

PROJECT NAME: ATEBUBU WIASE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION



9TH MULTISTAKEHOLDER PLATFORM MEETING REPORT

22ND FEBRUARY 2024





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ATEBUBU - AMANTIN MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY HALL

A REPORT SUBMITTED

BY

NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

TO

INOVALAND

Overview

This report summarizes the outcome of a one-day multi-stakeholder platform meeting organized on the 22nd of February 2024 at the Atebubu- Amantin Municipal Assembly Hall by the Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) in collaboration with the New Generation Plantations Technical Assistance (NGPTA) and African Plantations for Sustainable Development (APSD).

BACKGROUND

In the realm of project development, Multi Stakeholder Platforms have played pivotal roles in addressing many complex problems by engaging diverse interest groups in a participatory and inclusive dialogue to discuss shared challenges, opportunities, and advocacy strategies. The Multi stakeholder platform under the Atebubu Wiase Forest Landscape restoration project, a five-year community-led project located in the Atebubu Amante and Sene West Districts of the Bono East Region, of Central Ghana was established to support the exchange of experiences, knowledge, skills, and innovations among a range of actors in the project areas. The platform also seeks to represent all relevant stakeholders within the landscape to help identify key issues, opportunities, and prime areas for restoration by giving actors in the landscape a forum to talk about the project's practical implementation and how it will affect farmers and other stakeholders.

Four times every year over project lifespan, stakeholders meet at a convenient location to discuss project activities and other relevant issues. A total of eight (8) MSP meetings have been held so far (between 2022-2023). The first MSP meeting for 2024 was organized on the 22nd of February 2024 with the following objectives.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To present project's plans and activities for the ensuing planting season to stakeholders
- ✓ To seek stakeholders' inputs and direct collaboration towards implementation of project activities for the ensuing planting season and beyond
- ✓ To establish and strengthen the relationship between project implementors and various stakeholders.

MEETING DETAILS AND ATTENDANCE

The meeting was organized on the 22nd of February 2024 at the Atebubu Amantin Municipal Assembly Hall. A significant number of people attended the meeting as a direct result of phone calls, daily reminders, and invitation letters issued by email to representatives of the various stakeholders before the event. Participants invited to be part of the MSP include; Coordinating Directorate of the two Municipal/District Assemblies, Directorate of the Department of Agriculture, Social Welfare Department, the Environmental Protection Agency(EPA), District Wildlife Division, Ghana National Fire Service stations in the two (2) district/municipality, Members of Assembly of the communities

within the project area, Sub Chiefs from Traditional Council in the project area, Farmer representatives and project implementing partners. A total of 63 stakeholder representatives were present at the meeting. The overall number of male participants at the meeting were 57 (90.5%), as against 6 (9.5%) Females. *Attached as Annex_1 is a copy of the participant sheet.* It may be noticed that women representation in the MSP meeting has been fluctuating, sometimes getting as low as 9%. More has to be done to understand the gender relationships, cultural and operational impediments to many women participating in the MSP.

OPENING STATEMENTS

In order to enhance the level of familiarity among stakeholders, Mr. Kingsley Twumasi, a senior projects officer at NDF led a self-introduction at the beginning of the meeting. A welcoming speech and the purpose of gathering was outlined by Mr. Kingsley Twumasi where he acknowledged project donors, implementors and all stakeholders for playing major roles in ensuring the success of the project. He further made a brief presentation centered on NDF's role in the AWFLR project. He hinted on the objectives, intended impact and outcomes of the project. According to him NDF oversees the organization of quarterly MSP meetings, fire prevention and management trainings aimed at building capacity of farmers on how to manage bushfires especially during the dry season and an agroforestry training for farmers on good agronomic practices. He stated that the majority of the project's beneficiaries are locals and farmers in central Ghana's Bono East Region. He underlined the connection between tree planting, carbon sequestration and climate change, emphasizing how the project attempts to significantly lessen the adverse impacts and vulnerabilities associated with climate change on farming and local livelihood. He alluded that, through the initiative, direct and indirect beneficiaries will be able to restore nature, increase their income, and have a more resilient food system. Participants were also informed about the donor (Astra Zeneca), various implementing partners (NDF, NGPTA, APSD), and their roles in the project.

At the latter part of his speech, he mentioned that EPA representatives were formally invited to be part of the MSP meeting and in subsequent meetings the chief of the Fulani herdsman and Police officers in the two district/municipal will be invited.

PRESENTATION ON PROJECT PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES

Mr. Abraham Yalley of NGPTA gave an elaborate presentation focused on the project activities for 2024, activities implemented so far, main challenges and achievements. According to him, four (4) community level engagements have been conducted in Bantama, Mframa and Santi. He further mentioned that Radio discussions and community announcements using community information centers were used as a medium to sensitize general public on fire management and prevention and address questions on bushfires that arises from the public. He also indicated that, there was an engagement with Traditional Authorities in four traditional areas (Dwan, Wiawse, Kumfia, Nyamoase) to find out evidence (proof of ownership) of the land being used for the project. In addition, the interaction with traditional authorities was done to build trust with the chiefs to enable free flow of communication and to find out if there are any restrictions on the land that is being used or will be used for the project in the near future. It was further mentioned by Mr. Yalley that, an agroforestry monitoring conducted in seven (7) communities revealed that a total of five (5) fire occurrences were recorded in three (3) communities (Akyeremade, Bantama, Mframa) in the district. He again mentioned that, recruitment of interested farmers for 2024 is ongoing with 50 farmers from two (2) communities currently showing interest. He mentioned some challenges and achievements so far which has been listed below;

Main Challenges

- Harmattan and intense drought stressing seedlings.
- Cattle feeding on the apical meristems of some seedlings.
- Some farmers don't attach seriousness to their parcels.

Main Achievements

- New farmers have started signing up for the 2024 planting season.
- Opinion leaders in some communities trying to come up with their own initiatives to reduce fire
- Some farmers have paid heed to creating fire belts.

In conclusion, he stated that, there will be continuous community engagement, Radio programs, tree monitoring and Recruitment of interested farmers for 2024 planting.

PRESENTATION BY EPA

A presentation was made by Ms. Irene Jemilatu Yaro (Area Head, EPA), on a landscape restoration project called 'the Ghana Landscape Restoration and Small-Scale Mining Project', a World Bank sponsored project under the Government of Ghana with a life span of 6 years (2021 – 2027). She stated that the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) are the two key ministries executing the project with on-site project execution being overseen by the EPA, Department of Agriculture, Forestry Commission, and Cocobod. The project's objective according to her is to strengthen integrated natural resource management and increase benefits to communities in targeted savannah and cocoa forest landscapes. She added that, within the Bono East Region, the project is being implemented in the Sene West District. She further stated some achievements of the project which include 1. education and awareness creation on climate change, woodlot establishment and sustainable farming practices 2. successful riparian vegetation restoration activities within thirteen (13) communities 3. fire management training for fire volunteers. Some challenges she highlighted to be a threat to the project were issues of cattle grazing sections of project area, issues of bushfires, road inaccessibility, issues of robbery and reluctance of some opinion leaders to lease lands for the project.

STATEMENT BY THE GHANA NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE

Brief remarks about the pattern of fire breakouts in the district were made by station officers from the Ghana National Fire Service (Atebubu and Wise stations). They reported a decrease in the frequency of fire outbreaks between October and February. They identified a number of issues that are hindering attempts to suppress fire outbreaks, such as individuals going on group hunts on farms, an increase in Fulani herders' activities, and burning of debris close to farmlands. It was additionally noted that district and municipal byelaws pertaining to bushfires are often weak and ineffectual. Mr. Emmanuel Tetteh (GNFS Officer, Kwame Danso station) appealed to the district/municipal assembly' directors to, if possible, reinforce the byelaws prohibiting bushfires and raise the fines on offenders to significant levels that will discourage similar actions in the future.

Chiefs were pleaded with to take details of the Fulani population in their communities since it is nearly impossible to control their movement and activities. It was reiterated that the activities of Fulani herdsmen and their cattle are posing a serious threat to agriculture and food security in the district due to the destructive activities of their cattle. Lastly, participants were advised to report offenders to the appropriate authorities and cautioned against shielding bushfire offenders.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

No.	Questions	Responses
1.	Can I transplant seedlings from my private nursery to project farms?	No. To ensure the survival of the planted seedling, planting material of a good quality are supplied to farmers.
2.	Which bodies are in charge of restoration activities in off reserve/community forests?	The Forest Services Division
3.	Can a farmer under the project, who initially opted to plant cashew but due to low yields recorded decide to request for another tree crop?	Yes, farmers have that liberty to change initial requests.
4.	Can implementing partners collaborate with both Police officers and Fire service departments in setting up patrols in communities?	Due to inadequate staff in the various departments. Fire volunteers when trained will oversee setting up patrols in communities.
5.	Will APSD support in the establishment of a fire belt on my farm which shares a boundary with their concessions?	APSD will support such activities when the farmer consults the right authorities in APSD

DISCUSSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ As per the governance structure of the MSP, a new chairperson is to be elected after the two - year tenure of the current MSP chairperson. As a result, Mr. Kingsley Twumasi announced the opening of nominations for interested persons who will stand for the position of Chairperson to be selected through a voting process during the next MSP meeting.
- ✓ Mr. Kingsley Twumasi also informed participants on the ongoing fire announcements and urged those responsible to continue making these announcements to help curtail the incidences of bushfires. He further mentioned that there are ongoing preparations on inaugurating fire volunteers in the various communities.
- ✓ Participants were further informed of ongoing arrangement for field trip with relevant stakeholders to see what happening on the grounds.
- ✓ It was suggested that Chiefs should play active roles in advocating against bushfires by collaborating with the district assembly in organizing fire management trainings and community durbars for community members.
- ✓ It was noted that some farmers are not committed to the project, and was suggested that during recruitment of farmers, implementors should consider allowing farmers to allocate one or two acres of their land to the project. That way, if the farmer continues to demonstrate commitment to the project, they will then be allowed to allocate more acres of land.
- ✓ Participants were cautioned against protecting culprits of bushfires and urged to report offender to the right authorities.
- ✓ It was pointed out that, the narrative that farmers set fires in their farms is usually false. Instead, young people from the districts travel to other communities in groups to start fires in order to catch animals.

CONCLUSION

The Multi-Stakeholder Platform Meeting allowed different stakeholders to share experiences, views and challenges on the implementation of the project. Issues raised on fire outbreaks were heavily

discussed. Participants acknowledged the project’s contribution in creating better conditions for farmers and households in the district and municipal assemblies.

Issues Log and Action Points

Issue	Status	Actions until the next MSP meeting
Communication	In progress	How can members help communicate better on project objectives? The project resolved to use Community Information Centers to educate and spread information about the project
Better gender representation	Done. But there is more room for improvement	Women empowerment plan Bring in more female speakers to address their issues
Farmer representatives	Done	NGPTA field staff to help farmers select their representatives to the MSP
Land Tenure	In progress	NDF, Assembly members and NGPTA team to mediate the impasse between the chiefs and the migrant farmers
Low participation of migrant Farmers	In progress	Same as above

ANNEXES

Annex 1 - Participant Sheet



9TH MSP
ATTENDANCE.pdf



Annex 2 –EPA’S Presentation



NGO.pptx