

PROJECT NAME: ATEBUBU WIASE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION



13TH MULTISTAKEHOLDER PLATFORM MEETING REPORT

27TH February 2025

13TH MULTISTAKEHOLDER PLATFORM MEETING_ATEBUBU MUNICIPALITY_ REPORT

27TH February 2025

ATEBUBU AMANTEN MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY HALL

@

ATEBUBU

A REPORT SUBMITTED

BY

NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

TO

INOVALAND

Overview

This report summarises the outcome of a one-day multi-stakeholder platform meeting organised on the 27th of February 2025 at the Atebubu Amanten Municipal Assembly Hall @Atebubu 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

The Atebubu-Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration Project, situated in Ghana's Bono East Region, exemplifies community-driven initiatives that foster ecological and social resilience. This project extends its impact beyond environmental benefits, prioritizing the enhancement of local communities' livelihoods. By promoting agroforestry and sustainable agriculture practices, the project aims to bolster 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.

Prior to the start of the year 2025, the project partners agreed that there was a need to find a permanent solution to the low participation of women in the MSPs. One of the measures to solve gender imbalance in the meeting was to affirmatively allow a “participating female farmer” from each of the project communities to participate in the MSP. This will bring the total number of participants in each MSP to about 100 people. This number is too large for an interactive session. Therefore, the project decided to have, starting from 2025, three MSP meeting each in Atebubu and Kwame Danso whereby participants from Atebubu Municipality will participate in only the MSPs organize in Atebubu while those from Kwame Danso District will participate in the MSPs organize in Kwame Danso. This report captures the 1st MSP in Atebubu whereby only farmers and stakeholders from Atebubu municipality participated. It was the first MSP meeting for the year 2025, held on February 27, 2025, at the Atebubu Amanten Municipal Assembly where stakeholders gathered to shape the project's future.

Meeting Objectives

1. Recap on activities of the year 2024.
2. Update stakeholders on 2025 activities implemented.

Meeting Details and Attendance

The Multi-Stakeholder Platform meeting held on February 27, 2025, at the Atebubu Amanten Municipal Assembly Hall, was a success with 46 stakeholders in attendance. To achieve this impressive turnout, organizers employed a multi-channel approach, sending out invitation letters via WhatsApp, making personal phone calls, and issuing daily reminders to ensure stakeholders don't miss the event. Attendees included representatives from various sectors:

- Government Agencies: Coordinating Directorate of Municipal/District Assemblies, Forest Services Division, Ghana Police Service, Ghana National Fire Service, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Wildlife Division.

- Community Leaders: Members of the Assembly and Sub Chiefs from Traditional Councils.
- Farmer Representatives: Lead farmers.
- Project implementing partners: NDF and NGPTA.

The meeting demonstrated progress in achieving a more balanced gender representation, with males accounting for 78% (36 attendees) and females comprising 22% (10 attendees). This gender representation was still less than expected. This was because many of the communities in the Atebubu jurisdiction did not get prior information about the automatic participation for at least one participating female farmer from each participating community. While the current number represents an improvement in female participation at the MSP meeting, there will be increased participation of female farmers in subsequent meetings as the affirmative action of automatic female representation reaches each participating community. ***Attached as Annexe 1 is a copy of the participant sheet.***

Welcome Address

Mustapha Seidu, Director of Nature and Development Foundation warmly welcomed all participants to the 13th Multistakeholder Meeting Platform (MSP). He said that their active participation in the meeting is crucial to the project's success. As beneficiaries, their commitment and dedication will play a significant role in achieving the objectives of the project. He further pointed out to the participants about the importance of tree planting in mitigating the effects of climate change. According to him, trees are a vital component of the 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 added. He thanked participants for their participation and encouraged them to work together to achieve the project's objectives.

Setting the Context

Mr. Mustapha Seidu, the director of Nature and Development Foundation (NDF), commenced his presentation by setting the context for the gathering, inquiring about the number of first-time attendees, and reiterating the purpose of the meeting, 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), the African Plantation for Sustainable Development (APSD), and the Nature Development Foundation (NDF) funded by Astra Zeneca. The project's primary objectives, as emphasized by Mr. Seidu, are to improve the livelihoods of farmers in engaged communities and to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Climate change has disrupted traditional weather patterns, leading to unpredictable rainfall and sunshine, which has affected food crop production. Mr. Seidu attributed climate change to human activities that emit greenhouse gases, contributing to climate change in the atmosphere and indirectly affecting farmers' living incomes.

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, which subsequently became the cash crops supplied by the project. The project has three key components: planting indigenous trees implemented by APSD, an agroforestry component led by NGPTA that assists farmers in planting mango and cashew trees, and community engagement led by NDF that engages project beneficiaries to build their capacity and solicit their views on challenges and crucial issues pertaining to project implementation.

Mr. Seidu highlighted that the Multistakeholder Platform (MSP) meeting is organized every quarter, where stakeholders and project beneficiaries discuss project progress and key issues. Notably, there is a high gender imbalance in attendance, with females having limited opportunities to attend meetings. This MSP meeting was the first of its kind, organized exclusively for stakeholders from Atebubu, aiming to increase women's participation. Fire issues were also a key topic of discussion, as fire outbreaks have been a major threat to farm properties in the Atebubu-Wiase landscape. Mr. Seidu accentuated the importance of taking action to prevent fire from spreading and destroying farm properties, especially during the dry season. Key actions include weeding and keeping farms clean, creating fire belts 20 meters on the perimeter of the farm before October, and establishing fire volunteer teams in each project community.

Community engagements on fire prevention and management were conducted last year, and radio programs on fire prevention and management were implemented. Mr. Seidu identified the activities of herdsman and group hunters as major causes of fire outbreaks in the landscape. To address this, the chairman of the Fulani herdsman and group hunters were invited to the last MSP meeting to find practical solutions to the fire outbreak incidents.

In conclusion, Mr. Seidu emphasized that the measures taken to curb challenges of the project were a result of hearing the voices of relevant stakeholders at the MSP meetings. This underscores the importance of regular meetings to discuss project implementation and address emerging challenges.

Presentation by NGPTA on Project Progress

Andrews Asante's presentation comprehensively updated the project's progress in 2024. He began by mentioning that the annual report is still in development and will be shared with stakeholders once it is ready. Mr Asante highlighted activities implemented in 2024, and below are the listed activities:

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 100% Monitoring: The team has conducted comprehensive monitoring to assess the status of plots established under the project. Lead farmers were trained to assist in

data collection digitally, ensuring the project's sustainability even if funding ceases. The monitoring team comprised of 18 members for the assignment. The monitoring exercise focused on plots established in 2022 and 2023, across 23 communities, covering 908 plots in Kwame Danso and Atebubu. The team assessed the survival rate of planted materials, farm conditions, and the adoption of pruning and good agronomic practices. In Atebubu, 246 farms were visited and unfortunately, the results showed poor performance. A significant number of farms were abandoned, that is, 102 farms, 55 poorly maintained farms, 33 burnt farms, 5 excellent plots, 50 good plots and 1 plot with no data.

- **Project Satisfaction Survey:** A survey has been conducted to identify project implementation issues and gather stakeholder feedback. A satisfaction survey was conducted to gather insights into the perceptions of farmers on the implementation project. The survey engaged 225 farmers, representing 10% of all beneficiaries. The survey revealed the following key findings:
 1. **Positive Perception:** Most beneficiaries (80%) indicated that the project is properly implemented, and all activities initiated under the project are rightfully implemented.
 2. **Challenges:** Farmers identified the following major challenges:
 - a. **Fire Outbreaks:** Fire incidents were cited as a significant concern, affecting farm productivity and sustainability.
 - b. **Fulani Herdsmen Activities:** Herdsmen activities were reported to be damaging planted materials, posing a threat to farm livelihoods.
 - c. **Climate Change:** Poor precipitation in the landscape led to low yields of food crops, highlighting the need for climate-resilient agriculture practices.

Community Engagement and Development

- **Community Volunteer Inauguration:** Community volunteers have been inaugurated and launched to tackle fire outbreaks in project areas, led by the NDF. The training and inauguration of fire volunteers in Atebubu and Kwame Danso marked a significant milestone in enhancing community resilience to fire outbreaks. In Atebubu, 58 volunteers underwent comprehensive training, which covered essential skills on Fighting Fires and Drill Exercises.

Training Components

- **Fire Fighting Techniques:** Volunteers learned effective methods to combat fires, including the use of fire extinguishers and water.
- **Drill Exercises:** Participants engaged in simulated fire scenarios to practice their response and coordination.

- **Fire Safety and Prevention:** The training emphasized the importance of fire prevention, identification of potential fire hazards, and strategies to mitigate risks.

To ensure the volunteers are well-equipped to respond to fire emergencies, firefighting equipment was supplied, including water spraying machines and fire beaters, which are essential for rapid response to fires, and Personal Protective Equipment such as protective safety overalls, gloves, cutlasses, safety wellington boots, to safeguard volunteers during operations. Empowering local communities with the necessary skills and equipment will contribute to enhanced fire management and reduce the risk of devastating fires in the Atebubu-Wiase landscape.

Lead Farmer Engagement: Lead farmers have been engaged to plan activities for 2025. The NGPTA team conducted a collaborative engagement with lead farmers, focusing on enhancing project farm monitoring and addressing implementation challenges. This proactive initiative facilitated a comprehensive review of project progress, enabling the identification of key challenges and the development of targeted solutions to ensure optimal project outcomes.

Community Engagement: Community engagement has been initiated for 2025 activities. This community engagement initiative was launched in two communities in Atebubu, specifically in Kumfia and Seinti. This initiative aims to engage project beneficiaries in discussions on project activities for the year, broadening their knowledge and fostering collaborative problem-solving to address challenges.

Law enforcement and Collaboration

Stakeholder Engagement on Fire: Stakeholder engagement on fire prevention and management has been executed by the NDF. The Stakeholder engagement on fire prevention and management laws has been initiated with key stakeholders, including the Ghana National Fire Service, Police, Traditional Authorities, Judiciary Service, Implementing Partners, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and District Assembly. This collaborative effort aims to promote effective fire prevention and management practices, ensuring a safer environment.

Monitoring of Demo Farms: The crop research institute has monitored demo farms to ensure best practices and optimal results. The Crops Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) conducted a monitoring exercise to assess the establishment and maintenance of demo farms. The exercise revealed that while the demo farms are properly established, some require pruning to ensure optimal growth and productivity.

Recruitment and Planning

Registration and Mapping: Registration and mapping are underway for 2025 recruitment, ensuring a smooth and efficient process. Trained lead farmers and NGPTA officers will register and map new plots to expedite farmer registration. Farmers will be required to plant mahogany or cassia trees around their plots to protect farms and promote sustainability. This

agroforestry initiative is compulsory, with regular monitoring and enforcement to ensure compliance. The initiative aims to control soil erosion, regulate climate, conserve biodiversity, and increase crop yields.

Mr. Asante further said that iNovaland international team will conduct a visit to the project areas to assess the project's progress and challenges, identify urgent matters requiring attention and provide recommendation to ensure project success. The visit aims to strengthen partnerships, enhance project implementation, and ultimately drive the project towards achieving its objectives.

Mr. Asante concluded his presentation by outlining key activities planned for Quarter 2 of 2025, spanning from April to June. These initiatives include:

- Ongoing Registration: Registration of new farmers will continue, allowing more individuals to participate in the project.
- MSP Organization: The Multistakeholder Platform meeting (MSP) will be organized, providing a forum for stakeholders to discuss project progress and challenges.
- Community Engagement: Community engagement activities will be executed, fostering stronger relationships between the project team and local communities.
- Other Relevant Activities: Additional activities relevant to the project's objectives will be carried out, ensuring comprehensive progress during Quarter 2.

Attached as Annexe_2 is the PowerPoint presentation by the NGPTA.

Message from Nature and Development Foundation

Mr. Kingsley Twumasi, Senior Projects Officer for the Nature and Development Foundation, expressed his disappointment with the results of the survey presented by the NGPTA during the meeting. He stressed that implementing partners and other key stakeholders are fulfilling their responsibilities in the project, but the beneficiaries, namely farmers, are taking the project's support for granted instead of putting in the necessary effort to ensure its success and longevity. Mr. Twumasi's concerns underscore the importance of beneficiary engagement and participation in project success. He stressed that farmers should take the project seriously and contribute to its objectives. By doing so, the project can achieve its goals and have a lasting impact on the farmers and their communities.

The project's objectives, as highlighted by Mr. Twumasi, are to improve the livelihoods of farmers and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Climate change has disrupted known weather patterns, leading to unpredictable rainfall and sunshine, which has affected food crop production. It is essential for farmers to take proactive measures to adapt to these changes and ensure the sustainability of their farms.

To conclude, Mr. Twumasi mentioned the need for farmers to take ownership of the project and work towards its success. By doing so, they can ensure the project's longevity and achieve

its objectives, ultimately improving their livelihoods and contributing to the mitigation of climate change.

Message from the Wildlife Division

Ms. Philomina Dapaah from the Wildlife Division shared a concerning update. Last year's farm project was unfortunately destroyed by fire, which is a significant setback. During her interactions with farmers on Green Ghana Day, she found that almost all of them expressed frustration about the lack of support for farm management and pest and disease control. To address this issue, she recommended that a hotline should be established, allowing farmers to call and report any challenges they face during project implementation. This will provide a vital channel for farmers to receive timely assistance and support, ultimately contributing to the project's success.

Message from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture

Mr. Bright Atta Boateng, Director of the Agric department in Atebubu from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), stressed the need for communities to take project farms seriously. He suggested blacklisting communities that abandon project farms and focusing on those willing to participate. Mr. Bright shared his experience with a mango plantation project, where only a few communities took it seriously, leading to improved community status. He highlighted the impact of climate change on crop production and the benefits of planting tree crops, which mitigate climate change and provide additional income. Mr. Bright urged project beneficiaries to take the project seriously, putting in maximum effort to achieve its purpose and support livelihoods. He emphasized the importance of considering the long-term benefits of their actions. Mr. Atta Boateng's statement underscores the importance of community engagement and participation in agricultural projects, as well as the need for sustainable practices to address climate change.

Message from the Atebubu Fire Service

Mr. Kabore, Rural Fire Coordinator for Atebubu GNFS, emphasized the importance of fire management in the Atebubu landscape during the dry season. He noted that fire can be both beneficial and detrimental, and that the Bushfire prevention and control Act 1990 PNDCL 229 prohibits unlawful burning from November 1st to March 31st.

Mr. Kabore urged traditional authorities to support the fight and encouraged communities to live by the PNDC law. He also mentioned that the bush fire laws have been launched to raise awareness in the Atebubu landscape.

To combat fire outbreaks, Mr. Kabore proposed several measures:

- Establishing a Fire Brigade: A fire brigade will be set up in the Atebubu landscape to support fire volunteers in fighting fire outbreaks.

- **Fire Volunteers Squad:** Fire volunteers' squads have been established in various communities to effectively fight fire outbreaks.
- **Enforcing Anti-Bush Fire Laws:** Sub-chiefs who permit bushmeat hunters will be dealt with according to the law.
- **Farm Management:** Farmers are urged to keep their farms clean and well-managed to prevent attracting group hunters and minimize fire outbreaks.

Mr. Kabore stressed that adhering to anti-bush fire laws and working together can lead to a significant reduction in fire outbreaks.

Message from the MSP Chairman

The MSP Chairman, Mr Anthony Owusu mentioned the value and popularity of the project, cautioning that it should not be taken for granted. He urged lead farmers to share the lessons and information from the meeting with their respective communities, ensuring that all beneficiaries are informed and aligned with the project's objectives. The Chairman stressed the importance of knowledge sharing and dissemination, recognizing that not all beneficiaries were present at the meeting. By extending the lessons to their communities, lead farmers can empower other beneficiaries to take necessary actions that support the project's goals.

Furthermore, the Chairman provided guidance on securing future benefits. He recommended that beneficiaries plant at least one acre of cashew and one acre of mango, which will provide a sustainable source of income and livelihood. To ensure the long-term success of the project, the Chairman emphasized the importance of proper farm management and maintenance. This includes taking measures to prevent fire outbreaks, which can destroy farm properties and undermine the project's objectives.

Overall, the Chairman's statement underscored the significance of the project, the need for knowledge sharing and community engagement, and the importance of sustainable farm management practices. By following these guidelines, beneficiaries can ensure the project's success and secure a brighter future for themselves and their communities

Questions	Answers
How do I get land to be part of the project?	Land acquisition is the sole responsibility of the farmer.
What is the agreement with the landowner to be part of the project?	The agreement will depend on what the farmer has with the landowner
Will the project support land preparation to harvest of planted materials?	The project supports free supply of planting materials and training on farm management but not land preparation.
If I want both mahogany and cassia to plant, will I be supplied?	Yes, make your request through the NGPTA officers.

Was there a principle that if a farmer fails to plant the supplied planting materials, the farmer refunds the cost involved to the project?	No, the principle is that a farmer that fails to establish supplied planting materials will be blacklisted from the project.
Will the Fire volunteers squad establishment at Boniafo come on or not?	Yes, the establishment of the volunteers' squad is in phases and Boniafo will be established soon under the project.
Is group hunting at dawn permitted in the dry season?	Any form of group hunting during the dry season is prohibited, unless lawfully permitted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Supply of Planting Materials: Farmers should be provided with the requested planting materials to support the establishment and growth of their cashew and mango farms

Create Market for Cashew: A market for cashew should be created to incentivize cashew farmers and make farm establishment attractive, encouraging farmers to take good care of their farms and prevent abandonment or destruction by fire.

Proper Debris Management: Farmers should refrain from burning debris from interplanted maize in cashew or mango farms, adopting alternative methods for debris management to prevent fires.

Phase Supply of Planting Materials: Planting materials should be supplied in managed batches, with the remaining materials provided only after farmers have demonstrated their ability to establish and maintain their farms.

Timely Supply of Planting Materials: Planting materials should be supplied on time, with a deadline of June/July for distribution, ensuring farmers have the necessary resources for planting.

Reporting Fire Cases: Farmers should report fire cases to the police station, enabling prompt action to be taken to prevent further damage and protect farm properties.

A hotline should be established, allowing farmers to call and report any challenges they face during project implementation. This will provide a vital channel for farmers to receive timely assistance and support, ultimately contributing to the project's success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 13th Multistakeholder Platform (MSP) meeting of the Atebubu-Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration Project was a significant event that brought together stakeholders to discuss project progress, challenges, and plans. The meeting highlighted the importance of community engagement, sustainable farm management practices, and fire prevention and

management. The project's objectives, which focus on improving the livelihoods of farmers and mitigating the impacts of climate change, were reiterated, and stakeholders emphasized the need for beneficiaries to take ownership of the project and work towards its success. The meeting also provided a platform for stakeholders to share their experiences, concerns, and recommendations, which will inform future project implementation. The recommendations outlined, including the supply of planting materials, creation of a market for cashew, proper debris management, phased supply of planting materials, timely supply of planting materials, and reporting of fire cases, are crucial for the project's success and sustainability. Overall, the MSP meeting demonstrated the project's commitment to transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement. As the project moves forward, stakeholders must continue to work together to address challenges, share knowledge and expertise, and ensure that the project achieves its objectives and benefits the communities involved.

Issues Log and Action Points

Issue	Status	Actions until the next MSP meeting
Communication	Done	Almost all stakeholders in the landscape are aware of the project activities. All the paramount chiefs and their Odikros are involved. The project uses Community Information Centers to educate and spread information about the project
Better gender representation	In progress	More women now participating because of the affirmative action. 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 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	This is no longer an issue

Gallery



Gallery from 13th MSP.zip

Annexes

Annexe_1



13th MSP Participant
Sheet.pdf

13th MSP Participants Sheet

Annexe_2



01_iNovaland-MSP_
Q1 Update-27-02-202

PowerPoint Presentation by NGPTA