

9/8/2022

ATEBUBU -WIASE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROJECT PROCEEDINGS OF THE 3RD MSP MEETING



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Introduction

One of the principles of a good multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) is the regularity of the interaction and the feedback sessions that allows participants to receive and give information about the subject matter of the platform. In the case of the “Atebubu and Waise forest landscape restoration project”, it was agreed that a quarterly interactive session is organised to understand project progress, project challenges, and feedback from participating farmers. The third MSP meeting, which was organized on Thursday 8th September 2022 at the Assembly Hall of Atebubu-Amantin Municipal Assembly, was dedicated to giving i) progress report on the implementation of the project and ii) making recommendations on the prevention, control, and management of bushfire.

The subject of bushfire is relevant for our discussion today because uncontrolled bush burning is rampant in the landscape. Uncontrolled bush burning is a danger to the project success and the cashew, mangos and the timber trees being planted risk being burned to ashes by bushfires. The end of the raining season set in the drying up of the grassland and brings in widespread bush burning by herdsman, farmers, group hunters and individuals.

Although it is unlawful for a person to start a bushfire for any purposes, except in few cases permitted by the law, the Police and the Attorney General’s Office appears either overwhelmed with the number of people involved in bushfires or do not have appetite to prosecute offenders of the law. The Control and Prevention of Bushfires Act 1990, PNDCL 229 has provided punitive measures for persons who contravenes or fail to comply with the provisions of the law notwithstanding, people are not deterred.



Figure 1 Participant and Chairman of MSP making a contribution

Participants

A total of **36 participants** registered and attended the meeting. The participants represented different stakeholders. These include the Coordinating Directorates of both Atebubu-Amantin Municipality and Sene West District Assembly, the District Agriculture Office of both districts, and Assemblymen from Wiase, Mframa, Bantama, Garadima, Kokofu, Nyomoase, and Kwame Danso. Others include farmer representatives from each of the participating fourteen communities. There was a slight increase in the number of women participants which increased from five woman in the previous meeting to six during the 3rd MSP meeting.

Opening

The chairman of the MSP, Mr. Anthony Owusu welcome participants and invited a volunteer to pray to start the meeting. As a regular aspect of the MSP meeting, all participants introduced themselves to ensure familiarity with each other and networking.

Recap of the conclusions of the previous meeting

Mr. Mustapha Seidu of Nature and Development Foundation (NDF), who are the facilitators of the community engagement component of the project, took participants through the conclusions of the previous MSP meeting. He indicated that the meeting discussed two challenges, that is, 1) land tenure dynamics

affecting the participation of migrant farmers in the project and 2) low participation of women in the project. Mr. Seidu mentioned that the conclusions of the previous meeting were forwarded to the Advisory Board which further discussed the issues and in turn forwarded the same to the Project Board. The conclusions of the Project Board will be made know to the project team.

Project Update from Abraham Yelley



Figure 2 NGPTA Community Liaison Manager making a presentation

To keep participants abreast of progress of the project and any challenges facing the project, Mr. Abraham Yelley of the NGPTA who oversee farmer recruitment, mapping of farms and distribution of seedlings, to provide update on progress and challenges since the previous meeting in May 2022. Mr Abraham indicated that they have now engaged a total of 14 communities including Kwame Danso and Senti. He also indicated that as of the day of reporting, the project has distributed a total of 222,000 seedlings of cashew, mangoes, and timber tree species. The total area planted has increased to 830.30 hectares.

Participants however had concerns about the distribution of seedlings and the management of the same. In Garadima for example, the farmer representative indicated that migrant farmers participated and were supplied with seedlings. They have gone ahead to plant without prior arrangements with the chiefs. They are therefore not certain about their long-term participation or the security of those farms since the chiefs may seize the land without any intervention. The response was that the conclusions of the previous MSP meeting and the final decision of the Project Board on the subject matter will provide direction in resolving those uncertainties.

Another important revelation made by participants was that there were high mortality rates among second batch of seedlings supplied due largely to the lack of rains during the month of July and some parts of the month of August. The wrong packing of seedlings in the hauling truck as well as the long distance involved in transporting seedling also contributed to cause high mortality. This is so because farmers were compelled to accept seedlings even when they were not prepared to plant at the time. The solution is to establish community nurseries close to the communities and distribute to farmers when it rains and when they are ready to plant. The high mortality rate means that the project should purchase additional seedling for 'beating-up' during next year's planting season. Participants also indicated that the current grafted mango seedlings are problematic. The rooting stocks are too long making them susceptible to break.

In concluding his presentation, Mr. Yelley mentioned some of the challenges they face. These include failure of some farmers to plant the seedlings supplied, the killing of the planted seedlings through spraying of weedicides (especially when the farmer hires labourers and does not participate in the spraying himself) or uprooting of the seedlings through ploughing. It was suggested that the project team should pay a visit to farms and take notice of all those incidences. If any of those acts were deliberate, the project should avoid working with those farmers. Mr. Yelley further indicated that the team needs support from the MSP to prepare and sensitize farmers on bushfire prevention, control, and management. The NPTA assured the platform that the farms will be visited in the next few months and that the team is developing a role for 'lead farmers' to help support Monitoring and Evaluation.

Bushfire prevention, control and management.

To ensure effective participation and interaction, participants were divided into two groups. Each group was tasked to discuss and proffer suggested solutions to the bushfire menace that ravages the landscape each year. Below is a summary of the presentations made by the two groups.



Figure 3 A facilitator leading a group discussion on bushfire prevention

Suggested solutions to control and manage bushfire in the landscape

The group acknowledged that bushfire is caused by different actors and therefore the solution suggested must consider these different actors. According to the groups, bushfire is caused, among others, by 1) herdsman to allow fresh grass to sprout for the grazing of their herds, 2) farmers recklessly leave burning splinters in their farms, 3) individual or group hunters or 4) Arsonist. Therefore, the following are suggested:

- 1) In collaboration with the District Assembly, the District Ghana National Fire Service and APSD, form community fire volunteers and equip and motivate them in each of the participating communities. Their role is to support farmers in preventing and controlling bushfires. This will mean that a farmer who is desirous of burning around his farm will have to inform the fire volunteer and his neighbouring farmers for them to participate in such preventive burning exercise. Forming of farmer groups for farmers who are in clusters will facilitate this process.



Figure 4 A member of the MSP making her contribution

- 2) Organise regular fire prevention and control education in collaboration with the District Ghana National Fire Service and other stakeholders. This will lead to gradual behavioural change toward 'no burning'. The Ghana Police Service also has a role to play since the Prevention and Control of Bushfire Act 1990 PNDCL 229 provide punitive measures for offenders. The group also suggested that the project should support assemblymen to make regular announcement in the Community Information Centre on the impending bushfire season.
- 3) The commitment and involvement of the chiefs and opinion leaders of the communities is essential to ensure that people who do not comply with the rules establish under item 1) above are sanctioned by the community and if necessary, reported to the police for prosecution.
- 4) The groups are of the suggestion that each farmer must construct at least 10m fire belt around his or her farm. In addition, the farmer may subdivide the farm into blocks with clear boundaries to limit the amount of damage in case the burning flames cross the fire belt into the farm. It will also be helpful if the farmer reduces the volume of combustible materials in his farm.
- 5) Institute a system of awarding or giving recognition for farmer groups or communities who do not experience bushfire.



Figure 5 A sub-chief and a member of MSP making contribution

Conclusion

The third MSP meeting was well attended by all the stakeholder groups except Forestry Commission which was having another program on that same date. In addition, we missed the valuable participation of APSD due to miscommunication. We will ensure that in the next MSP meeting, which is envisaged to be held in November, the invitations are sent at least a week before the date of the workshop. The meeting was interactive and brought the best out of the participants by way of suggested solution to the subject matter of the day.

Issues Log and Action Points

Issue	Status	Actions until next MSP meeting
Communication	Pending	How can members help communicate better on project objectives
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 to select their representatives to the MSP

Land Tenure	Pending	NDF, Assembly members and NGPTA team to mediate the impasse between the chiefs and the migrant farmers
Low participation of migrant Farmers	Pending	Same as above
Bushfire management and control	Pending	Development of Bushfire management plan including MSP recommendations to be agreed and start implementation in the next MSP meeting

Annex 1 - Participant List

PARTICIPANT SHEET
3RD MSP MEETING
Date: 8th September 2022

No.	Name	Community	Telephone No.	Signature
1	Abraham Yelley	Atebubu	0249284100	
2	Joseph Osei K.	Boniabo	0552888652	
3	Fauskina Archang	Atebubu	0556851620	
4	Paul K. Sarfo	Akyemname	0240380629	
5	Nana Atta Kwaku	Mframona	0557347933	
6	Ayo Gari	Mframona	-	
7	Veronica Amefa	Atebubu	0597906976	
8	Kobibi	Mframona	0245429878	
9	Hon. Boi Peter	Mframona	0559029498	
10	Daniel Bingaye	Gomadima	0551962146	
11	Hon Anthony Owusu	Banframona	0546374330	
12	Stephen Aidoo	Atebubu	0246213694	
13	Jeffrey Kofi Yebuah	Atebubu	0248415613	
14	Osei Kofi	Bantama	0547009813	
15	Nana Gideon Baffour	Boniabo-Dikwa	0544954422	

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16	Boa Senosa	Kokofu	0542612880	
17	Nuhun Jiboda	Sene West Dist AS	0244623770	
18	Matthew Opoke	Sene West K/Danso	0243244140	
19	Bona Anthony Kofi	Kokofu	0546540010	
20	Nana Kwaku Asare	Kokofu	0556486098	
21	Abuagye Eric	Atebubu	0243030265	
22	Lai Kwasi Ezeru	Khase	0548717727	
23	Cecilia Amoa	Khase	024162291	
24	Ampemah Gideon	Atebubu Assembly	0249367063	
25	Akrasi Emmanuel	Agrade Assemblyman	0244581697	
26	Kuadwo Asumah	Kwame Danso	0542919972	
27	Bashiru Gumbo	Kwame Danso	0245178572	
28	Mary Bobre	Kwame Danso	0545059504	
29	Kwarteng Emmanuel	NCPD	0544887180	
30	Nana Agyei-Badu	Bantama	0246194333	

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31	KUUCHANDO BIMPOR JACOB	NYOMOASE	0248446069	Jfjmfj
32	LAKUBI ADAMS	NYOMOASE	0543882390	Lakubi
33	TANIMU ANAL	GARADIMA	0547636144	Okhite
34	MUSTEPIA SADI	ACCRA	0248930692	mdm
35	Gmasagun k-malheo	Seinti	0249391186	Gmas
36	Kindley Twumasi	Accra	0507004925	Kindley
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