer is sufficient to justify a change to their land-use practices.

Even when the nature of the benefits and opportunity costs of REDD-plus has been defined there remains the issue of whether those benefits can be distributed in a fair and effective manner. As outlined in section 2.1, the way in which forest-related benefits flow to landowners and forest communities has had a mixed history. REDD-plus readiness processes should address this issue up-front in an inclusive and transparent manner rather than postpone decisions on distribution until such time as REDD-plus revenues actually start to flow. Two dimensions of benefit distribution need to be considered:

- ➔ **Vertical distribution:** typically, many of the distributional mechanisms at play in the forest sector work on a trickle-down basis, with the largest sums staying in the hands of those furthest away from the day-to-day management of the forest. Some argue that this system needs to be reversed to one of "trickle-up", with the majority of resources allocated to those who directly undertake REDD-plus readiness action. The issue of how to allocate benefits to different stakeholders along the REDD-plus supply chain makes the design of a benefit-distribution mechanism particularly sensitive. History has shown that the

starting point for determining vertical distribution is critical—starting at the top means that inefficiencies in the system will not be weeded out but rather passed on to communities and individuals at the field level.

Ghana's own experience with the distribution of timber royalties shows that most of the revenue can be subsumed by the government agency, with little benefit flowing to landowners and communities. There is no easy answer and therefore government needs to clearly map the various stakeholders and beneficiaries to avoid future conflict. Given the complicated tenure system and uncertainty over timber and carbon rights, this will be a major challenge: it therefore needs to be addressed early in the REDD-plus readiness process in a transparent and participatory manner. All REDD-plus candidate countries should be willing to learn from each other—for example, Guyana's REDD-plus investment fund, which is being established under the guidance of a multi-stakeholder steering committee, may contain useful lessons and experience for Ghana and other countries.

- ➔ **Horizontal distribution:** to be effective, the benefit-sharing system must reward cheap and effective REDD-plus activities, but it also needs to be fair and to ensure that groups that have been disenfranchised in the past are able to participate and benefit. This means that allocating benefits within communities and among farmers and landowners can be just as big a challenge as deciding who benefits by how much along the REDD-plus value chain. To be equitable, consideration may have to be given to how poor and vulnerable groups can be incorporated within and benefit from a REDD-plus scheme. At the same time it is important to ensure that the reward received by a person or community is proportionate to their contribution towards REDD-plus deliverables.

Encouragingly, communities have clear and well-thought-through ideas of the sorts of horizontal mechanisms they would like to see. The idea of using REDD-plus revenues to provide the capital for locally controlled revolving credit schemes enjoys quite a lot of support, and there is significantly less enthusiasm for distributional schemes predicated on individual payments. The degree of sophisticated thinking at the local level about options for the distribution of REDD-plus revenues strongly suggests that the design of benefit-sharing mechanisms should be highly participatory and should build on the views and experiences of forest communities.

Finally, learning from past experience, the biggest challenge may not lie in the actual design of the benefit-sharing system but in how it is implemented at the local level. Key to this is the long-term predictability and sufficiency of funding for REDD-plus. It may be some time before a market system becomes fully operational; there is a real need, therefore, for the rich world to behave less as aid donors and more as contracting parties with obligations to ensure that money will flow to where REDD-plus is being delivered. This applies both to actual carbon credits and to progress in institutional and policy reforms designed to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. To attract sufficient and predictable funding over the longer term, REDD-plus countries such as Ghana also need to demonstrate that they are

investing in their own capacity to implement REDD-plus, eventually moving beyond reliance on international funding to shape the necessary policy and institutional reforms.

Ways forward might include the following:

- ➔ **Canvass local views on legitimate benefit-distribution mechanisms:** a process needs to be initiated early in the REDD-plus readiness process to map and engage with key stakeholders (with an emphasis on the district and community levels) to garner their views on what constitutes a legitimate and fair distributional mechanism, both vertically and horizontally.
- ➔ **Develop a framework for REDD-plus under share-cropping arrangements:** consultation with landowners (traditional authorities) and local communities is needed to establish a practical framework that could serve as the legal contractual basis for benefit-sharing on REDD-plus under *abusa* and *abunu* share-cropping arrangements. Note that this should be done through the same process that would clarify tree and carbon rights under share-cropping arrangements (see section 4.1.3).
- ➔ **Establish dispute-resolution procedures and capacity:** consistent and coherent procedures for REDD-plus dispute-resolution mechanisms need to be established. Critically, this must be accompanied by investment in building the capacity of local district administrations and courts to understand and implement these procedures.
- ➔ **Learn from other countries' experiences:** Ghana is not facing these challenges alone: many countries are struggling to develop fair and effective systems for benefit distribution that are not overly cumbersome or bureaucratic. Donors need to go further in promoting this sort of South-South learning—currently most of the exchange is focused on the technical side of REDD-plus implementation, such as the establishment of MRV systems (while important, this is not the only or largest challenge facing REDD-plus readiness).

Integration with Other Land Uses, Sectors and Development Plans

It is widely recognized that the discourse on REDD-plus must not be limited to the forest sector but should involve a broad range of stakeholders from other sectors. Ultimately, Ghana's REDD-plus will have to be integrated into national land-use, economic-growth and poverty-reduction plans. Given the need to feed a young, growing and increasingly urban population while also reducing deforestation pressures, the agricultural sector in particular is an inseparable part of the REDD-plus debate.

Equally, it is estimated that the majority of locally produced timber used domestically is derived from illegal logging (Birikorang et al. 2007). Ghana has made great strides in beginning to prevent illegal timber from entering its export supply chains, but insufficient attention has been paid to an illegal practice known locally as *chainsaw lumbering*. The reality

is that this cannot be eliminated overnight through improved law enforcement. The locations are remote and difficult to police, and chainsaw lumbering is undertaken by thousands of small crews, providing up to 1 million informal jobs (Osei-Tutu et al. 2010). Shutting down these operations would have major consequences for Ghana's growing economy, at least in the short term—the construction industry, for example, relies heavily on illegal timber.

While Ghana's R-PP is comprehensive with respect to REDD-plus activities (including, for example, restoration, agroforestry and forest management), many of the discussions on implementation still tend to focus on avoided deforestation. There was broad consensus in the dialogue that REDD-plus readiness implementation must maintain the balanced approach described in the R-PP. Given that deforestation rates are slowing in Ghana, the largest benefits might well be accrued from the systematic restoration of degraded forestlands and the locally appropriate diversification of farming systems through the incorporation of on-farm trees.

Several district representatives in Wassa Amenfi West expressed frustration about the lack of funding for district and local land-use planning, observing that these resource limitations prevented them from integrating new initiatives such as REDD-plus with district-level land-use plans. REDD-plus requires the highest-level political commitment, as has been forthcoming in countries such as Guyana. It must be on the agenda of not only the Chief Conservator/Chief Executive of Forests but also of ministers and ideally of the President. On the other hand, REDD-plus also requires effective mechanisms for coordination between national-level plans and those of district assemblies and other local administrative units, such as traditional stool lands. While there are clear advantages in early piloting, dialogue participants noted that several REDD-plus projects under way in Ghana make little, if any, reference to national or district strategies or development plans. This underlines the urgency of establishing framework modalities that can guide the integration of project initiatives with local and national processes. Failure to do so could mean that these valuable early learning experiences are wasted!

Ways forward might include:

- ➔ **An effective cross-sectoral awareness and engagement mechanism:** the Forestry Commission should take the lead in liaising with agencies in other sectors that affect, or are affected by, forest-sector action, and with other cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder mechanisms. Ultimately, REDD-plus needs to be integrated into the national development decision-making frameworks that really matter (see below). As a first step, REDD-plus readiness activities should include an awareness-raising component for national policymakers across various land-use sectors so that different ministerial departments can participate actively in REDD-plus-related decision-making processes.
- ➔ **The differentiation of REDD-plus plans by land-use system:** it will be increasingly important that REDD-plus readiness plans are sufficiently differentiated between the major land-use systems and conditions and that a single blueprint approach is avoided. For example, there could be plans for each of the following:

- High forest zone land-uses, recognizing differences with respect to:
 - intact forest reserves
 - on-reserve forest landscape mosaics (partially degraded and/or reserves with admitted farms)
 - heavily degraded forest reserves
 - off-reserve forest landscape mosaics
 - agricultural lands with perennial woody crops (e.g., cocoa and a range of agroforestry mixes)
- savanna woodlands (e.g., agro-silvicultural systems)
- denuded landscapes (e.g., ex-mining sites, and urban and peri-urban forests).

- ➔ **Identify conflicts and synergies with other sectoral land-use plans:** as part of the REDD-plus readiness process, government should consider initiating a review of other sectoral land-use plans in light of the broad strategies laid out in the R-PP in order to identify potential major conflicts with any future national REDD-plus strategy. Dialogue participants noted that the impacts of other sectors are mentioned briefly in section 2a of the R-PP but that the analysis does not extend to potential conflicts and contradictions between different sectoral policies and plans.
- ➔ **Periodic re-assessments of land-use change processes:** given the dynamic nature of land-use change in Ghana and the unknown consequences of the impacts of climate change and population growth, land-use pressures will inevitably change over time. Today's drivers of deforestation and forest degradation may not be the same as tomorrow's. Government should therefore make provision for periodic reviews of land-use change processes, particularly with respect to the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. A one-off assessment of these pressures at the start of the REDD-plus readiness process is unlikely to be sufficient to maintain the relevance of Ghana's national REDD-plus strategy in the long term.
- ➔ **Focus on forestland restoration and agricultural enhancement:** there is both great potential for and local interest in the restoration of degraded forestland and the improvement of agricultural systems with on-farm tree-planting. Ghana should consider a national assessment to quantify this potential and to identify the areas where such interventions would yield the greatest benefits, in terms of both the enhancement of carbon stocks and rural development.
- ➔ **Install REDD-plus in key national development frameworks:** the above-mentioned cross-sectoral engagement mechanisms can be judged a success when macro-decisions about laws, institutions and budgets favour effective and equitable REDD-plus. Key elements of the national REDD-plus strategy should be reflected in Ghana's Vision 2020, the presidential report on the coordinated program of economic and social development policies,⁸ and other key macro-planning and budgetary frameworks.

Key Actions Needed from Individual Stakeholder Groups in Ghana

For most countries, REDD-plus clearly constitutes a major undertaking. As Hansen *et al.* (2009) noted, REDD-plus in Ghana will “neither be fast nor easy” and will go to the heart of fundamental issues such as land use, property rights and even fundamental economic development decisions. A constant theme in the dialogue was that small incremental changes are unlikely to do the trick and that if Ghana is to tackle deforestation and forest degradation successfully then it will have to address weaknesses and contradictions in the policy system that have existed for almost 100 years. This is no small task: if it was, these problems might have been solved already. Crucially, it is also a task that no single stakeholder group can deliver alone; it will require a national debate that leads to a shared vision on the future of forests, as well as sustained commitment from a broad coalition of actors who have not always worked well together in the past.

Nevertheless, if any country has the potential to put in place a robust approach for addressing these difficult issues it is probably Ghana. A signpost for this is the successful conclusion of negotiations with the European Union on the VPA, which enjoyed broad stakeholder support.

Recognizing that REDD-plus arrangements will require input and effort from all key stakeholder groups, dialogue participants concluded their discussions by identifying some of the immediate and medium-term actions that different stakeholder groups in Ghana should prioritize if progress is to be made on the ways forward identified in Chapter 3.

Forestry Commission and Other Government Agencies

Government clearly has considerable influence in determining the direction and pace of REDD-plus readiness in Ghana. While REDD-plus is unlikely to move forward successfully without cross-sectoral coordination and broad stakeholder involvement, the immediate decisions made by the Forestry Commission and other government agencies (such as the ministries of Lands, Forestry and Mines; Agriculture; Finance, Trade and Industry; and Local Government and Rural Development; as well as the Ghana Cocoa Board and district assemblies) will determine how the REDD-plus process will evolve. There are no guarantees that any particular REDD-plus strategy will work, but several actions and decisions by the Forestry Commission and other agencies can increase or diminish the likelihood of success. These include the following:

- ➔ champion with donors and ministers the case for a comprehensive resourcing package that is sufficient to support the range of necessary REDD-plus readiness activities
- ➔ invest time, effort and resources in building an inclusive and participatory REDD-plus readiness model

- ➔ establish a concerted program of information provision and capacity building, including the development of an information and capacity strategy, information centres and training initiatives
- ➔ steer the development of REDD-plus plans for different land-use systems, focusing particularly on forestland restoration and agricultural enhancement
- ➔ develop and consolidate effective cross-sectoral engagement mechanisms and champion the mainstreaming of REDD-plus into other sectors at the local, district and national levels
- ➔ champion and trigger an analytical review of key legal and political stumbling blocks, and periodically re-assess the processes of land-use change
- ➔ develop opportunities, such as through the current constitutional review, to establish legally robust and practically secure rights for landholders to all trees outside forest reserves, and to secure carbon rights—linked to trees, vegetation and soil
- ➔ provide coordination, national policy development and engagement with international policy processes and discourses on REDD-plus.

Non-governmental Organizations

National and international NGOs and professional associations with links to forest policy or field issues in Ghana continue to be vital players in REDD-plus. NGOs can play a variety of important roles, such as the facilitation of stakeholder participation; the performing of interrogation and “watchdog” functions for state and private-sector agencies; information development; networking; policy advocacy; capacity building; and the implementation of field-based initiatives. Key actions for NGOs include the following:

- ➔ assist government bodies and researchers to develop and disseminate REDD-plus information materials through various media channels
- ➔ assist government to map key stakeholders in the REDD-plus context and help facilitate communication among stakeholder groups
- ➔ in alliance with the Forestry Commission and other government agencies, catalyze and facilitate multi-stakeholder platforms for REDD-plus
- ➔ in cooperation with government agencies, create and run one or more independent information and resource centre(s), which will provide stakeholders with easy access to high-quality information on REDD-plus and may take the lead on an information and communication strategy for REDD-plus

- ➔ widely disseminate information on new policy and legal reform priorities among the public and lobby government to take action on these in the context of REDD-plus readiness
- ➔ assist government in providing guidance and capacity building to different stakeholder groups on planning, negotiating and practising land uses that are appropriate for REDD-plus
- ➔ canvass local views on legitimate benefit-distribution mechanisms and frameworks for REDD-plus under share-cropping arrangements
- ➔ support and engage in international and cross-country exchanges and lesson-learning on experiences with REDD-plus.

Researchers

Researchers in universities and other academic bodies, research arms of government and NGOs have a critical role to play. Key actions for researchers include the following:

- ➔ help prepare materials that can explain fundamental REDD-plus concepts, policies and potential practices in ways that are readily understood by local stakeholders
- ➔ actively participate in multi-stakeholder platforms at all levels
- ➔ research REDD-plus plans for different land-use systems, including a focus on forestland restoration and agricultural enhancement, and frameworks for REDD-plus under share-cropping arrangements
- ➔ assess conflicts and synergies between REDD-plus and other sectoral land-use plans and undertake periodic re-assessments of land-use-change processes
- ➔ study tenure, tree and carbon rights in the context of REDD-plus and consider the implications of new policies and laws—and share this evidence with government and other interested stakeholders
- ➔ examine existing and potential legitimate benefit-distribution mechanisms and dispute-resolution procedures
- ➔ research and share lessons on relevant experiences among stakeholders in other countries
- ➔ Document traditional knowledge and innovative norms and practices that could support REDD-plus.

Private-sector Bodies

A wide range of private-sector bodies are increasingly important to the prospects of REDD-plus in Ghana. These include large-to-medium-scale furniture, window-and-door, flooring, mouldings, turnery and handicrafts manufacturers; rotary veneer mills, plywood mills, sliced veneer mills and sawmills; loggers, employees of timber companies and independent chainsaw operators; trade hands and porters; informal-sector timber wholesalers and retailers; small-scale producers of furniture, windows and doors, carpentry, carving, canoes and handicrafts; biodiversity conservation managers and tourism operators; and biofuel and agribusiness companies. Key actions for such private-sector bodies include the following:

- ➔ help form the new national multi-stakeholder platform and actively participate in multi-stakeholder platforms at all levels
- ➔ lobby government agencies to explore and reach resolution on issues of tenure, tree and carbon rights reform
- ➔ engage with REDD-plus plans for land-use systems over which the private sector has influence
- ➔ participate in the development of dispute-resolution mechanisms
- ➔ Identify other key issues in REDD-plus readiness and lobby government and NGOs to engage with them.

Community-based Organizations

Community groups are becoming increasingly well organized for forest and other land-use management, yet farmers and forest communities have traditionally obtained only limited economic benefits and user rights to trees, despite often deriving significant value from forest products. Landowners, chiefs and other traditional authorities are recognized by the state as the legitimate recipients of timber revenues, and the same may become true of revenues linked to carbon management unless this arrangement is actively questioned. Key actions for community-based organizations include the following:

- ➔ help form the new national multi-stakeholder platform and actively participate in multi-stakeholder platforms at all levels
- ➔ steer and/or participate in information and capacity-building initiatives
- ➔ engage with explorations of legitimate benefit-distribution mechanisms, dispute-resolution procedures and REDD-plus under share-cropping arrangements

- ➔ in reform processes, lobby government, NGOs and the private sector for the local control of tenure, tree and carbon rights
- ➔ identify other key issues in REDD-plus readiness and engage with other stakeholders in exploring and resolving them.

Conclusion

Stakeholders in Ghana have made great progress in a short time in preparing for REDD-plus. But there is much more to do. The TFD dialogue process showed the value of engagement between all those working on REDD-plus and related issues at local, national and international levels. In addition to the stakeholder-specific agenda outlined above, there is much to be gained from strengthening the connections between REDD-plus protagonists in different countries. All this can help generate the momentum needed to realize the promise of REDD-plus and, in so doing, to contribute to real and lasting reform for the benefit of forests and livelihoods.



Field trip participants

Endnotes

- 1 www.theforestsdialogue.org.
- 2 [http://research.yale.edu/gisf/tfd/pdf/fcc/TFD Forests and Climate Statement w Briefing Notes.pdf](http://research.yale.edu/gisf/tfd/pdf/fcc/TFD%20Forests%20and%20Climate%20Statement%20w%20Briefing%20Notes.pdf).
- 3 http://environment.yale.edu/tfd/uploads/TFDReview_InvestingInREDD-plus.pdf.
- 4 Such as the negotiation of a voluntary partnership agreement between the Government of Ghana and the European Union under its Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade program.
- 5 Consultations were conducted in the preparation of the R-PP among stakeholder groups identified through a stakeholder mapping process. This was enhanced in January 2010 with a grant from the Katoomba Group. These consultations are ongoing to achieve broader stakeholder participation in the REDD-plus process nationwide.
- 6 A list of participants can be found in the annex.
- 7 The high forest zone is a high-rainfall zone that makes up about one-third of the country and was once largely covered by forest.
- 8 <http://www.ndpc.gov.gh/GPRS/Ghana's%20Vision%202020%20-%20First%20Step.pdf>.

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Annex: List of Dialogue Participants

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Edward Asare	Forestry Commission, Ghana	Ariel Nieves	Instituto Nacional de Bosques, Guatemala
Alex Asare	Forestry Commission, Ghana	Samuel Nketiah	Tropenbos International, Ghana
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Paul Bosu	Forestry Research Institute of Ghana	Lambert Okrah	The Institute of Cultural Affairs International, Canada
Alex Dadzie	Ghana Timber Association, Ghana	Paul Osei-Tutu	TROPENBOS, Ghana
Gary Dunning	TFD, USA	Bharati Pathak	Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal
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All omissions and inaccuracies in this document are the responsibility of the authors. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the institutions involved, nor do they necessarily represent official NORAD policies.



Created in 1948, **The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** brings together 81 states, 120 government agencies, 800-plus NGOs and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. The Union's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

The Union is the world's largest environmental knowledge network and has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies. The Union is a multicultural, multilingual organization with 1,000 staff located in 62 countries. Its headquarters are in Gland, Switzerland. More information can be found at www.iucn.org.

The Forests Dialogue (TFD), formed in 1999, is an outgrowth of dialogues and activities that began separately under the auspices of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, The World Bank, the International Institute for Environment and Development, and the World Resources Institute. These initiatives converged to create TFD when these leaders agreed that there needed to be a unique, civil society driven, on-going, international multi-stakeholder dialogue forum to address important global forestry issues.

TFD's mission is to address significant obstacles to sustainable forest management through a constructive dialogue process among all key stakeholders. The Forests Dialogue's approach is based on mutual trust, enhanced understanding and commitment to change. Our dialogues are designed to build relationships and to spur collaborative action on the highest priority issues facing the world's forests.

TFD is developing and conducting international multi-stakeholder dialogues on the following issues:

- *Forest Certification*
- *Illegal Logging and Forest Governance*
- *Intensively Managed Planted Forests*
- *Forests and Biodiversity Conservation*
- *Forests and Poverty Reduction*
- *Forests and Climate Change*
- *Investing in Locally-Controlled Forestry*
- *Free, Prior and Informed Consent*

There are currently 24 members of the TFD Steering Committee. The Committee is responsible for the governance and oversight of TFD's activities. It includes representatives of indigenous peoples, the forest products industry, ENGOs, retailers, unions and academia.

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