

**Governing multifunctional landscapes in Sub-Saharan Africa: Managing trade-offs between social and ecological impacts (GML) project**

# Pathways for implementing territorial approaches to zero deforestation commodities in Ghana



Financed by the European Union and led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), GML is a four-year project implemented across Sub-Saharan Africa that aims to address key knowledge, technical and policy gaps related to the global impacts of the FLEGT Action Plan, as well as forest and land governance, trade in informal and legal timber products, deforestation-related commodity-based agribusiness, woodfuel and ultimately sustainable forest and land-use management and improvement of livelihoods.

Amongst sub-Saharan African countries, Ghana is leading the way in defining climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and securing commitments to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in key commodity sectors: cocoa and oil palm.<sup>1</sup> Despite these efforts, however, agriculture and forestry emissions remain the largest source of greenhouse emissions (54.4%) and continue to rise.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, policy-makers, donors and private sector are recognizing the urgency to move from commitment to action to secure sustainable futures for food security and agricultural development in Ghana.

<sup>1</sup> Cocoa through the Ghana Cocoa-Forest REDD+ Program (GCFRP) and the Cocoa and Forest Initiative (CFI); Oil palm through the National Interpretation of the Roundtable for Sustainable Oil Palm (RSPO) Principles and Criteria, and the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA) 2020's signature African Palm Oil Initiative (APOI).

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 2019. National Greenhouse Gas Inventory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, EPA: Accra, page 30.

Governing Multifunctional Landscapes (GML) aims to build the business case, strategies and action pathways for sustainable landscape development within selected jurisdictions in Ghana. This entails responsible environmental governance and land-use planning that integrates food crops, agro-commodities, and forest trees; resilient agriculture systems that support local communities and local economies; and a healthy private sector that strategically invests in inclusive green growth.

Through this project, CIFOR will work through partnerships to mobilize multi-stakeholder landscape platforms to negotiate jurisdictional priorities for sustainable agricultural intensification and inclusive low emissions development.

The outcome of the project will be a Landscape Development Strategy co-designed by the local authorities, traditional authorities, agricultural producers and forest users, and companies and traders sourcing agricultural commodities from the selected jurisdictions. It must incorporate the environmental, social and economic development goals of the jurisdictional authorities and the constituencies that they serve.

## Our pillars

- **Sustainable intensification** aims to increase yields per unit land area through good agricultural practices and improved input and service supply chains.
- **Low emissions development** pathways work towards economic growth and development that builds climate resilience by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration.
- **Inclusive value chains** link smallholder producers, women, youth, and other marginalized laborers with other agricultural commodity value chain actors to mutually improve productivity, efficiency and benefit-sharing.



Ghana's Atiwa landscape is a multifunctional landscape, including cocoa production, mining, and logging. | Photo by Ahtziri Gonzalez/CIFOR

## Our objectives

- Design an actionable, evidence-based Landscape Development Strategy that responds to local priorities, needs and interests.
- Develop a locally-owned, participatory and adaptable governance structure that is capable of supporting, overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the Landscape Development Strategy.
- Promote learning amongst and improved coordination between key stakeholders in the landscape.
- Pilot test and validate implementation mechanisms for the Landscape Development Strategy.
- Identify funding needs, gaps and strategies, including opportunities for leveraging (donor) funding for full implementation of the Landscape Development Strategy.

## The Atiwa landscape

The GML landscape platforms will be convened in two jurisdictions in the Atiwa landscape in southeastern Ghana: Kwaebibirem Municipality and Atiwa West District, both located on the western side of the Atewa Range Forest Reserves.

Atewa Range Forest Reserves are under threat from illegal mining and logging, smallholder cocoa expansion, and other interests. Atiwa Forest has been designated as a Globally Significant Biodiversity Area which provides critical ecosystem services to surrounding farmlands and communities primarily through microclimate regulation and water resources. The headwaters of three major river systems originate in the Atewa Range, supplying water to greater Accra and much of southeastern Ghana.<sup>a</sup>

Kwaebibirem and Atiwa West jurisdictions map onto a dynamic landscape where oil palm, cocoa, citrus, and now rubber, rice, and other valuable horticultural crops compete for land and farmer resources. Kwaebibirem is the heart of the oil palm production in the Eastern Region with strong knowledge institutions and a private sector committed to the principles of sustainable oil palm. Atiwa West is an emerging district established in 2018, and in close proximity to vibrant local and regional markets. These jurisdictions are uniquely poised to pilot cross-sector approaches to sustainable landscape development, where stakeholders expressed the need for coordination, facilitated planning, and clear action pathways.

<sup>a</sup> Densu, Birim and Ayensu Rivers

## What are jurisdictional approaches?

- Jurisdictional approaches emerged initially as a way to implement national and subnational strategies for REDD+, but have since been adapted for delivering on private and public commitments to zero-deforestation supply chains, sustainable sources, and better environmental governance.
- Jurisdictional approaches center on multi-stakeholder collaboration, negotiation and decision-making; as well as capacity and institution building within jurisdictional boundaries. This means that private, public and civil society actors are brought together to improve supply chain sustainability.
- Jurisdictional approaches typically seek to reconcile three, often conflicting, objectives: enhancing production on existing farmland, conserving natural resources and improving carbon stocks, and being inclusive of and creating value for smallholders. Dissociating agriculture expansion and deforestation, and leveraging private sector expertise, market networks, and capital are considered integral to these efforts.

Cover photos by (1,2,3) Ahtziri Gonzalez/CIFOR

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