



Facilitating engagement and building local capacity to improve gender equity and smallholder food security

The West Africa Forest Farm Interface (WAFFI) Project

Key messages

The West Africa Forest–Farm Interface (WAFFI) Project:

- builds the capacity of rural women and men to proactively participate in policy dialogue and knowledge-sharing processes (998 women and men participated in the Auto Appraisals and Participatory Action Research).
- improves understanding of farmer management of multi-use landscapes that combine agriculture, forestry, livestock and natural resource management
- facilitates social learning to draw on local knowledge, to ensure research relevance and to validate scientific findings
- applies a gender-responsive approach to all activities in Burkina Faso and Ghana, ensuring that women make up more than 40% of participants and beneficiaries.

WAFFI is increasing our understanding of farmer management of the forest–farm interface

The forest–farm interface is a complex geographic and temporal mosaic landscape of agricultural and forest land uses. In southern Burkina Faso and northern Ghana, the integration of agriculture, forestry, livestock and natural resource management by smallholder households makes it difficult to separate agricultural land use from forest and tree use in their livelihoods. Unfortunately, such smallholder systems are often poorly accommodated by policies and programs that treat forests and agriculture separately.

The WAFFI project analyzes local management of the forest–farm interface and examines how policy frameworks address the smallholder agriculture and forestry context. The goal is that policy makers, practitioners, scientists and farmer experts actively engage in multistakeholder dialogues and use the evidence generated by WAFFI to define strategies, approaches and actions that effectively support the livelihoods of smallholders managing the forest–farm interface for improved income, food security and equitable benefits.

WAFFI is a collaborative effort by the **Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)**, **The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)** and **Tree Aid**, and is being implemented in two multi-village landscape sites in Ghana and Burkina Faso.

WAFFI is enhancing capacity for policy engagement

WAFFI has adopted a capacity-building strategy based on social adaptive learning, with a bottom-up approach that allows communities to gain space and skills for negotiations and ensures that relevant resource management issues are the focus.

WAFFI introduced an **Auto-Appraisal (AA)** method and a **Participatory Action Research (PAR)** approach, activities that have engaged almost 1,000 farmers (over 40% female). These local experts have identified and are iteratively analyzing challenges, and developing locally adapted solutions related to:

- wood fuel access and management
- resource conflicts between pastoralists and farmers
- negotiations of forest restoration agreements with the government
- strategies to increase women's income from non-timber forest products.

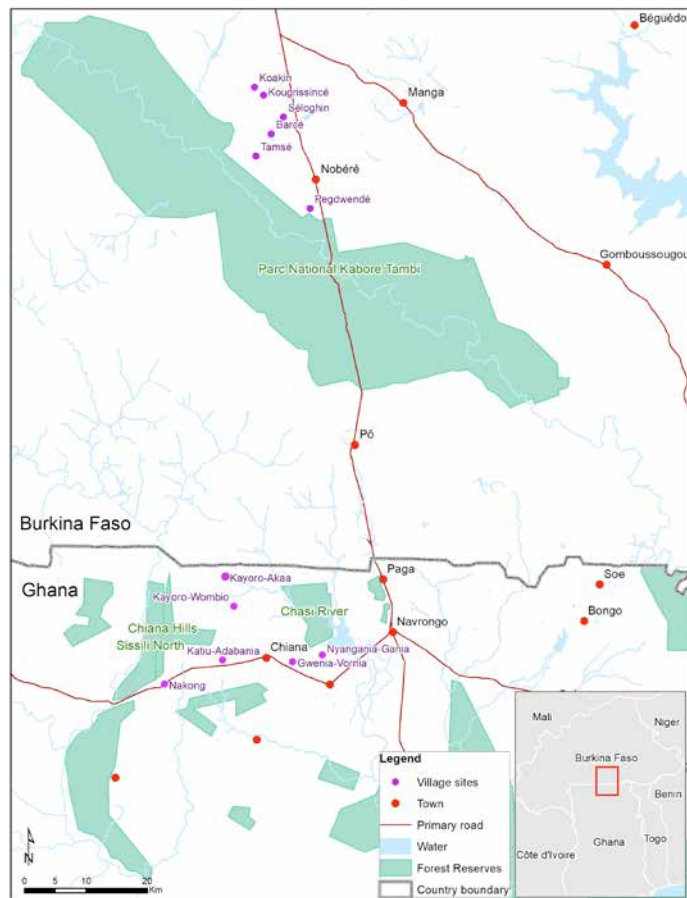
Using multidisciplinary research to scale up lessons learned

Using the forest farm interface approach, the WAFFI team analyzes landscape management processes and pathways for changes and impacts from multiple perspectives.

CIFOR analyzed how national policy frameworks and institutional arrangements create enabling conditions or constraints for different management strategies at the local scale. This work included 54 focus group interviews with over 700 participants (43% female) that identified local perceptions of challenges and opportunities from groups such as male and female farmers, youth, fuelwood producers, hunters and Fulani pastoralists.

ICRAF has used the **Land Degradation Surveillance Framework (LDSF)** methodology for systematic landscape-level assessments of soil and ecosystem health at WAFFI landscape sites. ICRAF is also using **Polyscape** methods to facilitate participatory mapping to identify local land use classifications and ecosystem services, particularly those associated with trees.

CIFOR is using a **Gender-Responsive Value Chain Analysis (GRVCA)** framework to illustrate differentiated roles, resource access patterns and benefit distribution patterns associated with marketing networks for stakeholders involved in the harvest, post-harvest and transformation of key forest-farm interface products.



WAFFI project locations

Facilitating knowledge sharing and dialogue

To enhance adaptive social learning, the WAFFI team has organized **Village Exchange Meetings** to evaluate research results and identify common themes and work toward through locally adapted solutions emerging from the research. The project team has also facilitated **multistakeholder dialogue platforms** to engage policy makers, practitioners and village representatives in knowledge sharing and co-learning. The 150 participants (35% female) in these meetings assessed evidence generated by the project to define strategies, approaches and actions that will effectively support the livelihoods of smallholders managing the forest-farm interface for improved income, food security and equitable benefits.

Contact

Peter Cronkleton, Senior Scientist, CIFOR
P.Cronkleton@cgiar.org

cifor.org | forestsnews.cifor.org