



SECOND SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ADDRESSING AND RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS IN GHANA



July 2019 – June 2023

List of Acronyms

AU	African Union
ART	Architecture for REDD Transactions
BSP	Benefits Sharing Plan
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCD	Climate Change Directorate
CFIs	Cocoa and Forest Initiatives
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
COCOBOD	Ghana Cocoa Board
COP	Conference of Parties
CREMAs	Community Resource Management Areas
CRMCS	Community Resources Management Committee
CSE	Carbon Stock Enhancement
DRM	Dispute Resolution Mechanism
E & S	Environmental and Social Safeguards
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERPA	Emission Reductions Payment Agreements
ERPD	Emission Reduction Programme Document
ER-PIN	Emission Reductions Program Idea Note
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FC	Forestry Commission
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FDMP	Forestry Development Master Plan
FFPOs	Forest and Farm Producer Organizations
FGRM	Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism
FIP	Forest Investment Program
FRL	Forest Reference Level
FWP	Forest and Wildlife Policy
GCFRP	Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program

GhG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
GRS	Ghana's REDD+ Strategy
GSLERP	Ghana Shea Landscape Emission Reductions Project
GSWG	Gender Sub-Working Group
HFZ	High Forest Zone (HFZ)
HIA GS	Hotspot Intervention Area Governance Structure
HIAs	Hotspot Intervention Areas
HICs	HIA Implementation Committees
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LEAF	Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest finance
MESTI	Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation
MLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MOP	Manual of Procedures (MOP)
MTS	Modified Taungya System
NACAP	National Anti-Corruption Action Plan
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NFF	National Forest Forum
NREG TA	Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Technical Assistance
NRS	National REDD+ Secretariat
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
PAMs	Policies Actions and Measures
PCIs	Principles, Criteria and Indicators
PLP	Production Landscape Programme
PLR	Policy, Legal and Regulatory
PMU	Program Management Unit
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, sustainable forest management, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks

RMSC	Resource Management Support Centre
RPF	Resettlement Policy Framework
R-PP	REDD+ readiness preparation proposal
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SFP	Safeguards Focal Persons
SHEC	Sub-HIA Executive Committee
SIS	Safeguards Information System
SOI	Summary of Information
TREES	The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard
UAP	
UNCAC	United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
PART I: Introduction	4
Progress on Ghana’s REDD+ Strategy.....	4
PART II: Ghana’s national circumstances and country approach to safeguards	11
PART III: Addressing the Safeguards	13
PART IV: Respecting the Safeguards	15
A. UNFCCC REDD+ safeguard (A) –.....	15
B. UNFCCC REDD+ safeguard (B) –.....	18
C. UNFCCC Cancun Safeguard (C)-.....	29
D. UNFCCC Cancun Safeguard D –	36
E. UNFCCC Cancun Safeguards (E) –.....	44
F. UNFCCC Cancun safeguard (F) –.....	52
G. UNFCCC Cancun Safeguard (G) –.....	60
PART V: Recommendations	68
Annex 1: Sample Projects in the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program – Evidence of Alignment of Project Goals with Cancun Safeguards Adherence Indicators	70
Annex 2: Evidence of Gender Mainstreaming	74
Gender Assessment to inform Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy Framework for the Production Landscape Programme (Proforest Asunafo-Asutifi Hotspot Intervention Area)74	
Annex 3: Involvement of children in advocating against child labour in cocoa supply chains	77
Safeguarding our planet today	77

List of Figures

Figure 1: The launch of GCFRP by H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (left) and the launch of GSLERP by H.E Mahamud Bawumia (right)	2
Figure 2: Drivers of deforestation and degradation in the Transition Zone, Togo Plateau and Coastal Mangroves, Nov 2022	8
Figure 3: Financing Architecture for REDD+ Strategy	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 4: Ghana’s REDD+ Journey	10

List of Tables

Table 1: Ghana’s Priority REDD+ Emissions Reduction Programmes.....	4
Table 2: Feedback/Grievances recorded by the Ghana REDD+ Program (2019-2023)	22
Table 3: A stakeholder mapping matrix conducted in the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA.....	37
Table 4: Sample Environmental and Social Safeguards Trainings conducted in the GCFRP ..	40
Table 5: Sample Capacity building events conducted by Mandated Institutions and REDD+ Implementing Partners (2019-2023)	42
Table 6: Reversal Risk Assessment as reported in the First monitoring report (FCPF)	53
Table 7: Updates on displacement risks associated with different drivers of deforestation ...	61

List of Pictures

Picture 1: A poster on the Feedback, Grievance and Redress Mechanism (FGRM)	21
Picture 2: Staff of the NRS, engaging local communities Ahafo- Ano South and Asunafo Asutifi HIAs respectively	29
Picture 3: Traditional authorities at the launch of the GSLERP	33
Picture 4: Bia Forest Reserve.....	46
Picture 5: Some CPCA members receiving seedlings of their choice for growing on their birthdays	77
Picture 6: CPCA support in national climate change events and tree growing exercise.....	78
Picture 7: CPCA undertakes waste recycling including weaving sachet rubbers into goal post nets. This help keep the compounds/ environment clean, inspire creativity, and provide supportive tools to promote play and learning	78
Picture 8: CPCA combines team work to grow trees for their nutritional values, impact the climate, and ease learning of science in school.....	79
Picture 9: CPCA supports green bleeding as most menstruators in the group are switching to Days for Girls International Standard Reusable Menstrual Kits which helps them to stay in school and attend group meetings during one’s period	80
Picture 10: CPCA collaborates with other children and children groups within and outside their communities to achieve their collective interest.....	81

Executive Summary

The world has reached the halfway point of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2023, but progress is significantly off-track. There has been minimal progress in reducing the emissions gap for 2030 – the gap between the emissions reductions promised by countries and the emissions reductions needed to achieve the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement. To get on track to meet the Paris Agreement goals of limiting warming to well below 2 °C and preferably 1.5 °C, global greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by 30% and 45%, respectively, by 2030, with carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions getting close to net zero by 2050, compared with current policy projections. (United in Science 2030)¹

The UN-REDD Programme states that the conservation and sustainable management of forests can lead to significant reductions in emissions, with approximately 3.3 Gt CO₂/year of cost-effective mitigation potential in the tropics alone, representing the most important opportunity to increase the ambition of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in many tropical forest countries. According to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), land-based options such as reforestation and forest conservation, avoided deforestation, restoration and conservation of natural ecosystems and biodiversity, improved sustainable forest management, agroforestry, soil carbon management and options that reduce methane and nitrogen dioxide emissions in agriculture from livestock and soil, can have multiple synergies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ([Climate Change 2022, Mitigation of Climate Change. Summary for Policymakers \(ipcc.ch\)](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf))².

According to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report also, GHG emissions in 2030 associated with the NDCs announced before COP26 would make it likely that warming will exceed 1.5°C during the 21st century. Likely limiting warming to below 2°C would rely on a rapid acceleration of mitigation efforts after 2030. Policies implemented by the end of 2020 are projected to result in higher global GHG emissions than those

¹ <https://library.www.int/idurt/4/68235>

² https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf

implied by NDCs. ([Climate Change 2022, Mitigation of Climate Change. Summary for Policymakers \(ipcc.ch\)](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf))³ In efforts to ramp up climate ambition and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Ghana submitted its revised NDCs in 2021 with clear targets to reduce emissions and enhance forest management.

Ghana's Reducing Emissions from Degradation and Deforestation (REDD+) program commenced in 2008, in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties' (COP) Warsaw Framework for REDD+, which officially anchored it to the UNFCCC regime in 2013 and clarified the requirements countries must meet to access results-based finance. The country's First Summary of Information ([1st SOI](#)) on how safeguards for REDD+ are being addressed and respected was submitted to the UNFCCC in June 2019.

This Second Summary of Information covers REDD+ related safeguards reporting from June 2019 to June 2023. The country transitioned from REDD+ readiness (2008-2018) to the implementation phase (2019-2024) and launched two programs within the period, the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program (GCFRP) in 2019 and the Ghana Shea Landscape Emissions Reduction Project (GSLERP) in 2022.



Figure 1: The launch of GCFRP by H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (left) and the launch of GSLERP by H.E Mahamud Bawumia (right)

This report highlights the outcomes, challenges, and lessons learned of the REDD+ implementation phase. It references linkages with the readiness phase, which are relevant to emphasizing continuity and sustainability of outcomes.

³ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf

For addressing and respecting safeguards, key outcomes recorded during the period under review, in line with Ghana's goals for REDD+ implementation, are:

- Implementation of the Policies, Laws and Regulations (PLRs) to address REDD+ safeguards
- Improved forest protection, including sustainable management of forests through reforestation and afforestation
- Improved social and environmental safeguards programming by REDD+ stakeholders, including the protection of the rights of local communities, local customs and traditions
- Receipt of first emissions reduction payment from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) due to emissions reduction from deforestation and forest degradation
- Receipt of non-carbon benefits by REDD+ communities and stakeholders, including strengthened forest governance structures, capacity strengthening, farm inputs, increased yields and diversified incomes.

Structure of report:

- **Part I** - Introduction: Progress on the Ghana REDD+ Strategy
- **Part II** - Ghana's National Circumstances and Country Approach to Safeguards
- **Part III** - Addressing Safeguards
- **Part IV** - Respecting Safeguards
- **Part V** - Recommendations

PART I: Introduction

Progress on Ghana’s REDD+ Strategy

During this reporting period, Ghana transitioned into the implementation phase of its National REDD+ strategy (Ghana’s REDD+ Strategy (GRS), 2016-2035), which seeks to preserve its forests to sustain ecosystem services, conserve biological diversity, and maintain cultural heritage.

As detailed in the [1st SOI](#), the GRS adopts a dual national and sub-national approach for implementation in a phased programmatic manner with an initial focus on the High Forest Zone (HFZ), scaling up to other distinct major ecological zones of the country. The [1st SOI](#) detailed the critical concepts of the GCFRP and other programs. In June 2023, the Forestry Commission (FC) signed a Letter of Intent with Tullow Oil PLC to commence feasibility studies in the transition zone of Ghana, which will result in Verified Emission Reductions and Removals from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks, in conformance with the GRS and Tullow Oil’s decarbonization program. Table 1 shows the status of all of Ghana’s Priority Emissions Reductions Programmes after the submission of the [1st SOI](#).

Table 1: Ghana’s Priority REDD+ Emissions Reduction Programmes

NO	REDD+ JURISDICTIONAL EMISSIONS REDUCTION PROGRAMMES		DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
1	ER PROGRAMME	COCOA FOREST REDD+ PROGRAMME (GCFRP)		
1.1	Strategy Intervention	Improving Land-use and socioeconomic development in the HFZ and cocoa growing area	- To significantly reduce emissions driven by cocoa farming and other agricultural drivers as well as illegal logging and illegal mining and achieve 10 million	Nine Hotspot intervention areas were flagged for the GCFRP, Six of which have been prioritized for implementation. The GCFRP was launched on 4 th October 2019 and expected to end in
1.2	Level	Sub-national		
1.3	Eco Zone	High Forest Zone (moist semi-deciduous (NW &SE) moist evergreen and wet evergreen forest types		

1.4	Commodity	Cocoa, Palm Oil and other tree crops	<p>tonnes of emission reductions in 6 years.</p> <p>- To improve incomes and livelihood opportunities for farmers and forest users</p> <p>- To establish a results-based planning and implementation framework through which the government, private sector, civil society, traditional authorities and local governments can collaborate</p>	<p>2024. The key outcomes include a mix of public, private multi-lateral and bilateral partnerships, biodiversity conservation through improved agronomic practices and reduced pesticide use, effective stakeholder participation, protection of local customs and practices, enhanced incomes and diversified livelihoods for forest fringe communities, improved forest governance.</p>
1.5	Drivers	Cocoa expansion, sun, cocoa, other tree crops expansion, illegal mining and illegal logging		
1.6	Implementing Institutions	Forestry Commission and Ghana Cocoa Board		
2	ER PROGRAMME	SHEA LANDSCAPE OF THE NORTHERN SAVANNA WOODLAND (GSLERP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote sustainable approaches to land use, forest conservation and enhanced community-based resource management such as forest and shea production systems 	<p>The GSLERP project was launched on 11 February 2022. The key outcomes include strengthened Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs), restored degraded shea and forest reserve landscapes/areas</p>
2.1	Strategy Intervention	Assessing wood and harvesting and agricultural practices in the Savannah woodland landscape		
2.2	Level	Sub-national		
2.3	Eco-zone	Savannah Woodland		
2.4	Commodity	Shea nut, cashew and yam		
2.5	Drivers	Charcoal, Illegal logging, agricultural expansion, illegal mining, wildfire etc.		

2.6	Implementing Partners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project will deliver 6.139 million tco2e emission reductions and removals over the first 7years and 25.24million TCO2e over 20years 	
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SCHEDULED REDD+ PROGRAMMATIC LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

		REDD+ JURISDICTIONAL EMISSIONS REDUCTION PROGRAMMES	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
3.0	ER PROGRAMME	THE TRANSITIONAL FOREST LANDSCAPE	A large-scale nature-based climate mitigation programme for the transitional, coastal, and Togo plateau areas includes strategies to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, the barriers to conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks, and the promotion of energy efficiency.	The feasibility studies have been finalized, and the programme document is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.
3.1	Strategy Intervention	Carbon Credits		
3.2	Level	Sub-national		
3.3	Eco-Zone	Dry semi-deciduous Forest type (Inner and fire zone)		
3.4	Commodity	Food Crops Belt		
3.5	Drivers	Wildfire, Cocoa and other tree crop extension, illegal mining and illegal logging		
4.0	ER PROGRAMME	COASTAL MANGROVES		
4.1	Strategy Intervention	Carbon Credits		
4.2	Level	Sub-national		
4.3	Eco- Zone	Coastal Mangroves		

4.4	Drivers	Cutting Mangroves for Fuelwood, settlement expansion and development, pollution		
5.0	ER PROGRAMME	TOGO PLATEAU		
5.1	Strategy Intervention	Carbon credits		
5.2	Level	Sub-national		
5.3	Ecozone	Dry Semi-Deciduous Forest in the Togo Plateau		
5.4	Drivers			

The principal drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Ghana, as reported in the 1st SOI, have been further validated by feasibility studies conducted in the Transition Zone, Togo-Plateau and Coastal Mangrove ecological areas by the National REDD+ Secretariat (NRS) in partnership with Eni Sp and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The key findings of the study conducted in November 2022 and validated at a national stakeholder meeting on 5th May 2023 in Accra were that:

- deforestation is mainly caused by agricultural expansion into forest reserves, sand-winning and urbanization (see Figure 1 below), and
- degradation is caused by the felling of trees for fuelwood, illegal logging, and the indiscriminate setting of fire by hunters, palm wine tappers, etc.

Monitoring reports of REDD+ projects on the [Ghana Reddis \(fcghana.org\)](https://ghana.reddsis.org) record that deforestation and forest degradation drivers across the various Eco-Zones remain similar.

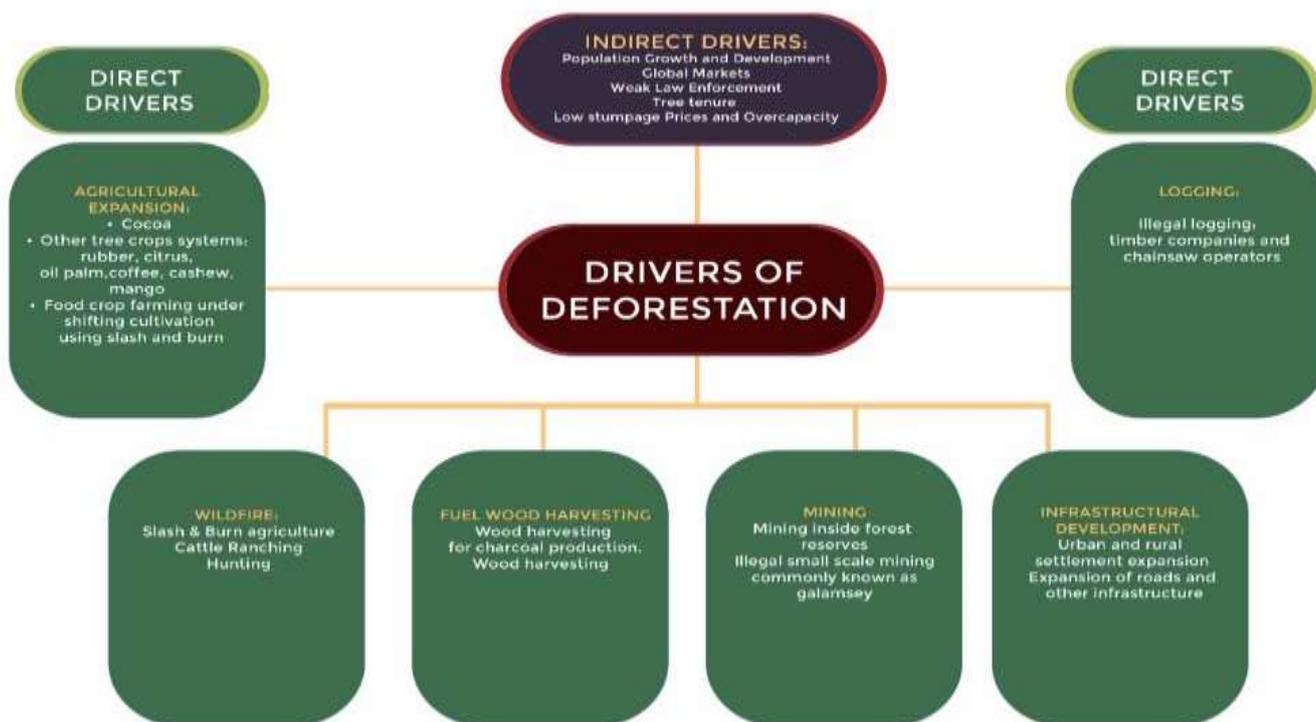


Figure 2: Drivers of deforestation and degradation in the Transition Zone, Togo Plateau and Coastal Mangroves, Nov 2022

In response to global calls for more ambitious climate action by governments through their NDCs, Ghana, per Article 4 of the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC decisions 1/CP.21 and 4/CMA.1 revised its NDCs it put forward in 2015. This was submitted to the UNFCCC in December 2021. The revision took cognisance of the objectives of the Africa Union (AU) blueprint strategy, Agenda 2063, and national policy documents, including the Ghana@100 frameworks and Ghana Beyond Aid Strategy. One of the key objectives of the revision is to put Ghana's development on an accelerated path for achieving "a resilient and low carbon society by promoting economic growth, climate protection and air quality benefits, youth and women empowerment and social inclusion in the next decade and beyond". To this end, the revised and enhanced NDCs reflect aspirations of goal 1, paragraphs 15, 16, 17 and 18 of the AU's Agenda 2063. Ghana is estimated to require between US\$ 9.3 and US\$15.5 billion of investment to implement the 47 NDCs measures from 2020 to 2030. Over US\$ 5.4 billion is expected

from international sources to supplement national efforts⁴. Sustainable Financing is critical to attaining REDD+ objectives, key amongst which are environmental and social safeguard goals. Figure 2 below shows funding sources Ghana envisaged at the inception of its REDD+ Strategy, some of which the country has accessed, as shown in Table 1 above.

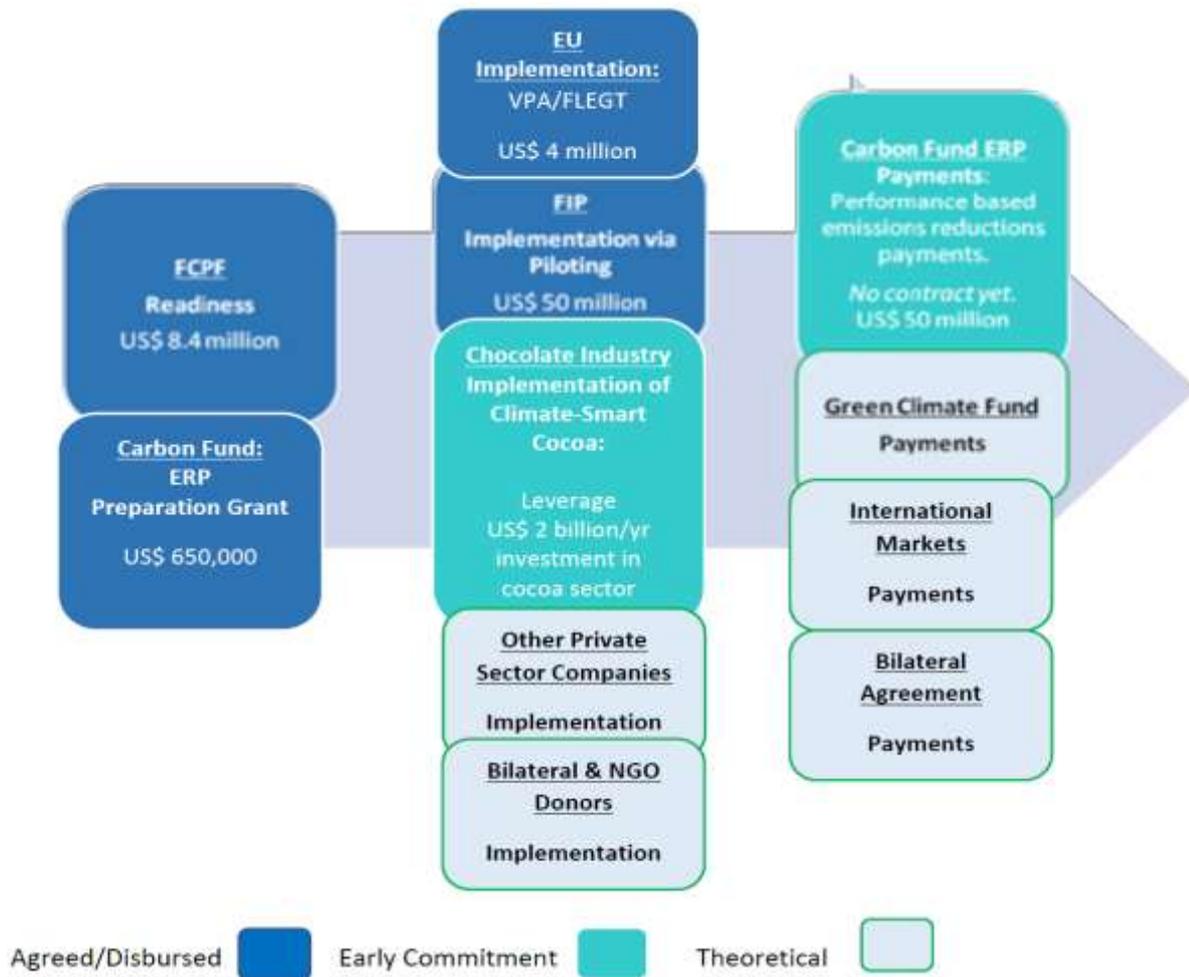


Figure 3: Financing Architecture for REDD+ Strategy

Key REDD+ milestones recorded during the reporting period include the commencement of two Emissions Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) partnerships, the launch of the Safeguards Information System (SIS), the implementation of two

⁴ Ghana's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCCC_2021 | Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology & Innovation (mesti.gov.gh) https://mesti.gov.gh/documents/ghanas-updated-nationally-determined-contribution-unfccc_2021/

major REDD+ programmes, securing diverse funding pipelines and improved protection of forests, development of community governance structures. Figure 3 details Ghana’s REDD+ milestones.

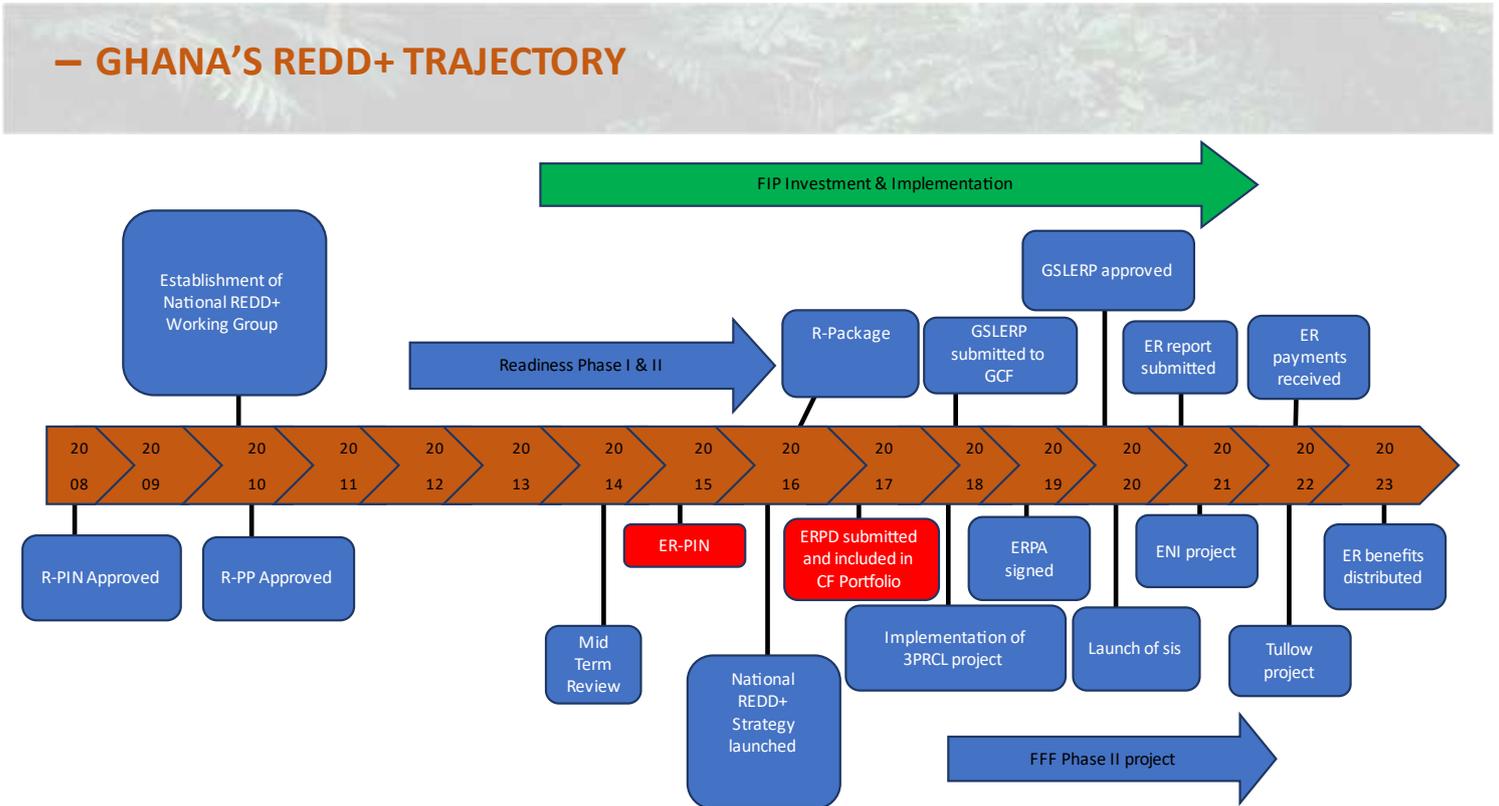


Figure 4: Ghana’s REDD+ Journey

PART II: Ghana’s national circumstances and country approach to safeguards

As Ghana detailed in the [1st SOI](#), the country respects UNFCCC, FCPF and donor safeguards, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF). It explores other robust standards for reducing emissions. It has indicated interest in implementing “The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard” (TREES) by submitting a concept note to the Architecture for REDD Transactions (ART) and also presented a proposal to the Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance (LEAF) Coalition, which seeks to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in Tropical Forests. The proposal was developed with technical assistance from UN-REDD and targeted ten sub-national jurisdictional areas. In this context, this 2nd SOI also includes key information related to ART/TREES safeguards requirements. As new standards and opportunities emerge, Ghana aims to continue strengthening its implementation and reporting on safeguards based on the country's approach and existing processes and governance arrangements.

The [1st SOI](#) was submitted to the UNFCCC in June 2019 and is publicly available on the UNFCCC REDD+ web platform. The [Safeguards Information System \(SIS\)](#) and a mobile application (REDD+ hotline 233 (0)24 365 9283) were launched on 21st December 2020 after a series of engagements with stakeholders by the FC with financial support from SNV Netherlands Development Organization under the project, “Operationalizing national safeguards for results-based payment from REDD+”, funded by the German Government. Information on REDD+ actions and safeguards is also widely available on the FCPF Ghana site:⁵ The SIS provides information on REDD+ interventions, the Country Approach to Safeguards (CAS), progress reports on REDD+ projects, stakeholder consultations, and training at landscape, regional, and national levels. Different sections of the SIS webpage explain the safeguards policies Ghana complies with, such as the Cancun Safeguards, Green Climate Fund (GCF), World Bank Safeguards, and Ghana's Environmental Assessment Regulations.

⁵ <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/country/ghana>

REDD+ implementing partners have collaborated with the FCPF/World Bank (WB), UN-REDD, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), UNDP and other international development partners in the accurate classification, documentation and implementation of social and environmental safeguard standards. The Environmental and Safeguards performance rating for the GCFRP, according to the World Bank, is **Satisfactory**, and the Environmental and Social risk of the project remains **Moderate**

PART III: Addressing the Safeguards

Information on how the safeguards are addressed is expected to be relatively constant from one summary to the next; that is, a country's governance arrangements are likely to change at a rate slower than the frequency of summary submissions. Passing new safeguard-relevant PLRs, along with any significant modifications of institutional arrangements, information systems, or any other relevant governance components of a country, will be updated and reflected in subsequent summaries. Some of the key PLRs include the Forest and Wildlife Policy (FWP,2012), considered to serve as an overarching national forest programme, the Forestry Development Master Plan (FDMP) 2016-2036, Forest Plantation Strategy, 2016-2040 and the Climate Change Policy 2013. The [1st SOI](#) lists at least 14 international legal treaties and conventions Ghana is party to. For further information on relevant PLRs identified for each safeguard, see Part III of Ghana's [1st SOI](#) for a comprehensive list.

The Wildlife Resources Management Bill 2022 was in the last phase of being passed by the Parliament of Ghana in June 2023. The bill seeks to revise and consolidate all laws relating to Wildlife and Protected Areas and bring them in conformity with existing policies and emerging trends in the natural resources sector. The new legislation, when passed, will also ensure the effective implementation of International Conventions on Wildlife, of which Ghana is a signatory and give legal backing to local communities in wildlife management through the creation of Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) and will introduce higher penalties and sanction regimes for wildlife offences, which is deterrent enough to protect wildlife resources. ([Wildlife Resources Management Bill 2022 – Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources \(mlnr.gov.gh\)](#))⁶

There is also a process to revise the National Biodiversity Policy, which will guide the country in the conservation and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity. As reported in the 1st SOI and the REDD+ Strategy, 2016 (p52-55), the mandated public sector institutions for implementing the REDD+ actions remained the same over the reporting

⁶ <https://mlnr.gov.gh/index.php/wildlife-resources-management-bill-2022-passed/>

period. See the [1st SOI](#) for a list of mandated organisations, which is also referenced under safeguard A..

PART IV: Respecting the Safeguards

The REDD+ Program Management Unit (PMU) employs a participatory bottom-up approach to implementing, monitoring, and evaluating safeguards. This approach starts with the Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA) governance structure, the safeguards focal persons at the various levels, the REDD+ implementing partners, and ultimately, the NRS, which collates outcomes at the national level.

Staff at the NRS and REDD+ partners have strengthened their safeguards capacity through training and regular interactions with development partners at national, regional, and global levels.

A. UNFCCC Cancun safeguard (A) –

“That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programs and relevant international conventions and agreements.”

The Ghana REDD+ Strategy (GRS,2016) which outlines the general framework and intention for REDD+ in Ghana, as well as sub-national emission reduction programs documents and frameworks have been consistent with relevant international conventions and agreements. For example, the GCFRP which is a component of the GRS has been designed and implemented in line with the objectives of identified international conventions and agreements such as the UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, through the NDCs among others (for further information see Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program, 2017, pg. 65).

The mandates and roles of government institutions consider objectives and commitments under the ratified relevant international interventions and conventions and also national forest plans. Key institutions such as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), COOCBOD and Forestry Commission (FC) incorporate for instance process and activities that follow up and address commitments under the UNFCCC. Together with the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) at subnational levels, they have the capacity, mandates and resources to implement the PLRs and ensure that it is consistent with the National legal framework and the National REDD+ strategy. The roles of the institutions have been identified in the National REDD+ Strategy (Ghana National REDD+ Strategy, 2016, p52-55). Other key

institutions which execute mandates which support REDD+ environmental and social mandates from sub-national to national levels include: • Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) • Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) • Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) • Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) • Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) • Traditional Authorities • Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) / Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) • Private Companies and their representatives in-country • Local Communities members and farmer groups • World Bank and other donors.

At the national level, the Government of Ghana has instituted a host of initiatives, including the annual Green Ghana Day, which commenced in 2020 to ensure that millions of trees are planted across the country to meet its targets in the NDCs and national forest plans. Safeguards monitoring reports confirm that all MMDAs in the GCFRP intervention area have included Green Ghana Day Events and other REDD+ actions in their annual plans and budgets. The Plans of the NRS and REDD+ implementing partners also reflect the objectives of national forest programs and international conventions. See Annex 1 for a list of sample REDD+ projects and their goals. The GCFRP and GSLERP are being implemented in jurisdictions selected based on the intensity of deforestation and forest degradation drivers, which is consistent with REDD+ objectives.

At the sub-national level, some HIAs have developed landscape management and investment plans for resources in their landscape that align with Ghana's REDD+ Strategy. Five of the HIAs (Juaboso/Bia, Ahafo Ano, Asunafo-Asutifi, Ahafo Ano and Sefwi-Wiawso) have signed [framework agreements](#) with FC and COCOBOD⁷, which spell out the partnership modalities at the landscape level. The various forest districts have also developed Forest Management Plans to enable effective and efficient management, protection and development of forest and wildlife resources in each reserve in their jurisdiction. These plans are elaborated in compliance with the provisions of the national legal framework. MMDAs have also mainstreamed climate

⁷ <http://www.ghanaredddatahub.org/hia/details/2/>

issues in their medium-term development plans as the National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework requires. For instance, (i) the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Medium Term Development Plan, 2022-2025, includes activities on the Modified Taungya System, Youth in Afforestation, Annual Green Ghana Day and Climate Smart Agriculture Practices. (ii) the Assin South District Assembly in the Kakum HIA conducted public sensitizations on bushfires in six area councils, distributed avenue tree seedlings to communities to plant to prevent rainstorms, provided motorbikes to the Department of Agriculture for extension activities and conducted capacity building of disaster management volunteer groups and local communities on the creation of fire belts.

To address the UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCDD,1994), under the patronage of the Prince of Wales in March 2017, a collective industry commitment was made to end deforestation and forest degradation in the global cocoa supply chain, with an initial focus on Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana under the [Cocoa Forests Initiative](#). In conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, trainings have been conducted by REDD+ partners COCOBOD, MONDELEZ, Solidaridad and Touton SA to reduce/eliminate child labour and modern slavery. As regards the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), forest management plans, cutting across targets of the CBD, notably Target 3 and Target 8, have been developed for all forest reserves under the REDD+ operational areas, including the planting of both indigenous and exotic tree species, in a careful balance through the implementation of restorative activities. The GSLERP, Transition, Togo Plateau and Coastal Mangroves programme components of the REDD+ strategy are being rolled out and designed, respectively, in harmony with the objectives of national forest programs and international conventions such as the Forest and Wildlife Policy, Warsaw Framework on REDD+, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) ⁸ etc.

⁸ Ghana National REDD+ Strategy 2016, Pg. 62 <https://reddsis.fcghana.org/reddstrategy.php>

Ghana's programmes aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, protecting biodiversity and promoting sustainable development, and its forest governance structures are in alignment with key protocols, including the Kyoto Protocol (1997), the Paris Agreement (2015) and the Kigali Agreement (2016), reported in the 1st SOI. The mandate of the governance structures, including the government institutions (FC, COCOBOD, EPA, MOFA), Hotspot Management Boards (HMBs), Sub-HIA Executive committees, CREMA, and Community Resource Management Committees (CRMC), align with international protocols. For instance, among the roles of government and landscape governance structures are to protect forests and the rights of local communities in direct alignment with (1) i LO No. 169 (1991), which states the "protection of the social, economic and cultural rights of indigenous peoples, including (implicitly) forest dwellers and forest-dependent indigenous peoples"(2) Ramsar (1975): conservation and wise use of wetlands, including mangroves and some other forest ecosystems (3) World Heritage (1975): protection and maintenance of sites of the outstanding cultural and natural heritage of universal value, including forest area. See the document on the [Ghana Reddis \(fcghana.org\)](http://fcghana.org), which defines the relevant international and national conventions and laws with which Ghana's Forest programs are compliant and the various safeguards standards Ghana adheres to for detailed information.

B. UNFCCC Cancun safeguard (B) –

"Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty"

A self-assessment as part of monitoring plans conducted by the NRS of the REDD+ program and implementing partners during the reporting period found that "generally, there is good progress in terms of the institutional arrangements, accountability and transparency, cross-sectoral coordination, technical supervision, staffing and funds management." EPA facilitates regular preparation and dissemination of international climate reports, including national communications. Every four years, the EPA submits Ghana's national Greenhouse Inventory report to UNFCCC, which is accessible to the public.⁹

⁹ http://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/gh_nir5_15052022_final.pdf.

Ghana's First Summary of Information on Safeguards (https://redd.unfccc.int/files/summary_of_information_v2_01.05.19.pdf) is available on the Safeguards Information System (SIS) online and provides data on how safeguards are addressed and respected (<https://www.reddsis.fcghana.org/>). A REDD+ hotline is available for stakeholders to report grievances, feedback, and seek information, and there is also an FGRM portal on the SIS web platform.

Several public consultations, sensitizations, and training programs have been conducted by all the REDD+ implementing partners on topics such as safeguards, benefit-sharing arrangements, and REDD+/ forest governance from sub-national to national levels. Stakeholders have the opportunity to seek information on REDD+ actions at such fora in addition to other channels (See Pages 62-64 for Public consultations in the Kakum HIA <https://www.reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/consultations/2019%20%20Kakum%20HIA%20-%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring%20report.pdf> and Pages 58-62 for Public consultations in the Sefwi-Wiawso HIA <https://www.reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/consultations/Sefwi%20Wiawso%20Bibiani%20HIA%20-%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring%20report.pdf>

Local communities and stakeholders contact the Safeguards Focal Points (SFPs) resident in the HIAs for information and to report grievances. The offices of COCOBOD and the FC at the HIA levels are also channels used to seek information on REDD+ Actions. Information, Education and Communication materials (IE&C) on different REDD+ topics have been disseminated from readiness through the implementation phase per the REDD+ communications strategy. Radio, TV and social media outlets, such as the GHREDD LinkedIn page, operated by the NRS, are some of the frequent dissemination channels.

A fully operational Feedback, Grievance and Redress Mechanism (FGRM) has been communicated to all stakeholders through open, inclusive, and transparent channels, and all stakeholders are aware of how to file complaints (nearest FC office or using the Safeguards Information System). The SFPs in all the HIAs respond to and document complaints and grievances in FGRM-dedicated record books. These capture

details such as names, genders, contacts and locations of the complainant, the nature of the complaint, the mode of resolution, the status, the attending SFP and whether the complaint is REDD+ related. Some stakeholders and project proponents also have pre-existing modes of grievances and redress mechanisms and methods of documentation, which have been streamlined with the REDD+ FGRM. The HIAs in the GCFRP have received flyers and posters on FGRM (Figure 4, p 13). There is also the opportunity for forest users or stakeholders to report infringements of the principles and standards of the Forestry Commission Charter to the Customer Service Officers (CSO) at the Forestry Commission's district offices and have them dealt with. Ghana's COCOBOD has a committee to manage possible grievances on environmental and social issues that may arise in implementing the Productivity Enhancement Programs (PEPs) within the cocoa sector.



DID YOU KNOW??



**IF YOU HAVE ANY FEEDBACK,
GRIEVANCES AND CONCERNS
WITH THE GHANA COCOA
FOREST REDD+ PROGRAMME,
YOU CAN CALL OR WALK TO THE
FORESTRY COMMISSION DISTRICT
OFFICE AND LODGE YOUR
COMPLAINT.**



0591001370



Ghana Cocoa Board
Proud to Market Premium Quality Cocoa

Picture 1: A poster on the Feedback, Grievance and Redress Mechanism (FGRM)

The Emissions Reductions Program Document (ERPD) identified potential conflict sources for categorizing grievances. Table 5 details the number of cases recorded under each category; 151 have been resolved, and 10 were outstanding as of June 2023. 44 feedbacks were also recorded within that period across 5 HIAs in the GCFRP (See p. 116 for FGRM issues in the Kakum HIA - Implementation and Monitoring report¹⁰ and p.126-128) for FGRM cases which were adjudicated through the courts (Ahafo Ano South HIA - Safeguards Implementation and Monitoring report)¹¹.

¹⁰ <https://www.reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/consultations/2019%20-%20Kakum%20HIA%20-%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring%20report.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/consultations/Ahafo%20Ano%20South%20HIA%20-%20Safeguards%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring%20report.pdf>

Table 2: Feedback/Grievances recorded by the Ghana REDD+ Program (2019-2023)

Type of Conflict	Potential Areas	# of Issues recorded
Resource use and access	Access to forest resources and land use rights.	16
Land and tree tenure	Land (boundary), tree and carbon rights.	6
Benefit Sharing	Who gets what, and how much.	0
Participation and inclusiveness	Representation in decision-making and right of consultation, including gender participation.	4
Safeguards	Compensation payments and grievance redress.	32
Capacity-Building	Access to information.	0

The Forestry Commission, through the National REDD+ Secretariat, has put in place measures to promote transparency in the implementation of REDD+ actions and the distribution of REDD+ benefits. The Ghana REDD+ Strategy and a Benefit Sharing Mechanism have been developed through cross-sectoral participation for the carbon and non-carbon benefits the GCFRP will generate and were finalised in March 2020¹². The Benefit Sharing Plan (BSP) elaborates an equitable benefit-sharing mechanism intended to effectively distribute carbon and non-carbon benefits as articulated by the ERPD initially. It describes the various beneficiaries, their eligibility, roles and responsibilities while specifying the scale and modalities for distribution. It also describes the type of benefits to be transferred to the beneficiaries, the timing of the distribution, the conditions (roles and responsibilities) to be satisfied for the benefits, and the appropriate indicators for monitoring, measuring and verifying compliance with modalities for distributing benefits. Beneficiaries include cocoa farmers, Modified Taungya System (MTS) farmers, communities, and government institutions such as

¹² BSP https://reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/publications/Final%20BSP_Ghana_%20March%202020.pdf

FC, COCOBOD and MMDAs¹³.The agreed formula for distribution of the emissions reduction payment per the Final Benefit Sharing Plan, Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program March 2020¹⁴:

- 4% as a fixed cost to the Program Management Unit
- 69% to the HIAs
- 27% to the Government

For the HIA percentage, the following is the agreed distribution:

- 58% to farmer groups
- 3% to traditional authorities
- 39% to HIA communities

On June 11, 2019, Ghana signed Emission Reductions Payment Agreements (ERPAs, Tranches A and B) with the World Bank as a Trustee for the Carbon Fund. On April 14, 2020, the World Bank declared that all effective conditions for ERPAs were fulfilled. An amount of 1.3 million USD as Upfront Advance Payment, as negotiated under the ERPAs, was released on September 3, 2020, to support Program implementation. Ghana has also recorded a verified emissions reduction of 972,456 tonnes of carbon dioxide, which translates to USD 4,862,280. The funds which have been disbursed to farmer groups at the HIA level based on the above percentages are; Ahafo-Ano (\$245,541.28), Asunafo-Asutifi (\$442,010.30), Juaboso-Bia (\$343,785.79), Kakum (\$343,785.79) and Sefwi-Wiawso (\$294,673.54) and the HIAs were in the process of tendering for prioritised benefits, which include indigenous tree seedlings, wellington boots, knapsack sprayers, cutlasses, and pruners in June 2023.

The REDD+ payments received from the World Bank are managed at two levels:

- national level - a REDD+ Dedicated Account Steering Committee (RDA), composed of representatives from the National House of Chiefs, the Office of

¹³ Benefit Sharing Plan

https://reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/publications/Final%20BSP_Ghana_%20March%202020.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.reddsis.fcghana.org>

the Administrator of Stool Lands, the Ministry of Finance, the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), and three representatives from CSOs/NGOs acting on the fair distribution of benefits (funds) to the respective beneficiaries. The roles of the RDA committee have been clearly defined and shared with all stakeholders. They include reviewing proposals, checking the eligibility of the proposed items, and checking quoted amounts/quantities and prices in line with the fund flow operational manual.

- Landscape level—an HIA Implementation Committee (HIC) made up of a consortium of partners (government, private sector, and NGOs/CSOs) and HMB members (community representatives) has been set up to supervise the disbursement of carbon funds, review planned activities, and distribute beneficiaries at the HIA levels.

The non-carbon benefits farmers and local communities received during the period include input packages, capacity building and planting materials for farmers to increase resilience productivity. Farms have been mapped to improve land tenure and farm management; farmers have realised improved tree and land tenure security and increased incomes from farm diversification (CSC premiums/price and increased cocoa production). Additional non-carbon benefits received per data in the monitoring reports on the [Ghana Reddis \(fcghana.org\)](https://fcghana.org) indicate the following:

- In 2019, 2,261,247 tree seedlings were supplied to farmers by various groups (Cocobod, FC, CSOs, Private Sector)
- 2020 & 2021: 5,010,261 and 2,252,877 tree seedlings supplied respectively (<https://fcghana.org/?p=3362>, <https://fcghana.org/?p=3501>)
- 224,500 farmers (67,350 women and 157,150 men) were trained in Climate Smart Cocoa (CSC) Practices in 2019
- 229,469 farmers (68,270 of them were females) were trained in Climate Smart Cocoa (CSC) Practices in 2020
- 341,299 farmers (114,976 were females) were in trained in Climate Smart Cocoa (CSC) Practices in 2021
- 7,885 farmers (5,655 were females) were trained in Farmer Business School (FBS) in 2021

- 21,241 farmers (11,919 were females) were trained in Farmer Business School (FBS) in 2020
- 2019/2020: 453kg/ha average cocoa yield per hectare
- 2020/2021: 615kg/ha average cocoa yield per hectare;
- 29,618 ha hand-pollinated farms as at the end of 2020
- 434.5 ha of degraded watershed was restored in 2019
- 406.14ha and 75.21ha of degraded watershed were restored in 2020 and 2021, respectively
- 52 irrigations fully set up as of the end of 2020

Ghana has National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) aligns with the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). The media and forest-related civil society organizations continuously engage in anticorruption activism to promote implementing and monitoring the NACAP. Some leading CSOs include the Ghana Integrity Initiative, the local chapter of Transparency International, the Ghana Anticorruption Coalition and the Ghana Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative. The HIA Governance structures have been set up and are fully operational in 5HIAs of the GCFRP. It is made up of local land users, land owners and traditional authorities. It includes (i) The Community Resources Management Committee (CRMC), the basic unit of the HIA governance structure (ii) Community Resources Management Area (CREMA) or Zone, which is a geographical area that includes one or more communities that have agreed to manage natural resource in a sustainable manner guided by constitution and enacted by-laws (iii) the Sub-HIA which encapsulates the CREMA and the adjoining Non-CREMA Area (NCA), managed by a Sub-HIA Executive Committee (SHEC) with equitable representation of all its constituent groupings and is responsible for decisions of collective interest.

The Hotspot Intervention Area Management Board (HMB) is the apex decision-making body responsible for guiding and directing all HIA management decisions and have worked in collaboration with a formal Consortium of key stakeholders, including private-sector cocoa companies, NGOs and government agencies, through an established HIA Implementation Committee (HIC) with representatives from both the

HMB and the Consortium (Forestry Commission National REDD+ Secretariat Safeguards implementation & monitoring report). The NRS has established a robust institutional arrangement for the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of safeguards in close collaboration with the EPA, the National Safeguards Working Group, and the REDD+ partner organizations that support the implementation of ER activities. See page 65 of the [Sefwi Wiawso Bibiani HIA - Implementation and Monitoring report.pdf \(fcghana.org\)](#) for details of the safeguards governance structure, which is fully operational at all levels in all operational REDD+ areas and has enabled safeguards implementation, reporting and outcomes.

To ensure equitable benefits to all segments of society, Ghana prioritized gender mainstreaming in its national REDD+ Gender Framework and integrated gender-responsive actions throughout the phases (Ghana Gender Strategy, 2015). A REDD+ Gender Sub-Working Group made up of government agencies (FC, COCOBOD, EPA, Minerals Commission), NGOs/CSOs and the private sector, which was set up during the readiness phase of the program and is still functional, has been instrumental in providing technical support for REDD+ programs to mainstream gender. They have been involved in developing a national safeguards training manual and are represented on REDD+ project steering committees. They also liaise with other government agencies, Traditional Authorities, Local Communities and Civil Society Organizations to implement gender mainstreaming actions at the sub-national level. REDD+ programs have provided equitable opportunities for women, men, youth and other vulnerable groups to participate in project activities and leadership positions. In all activities such as meetings, workshops, training programs, and committee constitutions, it is encouraged that there is at least 30% women's representation where possible. In the Juaboso/Bia HIA, where a framework agreement has been signed to define partnership tenets and guide activities, the HIA Management Board of 13 includes six women. The various structures that make up the HIA governance structure also ensure gender equity through free and fair election processes.

The REDD+ Gender Action Plan was implemented and integrated into REDD+ projects design in respecting the Cancun, World Bank and other safeguards, and the outcomes below have been reported:

- The NRS and REDD+ implementing partners identified potential risks of REDD+ implementation to the rights and livelihoods of women, with particular emphasis on land and natural resource use, complete and effective consultation and participation, fair access to information, education to enable decision-making/consent, and equitable distribution of benefits, which are being addressed through the various projects under REDD+. See Annex1 for a list of sample projects under the GCFRP.
- Training materials on sustainable management of forests and REDD+ are developed to be accessible to women.
- Training programs (workshops, consultative meetings) on gender and REDD+ issues for implementing partners working on REDD+ issues have been organized as part of sensitization and education.
- The capacity of local women in project areas has been strengthened to participate in REDD+ activities through leadership training programs actively
- Women and men have been granted equal access to and control of tools, equipment, technology, and resources in REDD+ activities.
- Local women are informed of their rights, safeguards, and capacity to use FGRM or protocol systems if safeguards are violated. In June 2023, COCBOD implemented five (5) gender mainstreaming approaches, including farmer training group/cooperatives meetings, community information centres, rallies, and farm and home visits to sensitize farmers on Gender Integration in one hundred and forty-three (143) communities. Six thousand one hundred and ten (6,110) participants were involved, which include three thousand seven hundred and forty-two (3,742) males and two thousand three hundred sixty-eight (2,368) females. See Annex 2 for a case study on a gender assessment conducted by REDD+ partner Proforest to inform project designs.

From the readiness phase of the REDD+ program, numerous capacity-building initiatives on gender, equity and social inclusion have been conducted by the NRS and REDD+ partners. In December 2017, the NRS and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Ghana, organized a training on REDD+ and Gender for the Regional Safeguards Focal Persons (SFPs). This initiative was organized as part

of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) consultancy agreement with the IUCN Global Gender Office (GGO) for the provision of technical assistance to Ghana, aimed towards mainstreaming gender into the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP) development and implementation arrangements. This was also replicated for the District Safeguards Focal Persons (DSFPs).

The GSLERP has recorded the following gender mainstreaming outcomes since its inception in 2022:

- 158 women have been employed in nurseries set up by the project to improve their livelihoods and to acquire technical expertise.
- 11 women's cooperatives have been set up as part of the private partners' responsibility, with matching funds to help train and empower women.
- 9 women cooperatives have been trained in group dynamics and cooperative governance.
- 3, 409 women trained on shea aggregation, marketing, auditing and warehousing.
- 2, 609 women trained on improved technologies and efficiency concerning quality shea processing.
- 2, 609 women trained on improved business management. 17,038 women and youth trained in alternative livelihoods.

REDD+ activities involve cross-sectoral representation of stakeholders of varied backgrounds from sub-national through to national levels. The development of all 5 ESMPs in the GCFRP benefited from broad stakeholder involvement and participation, especially in local communities¹⁵. Stakeholders have been involved in implementing the GCFRP benefit-sharing plan through the steering committee, which consists of members from various institutions as prescribed in the BSP. A REDD+ Dedicated Account (RDA) has been set up, and a series of meetings held to orient members on the Fund Flow Mechanism Operational Manual, Emission Reductions payments (percentages going to each HIA), Consent Forms and proposals submitted by the respective HIA Implementation Committees (RDA Meetings 5/08/22, 9/02/23, 9-

¹⁵ <https://reddsis.fcghana.org/documents.php>

10/05/23). Information on REDD+ actions is widely shared by the NRS, which disclosed the safeguards instruments (SESA, ESMF, RPF) in the national newspapers and FC's website [Ghana Reddis \(fcghana.org\)](http://Ghana Reddis (fcghana.org)).

Feedback from community members during monitoring exercises attested to the numerous trainings/capacity building opportunities they have received from various stakeholders on topics such as climate-smart cocoa, farmer business school, safe handling of agrochemicals, proper disposal of agrochemicals, compost/organic fertilizer application, buffer zone protection, wildlife and forest protection, to mention a few (Table . See Pg 111-116 for capacity building events in the Ahafo Ano South HIA Safeguards Implementation and Monitoring Report [Ghana Reddis \(fcghana.org\)](http://Ghana Reddis (fcghana.org)).

C. UNFCCC Cancun Safeguard (C)-

“Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”



Picture 2: Staff of the NRS, engaging local communities Ahafo- Ano South and Asunafo Asutifi HIAs respectively

Ghanaian laws do not recognize the concept of 'indigenous people' as understood in International Law, as there are no indigenous people in Ghana; hence, the term 'local communities' shall be used instead, as detailed in the FC Manual of Procedures (MOP). In respecting safeguards on the rights of local communities, the ESMF of the GCFRP (p.33) identified cultural sites, including sacred groves on proposed plantations and, with the agreement of local communities, have demarcated and protected these against encroachment. The ESMF conducted by the GSLERP states that the implementation of activities will take into account culturally sensitive areas as prescribed in the Environmental Assessment Regulation 1999, LI 1652 and also requires the development of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan, which has been executed (ESMF, GSLERP p.47).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana recognizes the existence of customary law and provides for establishing traditional councils and other traditional authorities¹. The Customary Land Secretariat is responsible for registering customary lands and establishing customary land secretariats¹. The Customary Law also recognizes the existence of customary courts and provides for the establishment of such courts¹. Some traditional farming practices have been identified and promoted when they do not adversely impact the environment in the REDD+ program. The Nagoya Protocol addresses traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources with provisions on access, benefit sharing and compliance which Ghana has ratified (GCFRP Program, 2017, Pg. 47). During the procurement of seedlings for Modified Taungya System (MTS), local communities indicated their preference for the inclusion of *Pycnanthus angolensis* spp locally called (Otie), which in their view has diverse uses including alternative livelihood potential and this was procured by the implementation Committee, as a means of respecting their opinions and rights.

REDD+ program partners strictly observed local taboos, totems, and respected experience/knowledge in cocoa farming and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. The customs of local communities, including language use and protection of sacred sites, have been upheld by implementers. Taboo days are observed by local communities to conserve biodiversity. On such days, no persons are

to enter the forest or use water bodies to allow the river and forest gods to rest. This ancient practice has been passed down for generations and is still practiced in some HIAs. Local communities still collect Non-Timber Forest Products for use as medicine and food and for performing rituals and sacrifices. The use of traditional medicine is widely practiced in Ghana, and most of this knowledge is held by local communities who access the ingredients - roots, leaves, tree bark and certain animals for these medications from forests. Sacred groves and shrines found in REDD+ areas have been preserved, and local communities still have access to them. The creation of buffers on riverbanks is an age-old custom, and bamboo, in particular, was planted to conserve water bodies. According to local knowledge, trees like Odum, Wawa, and Cedar were not harvested because they provided a lot of ecological benefits to crops.

At the HIA levels, the traditional council representatives act as advisors and patrons to the HMBs, including on all conventional and customary matters, providing such technical guidance to the REDD+ implementing structures. The advent of other religious beliefs and practices has led to a total disregard for traditional conservation methods and beliefs and has contributed to the large-scale deforestation and degradation of Ghana's forests. The REDD+ program, therefore, ensures that communities freely use their traditional knowledge to protect and conserve biodiversity. For instance, in northern Ghana, smallholder farmers cultivate a wide array of products to feed their communities and protect local traditions. Shea trees are used in healing and spiritual practices, during funeral rites, in medicine and traditional dishes. The baobab is known as a spiritual tree, and it is believed that the location of a new baobab tree is a reincarnation of the community's ancestors, reminding them that someone settled in that place in the past. Non-timber forest products in the Ghanaian savannah landscape also play an essential role in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, as they are primarily women-led value chains. The dry pulp of the baobab fruit is converted into powder and used by women in various households for drinks, soups, or sauces. At the same time, the kernel of the seed is processed into an oil, and the waste product of the fruit serves as livestock feed and fuel (Reference <https://www.fao.org/ghana/news/detail-events/en/c/1514012/>).

Such traditional practices have been found to help conserve biodiversity and protect traditional knowledge through local traditions and customs. The REDD+ program, through the ESMPs and cultural heritage plans, ensures communities can still practice such knowledge. Presentations and discussions are conducted in regional languages at the community levels, and some IE&C materials were printed in local languages to respect the right to use their mother tongue. In cases where there is a need for translation, the REDD+ implementing partners ensure this.

Local communities/farmers have been sensitized on their rights and responsibilities in the GCFRP and GSLERP including rights to register trees on their farms as a critical step to tree ownership and financial benefits generated from the sale. Farmers in the GCFRP have been sensitised on their right to compensation if their registered cocoa trees get destroyed during the felling of economic shade trees and the existence of the FGRM.

At the landscape level, the Traditional Council has a formal relationship as an advisor of the REDD+ consortium. Each sub-HIA is entitled to 1-2 patrons drawn from the traditional authorities or influential community members (Sub-Chiefs) who serve as advisers to the sub-HIA and are the final arbiters in traditional matters arising from activities within the sub-HIA. Patrons also forge peace and unity to advance development within the sub-HIA (See Pg 21 for protected shrines in the conservation area in the Kakum HIA - Implementation and Monitoring report.¹⁶)

¹⁶ <https://www.reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/consultations/2019%20-%20Kakum%20HIA%20-%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring%20report.pdf>



Picture 3: Traditional authorities at the launch of the GSLERP

Free, Prior and Informed consent has been sought from communities involved in REDD+ activities. Some communities which do not fall within the REDD+ programme areas also expressed willingness to be included, especially during seed distribution activities. Such communities will be considered during a scale-up of interventions. Communal rights such as the right to information, the right to participate and the right to the use of local customs have been respected E.g., in the Upper Wassaw Forest Reserve, the collection of Non-Timber Forest Products such as snails, firewood, chewing sticks, canes, raffia and rattan cutting is permitted, and also access to hunting camps and fishing in the reserve and farming in admitted farms. However, for commercial use, permits should be issued by the District Manager of the Forest Services Division (Management Plan for Upper Wassaw Forest Reserve, Draft Report).

The NRS conducted a power-interest analysis using the Mendelow stakeholder matrix, which informed participation approaches and program design by REDD+ partners in prioritizing the involvement of the identified stakeholders, which include local communities represented in the matrix as farmers, farmer-based organizations and CSOs (See Table 3 below). The rights of local communities were protected and upheld

through access to varied government agencies, traditional authorities, private companies and NGOs/CSOs who provide clear and accessible information on REDD+ actions and adherence to forestry regulations for forest fringe communities in particular. All districts have REDD+ safeguards focal persons and teams that protect community rights through safeguards adherence and resolving conflicts through the REDD+ FGRM. The right to participate in REDD+ decision-making processes and structures is the most fundamental right ensured by all project partners (see Pages 57-58 for the Stakeholder analysis of the Sefwi-Wiawso HIA <https://www.reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/consultations/Sefwi%20Wiawso%20Bibiani%20HIA%20-%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring%20report.pdf>).

Under the framework agreements, private sector cocoa companies ensure improved transparency in the purchase of cocoa beans, another way through which farmer/community rights are protected. This is closely related to Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD), which private cocoa companies conduct regularly through risk assessments. Under the GCFRP, Touton SA implements projects in the Kakum HIA to prevent child labour in the cocoa supply chain by mobilising primary school pupils who use drama to educate communities on the negative impacts of child labour and the effects of deforestation and climate change. Outcomes include increased enrollment of non-school going children after their parents witnessed the drama performances and reduced child labour statistics in the cocoa supply chain. According to the International Cocoa Initiative, child and forced labour are adjudged to be among the salient human rights risks in the West African Cocoa supply chain. See Annex 3 for a case study on Touton SA's Project to reduce child labour, deforestation and land degradation.

The Cocoa Coalition is an informal group of companies which include REDD+ partners Hershey, Mondelez International, Rainforest Alliance and Solidaridad, who support the development of relevant policy measures with the European Union, such as due diligence human rights legislation to drive the production of sustainable cocoa within responsibly managed supply chains. In the Kakum HIA, ECOM and Hershey, to ensure that community rights are protected and they know their rights, trained farmers on discrimination, forced labour, child labour, workplace violence and harassment (86%

of farmers trained) and also revamped structures to aid Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMS).

In the Western North HIA, COCOBOD also conducted sensitizations to educate farmers and the general public on determinants of child labour in the cocoa production value chain. A total of six thousand one hundred and twenty-three (**6,123**) persons involving three thousand seven hundred and forty-two (**3,742**) males and two thousand three hundred and seventy-one (**2,371**) females in one hundred and forty-three (**143**) communities participated. Other private companies involved in the GCFRP also prioritize safeguarding human rights. Eg. Barry Callebaut ensures the prevention of modern slavery and human trafficking in its business and cocoa supply chain. In the Asutifi-Asunafo HIA, Proforest trained local communities on human rights impacts; Mondelez implements the Mondelez Cocoa Life Project, which addresses child labour, gender and youth challenges. Under the Forest for a just future – Green Livelihood Alliance Programme II (GLAII) implemented by Tropenbos Ghana in Juaboso-Bia and Sefwi Wiawso-Bibiani HIAs, capacities of CSOs (including media) have been strengthened to form environmental and social movements to defend environmental human rights.

The principles and guidelines for engagement document developed for the GCFRP by Proforest and the NRS, which was launched on July 23, 2021, by the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, also provides child guidance/forced labour for companies and organizations in the HIAs. The REDD+ program prioritises respect for the human rights of local communities through sensitisation on their rights and responsibilities through the FGRM. When the rights of local farmers are violated through the destruction of their farmlands from harvesting timber resources, such grievances have been recorded through the FGRM and addressed. The full extent of the redress mechanism is utilized from the HIA level to the law courts, based on the severity of the matters involved, which has sometimes resulted in fines and sanctions for the perpetrators. Communities also take precautionary measures to protect themselves where necessary, and in the Kakum HIA, for example, farmers have adopted the practice of building pepper fences around their farms to prevent raids by elephants during the cropping season. Table 2 on page 13 categorises grievances recorded for the reporting period (2019-2023).

Advocacy and Policy influencing is a significant component of Ghana's REDD+ program to ensure that the proper legal and regulatory frameworks exist and that they are implemented effectively for all people's benefit. To this end, the implementing partners provide technical support and amplify the voices of local communities for the requisition of their rights. The culture of local communities reveals dependence on wildlife resources for their basic needs, such as harvesting of NTFPs, and the REDD+ program continues to advocate for community rights in this respect, especially since NTFPs are mostly relied on by women in the REDD+ program areas. In instances of violation of forest reserves by local communities/forest fringe communities, Ghana could deploy its Resettlement framework. However, the country does not anticipate any involuntary resettlement in the immediate. When illegal farms are identified in forest reserves, farmers can rehabilitate them for ten years to gradually remove them from the forest reserves. This will be done through the Modified Taungya System, where farmers plant trees in their farms in a bid to protect livelihoods.

D. UNFCCC Cancun Safeguard D –

“The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities in the actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of this decision”

Ghana's REDD+ readiness preparation proposal included a consultation and participation plan that set out the broad parameters to guide REDD+ consultations, participation, and outreach, contributing to institutionalising this culture in the program. Multi-stakeholder consultations have been organised through community meetings, trainings, and sensitisations from sub-national to national levels to ensure a shared understanding of the roles of all key stakeholders. A stakeholder mapping

and power analysis were conducted in all the GCFRP HIAs and the GSLERP Program Areas using the Mendelow Matrix, as shown in Table 4, to guide engagement plans. In line with the consultation and participation plan of the Ghana REDD+ Program, seven (7) sub-working groups were organized under the National REDD+ Working Group (NRWG) and convened by the NRS to review, critique and provide feedback on reports from consultancies commissioned during the REDD+ readiness process, as well as the ERPD development process (Ghana REDD+ Strategy 2016, pg. 54). The stakeholder engagement processes usually includes translation of information from English to the local dialects and vice versa. Social inclusion is considered an essential element for the development of stakeholder engagement processes i.e., gender and generational balance is promoted.

Table 3: A stakeholder mapping matrix conducted in the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA

No .	Category of Matrix	Explanation and Implication	Stakeholders Assessed
1.	Low Interest and Low Power (LL) – Minimal Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are more likely to accept what they are told and follow instructions. • Can be largely ignored when considering project planning. • Ethically, it is considered that feigning interest in them may awaken their interest. • Monitor (Minimum Effort) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands Commission • Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands (OASL)
2.	High Interest and Low Power (HL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be duly considered during the implementation phase. • Keep informed and not underestimated. • Can lobby others to join forces to exert pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal and District Assemblies (MDAs) • Cocoa Forest Initiative Secretariat • Civil Society Organizations • Some Donor Partners
3.	Low Interest and High Power (LH) – Keep Satisfied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep satisfied and remain dormant. • If they become more interested, they can quickly become key players. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Authority

4.	High Interest and High Power (HH) – Key Players/Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have high influence on programme implementation. • Could inhibit the achievement of project objectives. • Manage closely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry Commission • National REDD+ Secretariat • Ghana Cocoa Board • Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources • Ministry of Food and Agriculture • Private sector companies • Farmers and Farm-based Organization
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A national communications strategy was developed with broad-based stakeholder involvement and implemented to entrench further participation of cocoa farmer groups, traditional authorities, cooperatives, forest users, landowners, youths, women and minority groups who voluntarily opt to participate in REDD+ activities. The HIA governance structures, by design, ensure the representation of diverse groups, strengthening decision-making processes and good governance. Find more information in the 2019 Environmental and Social Management Plan for Asunafo Asutifi and Kakum HIAs¹⁷ Stakeholder consultations were organized to discuss the drivers of deforestation and identify hotspot intervention areas for a possible carbon offset project for the Transition zone, Togo-Plateau, and the Mangrove areas in 2022/23. 360 stakeholders comprised 30% (109) females and 70% (251) males representing local communities, government, security agencies, and timber contractors. All stakeholders were willing to participate in a new intervention to halt deforestation and degradation.

Through the REDD+ governance structures, communities are consulted to participate fully in all REDD+ actions. Formation of CREMAs, Sub HIAs and HIA Management Boards (HMB) are examples of how stakeholders are engaged at the landscape level, providing avenues for participation in decisions that will affect them and education on

¹⁷ www.reddis.fcghana.org/dmeeting.php

how infringements to their rights should be redressed. For example, in the Asutifi-Asunafo HIA, Proforest, through the Linking 'no deforestation' in supply chains and national climate mitigation initiatives project, trained HIAs on organisational governance. More details on how HIA governance structures are engaged in the Kakum HIA can be found on pp 49-54 here: [Kakum HIA 2019-Implementation and Monitoring report \(fcghana.org\)](#).

In the Kakum HIA, for instance, women and youth were involved in ECOM and Hershey's REDD+ activities through:

- Formation of Gender committees at community and district levels.
- Training of 255 Farmers on gender policy and youth empowerment.
- Setting up youth-focused (<35 years old) Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA).
- Training of 104 youth farmers on financial and business literacy skills.

Several pieces of training on environmental and social safeguard topics have been conducted for REDD+ regional and district safeguard focal persons. Table 5 below shows the training conducted and content shared over the period for the GCFRP project. A specific example of safeguards training conducted in the Juaboso-Bia HIA in May 2019 can be found here: [3PRCL FC Report on Safeguards Training Juaboso-Bia-10.06.19.pdf \(fcghana.org\)](#). Over 34 stakeholder consultations, meetings and workshops with more than 40 institutions and local communities were conducted in the planning, design and validation of the Ghana Cocoa Forest Reduction Program. Main program themes include tree tenure, benefit sharing, Climate-smart practices, Ghana Cocoa standards, HIA landscape planning, and sustainable HIA finance. (Reference: Overview of Ghana's Emission Reduction Program Document: Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program 2017, p.14). A key example was the stakeholder engagements on alternative livelihood options conducted by the NRS from 14th-18th December 2022 under the GCFRP to solicit inputs on preferred options and validate the beneficiary selection criteria. Options proposed by farmers included honey production, baking, soap making, vegetable farming, Gari processing, grass cutter-rearing and mushroom production. (Reference: Overview of Ghana's Emission Reduction Program Document: Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program 2017, p.14)

Table 4: Sample Environmental and Social Safeguards Trainings conducted in the GCFRP

TRAINING ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	HOTSPOT INTERENTION AREA (HIA)	DATES
REDD+ Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build the capacities of participants on REDD+ Safeguards and Safeguard Information System (SIS). To build capacity on Gender mainstreaming into the REDD+ Process. To build capacity on the operationalization of the Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) 	Asunafo – Asutifi, Juaboso – Bia, Ahafo Ano South, Sefwi Wiawso – Bibiani, Kakum	11 th – 21 st May, 2021
REDD+ Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build the capacities of participants on REDD+ Safeguards and Safeguard Information System (SIS). To build capacity on Gender mainstreaming in REDD+ Processes. To build capacity on the operationalization of the Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) 	Asunafo – Asutifi, Juaboso – Bia, Ahafo Ano South, Sefwi Wiawso – Bibiani, Kakum	16 th August – 4 th September, 2021
Field engagement on safeguards, governance and monitoring of planting activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build the capacities of stakeholders on safeguards and governance. To create continuous awareness and sensitization on GCFRP, safeguards, FGRM, BSP through radio and community information centres as well as community visits To monitor and build capacity on the operationalization of the Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) 	Asunafo - Asutifi	7 th – 11 th December, 2021

Ghana Emission Reductions Training Program; World Bank Safeguards Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build the capacities of stakeholders on World Bank Operational Policies 	FCTC, Akyakrom	8 th – 10 th March 2022
Capacity Building for HIA Leaders and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build the capacities of HIA leaders and stakeholders on critical REDD+ topics 	Asunafo – Asutifi HIA,	21 st – 31 st March, 2022
Proforest capacity building workshops for Local Level/Sub HIA participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build the capacities of HIA leaders and stakeholders on critical REDD+ topics 	Asunafo – Asutifi HIA	26 th – 28 th April, 2022
Capacity Building for HIA Leaders and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build the capacities of HIA leaders and stakeholders on critical REDD+ topics 	Ahafo Ano South HIA	16 th May - 9 th June, 2022
Proforest capacity building workshops for Local Level/Sub HIA participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build the capacities of HIA leaders and stakeholders on critical REDD+ topics 	Asunafo – Asutifi HIA	17 th May – 20 th May, 2022
Capacity Building of Crema/Zonal Executive Committee Members and Communities engaged in the Ghana Cocoa Emission Reductions Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To train and build capacity of participating Community-based Organizations, notably CREMA/Zonal Executive Committees (CECs/ZECs) on developing and tailoring the messaging on the Emissions Reduction Program to HIA Landscape Stakeholders 	Asunafo – Asutifi, Juaboso – Bia, Ahafo Ano South, Sefwi Wiawso – Bibiani, Kakum	December 2022

Course content for trainings listed in cells above

The broad outlines of the training courses included the following topics: • Implementation of Safeguards • Overview of safeguards requirement/ background information and key element of each safeguard (WB, CANCUN, AfDB) • Linkages and differences among safeguard policies • Capacity building for implementing ESMF • • Key elements of safeguards documents: o ESMF o RPF o PF o PMP o • Safeguards training for regional and district Officers (National Legal Environment) including relevant Sections of the Constitution • Overview of EPA ACT 490 • Key Elements of the EA Regulations – 1652 of 1999 • Overview of EIAs • Key Elements of Screening Checklist • Key Elements of EA Registration Forms EA1 & EA 2 • Linkages with international Safeguard Arrangements & Policies • Implementation of the Safeguards Requirements • Modalities for Ghana's Feedback and Grievance

Redress Mechanism (FGRM) under REDD+ • Potential Disputants 16 • Potential REDD+ Related Conflicts • FGRM Operational Modalities o Step-wise process of Flow Chart of operations & Timelines • Modalities for Ghana's Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) under REDD+ (Legal Advice) • Guiding Ideas for FGRM • General Features • REDD+ Safeguards Monitoring.

As part of maintaining good governance in the management of timber resources, the Forest and Wildlife Policy of Ghana, 2012 contains visions for the development of institutional capacities, including community enterprises (Ghana Forest and Wildlife Policy, 2012: Policy Strategy 4.1.1(a) of Strategic Direction 4.1 (p. 26) which is also in line with the objectives of the GRS and the ultimate goal of attracting results-based payments. In this light, stakeholders have participated in several capacity-building events throughout the readiness and implementation phases (more information on the training available in SIS, library tab, link: <https://reddsis.fcghana.org/pub.php>).

Table 5: Sample Capacity-building events conducted by Mandated Institutions and REDD+ Implementing Partners (2019-2023)

N°	Institution	1. Topics/events
1	National REDD+ Secretariat	2. Training on safeguards for REDD+ Regional and Districtfocal persons 3. REDD+ Safeguards Training for Forest Districts 4. Sensitisation of community members and otherstakeholders on REDD+ safeguards 5. Training on SIS and FGRM for REDD+ regional and district safeguards focal persons 6. REDD+ safeguards landscape monitoring and training
2	Wildlife Division	1. Engagement of communities in livelihood improvements 2. Sensitization and education of communities on environmental protection
3	Forest Services Division	1. Engagement of fringe communities in fire management 2. Engagement of fringe communities in shade

		<p>treemanagement</p> <p>3. Engagement of communities in conflict resolution</p>
4	Ghana Cocoa Board	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training of farmers on safe chemical application 2. Training of farmers on compost preparation and compost application 3. Training of farmers on buffer zone protection 4. Training of farmers on good agronomical practices 5. Training of farmers on wildlife protection and conservation 6. Training of farmers on proper disposal and storage of chemical waste. 7. Engagement of farmers in shade tree management 8. Training of farmers on additional livelihoods 9. Training of farmers on financial management and records keeping
5	The private-sector cocoa companies	10. Climate-smart and deforestation-free cocoa practices
6	The Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) /Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	11. The CSOs/ NGOs regularly interface with farmers/ farmer groups on several capacity-building activities on safety compliance. All these were done in collaboration with the Regional/District level Safeguards Focal Points.

To further guide GCFRP implementing organisations on REDD+, NRS, in partnership with Proforest funded by the International Department for Development, developed a guidance document, "Engagement Principles for the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program (June 2021), which is a step-by-step guide intended to help companies and organisations engage effectively with the GCFRP and associated initiatives to deliver on their responsible production and sourcing policy commitments in ten specific steps. Given the broad multi-stakeholder nature of the GCFRP, which includes multiple

government institutions, the private sector, civil society, traditional authorities and community representatives, it was imperative to provide this guidance to enhance collaborative efforts.

The safeguards monitoring team is another channel that engages varied stakeholders by design to ensure effective participation. For instance, in 2019, the first safeguards team was formed in the Juaboso-Bia HIA, comprised of a representative each from EPA, Juaboso District Assembly, COCOBOD, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana Police Service, Ghana Fire Service and three members of the Hotspot Intervention Area Management Board. By the design of the Emission Reductions Programme (ERP), many projects are being implemented concurrently. The ESMF/screening checklist guides screening project activities for likely social and environmental impacts and more critically, proposes mitigation measures to address those risks. See risks identified and mitigation measures implemented at pp. 36-54 in the 2019 - Juaboso-Bia HIA - Implementation and Monitoring report.¹⁸ Data from the Juaboso-Bia HIA - Implementation and Monitoring report, pp 8-15 affirm the involvement of local traditional systems in REDD+ related activities fostering many impacts including community ownership and acceptance of the Ghana Emission Reduction Programme.

E. UNFCCC Cancun Safeguards (E) –

“That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the actions referred to in paragraph 70 of decision 1/CP16 are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivise the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services and to enhance other social and environmental benefits”

The Forestry Commission has developed a Manual of Procedures (MoP) that guides the management of forest resources based on forest condition score (MoP pg. 1 & 200). Constitutional provisions require that the government and the citizens take appropriate steps to protect and safeguard the environment (Constitution, Article 39). Forestry Commission operationalizes the Environmental and Social Management

¹⁸ <https://reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/consultations/2019%20-%20Juaboso-Bia%20HIA%20-%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring%20report.pdf>

Framework/Environmental and Social Management Plan that makes provision for screening of all REDD+ related projects to detect or identify risks that could potentially impact on environmentally sensitive sites that render various ecosystem benefits. The Commission has also outlined the Star system and Genetic Heat Index that categorizes tree species based on their scarcity and the degree of exploitation (Manual of Procedures, p.30).

For any undertakings that cover more than 40ha within forest reserve(s), an environmental assessment is conducted to ensure compliance with environmental safeguards measures. For any undertakings with environmental and social safeguards implications, the proponent must submit an environmental impact assessment before any environmental project is approved and/or otherwise denied by the Environmental Protection Agency even after the project has started. Additionally, the Forestry Commission screens any REDD+-related interventions/activities to identify potential impacts/risks for mitigation. The proponent must continue to submit an annual report of the project to ensure compliance with the conditions of the project as stated in the environmental permit. The Biennial Update Report (BUR) is submitted by EPA under the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI). The NRS updates the forest sector inventory in collaboration with the Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC) of the Forestry Commission (FC).



Picture 4: Bia Forest Reserve

The NRS and REDD+ implementing partners have undertaken quarterly monitoring visits since the implementation phase to monitor how environmental and social safeguards were being respected and addressed by stakeholders at the landscape level. Monitoring reports housed on the [Ghana Reddis \(fcghana.org\)](http://fcghana.org) show the proponents of the GCFRP and GSLERP (from government, private sector and CSOs/NGOs) have exhibited strong dedication to sound environmental and social safeguards measures by demonstrating robust compliance to national, World Bank, UNDP and Cancun safeguards policies. By involving communities in methods that provide environmental and financial benefits, the REDD+ programme has a solid potential to increase carbon stocks (achieve emissions reductions) in the High Forest and Northern Savannah Zones by reducing deforestation and forest degradation. Adverse environmental and social effects that may result from the GSLERP and GCFRP

activities have been identified and mitigated, maximizing the programme's reputational, economic and social benefits.

The RMSC has been equipped to enhance its forestry monitoring capacity. The Remote Sensing/Geographic Information System Unit of the RMSC was supplied with GIS equipment and software and was followed up with training. The RMSC as the mapping wing of the FC has the capacity to map the dynamics in forest reserve areas adequately and have GIS layers of the forest reserve boundaries, yield maps and land cover maps of selected forest reserves, and regularly update them as and when resources are made available (Framework for National Forest Monitoring System, page 4). The Forestry Commission uses inventories to track forest initiatives every ten years (*Forestry Commission Act, 1999 (Act 571), Sections 1 and 2(1) (2) (b)*). In operationalizing the Manual of Procedures, the Forestry Commission develops forest management plans to guide the sustainable management and utilization of forest resources and to score forest cover and quality.

There are also incentives such as the Modified Taungya System and Royalty Payment to encourage traditional authorities and communities to protect the forest and avoid the risk of reversals¹⁹ (GCFRP Benefit Sharing Plan, page 20). Social Responsibility Agreements between Loggers and communities for community development projects may also serve as incentives to protect the forest and avoid the risk of reversals. Environmental and Social Management Plan was prepared for Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program implementation areas. This has promoted the protection of natural forests and biodiversity through the compliance of Social and Environmental Safeguards (Refer to the Forestry Commission Annual Report 2020). The various forest district offices have forest reserve management plans that prevent the conversion of forest, and the MMDAs have medium-term development plans, which ensure the protection and sustainable management of forest (e.g., Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Medium Term Development Plan 2022-2025). Environmental and Social Management Plan was prepared for Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program implementation areas.

¹⁹ https://redd.unfccc.int/files/summary_of_information_v2_01.05.19.pdf

This has promoted the protection of natural forests and biodiversity through the compliance of Social and Environmental Safeguards (Forestry Commission annual report 2020).

A monitoring framework has been developed to measure forest cover and quality (Monitoring Report for Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program, 2019²⁰). Ghana has made progress in the implementation of the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program (GCFRP), leading to Emission Reductions (ERs) of 972456 tCO₂e for the 2019 accounting period through the maintenance of natural forests and avoided deforestation and reduced forest degradation (GCFRP Monitoring Report, 2019). According to the Cocoa and Forest Initiatives (CFIs) Report of 2021, 9,487.53 hectares of degraded forest area were restored in 6 hotspot intervention areas (HIAs). Also, a forest monitoring system with a web portal and deforestation alerts was developed and continues to be operational.

The relevant mandated institutions prioritise tree and animal species protection through screenings and risk assessments to prevent extinction within the boundaries of Ghana. As a result, the Minister must ensure that vulnerable and endangered species are protected while awarding timber permits and any other types of permits. The environmental impact analyses provide some information on biodiversity (See IE&C materials on Pg155 & 156 for invasive species, Pg. 163 for endangered animals, Pg 159 for the announcement of Close season for Hunting in the Sefwi Wiawso Bibiani HIA - Implementation and Monitoring report²¹).

Forestry Commission operationalizes the Environmental and Social Management Framework/Environmental and Social Management Plan, which makes provision for screening of all REDD+ related projects to detect or identify risks that could potentially impact environmentally sensitive sites that render various ecosystem benefits. The Environmental Protection Agency, as a regulatory body, has the authority to halt any

²⁰https://reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/publications/Ghana%20ER_2019_%20MR_Final_Version_without_annex_123_18082022_FINAL_VERSION.pdf

²¹ <https://www.reddsis.fcghana.org/admin/controller/consultations/Sefwi%20Wiawso%20Bibiani%20HIA%20-%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring%20report.pdf>

ongoing projects that do not conform to Environmental and Social safeguard measures. This is possible under the provisions of Section 13 of the EPA Act, 1994 (Act 490), and there are also national laws and international conventions, such as CITES, that prohibit the marketing of endangered species.([GSLERP - Social and Environmental Screening Procedure.pdf \(fcghana.org\)](#)).

The tools used in the identification, implementation and monitoring of environmental and social safeguards are the Environmental Social Management Framework. The Environmental Social Management Plan and screening checklist (see pages 164-175 of [Sefwi Wiawso Bibiani HIA - Implementation and Monitoring report.pdf \(fcghana.org\)](#)). These have contributed to the rolling out of safeguards actions, which in the long term would ensure the protection of forests and ecosystems and have enabled program implementers to identify and reduce risks, outline mitigation measures to address the risks, enhance benefits, promote the protection of natural forests and biodiversity through the compliance of Social and Environmental Safeguards. The mitigation measures outlined in the ESMPs are clear and concise and have guided compliance with safeguards such as integrating gender considerations and protecting community rights. Below are some categories of REDD+ activities which are screened for potential risks:

1. Component One: Forest Restoration Activities such as:
 - Modified Taungya System (MTS)
 - Enrichment Planting
 - Trees on Farm (ToF)

2. Component Two: Climate Smart Cocoa Activities made up of:
 - Cocoa Rehabilitation
 - Cocoa Diseases and Pest Control Programme (CODAPEC)
 - Cocoa HiTech (Fertilizer) Programme
 - Free Hybrid Cocoa Seedling Distribution
 - Artificial Hand Pollination
 - Mass Cocoa Pruning

3. Component Three: Additional livelihoods Activities/Interventions comprised of:

- Training to promote economically viable and environmentally sound on-farm income diversification options such as:
 - Vegetable farming
 - Beekeeping
 - Animal husbandry

Pest management plans (PMP) have been developed with specific principles of appropriate pest management approaches, chemical pesticide thresholds, and applications to prevent pollution to nearby water bodies due to run-off. Safeguards monitoring reports record reduced use of pesticides through continuous capacity-building events by REDD+ partners and the utilisation of IE&C materials distributed to farmers and local communities by implementing partners. See a list of banned agrochemicals on Pg 135-150 of the [Ahafo Ano South HIA - Safeguards Implementation and Monitoring report.pdf \(fcghana.org\)](#).

A unique approach of Ghana's REDD+ programs (GCFRP/GSLERP) is that they both enhance non-carbon benefits. In the case of the GCFRP, increased yields for cocoa farmers have been recorded, and the sustainability of cocoa beans from HIAs that the private sector uses to validate its no-deforestation supply chain commitments has been verified. This represents a significant strength of the program, as it means that the expected carbon benefits will not be the only source of incentives or benefits to stakeholders but the underlying interest and motivation of the program to realize sustainable cocoa forest landscapes and livelihood production systems. In practical terms, climate-smart cocoa farmers who agree to shaded cocoa production and forest protection measures can expect significant yields from improved access to farming inputs and resources, resulting in increased incomes²². The GSLERP enhances livelihoods along the shea value chain through green and sustainable economic livelihood ventures. The HIAs' adherence to safeguards has helped maximize both environmental and social benefits, as shown in some examples below, as recorded by

²²<https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/system/files/documents/Ghana%20FCPF%20ER%20Program%20Advanced%20Draft%20BSP.pdf>,

project monitoring reports through field verification. See feedback received from participating farmers on increased yields and income on pp 75-77 in the [2019 Juaboso-Bia HIA - Implementation and Monitoring report \(fcghana.org\)](#).

The following are some outcomes recorded in field monitoring reports of the various HIAs on the [Ghana Reddis \(fcghana.org\)](#):

- Improved community governance of forest resources through participation and inclusion in the HIA governance structures, which include women, youth, men, traditional authorities, local government and community representatives. For instance, in the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA of the GCFRP. A total of 1,092 communities form part of the governance structure, and this number is expected to increase as the project garners momentum and shows results. In the GSLERP, the HMB and elected SHEC members were trained on policy influencing and advocacy, focusing on how to influence local or district-level actions.
- A total of 1,057 MTS farmers (881 men and 176 females) from 50 forest fringe communities in the project were engaged in establishing the MTS plantation. Some MTS farmers depend solely on the forest reserves for their livelihoods since their traditional lands have been rendered infertile due to continuous cropping over the years. Conscious efforts were made to recruit willing women to join the MTS farmer groups, which has improved vegetative cover.
- Improved environmental integrity of the project landscape.
- Improved resilience to climate change.
- Knowledge sharing among beneficiaries and communities as evidenced by learning exchanges facilitated by the NRS among HIAs during consultative meetings.
- Increased livelihood and economic activities of beneficiary communities, including women and vulnerable groups.
- Increased income for farmers through alternative livelihood ventures (e.g. beekeeping).
- Adoption of the FGRM modalities by stakeholders has improved
- Preserved Indigenous tree species through enrichment planting and MTS. Some tree species were suggested by farmers & verified and accepted by the REDD+

implementing partners. These include *Terminalia superba* (Ofram), *Swietenia mahagoni* (Mahogany) and *Pycnanthus angolensis* (Otie).

- CSOs raised the awareness levels of communities of Social Responsibility Agreements (SRAs). They supported the formation of SRA committees to oversee the negotiation, implementation, and monitoring of Social Responsibility Agreement processes. The CSO also assisted communities who did not already have SRAs to lead talks with logging firms.
- 82,055 multi-purpose trees distributed to cocoa farmers, such as coconut and oil palm seedlings, to improve diversification of livelihoods for local communities.
- Adopting or using best agricultural practices, such as pest management and fertilizer application, has improved environmental quality.
- Seedlings supplied to communities for restoration activities and rehabilitation of cocoa. According to the Ghana Emission Reduction Monitoring Report, 2,261,247 tree seedlings were supplied to farmer groups by COCOBOD.

F. UNFCCC Cancun safeguard (F) –

“Actions address the risk of reversals”

With the experience from the Forest 2020 Project, the FC is currently developing a web portal to serve as a one-stop shop for forest data. Therefore, Ghana has also created a forest monitoring system with a functioning web portal and deforestation alerts, leading to Emission Reductions (ERs) of 972456 tCO₂e for the 2019 accounting period through the maintenance of natural forests, avoided deforestation and reduced forest degradation (GCFRP Monitoring Report, 2019).

Forest guards patrol forest boundaries/areas and monitor changes. The Forest Services Division district offices carry out community sensitization on the benefit of forests to survival and livelihoods. According to the Cocoa and Forest Initiatives (CFIs) Report of 2021²³ 9,487.53 hectares of degraded forest area were restored in the 6 HIAs in the GCFRP area.

²³ <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/publication/cocoa-forests-annual-report-2021/>

There have not been any significant events or changes in ER Program circumstances that have led to reversals during the Reporting Period. The reversal risk assessment using the CF Buffer Guidelines has changed from 18% to 13% since the revised final ERPD was prepared. The change is due to the risks associated with institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability. The risk was reduced due to several measures that strengthened the institutional capacity for implementation. A risk reversal assessment of key indicators is provided in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Reversal Risk Assessment as reported in the First monitoring report (FCPF)

Risk Factor	Risk assessment	Default Reversal Risk Set-Aside Percentage	Discount	Resulting reversal risk set-aside percentage
Default risk	<i>N/A</i>	10%	<i>N/A</i>	<i>10%</i>
Lack of broad and sustained stakeholder support	<p>There is low stakeholder risk as the programme has clearly identified its main stakeholders and a high degree of formal and informal consultations were undertaken during the design phase (reference ERPD Section 5 pp 70-81). Extensive further engagements /consultations/capacity building on specific issues (Benefit Sharing, Safeguards, governance) have continued across the HIAs (https://reddsis.fcghana.org/documents.php)</p> <p>In line with the program design, the in-depth participation of cocoa farmers, their rural communities, women, the private sector, farmer associations, and the HIA-Consortium structure ensures a high degree of</p>	10%	<i>Reversal risk is considered low 10%- 10%=0% discount</i>	<i>0%</i>

	<p>buy-in. This is evident in the development of governance structures for 5 out of 6 HIAs.</p> <p>There was a risk that broad support would not be provided during the early phase of implementation, this risk was mitigated early in the project cycle through official launch of the programme by the President of Ghana²⁴, broad community consultation involving all stakeholders, especially traditional authorities, community elders, and other key persons. The consultation process served to manage community expectations, increase ownership, inclusiveness, and ensure sustainability while garnering broad community support. These activities were buttressed by the implementation of safeguards and grievance redress mechanisms under the programme.</p> <p>In addition, the existence of the following mitigates this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit Sharing Plan, which is being operationalized. • Existence of Process Framework Document. • Signing of Memorandum of Understanding with partner institutions²⁵. 			
Lack of institutional	The risks associated with Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability are listed as low. At the start of REDD+ and the GCFRP in Ghana,	10%	Reversal risk is	<i>0%</i>

²⁴ <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/business/Ghana-signs-agreement-with-cocoa-and-chocolate-companies-to-protect-and-restore-forests-1234705>

²⁵ <https://www.confectionerynews.com/Article/2021/04/15/Cocoa-companies-forge-new-partnership-with-Ghana-to-protect-and-restore-forests>

<p>capacities and/or ineffective vertical/cross sectorial coordination</p>	<p>institutional capacity was relatively low. However, capacity is being strengthened through numerous trainings and workshops (https://reddsis.fcghana.org/documents.phphttps://reddsis.fcghana.org/documents.php) at the National and landscape levels, and Ghana’s capacity to implement this programme has further improved.</p> <p>For example, in the past, there was weak cross-sectoral coordination amongst the lead institutions, the Forestry Commission and the Ghana Cocoa Board. This has changed as evidenced by the coordination required to design and implement this programme as well as the Forest Investment Program (FIP). Moreover, the CEOs of the FC and Cocobod sign the framework agreements with the HMBs.</p> <p>Since the GCFRP began, Ghana continues to identify interventions²⁶/initiatives (cocoa & forest Initiative), which enhance annual work planning and budgeting across sectors and projects operating within the GCFRP. In addition, the program has sought to enhance safeguards implementation and has ensured delivery of operational and coordination requirements.</p> <p>Finally, the programs strategy focuses on interventions in decentralized deforestation hotspots which given the emissions reductions reported in this document, highlight that the program has successfully mitigated the risk associated with institutional capacity.</p> <p>In addition, the following also mitigate this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry Commission and Ghana Cocoa Board Regional and District Offices are located in all 		<p>considered low: 10% - 10% = 0% discount</p>	
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²⁶ <http://reddsis.fcghana.org/projects.php?id=4> ,

	<p>the programme areas and thus have the requisite staff to execute the programme and coordinate activities at the landscape level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FC has lots of experiences in the implementation of projects that involve other agencies in Ghana. The projects include the Forest Investment Programme, Natural Resources Environment Programme, Sustainable Land and Water Management Project. • Existence of the GCFRP Implementation Committee with membership from FC, Cocobod and World Cocoa Foundation to guide operational activities. <p>The Consultant Procured to develop the Fund Flow Mechanism has completed the task and with guidance in the FFM, Ghana has distributed the first carbon Payment to community beneficiaries.</p> <p>In the addition to the above, in the years under review, the following activities have been undertaken to deepen the institutional capacities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadened engagement with the development of governance structures for 5 out of the 6 HIAs and the signing of Framework agreements with those 5. • Experience in collaboration between private sector and government agencies. • Set-up of all REDD+ Dedicated Account at the national level as well as HIA accounts at the sub 			
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	<p>national level for onward transfer of Carbon Payments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up of RDA Steering Committee to provide transparency for the transfer of funds to all beneficiaries. • Capacity building of functional governance structures to prepare them adequately for the administration and disbursement of Carbon Payments²⁷. • Trainings conducted by the World Bank on Safeguards for all landscape actors. • Institutional arrangements defined for the development of Second MR, as a follow up to the first MR. 			
<p>Lack of long term effectiveness in addressing underlying drivers</p>	<p>The programme interventions have directly focused efforts on two of the main drivers and agents of deforestation and degradation in the region (cocoa/subsistence farming and unsustainable logging).</p> <p>The risks from cocoa farming and subsistence agriculture have been mitigated through the direct engagement of agents in programme interventions through the formation of the HMBs and signing of framework agreements. These agents are also unlikely to migrate within or outside the program area and thus the risk of displacement is low. This is because Cocoa</p>	<p>5%</p>	<p>Reversal risk is considered Medium: 5% - 2% = 3% discount</p>	<p>3%</p>

²⁷ <https://reddsis.fcghana.org/documents.php>

	<p>production mainly thrives in the Programme area in Ghana²⁸.</p> <p>Risks associated with illegal logging was considered low. As indicated in the ERPD, the risk of illegal logging is mitigated by both hard and soft approaches. The FC has increased its law enforcement role by deploying the Rapid Response Unit to augment the roles of Resource Guards in flash points where there are constant reports of illegal logging. As part of the VPA FLEGT process, there has been a reform in the regulation of timber utilization in Ghana, thus there is a new legislative Instrument to regulate the utilization of timber resources (http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC173919/). http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC173919/). Through this process, there is a legal assurance for timber production and utilization in Ghana. Ghana looks forward to issuing the first FLEGT License in 2024²⁹.</p> <p>Also, as part of the by-laws of HMBs, they assist in the protection of the forest resources.</p> <p>The risk from illegal small-scale mining was also considered medium. Landowners were not considered migratory, though some of the agents were. Increased income from climate-smart agriculture and other benefits is helping to mitigate the opportunity cost. The Government has also introduced community mining</p>			
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²⁸ Ghana Cocoa Board Research and Monitoring Department.

²⁹ <https://mlnr.gov.gh/index.php/ghana-to-become-first-african-country-to-issue-flegt-license/>

	<p>schemes ³⁰ to guide community level mining in sustainable manner.</p> <p>In addition, lessons learnt from the successful implementation of the FIP which is a pilot to the GCFRP are being used to address the underlying drivers (provision of alternative/ additional livelihood options, key legislative reforms).</p> <p>The REDD+ strategy and the ERPD give a clear direction (at least 20 years) on the implementation of the program beyond the ERPA period.</p> <p>The program primarily targets sustainable cocoa productions and this commodity is a high exchange earner for Ghana. Therefore, governments always pay attention to this sector and hence the programme would persist the ERPA period.</p>			
<p>Exposure and vulnerability to natural disturbances</p>	<p>This risk associated with natural disturbances remains low. The main natural risk in the GCFRP accounting area is forest fires. Generally, the occurrence of uncontrolled forest fires may happen as a result of illegal practices related to land clearing, charcoal production, and as a result of dry years (El Nino events).</p> <p>The programme has mitigated the risk of forest fires by strengthening fire management and control units at the Forestry Commission, district assemblies, and fire volunteers etc.</p> <p>The FC also implemented the Wild Fire Management Project (2000-2008) and has therefore gained lots of experience in the management of wildfires in Ghana.</p> <p>A Manual of Procedure to guide FC staff in the management of fires has also been produced.</p>	<p>5%</p>	<p><i>Reversal risk is considered Low</i></p> <p><i>5% - 5%</i></p> <p><i>=0%</i></p>	<p><i>0%</i></p>

³⁰ <https://presidency.gov.gh/index.php/briefing-room/news-style-2/1653-new-community-mining-schemes-to-create-12-000-jobs-at-aboso-gwira-akango-president-akufo-addo>

	<p>Better land use planning with the development and operationalization of HIA management plans would ensure forests remain healthy and less susceptible to fires. The HIA management plans for both Juaboso/Bia and Asutifi/Asunafo HIAs are ready.</p> <p>Again, the promotion of Climate Smart Cocoa practices is one of the pillars of this programme and this would mitigate the effect of climate change on cocoa production systems (ERPD page 55).</p>				
		Total reversal risk set-aside percentage	13%		
		Total reversal risk set-aside percentage from ER-PD or previous monitoring report (whichever is more recent)	13%		

**G. UNFCCC Cancun Safeguard (G) –
“Actions reduce displacement of emissions”**

The five programs Ghana hopes to implement (i.e. Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program, Ghana Shea Landscape Emission Reduction Program, Transitional Forest Landscape Program, Coastal Mangrove REDD+ Program and Togo Plateau REDD+ Program) are meant to complement each other to address the risk of displacement of emissions.³¹ The National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) has been set up to identify instances of displacement so that steps can be taken to address them³². In setting up the NFMS, women were consulted and participated in the design, implementation and

³¹ Ghana REDD+ Strategy 2016 p.35 <https://reddsis.fcghana.org/reddstrategy.php>

³² Summary of Information, pg. 25-26 https://redd.unfccc.int/files/summary_of_information_v2_01.05.19.pdf

monitoring.

The Resource Support Management Support Center (RMSC) has been equipped to enhance its forestry monitoring capacity. The Remote Sensing/Geographic Information System Unit of the RMSC was supplied with GIS equipment and software and was followed up with training. So, the RMSC, as the mapping wing of the FC, can adequately map the dynamics in forest reserve areas. They have GIS layers of the forest reserve boundaries yield maps and land cover maps of selected forest reserves. They regularly update them when resources are available (Framework for National Forest Monitoring System, page 4).

Table 7 assesses the risks posed by cocoa farming, subsistence farming, illegal logging and illegal mining.

Table 7: Updates on displacement risks associated with different drivers of deforestation

Cocoa Farming	
Risk of displacement	Low
Progress of the strategy in Place	<p>In the first place, Cocoa production in Ghana is central to the GCFRP landscape. Limited or no cocoa production happens outside this landscape with some minimal cocoa production within the transition zone.</p> <p>Again, the threat from a changing climate and its impacts on cocoa production outside the recommended growing areas further reduces the likelihood of displacement.</p> <p>However, with recent threats of displacement due to small scale mining in cocoa growing areas, though, the Transition area falls outside the GCFRP area, capacity building, training and extension services by both FC and Cocobod extend to the Transition areas to ensure that farmers implement CSC practices.</p> <p>For instance, FC through the NRS is implementing a project in collaboration with FAO dubbed "Forest and Farm Facility Phase II" within the Forest, Transition and Savannah Zones, which aims to help forest farm producer organizations become stronger, amplify</p>

their potential and connect with each other whilst helping to promote sustainable development through management of farmland and forests that produce food, livelihoods, medicine. In 2022 training workshops on Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, and Access to Finance were organized for 46 farmers in the transition zone.

Generally, the strategy employed by Ghana to mitigate the potential for displacement of deforestation associated with Cocoa farming is anchored in the initiatives focused in the HIA areas. With an ageing population of Cocoa farms leading to a decrease in farm yield, communities are most likely to shift their activities to forested areas within the GCFRP. Several initiatives underway within the HIA areas are mitigating this potential displacement. In this regard, the Ghana Cocoa Board is currently rehabilitating all diseased and old cocoa farms to reverse the trend of decreases cocoa yield. As of 2020, 4199 hectares had been rehabilitated. In addition to this, other efforts in the form of projects are also complementing the efforts.

For instance, in the Juaboso Bia HIA, a consortium of stakeholders from both the private and public sectors are involved in the Partnership for Productivity, Protection and Resilience in Cocoa Landscapes (3PRCL). These partners are the Touton, SNV Netherlands, NCRC, Forestry Commission (FC), Ghana Cocoa Board (Cocobod) and have signed addendum to the Juaboso Bia Framework Agreement. The project has established landscape governance and forest protection mechanisms and enhanced Cocoa productivity at the farm level while also providing incentives and income diversification options for farmers as conditions for forest protection and sustainable land management.

In the Asutifi/Asunafo HIA, the Environmental Sustainability project (Public and Private Partnership; Mondelez, United Nations Development Program -UNDP), FC, Cocobod) has established community-level governance structures while also providing incentives and income diversification options for farmers as

	<p>conditions for forest protection and sustainable land management</p> <p>In addition, through the partnership established under this project, Mondelez has reforested a total area of 167.5 ha using the Modified Taungya System approach. The first of its kind by any Chocolate Brand in Ghana.</p> <p>COCOBOD in collaboration with Forestry Commission and other private sector participants have developed Climate Smart Cocoa (CSC) Standard, which is undergoing series of stakeholder engagements, and expected to be finalized by the third quarter of 2023. The document is a working document to be used in all cocoa-growing regions to ensure sustainability in the face of climate change. The CSC standard document would guide Community Extension Agents (CEAs) in the provision of extension services to farmers to promote on-farm best agricultural practices. These initiatives and more have and will continue to reduce the potential for displacement in the program area.</p>
Subsistence farming	
Risk of displacement	Low
Progress of the strategy in Place	<p>While clearing forests for Cocoa production is considered one of the main drivers of deforestation in the program area, subsistence farming has also been shown to contribute to displacement. As outlined in the ERPDP, shifting subsistence agriculture is constrained by the same ecological limits placed on Cocoa, and therefore farmers are unlikely to shift their cultivation outside their farms. Cocoa farmers typically establish their subsistence agricultural fields adjacent to their Cocoa trees and typically engage in diversified farming practices. These practices have been enhanced and incentivized through the initiatives (as indicated above) which seek to reward good forest governance within the area. These incentives include the provision of additional livelihood for the farmers, using the MTS approach to reforest degraded forest reserves, where farmers have access to additional lands to cultivate their food crops provision of free extension services for cocoa farmers, the supply of tree seedlings for</p>

	<p>planting on farm, provision of farm inputs and farm services as well as protective clothing etc. Farmers are now less likely to engage in the clearing of forested environments as there are specific mechanisms established to identify and sanction those engaging in clearing activities.</p> <p>In addition to the above, community governance structures have been developed for five out of the six HIAs. The Framework Agreements, which indicate the roles and responsibilities of farmers have also been signed with the HIA Management Boards (HMBs). The roles of farmers/communities include the protection of the forests and undertaking sustainable agriculture practices. Through series of engagements and capacity building programs, and the announcement of the receipt of the first ER payment by Ghana, farmers are more encouraged to undertake their roles in the Framework Agreements. (https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/emission-reduction-programme-dividends-cocoa-farmers-tell-success-stories.html).</p> <p>Going forward, the Ghana Cocoa Board has begun the process of establishing the Cocoa Management System in anticipation of implementing several new, farmer-focused initiatives, including pension schemes. This system would help provide tailor-made extension services to farmers. (Further details on the system will be given in subsequent ERs.)</p>
Illegal logging	
Risk of displacement	Medium
Progress of the strategy in Place	<p>Illegal logging within the GCFRP was identified as a risk in the ERPD. However, this risk is being mitigated as described below.</p> <p>Improved landscape governance and planning (HIA governance structures development), along with enhanced skills, mainly through sensitization on monitoring, allow both communities and government entities to respond to identified acts of illegal logging collaboratively.</p>

	<p>Enhanced monitoring capabilities partnered with improved agricultural production have and will continue to reduce the likelihood of displacement related to illegal logging activities. Further, the establishment of the Trees in Agroforestry program (a major component of ERPD) will in the future provide a sustainable source of timber to meet local needs.</p> <p>Again, Ghana has ratified a Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the EU, and has developed the Ghana Wood Tracking System systems to control, verify and license legal timber. In line with this, a new legislative Instrument (LI 2254) has been developed to guide the value chain of wood from the forest gate to processing. All Timber Permits need to be ratified by Parliament. So far, the first batch of 19 have been laid before Parliament for ratification.</p> <p>The Forestry Commission has been undertaking forest protection, including forest reserve patrol, to detect and apprehend illegal offences, including illegal logging, farming, mining sand/gravel winning, charcoal production, hunting, cattle grazing, canoe carving, setting of forest fires, and infrastructure development. This exercise is undertaken by FC staff at the National, Regional, and District levels with the support of the Rapid Response Unit. Arrested culprits are arraigned before a court of Law, and punitive measures are imposed against them to serve as a deterrent for others. The table below provides details of the number of prosecutions related to forests for 2020 and 2021.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="544 1514 1110 1733"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Prosecutions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>75</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Prosecutions	2020	55	2021	20	Total	75
Year	Prosecutions								
2020	55								
2021	20								
Total	75								
Illegal small-scale mining									
Risk of displacement	Medium								
Progress of the strategy in Place	The original ERPD recognized the displacement of illegal small-scale gold mining in the GCFRP project area as a medium risk.								

Since then, Ghana has made significant progress with regards to mitigating this risk.

With a new government in place, in 2017, new program (artisanal mining) was launched to enforce the law by putting up measures to stop the menace, this helped to reduce the menace.

Some reports indicate that the practice has returned in the project landscape.

In response, Government has introduced some policies to help mitigate illegal mining. These include the following:

- All eighty-three (83) Small Scale Mining Committees in the various mining districts, following section 92 of the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), to assist the District Offices of the Minerals Commission to effectively monitor, promote and develop mining operations in their jurisdictions. This is the first time since the passage of Act 703 that Small Scale Mining Committees have been established in all mining districts in the country. Under the Ghana Landscape Restoration and Small Scale Mining Project, members of these Committees to build their capacity efficiently perform their functions.
- Establishment of Community Mining Schemes, which allows mining to be undertaken in a sustainable manner.
- Implementation of the National Alternative Livelihood Program (NALEP) carry out its mandate. This program which has an objective of creating jobs as alternative to illegal mining was launched on 25 October 2021.

In addition to the above, through the Forest Investment Programme and GCFRP, additional livelihood schemes are provided to farmers to increase their income levels. Again, the logic of intensifying good farm practices and other climate-smart interventions is to help increase cocoa yields. This motivates farmers not to give up their cocoa farms to illegal mining.

Furthermore, Cocobod announced in October 2022 the start of a Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme to assure farmers of income in

	their old age. The scheme has just been rolled out after piloting in the Ashanti Region. Subsequent MRs will give details.
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PART V: Recommendations

A holistic approach is essential to ensure the REDD+ program achieves its ambitious emissions reduction and biodiversity conservation goals. Building on the existing emphasis on partnership and stakeholder engagement, the following additional recommendations are crucial:

Governance and Institutional Arrangements

- **Formalize Collaboration:** Establish formal agreements between REDD+ implementing bodies and relevant government agencies to ensure consistent information sharing, streamlined decision-making, and effective coordination on safeguard issues.
- **Designated Safeguard Focal Points:** Appoint dedicated safeguard focal points within government and implementing agencies as central resources for knowledge, guidance, and grievance resolution.
- **Review and Adaptation:** Regularly review and update existing governance arrangements to address emerging challenges, incorporate lessons learned, and ensure alignment with evolving best practices in safeguards implementation.

Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building

- **Prioritize Vulnerable Groups:** Develop targeted engagement strategies for marginalized and vulnerable stakeholders, including indigenous communities, women's groups, and local communities directly affected by HIA activities. This may involve culturally sensitive approaches, translated materials, and dedicated forums for participation.
- **Invest in Continuous Capacity Building:** Secure long-term funding and resources for ongoing capacity-building initiatives. This includes technical training for government staff on safeguards monitoring and reporting and workshops for HMBs and HICs on their roles in benefit sharing and grievance mechanisms.
- **Foster Community-Led Monitoring:** Empower local communities to participate in monitoring and reporting processes, recognizing their unique knowledge of local ecosystems and potential impacts.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Budgeting

- **Expand Safeguard Monitoring:** Develop a comprehensive monitoring framework that goes beyond the ERP, tracking the social and environmental impacts of all REDD+ activities. Incorporate relevant themes and indicators from international best practices, national commitments, and the specific needs of Ghana.
- **Regular Safeguard Reporting:** Produce regular, publicly accessible summaries of safeguard information, including quantitative data and qualitative assessments of impacts. This promotes transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making.
- **Secure Long-Term Financing:** Develop a sustainable financing strategy for safeguards implementation, including budgeting for monitoring activities, capacity-building initiatives, grievance mechanisms, and the continued operation of the SIS. Explore diverse funding sources, such as international climate funds, national budgets, and private sector partnerships.

The success of REDD+ in Ghana hinges on a commitment to comprehensive, inclusive, and adaptive safeguards. By prioritizing strong partnerships, investing in capacity building, and establishing robust monitoring and reporting systems, the program can achieve its dual objectives of emissions reduction and biodiversity conservation while ensuring equitable benefits for all stakeholders.

Annex 1: Sample Projects in the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program – Evidence of Alignment of Project Goals with Cancun Safeguards Adherence Indicators

Name of initiative	Aim/issues	Location	Lead organisation and partners	Contact
Mondelez Cocoa Life Programme	Deforestation, Smallholder Productivity Enhancement, Community and Farmer Livelihood, Gender & Youth inclusion and Child Labour elimination	Western North, Ashanti, Ahafo, Eastern and Central Regions	Mondelez, Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Vision International, Institute for Democratic Governance Abantu, Right to Play	https://www.cocoalife.org/
Forest Investment Programme	Deforestation, forest protection and restoration, landscape restoration	Throughout The High Forest Zone	FC, COCOBOD	http://www.fcghana.org/page.php?page=266&section=28&typ=1
Additional Financing for Ghana Forest Investment Programme	Support for plantation development to expand holding and improve quality, Deforestation, forest protection and restoration, landscape	Throughout the High Forest Zone	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, FC, COCOBOD	http://mlnr.gov.gh/index.php/programs-projects/ghana-forest-investment-program-fip/

(FIP)- Enhancing Natural Forest and Agro-forest Landscapes Project	restoration of mined out areas.			
Name of initiative	Aim/issues	Location	Lead organisation and partners	Contact
Environmentally Sustainable Practices in Cocoa Landscapes (ESP I and II)	Support for good environmental practices in cocoa landscape, carbon stock enhancement and habitat restoration in cocoa landscape, support for collaborative community resource management	Throughout the Cocoa landscape	UNDP, COCOBOD	https://www.gh.undp.org/content/ghana/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/ESPII.html
Cocoa Rehabilitation and Intensification Phase II (CORIP II)	CORIP II focuses on large-scale adoption of sustainable intensification Of cocoa production by improving farmers access to recommended inputs (planting material, fertilizer, crop protection), extension advice and other services (including finance) through small- and medium- scale enterprises	Selected cocoa landscape in Ghana	FC, COCOBOD, Pan African Savings and Loans, Touton	

From Full Sun to Shaded Cocoa Agroforestry (SCAFS)	SCAFS aims to establish a balanced approach to cocoa production and forest protection while supporting cocoa businesses to implement transparent deforestation-free supply chains in Ghana	The cocoa mosaic landscapes in the Western part of Bia National Park and Bia North Forest Reserve in the Bia West District of Western North	SNV, FC,COCOBOD,Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, Bia West District Assembly	https://snv.org/project/full-sun-shaded-cocoa-agro-forestry-systems-scafs
Name of initiative	Aim/issues	Location	Lead organisation and partners	Contact
Partnership for Livelihoods and Forest Landscape Management	Deforestation, forests protection and landscape restoration	Western Region	Rainforest Alliance and Olam	https://partnershipsforforests.com/partnerships-projects/rainforest-allaince-olam-partnership-livelihoods-forest-landscape-management-western-ghana/
Partnership for	Deforestation, forests	Western Region	Touton, SNV, Nature	http://www.3prcocoalandscape

Productivity, Protection And Resilience In Cocoa Landscapes	protection and landscape restoration		Conservation Research Centre (NCRC), COCOBOD, FC, Agro Eco Louis Bulk Institute	es.com/
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Annex 2: Evidence of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Assessment to inform Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy Framework for the Production Landscape Programme (Proforest Asunafo-Asutifi Hotspot Intervention Area)

The Production Landscape Programme (PLP) implemented by Proforest seeks to establish a deforestation-free, climate-resilient sustainable cocoa production landscape in the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape to promote good agricultural and environmental practices. Through the implementation of landscape initiatives, Proforest noted the inequalities embedded in the differential roles, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men which could negatively impact the project. A gender and social inclusion analytical study was conducted to support the development of a gender and social inclusion framework in 2022.

Findings:

- Forest and natural resources depletion of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape have negatively affected the livelihoods of both men and women within the landscape with women bearing the greatest brunt of the forest depletion situation especially regarding household food security.
- Women experience low crop yields because of their unequal access to fertile lands, declining soil fertility and inadequate rains resulting from changing weather conditions and cutting down of trees in the forest.
- These low yields of farm produce pose household food security challenges to both men and women with women being the worst affected. Lack of sufficient financial resources arising from low yields means that men are unable to effectively play their breadwinning roles/responsibilities.
- This has implications for household relationships, particularly regarding how the dominant role of males is being undermined.
- Consequently, women have to resort to various coping strategies including petty trading to be able to provide the basic needs of their households.
- Male out-migration is an option for men in such cases.
- Access to farmlands is generally scarce for both males and females in the communities within the landscape.

- The Asunafo-Asutifi landscape used to be endowed with natural resources such as gold, streams or water bodies, fertile land, and timber which served as a major source of livelihood for the people within the landscape. Human activities largely contributed to the depletion of the forest and the forest no longer provides communities with enough of the natural resources.

Quotes by Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Participants

"We do not benefit from the resources. the streams around have dried up and therefore we do not benefit from them. We depend on pipe – borne water even for spraying activities on the farms. We have to fetch water from homes to the farm which consumes a lot of time and is also very expensive". [Women FGD Participants at Kwabenakuma]

"Young women have realized that their mothers did not have any real livelihood options even though they were actively involved in cocoa farming, so they are not really interested in farming" [FGD Youth Participants at Mim]

"We the young women have realized that our mothers do not have any better life from years of cocoa farming, so we are not really interested in farming. Besides, the distances to the farms are unbearable". [FGD with Girls at Ntotroso]

"The mining activities have really affected cocoa farming because it is more lucrative than farming. If we want the youth to be involved in farming, then the sensitization has to be sustained rather than ad-hoc." [FGD Youth Participants at Mim]

*"There are limited income generation opportunities for the youth in the community. Some girls cart cocoa for money; Boys are into gambling, Girls end education at Junior High School level, but boys tend to move a bit higher, other boys even after Secondary School mainly drive **okada** (motor cycles) or move into bigger towns for non-existent jobs. The girls end up as househelps in the cities sometimes." [FGD Participants At Kwabenakuma]*

Recommendations

- Low decision-making powers of women [household, community and production] despite their contributions is a major hindrance, this situation should be considered in any social inclusion and gender equality programme.
- Explore the possibility of empowering both women and men within the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape, in the area of alternative livelihood opportunities besides farming activities. This could be done through equal opportunities created for both women and men in the non-traditional sectors.
- Provision of livelihood skills training and start-up capital could help the women to earn additional incomes from diversified skills to contribute to household food security.
- Provide continued sensitization and education of the communities on the need for the conservation and protection of the natural resources of the landscape.
- Engage community members, both men, and women, in the replanting of trees and ensure the documentation of the planted trees for the ownership rights to be protected.

A gender framework is being developed for the landscape by Proforest, using the Gender Equality Wheel, which allows for the categorization of the outcomes and impact of gender mainstreaming on women, men, families and communities. It tracks women's transition from alienation and isolation to ultimate involvement in community activities and strategic participation in social, economic, cultural and political transformation—and significantly, men's recognition, support and involvement in this process.

Annex 3: Involvement of children in advocating against child labour in cocoa supply chains

Safeguarding our planet today!

The Climate Smart Kids initiative, also referred to as Child Protection and Climate Change Ambassadors (CPA), was started by Touton SA to help the offspring of cocoa farmers become change agents for child-centred issues in cocoa-growing communities. The Ambassadors meet and discuss climate change and child protection challenges affecting their community. Gardens are planted and maintained by the Ambassadors under the guidance of a patron. The ambassadors meet with their community members periodically and through drama/poetry, communicate challenges and the desired changes. The project was launched in 2019 and has undergone a number of iterations to become a novelty for ending child labour and deforestation in communities where Touton SA sources its cocoa.



Picture 5: Some CPCA members receiving seedlings of their choice for growing on their birthdays

The transformative project operates in 18 communities with a common topography of gentle slopes, trees, and warm temperatures. Underlining theory of change: since children are directly affected by child labour and the effects of climate change, they are the best to communicate to their parents and community leaders, the need to rethink actions which negatively impact them.



Picture 6: CPCA support in national climate change events and tree growing exercise

For starters, the groups are trained on climate change topics to understand its causes, effects, and the role of children and society as a whole to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate. They are also trained in innovative thinking, goal setting, emotional intelligence, leadership skills, communication strategies and advocacy skills. Currently, about 90% of CPCA members are taking leadership positions in their class and at home. Deep changes are already being witnessed on different levels – for instance, through drama on child labour, about 4 children who were not attending school, have been enrolled in school since their parents observed the drama by the group at Dadekrom. Over 14,000 waste sachet rubbers (plastic waste) have been collected from the cocoa communities and woven by hand into goalpost nets, which are used by schools during sports events.



Picture 7: CPCA undertakes waste recycling including weaving sachet rubbers into goal post nets. This helps keep the compounds/ environment clean, inspire creativity, and provide supportive tools to promote play and learning

The child protection and climate change ambassadors have had a direct and indirect influence on the planting of trees, waste management and child abuse in their communities. The groups have been working on environmental projects including tree planting around their schools, which helps to increase carbon sinks while lowering carbon emissions. A sample of the CPCA members shared interesting outcome such as the following. Talking about her passion for tree-planting, 13-year-old Benso Margaret an ambassador with the Nkrankrom Group told us that “I usually plant trees on my birthday as well and because I often plant the trees myself, I am able to encourage my parents to do same on their farm or under their cocoa so that the farm would be well aerated”



Picture 8: CPCA combines team work to grow trees for their nutritional values, impact the climate, and ease learning of science in school

In terms of nutrition and food, the ambassadors eat what they grow from their school gardens and this serves as a model for promoting and sustaining agroforestry. Notable eco-relevant achievements of the project include the confidence children have developed to share effects of climate change with their parents and peers, initiation of recycling of waste plastic sachets into goal post nets, the use of clay in modelling craft, weaving of waste bins for school use, periodic community/radio sensitisations on child protection and climate change, distribution of re-usable eco-friendly menstrual supplies and information which are all part of the project’s carbon emission reduction strategy.

Most significant is the ripple effects of the activities of the ambassadors on their peers and society at large. The groups have helped in keeping their communities free from filth, parents are encouraged by their children to plant trees in their cocoa farms, and schools now harvest

maize, mangoes and other crops from their school gardens. Many children who could not innovate have begun working with their colleagues to develop crafts in recycling waste using materials in their immediate environment. Ultimately, all community members are now aware about child protection and the need to promote agroforestry. Explaining why the Ambassadors adopt a whole-of-community approach, Emmanuel Oppong Ankrah (12 years old) of the Asempaneye Group had this to say; “We engage our mothers and family members about the importance of growing trees. If there are no trees we will not have continuous rainfall which will affect our lives and food production”.



Picture 9: CPCA supports green bleeding as most menstruators in the group are switching to Days for Girls International Standard Reusable Menstrual Kits which helps them to stay in school and attend group meetings during one’s period

There are currently 24 groups in existence with 360 children in total. The groups are assisted in choosing their own leaders, convene, talk about emerging issues in their communities, learn poetry, drama, choreography, and schedule meetings with their communities. The eco-friendly innovations made by them are also displayed during the community sensitisations. In recounting the benefits, for 14-year-old Catherine Mensah of Asempaneye Group, indicated that the involvement of children in saving the planet cannot be understated “We as children now do tree planting because we know their benefits. Some of the kinds of trees that we have planted include orange, guava, and mango among others. Since we started this initiative, we have been able to plant about one hundred trees. Right behind me is one of the varieties we planted some years ago. Also when you look around, you can see that we are surrounded by some of the trees”.

A laudable project securing our future today through climate-smart kids needs to be scaled-up to cover all cocoa-sourcing communities and perhaps all schools in the country. The opportunities for the ambassadors to engage in climate actions and the climate conversation are limitless from local to international levels.

This is a great opportunity for more hands to support little hands to secure our planet and future!



Picture 10: CPCA collaborates with other children and children groups within and outside their communities to achieve their collective interest