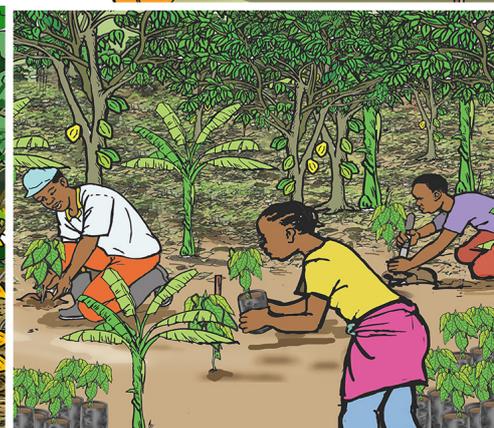
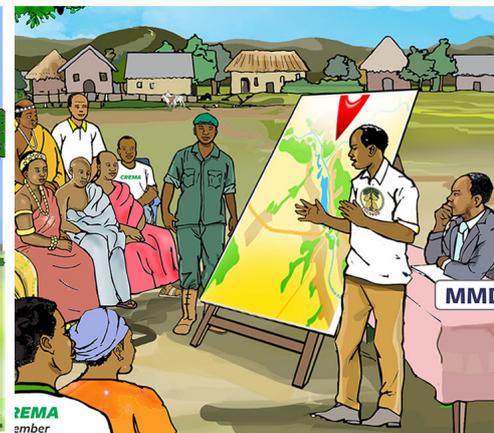
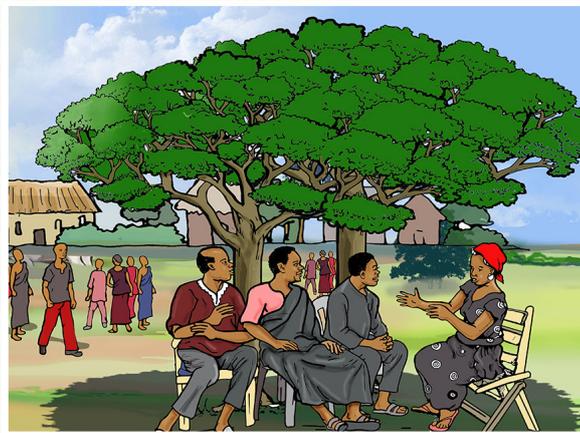




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THE GHANA COCOA FOREST REDD+ PROGRAM (GCFRP)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)



1. What is Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program (GCFRP)?

The GCFRP is a REDD+ program designed to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation within the cocoa forest landscape of Ghana. It is being implemented by the Forestry Commission, COCOBOD, private sector and civil society organizations among others.

2. What are the objectives of GCFRP?

The objective of GCFRP is to undertake activities to secure the future of Ghana's forests and make the cocoa sector climate-resilient, whilst sustaining and enhancing income and livelihood opportunities for farmers and forest users in all the cocoa-growing areas of Ghana.

3. What are the conditions for participating in the activities of the GCFRP?

The GCFRP is open to all cocoa farmers and other farmers who are willing to implement climate-smart agricultural practices. Community members and farmers are only required to actively participate in the activities of the GCFRP.

4. Who are the stakeholders of the GCFRP?

The major stakeholders of the GCFRP are Farmers, Traditional Authorities, Forestry Commission, COCOBOD, District Assemblies, Cocoa Private Sector Companies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and some Development Partners such as the World Bank.

6. What are the types of benefits under the GCFRP?

There are two types of benefits. These are carbon and non-carbon benefits.

7. What constitutes carbon benefit?

Carbon benefits represent benefits that result from emission reductions payments. This consists of payments to farmers and their communities as a result of trees planted and nurtured in their cocoa farms or other lands, with strict adherence to safeguards including not planting cocoa in forest reserves, and not cutting trees illegally, which will lead to the absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by plants. These benefits will be delivered in the form of monetary and non-monetary benefits. Community people will only benefit from non-monetary carbon benefits in the form of agro-inputs, farm services, etc.



8. What constitutes non-carbon benefits?

The non-carbon benefits are the additional co-benefits resulting from the GCFRP activities, such as additional livelihoods support, cocoa yield improvements, shading from planted trees, improvements in the climate for good cocoa cultivation and many other similar indirect benefits.

9. What will be the use of the benefits that communities receive?

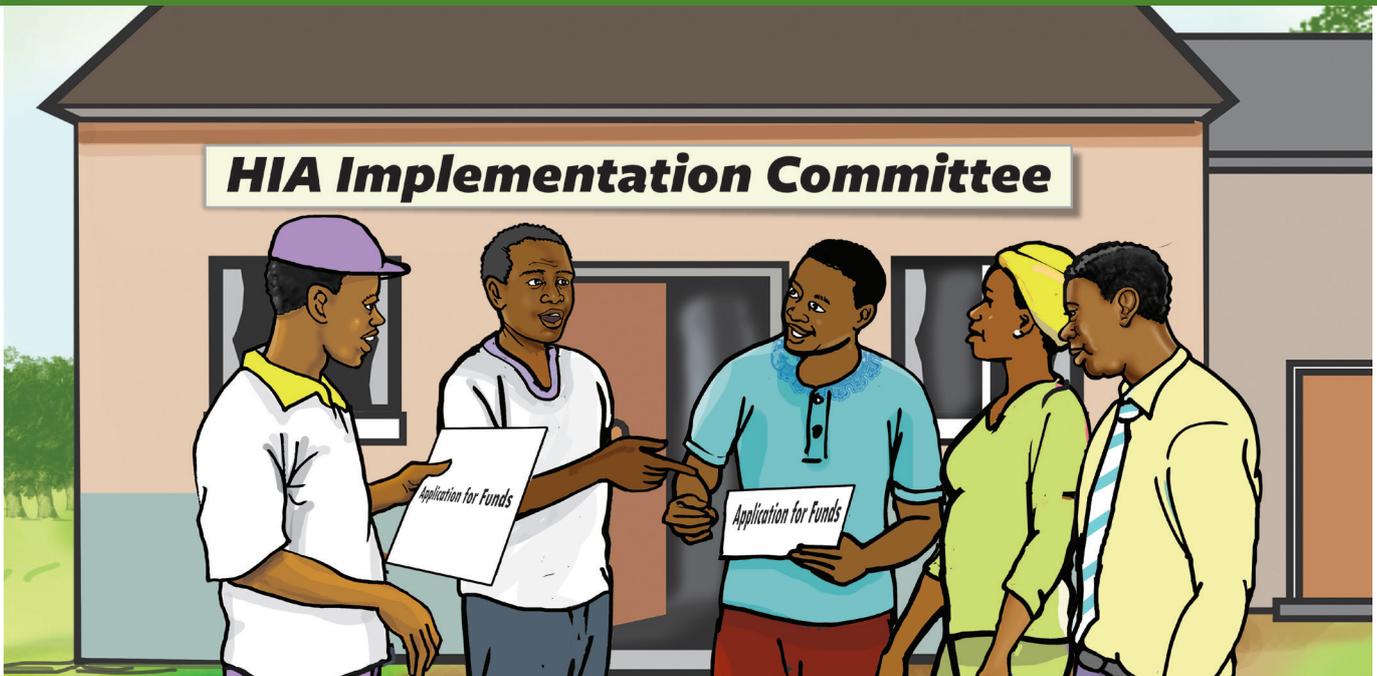
Selected communities that have actively participated in the GCFRP will get non-monetary carbon benefits and other non-carbon benefits. Communities can use the non-monetary carbon benefits to build boreholes, improve electrification in the community, build schools, and other development needs they may have. The non-carbon benefits, such as cocoa yield improvements, rehabilitation of old cocoa farms, and improvements in the climate for good cocoa cultivation will result in improved livelihood and well-being of communities and their people.

10. How will money from GCFRP to the community be managed?

The money from the GCFRP will be managed at two levels. At the national level, a committee, made up of representatives from the National House of Chiefs, the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands, the Ministry of Finance, the World Cocoa Foundation, and three representations from CSOs/NGOs will act on the fair distribution of Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA) benefits to the respective HIAs. This committee is called the REDD+ Dedicated Account Steering Committee. At the landscape level, the HIA Implementation Committee (HIC) will manage the funds that will be allocated to the HIAs. The HIC is made up of a consortium of partners (government, private sector and NGOs/CSOs) and HMB members.

11. What benefits go to individuals?

Individuals who do not plant cocoa in forest reserves, and do not fell trees illegally but directly get involved in the activities of the GCFRP such as tree planting in cocoa farms will gain non-monetary carbon benefits in the form of fertilizers and other farming inputs. These inputs will be given to only farmers who have organized themselves into a cooperative. Individuals can also gain non-carbon benefits, such as cocoa yield improvements, rehabilitation of old cocoa



farms, as well as improvements in the climate for good cocoa cultivation, which will result in improved development and enhance the well-being of communities and their people.

12. Who receives monetary and non-monetary carbon benefits?

The monetary benefits are benefits that will be given to selected stakeholders in the form of money (cash). These stakeholders will use the cash benefit to finance their activities relating to climate-smart cocoa for cocoa farmers, forest reserve patrols, and improved governance of the HIA landscapes for sustainable land use interventions. Only Forestry Commission, COCOBOD, selected Traditional Authorities, and District/Municipal Assemblies in the HIA landscape will get monetary carbon benefits.

The non-monetary benefits are benefits farmers and their communities who have actively participated in the GCFRP will gain. These will be in the form of fertilizers and other farming inputs. These inputs will be given to only farmers who have organized themselves into a cooperative.

13. Who are the HIA functional Units?

These are community-led representatives that support governance and decision-making processes at different levels of

representation. There are four HIA functional units namely: Community, CREMA or Zonal Executive Committee (CEC/ZEC), Sub-HIA Executive Committee (SHEC), HIA Management Board (HMB). The HMB forms the apex decision-making body of the entire governance structure.

The HMB represents farmers, community people, and other stakeholders at the strategic level so that they can make effective decisions that will promote the realization of the GCFRP outcome.

14. How is the HIA governance structure formed?

Communities are engaged at the community level to create awareness and uptake of GCFRP and, thereby creating the need for participation in the HIA governance arrangements. At the community level, individuals from various social groupings (farmer groups, cocoa cooperatives, women groups, traditional authorities, and minority groups) are either nominated or voted on a voluntary basis to be part of this first-level (basic) governance structure known as the Community Resources Management Committee (CRMC).

In moving up the governance structure, a number of communities are clustered at the CREMA/Zonal level. Community representatives at this level are elected to form the CREMA/Zonal Executive Committee



(CEC/ZEC). CREMA/Zonal areas are further grouped into large areas forming the Sub-HIA. Community representatives at the Sub-HIA level are similarly elected to form the Sub-HIA Executive Committee (SHEC). The summation of all Sub-HIAs constitutes an HIA.

Therefore, the HIA Management Board (HMB) which forms the apex decision-making body of the entire HIA governance structure is constituted by elected/nominated representatives from the various Sub-HIAs. Communities are guided by individuals with integrity, availability, passion, and commitment in choosing their representatives.

15. What is the role of the communities in the GCFRP program?

The role of the communities is to actively participate in tree planting exercises within cocoa farms and not cut trees illegally, nor establish cocoa farms in the forest reserves but participate in all GCFRP activities. Generally, communities are expected to perform the following roles:

- Adoption of climate-smart cocoa farming practices including planting and management of shade trees on farms and farmlands.
- Avoid encroachment into forested areas for farming activities or illegal logging or small-scale mining.

- Compliance with HIA landscape by-laws and management plan.
- Nurturing/Tending of trees

16. What benefit does a cocoa farmer get from keeping trees on his farm?

The trees provide shade from high temperatures that kill cocoa trees and seedlings. The trees also improve the soil fertility in the cocoa farm. When matured, they can be harvested by the farmer for revenue or for personal use.

17. What benefit does the GCFRP has for farmers who plant trees?

Farmers who plant recommended timber trees in their cocoa farms will contribute to carbon dioxide removal from the atmosphere. This will generate non-monetary carbon benefits over time, which will be shared with their farmer cooperatives and the communities they reside in.

18. How can farmers get tree seedlings for planting?

Be part of a cocoa cooperative, farmers' association of licensed cocoa buying companies (LBCs) or contact NGOs/CSOs working within your area to benefit from tree seedling distribution. You can also contact the district Forest Services Division or Cocoa Health and Extension Division closest to you for seedlings.



Generally, the following are some examples of the GCFRP benefits to farmers:



HIA farmers benefit from **increased yields**



HIA farmers benefit from **income diversification**



HIA farmers benefit from **increased climate resilience**



HIAs benefit from **improved protection of the forest**



HIA farmers, communities and Traditional Authority benefit from **Carbon Fund**

19. How can farmers secure trees planted on their farms?

Farmers can secure trees in cocoa farms by registering all planted and nurtured trees within their cocoa farms. Farmers must endeavour to plant trees according to the recommended planting spacing and in line. This is to differentiate planted trees from naturally occurring trees. It is important for farmers to engage the district offices of the Forest Services Division to understand all the procedures for cutting trees in farmlands and other off-reserve areas. This will help them to better protect their trees from being harvested by illegal chainsaw operators and timber contractors.



20. How many trees should be planted to qualify for benefits under the GCFRP?

While the GCFRP does not have a strict provision to qualify a person to participate in the program, it is recommended that all cocoa farmers should plant at least 18 timber trees in every hectare of a cocoa farm. Farmers are also encouraged to plant as many trees as possible on all other farms and lands that are available for planting. Farmers are also encouraged to adhere to safeguards requirements under the REDD+ emission reductions program.

21. What is the status of tree registration?

Tree registration is ongoing. Farmers are to visit any district office of the Forest Services Division to get their trees registered.

22. What criteria will be used for the community project selection under the GCFRP?

The following factors will be considered:

- 1) Environmental projects that align with the objectives of the GCFRP
- 2) Development and social welfare projects for which there is a significant need. Projects that bring leverage funding from the private sector or from the MMDAs will be prioritized.

Examples of eligible types of environmental projects are conservation of community lands

under Management Plan, incentives (and rules) to support the adoption of high-shade (climate-smart) cocoa, HIA forest monitoring teams and activities and diversification of sustainable agricultural livelihoods.

23. What has been achieved so far under the GCFRP?

Some achievements include the following:

1. Development of community governance structures
2. Verification and validation of the first monitoring report
3. Provision of alternative Livelihood to some farmers
4. Supply of tree seedlings to some farmers

So far, farmers have planted a number of trees in their cocoa farms. Illegal cutting of trees has also reduced as well as the cocoa establishment in forest reserves. But farmers and community members need to do more of these activities and fully participate in all GCFRP activities so that the goal of the program will be achieved.

24. What portion of the benefit goes to HIA-level beneficiaries?

HIA-level stakeholders would benefit from 69% of the carbon benefit. However, The HIA-level stakeholders would split their allotment according to the following percentages: farmer groups (58%), Traditional Authority (3%), and HIA communities (39%).



25. What role does COCOBOD play in the GCFRP?

COCOBOD provides cocoa extension support on climate-smart cocoa to all cocoa farmers. They also raise cocoa and timber tree seedlings for farmers to rehabilitate old cocoa farms. They also train farmers through the farmer business school to enable farmers increase productivity through profit and loss analysis, diversification, good record keeping, etc.

26. How are the HMB members selected?

The HMB is set up with a conscious consideration of creating space for a balanced representation of individuals from the Sub-HIA level to be well represented on the HMB. The selection of HMB representatives is subjected to a robust, competitive electoral process involving nominations, vetting, manifesto reading, and voting by a secret ballot. They go through the process of being represented at the community level, CREMA/Zonal level, and Sub-HIA level.

27. What is the Forestry Commission doing to protect trees planted by farmers?

The Forestry Commission is sensitizing farmers on the regulatory regime on the planting of trees and supporting the registration of planted trees.

28. Does the Modified Taungya System (MTS) farmers qualify to benefit from GCFRP?

Yes, MTS farmers' activities contribute to emission reductions as they plant and tend trees.

29. Why are farmers not receiving cash benefits?

Through transparent consultations carried out for the development of the BSP, the stakeholders including farmers indicated a preference for receiving farm inputs as opposed to cash benefits.

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For more information, please contact:

1. Forestry Commission: www.fcghana.org
2. Solidaridad West Africa: www.solidaridadnetwork.org