

PROJECT NAME: ATEBUBU WIASE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION



Figure 1 Participants at MSP meeting in Kwame Danso



12TH MULTISTAKEHOLDER PLATFORM MEETING REPORT

20TH November 2024

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20TH NOVEMBER 2024

SENE WEST DISTRICT ASSEMBLY HALL

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KWAME DANSO

A REPORT SUBMITTED

BY

NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

TO

INOVALAND

Overview

This report summarises the outcomes of a one-day multi-stakeholder platform meeting held on November 20, 2024, at the Sene West District Assembly Hall in Kwame Danso. The event was organized by the Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) in collaboration with the iNovaland/New Generation Plantations Technical Assistance (NGPTA) and African Plantations for Sustainable Development (APSD) as part of the Atebubu & Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration Project

Background

The Atebubu Wiasse Forest Landscape Restoration Project is a shining example of community-led initiatives driving ecological and social resilience in Ghana's Bono East Region. The project's impact extends beyond environmental benefits, as it also focuses on enhancing the livelihoods of local communities. By promoting agroforestry and sustainable agriculture practices, the project aims to improve food security, increase income, and empower women and youth. This ambitious project has established a thriving Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP), bringing together diverse stakeholders to share knowledge, skills, and innovations.

The MSP serves as a dynamic forum for discussing project implementation, identifying key issues, and uncovering opportunities for restoration. By facilitating collaborative problem-solving and informed decision-making, the platform engages all relevant stakeholders to shape the project's future.

This report captures the essence of the 12th MSP meeting, held on November 20, 2024, at the Sene West District Assembly where stakeholders gathered to shape the project's future.

Meeting Objectives

1. Review and Resolve Persistent Issues on Bush Fire Outbreaks.
2. Enhancing Fire Management and Prevention.

Meeting Details and Attendance

The Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) meeting was held on November 20, 2024, at the Sene West District Assembly Hall, attracting 69 stakeholders. To ensure a strong turnout, organisers sent out invitation letters via email/WhatsApp, made phone calls, and issued daily reminders. Attendees included representatives from various sectors:

- Government Agencies: Coordinating Directorate of Municipal/District Assemblies, Department of Agriculture, Social Welfare Department, Environmental Protection Agency and Ghana National Fire Service.
- Community Leaders: Members of the Assembly and Sub Chiefs from Traditional Councils
- Farmer Representatives: Lead farmers
- Others: Fulani herdsman chairman and bush hunter's chairman
- Project implementing partners: NDF and NGPTA

Notably, the meeting saw a significant imbalance in gender representation, with males comprising 99% (68 attendees) and females only 1% (1 attendee). This disparity echoes broader trends in Ghana, nevertheless, a solution to this gender imbalance at MSP meetings has been identified which will be implemented within 2025. It was agreed at the MSP meeting that there should be increased farmer representatives from one per

community to two farmers per community. Affirmatively, the second representative from each community will be a woman. ***Attached as annexe_1 is a copy of the participant sheet.***

Welcome Address

Mr Ramzi Nuhu Jibrila, the Assistant Director of the Sene West District Assembly gave the welcome address for the 12th Multistakeholder Meeting Platform (MSP). Mr. Ramzi delivered the welcome speech, warmly welcoming the beneficiaries to the meeting. He emphasized the importance of their active participation, stating that their commitment and dedication would be crucial to the project's success.

Mr Ramzi highlighted the critical role that tree planting would play in mitigating the effects of climate change. "Trees are a vital component of our ecosystem, providing oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide, and supporting biodiversity. By planting trees, we are not only beautifying our surroundings but also contributing to a healthier environment and a more sustainable future."

He urged the beneficiaries to take the project seriously despite receiving the services for free. "Although we are providing these services at no cost to you, we expect you to invest your time, effort, and commitment. By working together, we can promote environmental conservation, improve livelihoods, and enhance the overall well-being of our communities."

Mr. Ramzi concluded his speech by thanking the beneficiaries for their participation and encouraging them to work together to achieve the project's objectives.

Message From the MSP Chairman

Mr. Anthony Owusu, the MSP chairman, underscored the significance of participating in the multistakeholder platform meetings, emphasizing that it's a privilege to be involved. He stressed that these meetings are vital for the success of the Atebubu-Wiasse Forest Restoration Project, as they facilitate the identification and addressing of challenges hindering the project's progress.

Mr Owusu urged beneficiaries to take ownership of the project, underlining that excuses for not following project instructions are unacceptable. Instead, he encouraged beneficiaries to commit fully to the project, which will ultimately benefit their livelihoods and contribute to reducing the negative impacts of climate change in the Atebubu-Wiasse landscape and Ghana as a whole. To ensure the project's success, Mr Owusu emphasized the need for beneficiaries to strictly adhere to project protocols. This level of commitment will promote the project and ultimately lead to its achievement of maximizing farmer livelihoods and mitigating climate change effects. By actively participating in the project and following its guidelines, beneficiaries can help restore the

Atebubu-Wiase forest landscape, promote sustainable land use, and improve their livelihoods.

Setting the Context

Mr. Mustapha Seidu commenced his presentation by setting the context for the gathering. He inquired about the number of first-time attendees, and a few participants raised their hands. Mr Seidu then reiterated the purpose of the gathering, which was to benefit the new attendees.

He explained that the project is a collaborative effort implemented by three key organizations: the New Generation Plantation Technical Assistant (NGPTA)-INovaLand, the African Plantation for Sustainable Development (APSD), and the Nature Development Foundation (NDF) funded by Astra Zeneca. Mr Seidu emphasized that the project's primary objectives are to improve the livelihoods of farmers in engaged communities and to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Mr Seidu highlighted the pressing issue of climate change, noting that it has disrupted traditional weather patterns, leading to unpredictable rainfall and sunshine. He attributed climate change to the emission of gases from human activities. In response to this challenge, the project donor initiated an intervention by planting trees to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and help mitigate climate change. A survey conducted by the NDF in the Atebubu-Wiase landscape revealed that most farmers prefer mango and cashews as planting materials. Mr Seidu identified the primary causes of fire outbreaks in the area, citing human greed, Fulani herdsman, and group hunters. He inquired from participants whether any of them experienced incidences of fire in their farms. In response, five people from the Atebubu landscapes indicated that they had their farms burnt, while three persons from Kwame Danso suffered the same fate in the year 2024.

Presentation by NGPTA on Project Progress

Abraham Yelley, the Programs Coordinator from New Generation Plantation Technical Assistant (NGPTA), delivered a presentation on the update of the project implementation. Mr. Yelley emphasised that the project involves key stakeholders, from implementers to beneficiaries.

He began his presentation by discussing community engagement. Mr. Yelley highlighted the importance of engaging with local communities and mentioned that their participation and involvement are crucial to the project's success.

Furthermore, Mr. Yelley provided an update on seedling distribution. He mentioned that in 2024, 237,434 seedlings were distributed. He segregated the seedling distribution per species and district. He shared information on the number of seedlings distributed, the

types of seedlings, and the beneficiaries who received them. types of seedlings, and the beneficiaries who received them.

Operational Areas	Communities	Farmers engaged			Trees supplied			Totals
Atebubu& Kwame Danso	29	#Male	#Female	#Total	#Fruit trees	Wood trees	Replacements	238,901
		249	875	1129	184,062	54,779	54,948	

NB: *Replacements for 2022 and 2023 farms.*

Mr. Yelley also presented the findings of the implementation audit. He said that CBA, a partner of the project, conducted a field audit. The CBA team did a random sampling of farms in both districts for the audit. Project sites selected were visited to cross-check the received support per the database at the hands of the auditors. Mr. Abraham indicated that the non-conformances identified by the field auditors will be heavily discussed in next year's first MSP meeting, 2025.

In addition, Mr. Yelley discussed the project's efforts to promote biodiversity. He mentioned that the project also seeks to protect wild animals in the landscapes. The project, in collaboration with KNUST, has put up the initiative to research biodiversity. The first result from the conducted research on water in the Atebubu landscape showed that the water is rich in biodiversity.

Mr. Yelley also mentioned that intensive training was organized for lead farmers for two days each for lead farmers at Kwame Danso and Atebubu districts on how best to monitor the survival rate of the seedlings. He then mentioned that fire training had been conducted by NDF in about 17 communities in both districts. Residents of the communities were comprehensively sensitized on how to manage and prevent fire outbreaks in the various communities.

Mr. Andrew Asante continued the presentation on challenges faced in the project implementation. He discussed the obstacles faced, the lessons learned, and the strategies used to overcome these challenges. He mentioned that gender misrepresentation is a key challenge. The project is looking at ways to address that issue next year. He again noted that there was a lack of commitment because farmers had not prepared the land for establishment, and others did not plant the received planning materials. Farmers were urged to commit fully to the project. Harsh weather conditions as a result of climate change were also identified as a challenge. Strategies must be adopted to overcome climate change effects on the farmlands.

He further mentioned that farmers do not adhere to training guidelines in planting protocols. There is also poor record keeping by farmers, which harms decision-making. He indicated that training has been conducted for lead farmers to properly keep records as a way to solve the record-keeping problem.

Lastly, mobilizing project beneficiaries/community members for training was identified as a challenge. Despite consistent reminders through messaging and community information announcements, the number of members of the communities participating in the fire prevention and control training was below expectation. Since uncontrolled bushfires affect every person, the training was targeted at the community and not project participants. At Kyeame Krom, the team resorted to using the Community Information Center to conduct the training in addition to in-person training so as to reach wider audience.

Mr. Yelley concluded the presentation by highlighting the project's plans and activities beyond the implementation phase. This included sustainability measures, capacity building, and future initiatives to ensure the long-term success of the project. ***Attached as Annexe_2 is the PowerPoint presentation by the NGPTA.***

Presentation on Bushfire Control, Prevention and Management

Mr. Mustapha Seidu, Director of the Nature and Development Foundation, delivered a comprehensive presentation on controlling, preventing, and managing bushfires in the Atebubu-Wiase Landscapes.

Mr Seidu highlighted the devastating impact of bushfires, which have destroyed properties and farmlands, causing stress for victims. He emphasized that bushfires have become a recurring problem in the area, with farmers losing their farmlands annually due to bushfire outbreaks.

He identified the main causes of bushfires in the area as:

1. Animal hunting
2. Herdsmen
3. Charcoal burning

Despite knowing the culprits, traditional authorities and leaders often intervene to release them without punishment.

To address the issue of bushfires, Mr Seidu proposed several measures which are as follows:

- Creation of Fire Belts: Establishing fire belts 20 meters apart from farmlands to prevent fires from spreading.
- Fire Training: Participating in fire training to stay updated on managing and preventing fire outbreaks.
- Active Fire Volunteers: Creating active fire volunteers in each fire-prone community to respond quickly to fires.

- **Traditional Authorities' Role:** Traditional authorities should make regular fire prevention and management announcements to raise awareness among community members.
- **Prosecution of Culprits:** Strictly prosecuting culprits to deter future offences and ensure that those responsible for starting fires are held accountable.
- **Environmental Clubs:** Creating environmental clubs in schools to educate pupils on fire outbreak prevention and management, promoting environmental awareness and sustainability from an early age.
- **Volunteer Training:** Training fire volunteers and equipping them with Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to work effectively in reducing bushfire outbreaks during the dry season.

Mr Seidu accentuated the need for traditional authorities to support the fight against bushfires and stop shielding offenders, ensuring they face punishment. He urged community members to take an active role in preventing and managing bushfires, working together to protect their properties and farmlands. By implementing these measures, Mr Seidu believes that the incidences of bushfires can be significantly reduced, promoting a safer and more sustainable environment for all. ***Attached as Annexe_3 is the PowerPoint presentation by Mustapha Seidu.***

Message from the Fire Service

Mr. Kabore Zakaria, the Atebubu rural fire coordinator, delivered a presentation on fire prevention and management in the Atebubu and Kwame Danso districts. He mentioned the importance of fire prevention and management in the Atebubu and Kwame Danso districts. He highlighted that 17 communities were trained in fire prevention and management in 2024 through the initiative of the Nature and Development Foundation's yearly fire training program during the dry season. Kwame Danso has launched fire-by-laws to regulate burning in the dry season. This initiative aims to prevent fire outbreaks and promote environmental sustainability. Mr. Zakaria emphasized the importance of adhering to the Control and Prevention of Bushfires Act 1990 (PNDC Law 229), which bans burning in the dry season from November 1st to March 31st. He also mentioned that failure to report fire incidents is an offence and one could be punished for that omission. Mr. Zakaria mentioned that about 450 persons have been trained as fire volunteers to help reduce fire outbreaks in the Sene West district. These volunteers play a crucial role in preventing and managing fires in their communities and mentioned that a committee has been initiated to fight fire outbreaks. This committee works in collaboration with the fire service, military, and other security agencies to prevent fire outbreaks and promote environmental sustainability. Continuing his presentation, he stated that any form of burning without authority is strictly prohibited in the dry season (1st November – 31st March). He urged farmers and community members to adhere to this prohibition to

prevent fire outbreaks. In the event of a fire outbreak and destruction of properties, a valuation assessment will be conducted to ensure the appropriate compensation to the victim.

Mr Zakaria highlighted that the EPA and town council play a crucial role in dealing with issues related to cattle destroying farm produce. In the event that Fulani physically assaults or attacks, it must be reported to the police station for the necessary action to be taken. Participants present at the meeting were assured that the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) is committed to ensuring that the Atebubu-Amanten Municipal and Sene-West District are fire-free in 2025 and beyond.

Mr. David Owusu, the rural fire service coordinator in Kwame Danso, ended the fire service presentation by stating the importance of farmers taking precautions to prevent fires on their farms. He urged farmers to dig holes to set fires in them when cooking on the farm, to prevent fires from destroying farm properties.

Message from the Bush Hunters'/Fulani Herdsmen's Chairmen

The Fulani and Bush Hunters' chairmen attended the MSP meeting for the first time and took the opportunity to extend a message to the beneficiaries and project partners present.

In their statement, they expressed their gratitude for being invited to the meeting and indicated that they had learned a lot from the meeting and were ready to collaborate with law enforcement on banning burning during the dry season. They acknowledged that their activities involve burning but emphasized that they would comply with the law prohibiting burning in the dry season to ensure a sustainable environment. The chairmen urged community members to establish a committee involving leaders of Fulani herdsmen and bush hunters to enforce policies on burning during the dry season. They cited a similar committee created in Yeji, which had led to significant improvements and reduced fire outbreaks.

Concluding their statement, the chairmen emphasised the need for collective action to fight and reduce fire incidents in the Atebubu-Wiase Landscapes. They expressed their commitment to working together to achieve this goal.

Message from the EPA

The Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Mr. Emmanuel Bih made a short presentation on the way forward to prevent fire destruction. He emphasized the importance of taking proactive measures to protect the environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The Director highlighted two key strategies for preventing fire destruction:

1. **Planting Trees:** He emphasized the importance of planting trees and being cautious of the project's farmlands. Tree planting helps to reduce the risk of fire outbreaks and promotes environmental sustainability.
2. **Community Involvement:** He urged the present people to involve themselves in tree-planting projects to mitigate climate change and improve environmental conservation. Community involvement is crucial for the success of environmental conservation efforts.

The Director's presentation served as a call to action, encouraging stakeholders to take proactive measures to prevent fire destruction and promote environmental sustainability. By working together, we can mitigate the impacts of climate change and promote a more sustainable future.

Questions	Answers
If a farmer fails to plant the supplied materials, is there a sanction for that?	If a farmer fails to plant the supplied materials, an investigation will be conducted, and necessary steps will be taken.
How often should lead farmers monitor the project farms?	Lead farmers are expected to monitor project farms regularly, although the frequency of monitoring may vary. All farmers are encouraged to be vigilant and monitor their farms regularly.
Are you supposed to report a minimal burning incident?	Yes, any form of fire outbreak, including minimal burning incidents, must be reported. This enhances data collection and control.
Will defaulters of the project be privileged to a lawyer from the project?	If a suspect is found guilty of violating project rules, they will be sanctioned by the law. The project will not provide legal representation for defaulters.
When will the fire volunteers be trained and inaugurated?	The training phases for fire volunteers will commence after December 7, 2024.
Are charcoal burners part of the project allowed to benefit from the project?	Charcoal burners are eligible to benefit from the project only if their activities are controlled and permitted by law.
What is the dimension of creating a fire belt?	A fire belt should be 10-15 feet wide and 20 meters apart from the farm. Creating a bare-ground fire break is an additional recommended measure.

SUGGESTIONS
Fire Sensitization Program: Organize frequent fire sensitization programs to educate farmers and communities on the importance of fire prevention and management. This can be implemented through radio broadcasts, community meetings, and workshops.
Chiefs' Role: Engage chiefs in various project communities to make fire announcements on fire prevention. They should also emphasize the importance of reporting fire incidents/outbreaks.
Cattle Management: Establish cattle committees in communities to address cattle destruction of crops. This has been shown to be effective in reducing crop destruction in areas with existing cattle committees.
Assembly Involvement: Ensure the assembly is involved in fire mitigation actions and committees to guarantee full compliance and action.
Reporting Fulani Herdsmen: Encourage farmers to report Fulani herdsmen who destroy food crops and ensure that the police enforce the law and make arrests when necessary.
Prohibiting Herdsmen: Consider prohibiting the acceptance of herdsmen in communities to prevent cattle destruction of crops.

Conclusion

The 12th Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) meeting for the Atebubu Wiasse Forest Landscape Restoration Project was a resounding success, facilitating an open exchange of experiences, perspectives, and challenges among stakeholders. The meeting focused on project implementation, with key discussions centred on addressing persistent issues, including bushfire outbreaks, Fulani herdsmen issues, and cattle destruction of crops. The meeting provided a platform for stakeholders to share knowledge, skills, and innovations, yielding practical solutions to the challenges faced. Participants recognized the project's significant impact in improving livelihoods for farmers and households within the project landscapes. The MSP meeting also emphasized the importance of collaboration and coordination among stakeholders, including the AGRIC department, the assembly, the fire service, traditional authorities, and community members. The meeting reiterated the need for a collective effort to address the challenges faced and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.

Issues Log and Action Points

Issue	Status	Actions until the next MSP meeting
Communication	On-going	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	In progress	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 the NGPTA team mediated the impasse between the chiefs and the migrant farmers. However, new communities are being added and the issue reappears
Low participation of migrant Farmers	Done	Same as above
Fire outbreaks in project landscapes	In progress	The NDF, in partnership with the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) Atebubu-Wiase station and with support from the NGPTA, has conducted a series of fire prevention and management training sessions for communities within the project area. Despite these efforts, fire outbreaks continue to occur on the project landscapes.

Annexes

Annexe_1



ATEBUBU 12TH MSP
- SCANNED PARTICIF

12th MSP Participants Sheet

Annexe_2



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Q4 Update-19-11-202

PowerPoint Presentation by NGPTA

Annexe_3



12 MSP
presentation.pptx

PowerPoint presentation by Mustapha

For more information about the Atebubu-Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration project,
please visit: <https://atebubu.inovaland.earth>

For further inquiries or to request additional information, please email:
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