# SAFEGUARDS REPORT

## SAFEGUARDS CAPACITY TRAINING FOR FORESTRY COMMISSION STAFF

FORESTRY COMMISSION TRAINING CENTER
(FCTC)

CLIMATE CHANGE DIRECTORATE

**JANUARY 2024**

Contents

**Introduction**

The Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance (LEAF) Coalition is a unique public private partnership focused on halting tropical deforestation by 2030. By bringing together forest governments, the private sector, donor governments, Indigenous Peoples and local communities and civil society, LEAF aims to raise and deploy the finance needed to tackle deforestation by making tropical forests worth more alive than dead. LEAF works at scale, supporting large scale REDD+ programs to reduce emissions from deforestation across entire countries, or subnational jurisdictions, which involve all key stakeholders, including Indigenous peoples and local communities.

26 Forests Governments (national and subnational) have expressed an interest to work with LEAF to reduce tropical deforestation. Nine, including Ghana, have signed Letters of Intent (LOIs) to supply high integrity credits to the LEAF Coalition.

The LEAF Coalition is fully focused on integrity, only purchasing forest carbon credits that meet the stringent criteria of the robust and independent Architecture for REDD+ Transactions / The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard (ART/TREES) which guarantees the highest levels of environmental integrity and social safeguards.

As part of expanding Ghana's forest carbon portfolio in line with accessing the voluntary carbon market, Ghana through the Forestry Commission has accessed ART/TREES.

Following the introductory training held in December 2023 to introduce REDD+ project implementers and proponents to the LEAF and ART TREES, the Forestry Commission (FC) with funding support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized a set of capacity building trainings to further build capacities of FC staff. The trainings targeted the Regional, District and Assistant managers of the Forest Services Division (FSD) and Park managers of the Wildlife Division (WD) within the regions that constitute the LEAF area. Two trainings were held on 18th and 24th January 2024 by the Climate Change Directorate (CCD) of the FC. Both days had the same agenda and objectives, but

different set of participants, grouped by regions. The purpose of these trainings was to build the capacities of stakeholders on the ART/TREES in the context of the LEAF area, which covers ten regions, encompassing the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP) area. On the first day, the training was attended by 42 participants in total. Of these, 30 were males and 12 were females. The second day had an attendance of 57, of which 43 were males and 14 were females.

## Proceedings

The trainings started off with a warm welcome from the National REDD+ Secretariat, after which participants were allowed to introduce themselves. Participants were introduced to the purpose of the trainings. These trainings provided the opportunity to discuss the LEAF coalition and ART/TREES vis-à-vis the ART/TREES safeguards requirements to ensure understanding about the ART/TREES expectations of safeguards operationalization. Staff of CCD and the resource person took participants through presentations on LEAF and ART/TREES, after which questions were asked and answers provided. Discussions followed each presentation.

## Presentation on LEAF

The manager, programs, of the CCD presented on this. This presentation covered what LEAF Coalition is and what Ghana has done so far with regards to it. A brief introduction was given on the ART/TREES and its relation to LEAF.

The aim of the LEAF coalition was explained in summary to provide the finance needed to enable tropical and subtropical forest governments (national and subnational) to move more rapidly towards ending deforestation, while supporting them in achieving their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

In 2021, Ghana through the FC successfully submitted a proposal to Emergent Forest Finance Accelerator, under the LEAF for the sale of Carbon Credit for years 2025 and 2026. Submission of REDD+ results were based on the robust ART/TREES.

Emergent is the non-profit convenor and coordinator of the LEAF Coalition. It enters into parallel contracts, or Emissions Reductions Purchase Agreements (ERPAs), with forest governments selling credits on one side, and with LEAF Coalition corporate buyers and donor governments on the other. This enables Emergent to offer credits from one forest nation to multiple buyers via a single contract, whilst buyers, through their single contract with Emergent, can purchase credits from a range of Forest Governments.

**What has been done:**

- Ghana has submitted a Concept Note
- Ghana has submitted all documents required to be registered on the ART Registry
- Ghana has developed a reference level for TREES for the period 2012 to 2016; 9,606,429 tons of CO2e
- Ghana has achieved ERs within the Monitoring Period: 2017-2021
- Ghana has submitted the TREES Registration Document & and TREES Monitoring Report
- Ghana has signed an Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement with Emergent for vintage years 2017-2019 @ $10/ton for up to $50 million
- Ghana has engaged a Validation and Verification Body to validate and verify its submission


**Presentation on ART/TREES**

Tropenbos Ghana's director, acting as the resource person, gave a presentation on ART/TREES. This covered the overview, aim and vision of ART/TRESS, eligibility, safeguards requirements, ART/TREES cycle and discussion about perspective and next steps for Ghana

**Overview, aim and vision of ART/TRESS**

The vision of ART is to provide confidence needed in the integrity of forest emissions reductions to unlock new, large-scale investments to protect and restore forests and reward countries that are delivering those results.

The overview of ART presents it as a global voluntary carbon program (architecture) to register, verify and issue high quality REDD+ emissions reduction credits to countries and jurisdictions.

The overview of TREES also presents it as a precise technical, safeguard, verification, and registration requirements for national and jurisdictional crediting of emission reductions from reduced deforestation and degradation.

**Eligible TREES participation**

- Participant must be national government or subnational government with national approval
- Registration of subnational accounting areas that meet TREES eligibility requirements allowed until December 31, 2030.
- Boundaries of subnational accounting: one or several jurisdictions no more than one level down from national.
- Subnational areas shall encompass a minimum area of 2.5 million hectares of forest.

Technical requirements:

- Audit
- style validation / verification and registration required,
- Legal aspects
- Forest monitoring and reference level setting
- Accounting: non
- permanence, leakage, and uncertainties

- Safeguards

## ART/TREES safeguards requirements

Safeguards key requirements/eligibility criteria aligned to UNFCCC Cancun safeguards and core safeguards requirements:

National

- Having addressed and respected the safeguards
- Having submitted the most recent Summary of Information (SoI) to UNFCCC for any year where Results Based Payments (RBP) under TREES are sought
- Having a digital or analog system for providing information on safeguards (Safeguards Information System (SIS))

Subnational (interim)

- Having addressed and respected the safeguards at the scale of REDD+ implementation applicable to the Participant in consistency with national legislation and/or safeguards conformance at the national level
- Having submitted a SoI or safeguards report at scale consistent with national reporting to UNFCCC for RBPs year under TREES
- Demonstrating safeguards tracking and/or monitoring tools are consistent with national tracking or tools, in particular with SIS

## Structure of safeguards elements & reporting

Each Cancun safeguard unpacked into 16 themes, define conditions that must be met to address and respect safeguards. These comprise 44 indicators categorized under three types,

- ➢ Structure: demonstrate relevant governance arrangements (e.g., policies, laws, and institutional arrangements) in place.

- ➢ Process: demonstrate that relevant institutional mandates, processes, procedures, and/or mechanisms are in place and enforced.
- ➢ Outcome: demonstrate implementation outcomes, including how outcome(s) have been identified and are or will be monitored

**ART/TREES safeguards reporting**

1st crediting period:

Participants report conformance against all structure and process indicators plus present plan for achieving conformance with the outcome indicators (or report conformance with outcome indicators)

2nd crediting period:

Participants report conformance with all 3-types indicators. All indicators must be met within 5 years, before beginning of 2$^{nd}$ crediting period

- Subnational Participants, safeguards aligned and consistent with national procedures and/or applicable legislation
- Summaries of information and SIS can be used to provide information and demonstrate conformance.

**The ART/TREES cycle**

Participant selects a Validation and Verification Body (VVB) from list of approved ART VVB to verify and validate all documents and activities.

| Validation | Verification |
|---|---|
| TREES Registration Document | TREES Monitoring Reports |
| Year 1 | Years 1, 3 and 5 (optional years 2 & 4) |

| Conducted against information provided by Participant in Registration document | Conducted against evidence for safeguards indicators, Registration document & Monitoring report |
|---|---|
| Validation Report (within 12 months of the kickoff) | Verification Report and Statement (within 12 months of the kickoff) |

The Secretariat will request revisions as needed and submits recommendation to ART Board for approval and credit issuance.

The ART Registry will contain Participant information, program documentation, V&V Reports, records of serialized credit issuance, credit cancellation, transfer, and retirement data, and a pooled buffer account.

**Discussion about perspective and next steps for Ghana**
**Preliminary TREES safeguards assessment -findings**

| SIS requirement | Yes-Have either a digital or analogue system for providing information on safeguards |
|---|---|
| SOI requirement | Yes-Have SOI submitted May 2019<br>No–Need to submit the most recent SOI to the UNFCCC for any year where results-based payments under TREES are sought (gap for information after May 2019) |
| Reporting on Cancun Safeguards | Conformant on structure indicators, partially on process indicators, potentially non-conformant currently on some outcome indicators |
| Verification of compliance with requirements | By accredited verification body. Must conform with all indicators after 5 years. |

## Assessment findings by safeguard/theme

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 / SG A | 1.1 Consistency with forest programs | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| | 1.2 Consistency with international commitments | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| 2 / SG B | 2.1 Access to information | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| | 2.2 Transparency, anti-corruption, benefit sharing | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| | 2.3 Land tenure rights | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| | 2.4 Access to justice | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| 3 / SG C | 3.1 Identify Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| | 3.2 Traditional knowledge | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| | 3.3 Respect/fulfil IPLC rights | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| 4 / SG D | 4.1 Stakeholder participation | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| | 4.2 IPLC participation | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| 5 / SG E | 5.1 Non-conversion of natural forests | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| | 5.2 Conservation of natural forests & biodiversity and ecosystem services | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| | 5.3 Social & environmental benefits | Structure | Process | Outcome |
| 6 / SG F | 6.1 Risks of reversals | -- | Process | -- |
| 7 / SG G | 6.2 Risks of displacement | -- | Process | -- |

## Gaps identified (preliminary):

- Evidence of conformance with several structure indicators available, some additional information needed for other structure indicators (e.g.,2.2 on transparency and prevention of corruption; 3.1 on respect of traditional knowledge; 4.2 participation of IPLC; 5.1-5.3 on non-conversion of natural forests, protection of forest, biodiversity and ecosystem services and enhancement of benefits).

- Additional information is needed to show conformance with process indicators and few structure indicators (priority).
- Information available on conformance of certain outcome indicators, there is the alternative of having a plan for conformance for outcome indicators.

## Q & A

**Q.** Will the GCFRP area overlap with the LEAF area?

**A.** The GCFRP area is nested within the LEAF area so there will be no overlap.

**Q.** If the GCFRP is nested within the LEAF area, would there not be double counting of emissions?

**A.** The GCFRP area is not viable for payment under LEAF for the period the GCFRP is set to run. It has already been committed and as such will be subtracted from that of the entire LEAF area. The years before the GCFRP period, dubbed vintage years, are however viable for sale, which is 2017-2019.

**Q.** How are we ensuring emissions sold by private entities / plantations are taken note in avoidance of double counting?

**A.** The government in its dealings has to always make sure these sold emissions by private entities/ plantations are subtracted from overall emissions of any area in question.

**Q.** Are all areas under GCFRP getting payments?

**A.** Not all areas were paid due to the HIA approach implemented. The necessary governance structures for the remaining areas are being developed and prepared for subsequent payments.

**Q.** Is there any policy or law regulating carbon market in Ghana?

**A.** The EPA is working on a framework in collaboration with other relevant entities for the regulation of carbon and engagement with the carbon market.


**Q.** With regards to benefits sharing, is there a way to identify the contributions of each stakeholder, that is, what activities they are carrying out. We know there are different stakeholders involved in different restoration activities. This is important in order to give what each is due per their input when benefits are accessed and avoid double counting as well.

**A.** The benefits sharing plan used under the GCFRP will be one of the basis for benefits distribution under the ART/TREES and if the need for modifications arise upon further consultations, it will be done and implemented. A thorough stakeholder analysis was done under the GCFRP to this effect. As registration is ongoing, stakeholders outside the GCFRP area but within the larger leaf area are being identified and their activities catalogued to know how they are contributing to emission reductions. Any concerns will be addressed when consultations on the benefit sharing arrangement are underway.


**Q.** Which VVB did Ghana settle on for the LEAF?

**A.** Ghana nominated SCS Global since we already had some experience with them under the GCFRP.


**Evaluation and Conclusion**

In closing, the participants thanked the organizers for organizing this training and providing the platform for active discussions. The participants gave assurance that the knowledge acquired would help them to carry out activities effectively and in appropriate

manner. They indicated that the training was a wonderful opportunity to gain and share facts, knowledge, and insights for the implementation of project activities.

The CCD thanked everyone for their continuous efforts for the successful organization of the training. They stressed on the importance of having a collaborative team approach going forward and indicated that the CCD will continue providing support where necessary.

An evaluation of the training was conducted at the end of each day's training. A significant number gave positive feedback and ratings. Suggestions from participants will be incorporated to improve subsequent trainings.



## Going forward
- Undertake continuous stakeholder capacity/awareness on LEAF/ART-TREES
- Develop a Benefit Sharing plan for the Pre-LEAF Transaction
- Undertake validation and verification of the LEAF program

## Annexes
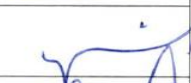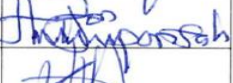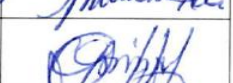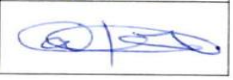
### Annex 1: List Of Participants

**ATTENDANCE SHEET**

| NAME | M/F | ORGANIZATION | LOCATION | CONTACT | SIGNATURE |
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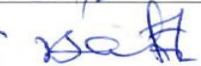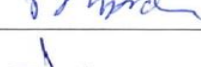
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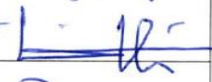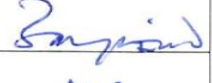
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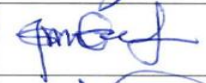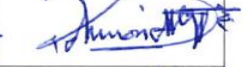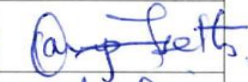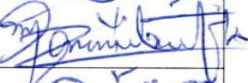
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| ✓ | Abbey Anita A. Anerkai | F | FSD | Amaranan | 0501366859 0552521013 | *(signature)* | ✓ |
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| ✓ | Emmanuel Ntiako | M | FSD | Sunyani | 0544551230 | *signature* | ✓ |
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| NAME | M/F | ORGANIZATION | LOCATION | CONTACT | SIGNATURE |
|------|-----|--------------|----------|---------|-----------|
| Rebecca Baning Oppan | F | FSD | Kofridua | 0244530557 | Oppan |
| Francis Bobbey | M | FSD | Sunyani | 0244169587 | FBb |
| Emmanuel Antwi | M | FSD | Kyebi | 0243151287 | |
| Onane Amankwaa | M | FSD | Begoro | 0242107404 | |
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## Annex 2: Gallery

First day

Second day

## Annex 3: Evaluation form

**CAPACITY BUILDING ON ART TREES**

Name: _____

Position: _____

Region/ District: _____

Please indicate your impressions of the items listed below.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The training met my expectations. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. I will be able to apply the knowledge learned. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. The content was organized and easy to follow. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. The quality of instruction was good. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Participation and interaction were encouraged. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. Adequate time was provided for questions and discussion. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

7. How do you rate the training overall?

| Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Very poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

8. What aspects of the training could be improved?