



Atebubu & Wiase

Forest Landscape Restoration Project



2025 ANNUAL REPORT
FEBRUARY 2026

Atebubu and Wiase FLR in Numbers

Natural Forest Restoration - APSD:

3,202,772
Trees
planted in 2025

7,042 ha
Restored¹
(2021–2025)

8
Native
Species
planted in 2025

Agroforestry Programme - Community:

5
New communities
engaged
(34 communities
overall)

889
Farms newly
engaged
(2,093 overall)²

982
ha of agroforestry
in 2025
(3,817.5 ha
overall)

752
Newly engaged
farmers
(2,692 overall have
planted trees)

15
Seedling collection
points established in
15 communities

Youth Team with 50 members

Provided planting support to 140 vulnerable³ farmers (25,780 trees in 181 ha).

211,510
Tree seedlings
distributed in 2025⁴

Multi-stakeholder platform (MSP):

6
MSP meetings
held
(4 meetings in 2024)

~66
People attending
each meeting
with 22%
female
participation

Four new stakeholders
Included in MSP, Ghana police services, Ghana Immigration Services, herders' associations, and hunting organisations.

¹ Areas restored are areas that have been planted with seedlings and/or with seeds. They are at the start of the restoration journey.

² This total number includes some farms which were abandoned after planting. We are working with farmers and community leaders to return these farms to active management as soon as possible. When this is not possible the database will then be updated.

Community capacity building:

47
Sensitization sessions at community level

2,587
Farmers participated in these sessions—
1,616 men and 971 women

35 Lead Farmers
Representing their communities attended two-day training on monitoring and record-keeping using digital tools

828
People attended 12 agroforestry training events

35
Nursery workers participated in the advanced nursery management; 63% were female

84 participants
(farmers, extension staff, and project developers) trained on agronomic management practices from communities for 2 days.

171 Community Fire volunteers
Underwent refresher training on fire prevention and management; they were inaugurated and provided with logistical support to enable effective operations.

1,509
People joined 24 wildfire prevention and management training events

47 Judiciary and Law Enforcement Officers
Were trained on laws governing fire management and enforcement.

1,869 pupils from 27 schools
Were sensitised on fire prevention, management, and safety, of whom 47% were female

Biodiversity:

19% increase
In the number of fauna species present from 2024 to 2025.

³ Vulnerable farmers refer to elderly farmers, females, and Persons with disabilities (PWDs)

⁴ Newly planted 163,259 and refilling 47,951

iNovaland Statement

The development of seedling collection points in 15 communities, plus 15 communities, along with the two additional MSP meetings, was part of the successful investment in community engagement and seedling survival last year. The local collection points enable trees to be held locally and collected more easily by farmers when they are ready to plant.

Fire remains a hazard not just for local communities and farmers, but also for agroforestry trees. The project team has worked with the Ghana Fire Service to engage nearly 2,000 local schoolchildren and deliver refresher training to 171 community fire volunteers. This commitment was recognised with an official certificate of thanks from DO II Majors Nourinnon of the Ghana National Fire Service of Atebubu-Amantin Municipality.

In October the project underwent a formal Verra carbon Validation audit and we hosted a team of five including auditors from Tru Nord and official observers from Verra. The audit findings included a list of corrective actions which are currently being processed, and we are on target to move forwards to Verification in 2026.

The carbon auditing processes required visiting several of the permanent sample plots in the natural forest restoration areas, it was interesting to note that natural regeneration was occurring in areas planted in 2022 and 2023. One plot which had originally been planted with 3 species now contains 7 different tree species. These additional species have seed which is spread by birds and other animals, as tree cover increases and fire is suppressed, we hope to see this diversification accelerate and spread across the wider area.

Andrew Heald,
iNovaland Group Chairman

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Community feedback



Abena Donkor
Farmer from
Kyeamekrom
Community

“I am privileged to have been selected by my community to represent women at the Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) and other project workshops. At the MSP, both men and women are given equal opportunities to share their views and contribute to discussions. This inclusive space has strengthened my confidence to speak up – not only during MSP meetings but also in community engagements. It has also inspired other women in my community to confidently voice their opinions during meetings.”



Anthony Yembo
Cashew farmer from
Kyeamekrom

“When I was told that the cashew seedlings would start fruiting after three years, I doubted it because of my past experiences with cashew planting. However, it has been exactly three years since I planted them, and some of the trees have already started fruiting. I had thought that, considering my age, I would not live to enjoy the benefits of cashew farming. Seeing the trees bear fruit has strengthened my trust in the project and increased my motivation to care for and protect them from fire. This year, I harvested some nuts, and I am confident that next year the yield will be even greater. I am truly happy”



Agyapomaa Debora
Mango farmer from
Kofidjan

“By January, this community (Kofidjan) typically experiences the onset of bushfire incidents. However, this year, no such incidents have been recorded. This improvement is largely attributed to the increased number of farmers participating in the project and the establishment of plantations across the landscape. The widespread presence of these farms has heightened community awareness and caution around fire use, as residents recognize the risk of damaging significant investments. In addition, targeted education on fire prevention and management has contributed to a positive shift in attitudes and practices. With continued stakeholder collaboration and project expansion, this initiative has strong potential to sustainably reduce and possibly eliminate annual fire incidents within the landscape.”

Project overview

Atebubu and Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) project:

“A ‘Living Lab’ for Community and Ecological Resilience” is a ten-year community-led project located in the Bono East region of Central Ghana.

Living Labs are an initiative established by the **Circular Bioeconomy Alliance (CBA)**, created by His Royal Highness Charles III under the Sustainable Markets Initiative. CBA aims to catalyse investments for creating resilient landscapes and sustainable markets powered by nature. The Atebubu and Wiase project was the world’s first CBA Living Lab, and is funded by **AstraZeneca**.

The project seeks to address issues of land degradation, declining soil fertility, low agriculture productivity, deforestation, nature loss, unemployment and climate change.

To build community and ecological resilience through forest landscape restoration, the initial targets set in 2021 have been revised and the project adapted towards the year so that in 2026:

- **Natural forest restoration:**
10,000 hectares of restoration in degraded areas
- **Agroforestry programme:**
5,580 hectares of agroforestry and regenerative agriculture to reduce pressure on natural forests, improve land productivity and boost incomes for smallholder farmers

A total of 12.9 million trees will be planted.

- **Natural Forest: 11.6 million trees**
- **Agroforestry and Woodlots: 1.3 million trees**

This is made possible by working with project partners and the Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP).



Building a Sustainable Future Together

Alignment with Circular Bioeconomy Alliance principles

The Atebubu and Wiase FLR project was the first “Living Lab” to be developed as part of the Circular Bioeconomy Alliance (CBA) and is aligned with **CBA’s principles for regenerative landscapes**. The project is focused on the long-term sustainability of all parties involved and the surrounding ecosystems. It aims to ensure social-ecological resilience by enabling people to create better livelihoods in harmony with nature and harnessing local knowledge to promote landscape regeneration.

Principles	Alignment
<p>1. Natural environment Design for environmental sustainability, reverse nature’s degradation and support ecosystem health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environmental sustainability and ecosystem health are key to project design. ■ Restoration focuses on native species using guidance from local experts and entities. ■ Wood fuel demand is being addressed by planting cassia for sustainable charcoal production. ■ Communities and farmers receive training to reduce reliance on burning and reduce impact of wildfires.
<p>2. Social well-being Inclusive design aiming for equity, human health and happiness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community-led design through continuous MSP engagement and lead farmer network. ■ Farmer training improves food security, nutrition, and incomes. ■ Regeneration and livelihoods addressed jointly for long-term well-being. ■ Knowledge transfer strengthens local stewardship and agency.
<p>3. Economic prosperity Design in support of the circular bioeconomy and target sustainable creation of wealth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creation of regenerative jobs in restoration and land management with over 500 local people directly working in the project implementation. ■ Agroforestry integrates farmers into circular bioeconomy value chains. ■ Proposed cooperative models and local processing will help retain value locally. ■ Carbon finance supports long-term landscape stewardship.

Principles	Alignment
<p>4. Diversity Manage risks by diversifying species, products and markets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Diverse agroforestry systems reduce ecological and economic risk. ■ Mix of food, cash, timber, and native species enhances resilience. ■ Rapid establishment of pioneer species will accelerate ecological succession via natural regeneration processes. ■ Native value trees (e.g. shea) strengthen livelihoods and biodiversity
<p>5. Connectivity Promote connectivity and collective impacts among nature and people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Landscape approach links 2,000+ farmers across 34 communities. ■ Biodiversity corridors reduce fragmentation and fire spread. ■ MSP platform strengthens collective governance with meetings every two months. ■ Community fire management links social and ecological systems.
<p>6. Adaptive capacity Act for the long term based on monitoring and learning, keeping the social-ecological system flexible and adapted to upcoming challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adaptive management of farmer and community engagement based on monitoring and feedback loops. ■ Continuous training strengthens climate and market resilience. ■ Species choices in natural forest areas guided by survival and mortality evidence. ■ Integrated monitoring of carbon, biodiversity, and livelihoods.
<p>7. Harmony Understand and embrace the local context, respecting laws and customary rights, including traditional knowledge, and finding balance between interests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respect for customary land rights and national regulations – regular meetings with traditional leaders ■ Traditional knowledge integrated with scientific research. ■ Community leadership and local government embedded in governance structures. ■ Balanced response to climate risks, land degradation, and migration pressures.

Progress and achievements in 2025

In 2025, **3,366,031** trees were planted on about **3,543** hectares of degraded forest land and farmland in the Atebubu-Amantin and Sene West districts.

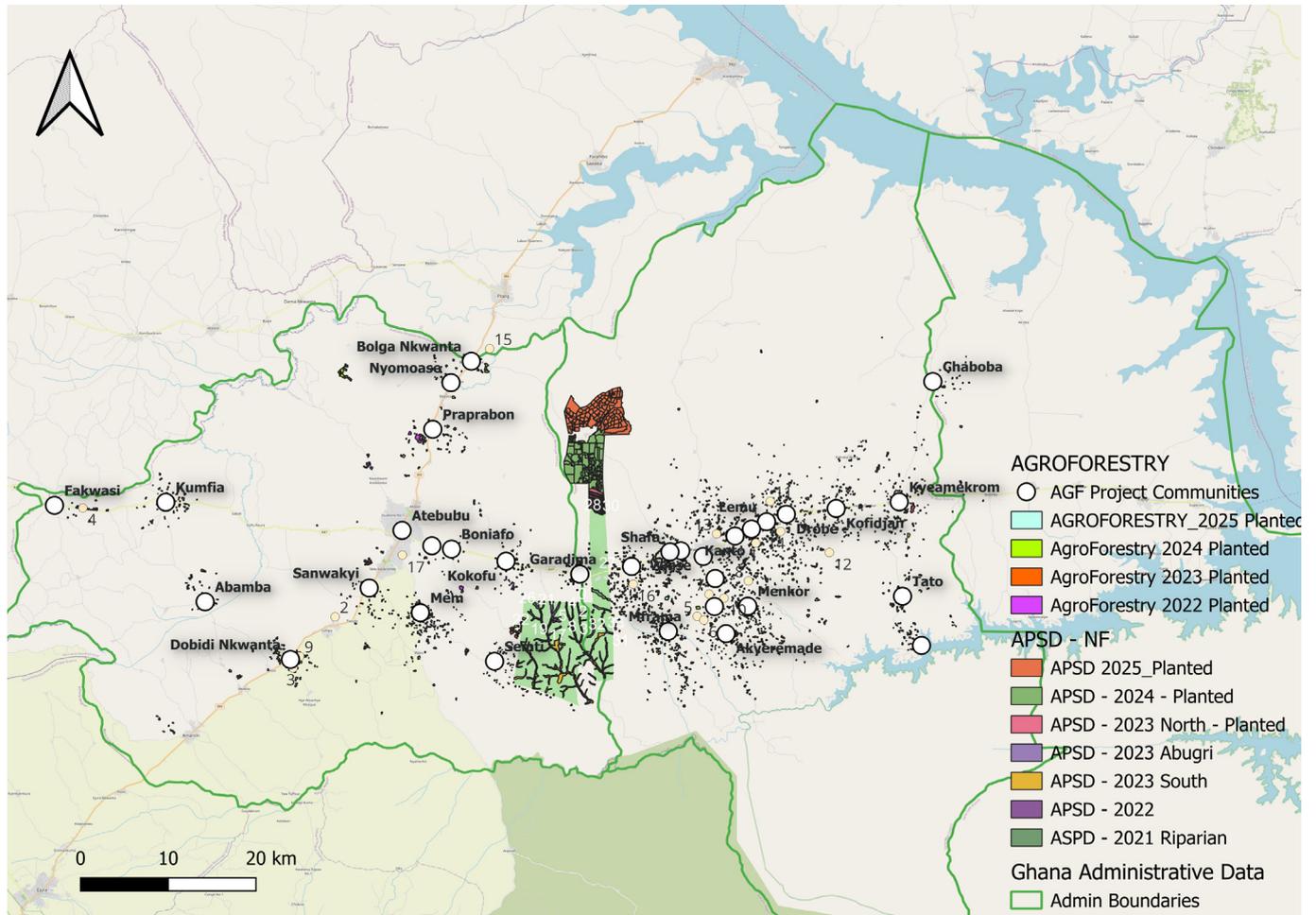


Figure 1. Areas planted in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

In the agroforestry programme, **163,259** trees (*117,367 fruit trees and 45,892 timber trees*) were distributed and planted across **981.2** hectares in 2025. Initial survival rates for mango, cashew, and timber trees were 88%, 81%, and 65%, respectively. In addition, 48,251 trees were distributed for refilling to farmers who had already planted in previous years (34,741 fruit trees and 13,510 timber trees).

In the natural forest restoration, **3,202,772** trees were planted on **2,562** hectares in 2025. Initial assessments in mid-December showed an average survival rate of 82%. Overall, since the project began, **9,928,747** trees have been planted across **7,042** hectares of degraded natural forest.

During the year, six MSP meetings were led by the Nature and Development Foundation (NDF), and iNovaLand's Community Liaison Officers also led 47 community-level meetings. This is an increase compared to the 4 quarterly MSP meetings previously held. These meetings are now held in Atebubu and Kwame Danso, enabling more people to attend a meeting close to where they live and work. Overall, 398 participants attended to discuss several issues (Table 3 – Issues raised by participants at MSP meetings). More balanced representation is one of the main topics being addressed, and many efforts have been made to increase young people's and women's participation in the project. 22% of attendees at MSP meetings are women, and this figure has increased from previous years, but still needs initiatives to increase female representation. When community engagement meetings are held directly in communities, women's participation increases to around 38% in comparison with MSP meetings.

Furthermore, three quarterly review and planning meetings were held involving Technical Assistants, Lead Farmers, and the iNovoland team. These engagements provided a structured platform to reflect on progress made, assess achievements against targets, discuss implementation challenges, and jointly develop action plans for subsequent quarters.

The fire management training is part of a broader strategy to reduce the impact of fire on the landscape and protect all planted trees. This has been developed from within the MSP and with the support of the project Advisory Board (Table 1), resulting in a broader management plan that includes the creation and training of community-level fire brigades. In addition to community-based efforts, targeted training was provided to the judiciary and law enforcement officers to strengthen their understanding of existing laws and regulations governing fire management, bush burning, and environmental protection.

As part of the community engagement, multiple training events on agroforestry (before the planting season), seedling collection points (to reduce transportation shocks), a youth team selected from communities to support planting for marginalized interested farmers, and fire management (post-planting and pre-dry season) took place at the community level. Also in 2025, in Kwame Danso and Atebubu, 34 lead farmers and 2 nursery operators spent 2 days training on traceability such as how to keep proper records and monitor and collect data using digital tools (QField and KoboToolbox).



Figure 2. Lead farmers' training at the Project Office in Atebubu

Five highlights in 2025 were:

i. The establishment of seedling collection points has addressed transportation shocks and mobility challenges previously observed during the movement of seedlings from nurseries to farms. Earlier experience showed that direct transport from community nurseries often resulted in intermediate handling shocks and reduced seedling mobility at the farm level during collection for planting. The introduction of the collection points has minimised these intermediate and on-farm transport shocks. This system has been further strengthened complemented through improved traceability mechanisms, enabling effective tracking of seedlings from community nurseries to individual farms.

ii. Tree for Life Day 2025, held in the Bono East Region under the theme “Restoring Degraded Landscapes in Ghana”, brought together government agencies, traditional leaders, farmers, youth, and media. The event provided a valuable platform to reinforce collaboration with local partners and communities, demonstrating a shared commitment to landscape restoration and ecosystem recovery.

iii. Improved documentation and traceability: In 2025, measures were put in place to track seedlings from the nursery to the community and to the farmer fields. Both paper-based and electronic approaches were introduced to ensure proper recording, documentation and monitoring of seedlings along the nursery-farm supply chain. This has improved transparency, accountability and a sense of responsibility on farmers to protect and care for the seedlings they receive.

iv. The expansion of the project team, including Office Assistants, Technical Assistants, and the Youth Team, enabled enhanced support to vulnerable farmers. Technical Assistants provided on-field guidance on traceability, species selection, planting techniques, and sustainable land-use practices. In parallel, the Youth Team offered practical support for labour-intensive tasks such as pegging and planting, particularly assisting elderly and vulnerable individuals during critical stages of the planting season.

v. The natural forest component of the project was strengthened through the protection and assisted natural regeneration of existing forest patches promoting higher biodiversity, and expanding on plantation of seedlings in degraded forest areas within the landscape. Activities continue to focus on reducing fire incidence, and watering of planted seedlings to face the challenges posed by the drought in the middle of the planting season.

vi. A Validation audit for the carbon component of the project was conducted in September, during which independent auditors assessed the project’s design, governance, monitoring systems, and implementation quality. The auditors concluded that the project demonstrates a high level of quality, highlighting its robust technical design, strong community engagement, and credible systems for long-term environmental and social impact.



Figure 3. Moro Seidu from the iNovaland field team collecting aquatic eDNA samples in September 2025, at the end of the rainy season.

Governance - 2025

Table 1. Members of the Advisory Board⁵

Name	Entity
Yitagesu Tekle	Circular Bioeconomy Alliance / European Forest Institute (CBA/EFI)
Mustapha Seidu (Chair)	Nature and Development Foundation
Nana Owusu Sarpong	Atebubu Traditional Authority
Bantama Honourable Anthony Owusu	Multistakeholder Platform Chair
Nana Amo Kwasi IV	Wiase Traditional Authority
Yakubu Mohammed	Forestry Commission of Ghana
Prof. Daniel Ofori	Forest Research Institute of Ghana
Mohammed Issiah	Dwan Traditional Authority
Samuel Azuug	Crops Research Institute
Nana Owusu Achiaw II	Kumfia Traditional Authority
Nana Yaw Owusu	Nyomoase Traditional Authority

⁵ The main purpose of the Advisory Board is to provide additional support and input to the project. This support and input could be scientific, cultural or technical. The Advisory Board has no decision-making power but can give clear recommendations to the Project Board.

Table 2. Members of the Project Board⁶

Name	Entity
Yitagesu Tekle	Circular Bioeconomy Alliance / European Forest Institute (CBA/EFI)
Mustapha Seidu	Nature and Development Foundation
Andrew Heald	iNovaland
Finn Jacobsen	APSD
John Atkinson	AstraZeneca
Alison Davies	AstraZeneca

⁶ The main purpose of the Project Board is to a) make high level strategic decisions about the direction of the project and b) monitor and evaluate progress of the project.

BOX 1. Biodiversity monitoring

The project underscores the importance of research in biodiversity management and has therefore strengthened collaborations with academic institutions. In addition to hosting a locally recruited PhD candidate, the project is collaborating with the university of Edinburgh to assess the potential of bioacoustics as a tool for monitoring ecosystem recovery. This research explores the relationship between connecting bird species richness with vegetation health, offering new insights into restoration effectiveness and landscape-scale ecological change.

Biodiversity monitoring for the 2025 dry season using conventional field assessment methods is currently ongoing. To expand the scope of monitoring and ensure a more comprehensive understanding of ecosystem recovery, the assessment of soil biota - previously not included in the baseline survey - has been incorporated into the 2025 monitoring programme. While the full report is not yet available, preliminary findings from the wet season survey indicate the identification of three new frog species (*Xenopus muelleri*, *Phrynomantis microps*, *Kassina senegalensis*) and two new bat species (*Nycteris macrotis* and *Macronycteris gigas*) that were not recorded during the baseline survey conducted in the previous year. A comprehensive biodiversity monitoring report covering both wet and dry seasons will be provided once dry-season monitoring is completed in February.

In addition, water samples for the annual biodiversity monitoring using environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis were conducted in October 2025. Results indicate the detection of additional species of mammal, amphibia, clitellate and insects' classes compared with 2024 data. These findings may reflect improving ecosystem functionality and the increasing availability of ecological niches. Looking ahead to 2026, the project plans to explore the use of Air eDNA, camera traps and acoustic devices, alongside conventional field assessment and aquatic eDNA, to capture a more complete picture of species presence and movement across landscape.

Table 3. Number of fauna species found on the project grounds in 2024 and 2025 and tree species in 2025.

Faunal class	Number of species	
	2025	2024
Mammals	29	27
Amphibia	24	22
Birds	11	17
Actinopterygii	37	41
Clitellate	12	8
Insect	369	291
Total	482	406

Local Tree Species	2025 Planted
Dawa Dawa	722
Ceiba	2,799,197
Papaw	1,067
Ofram	234,987
Mahogany	141,984
Emere	20,000
Rosewood	385
Wawa	4,430
Total	3,202,772

BOX 2. Socioeconomic assessment report

This report presents the findings of a socioeconomic study conducted for the Atebubu and Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) Project, implemented by iNovaland with Aqualife Conservancy as the lead research partner during 2025. The study assessed baseline socioeconomic conditions, livelihood strategies, and early project outcomes across 10 communities through household surveys (296 households), community workshops, and key informant interviews with statutory institutions. Results show strong local and institutional support for the project, driven by its potential to improve livelihoods, restore degraded landscapes, and enhance resilience to climate change. Participating agroforestry farmers recorded slightly higher per capita incomes than non-participants, and communities demonstrated high levels of environmental awareness, local ecological knowledge, and appreciation for indigenous trees, biodiversity conservation, and wildfire reduction.

The project has already delivered tangible and intangible benefits, including access to tree seedlings (cashew, mango, coconut), training in good agronomic and fire management practices, strengthened relationships with extension services, and improved social cohesion. Adoption of sustainable practices such as mulching and minimum tillage is widespread, and communities report reduced wildfire incidence and greater support for conservation.

However, the study also identifies key challenges that could affect long-term success, including drought-related crop losses, pressure on forests from firewood use, limited access to credit, low cooperative membership, and persistent concerns around tree tenure and unrealistic financial expectations.

The report concludes with practical recommendations to strengthen governance, farmer organization, financial resilience, sustainable energy use, and monitoring systems, ensuring that the FLR project delivers lasting social, economic, and environmental impacts at the landscape scale.



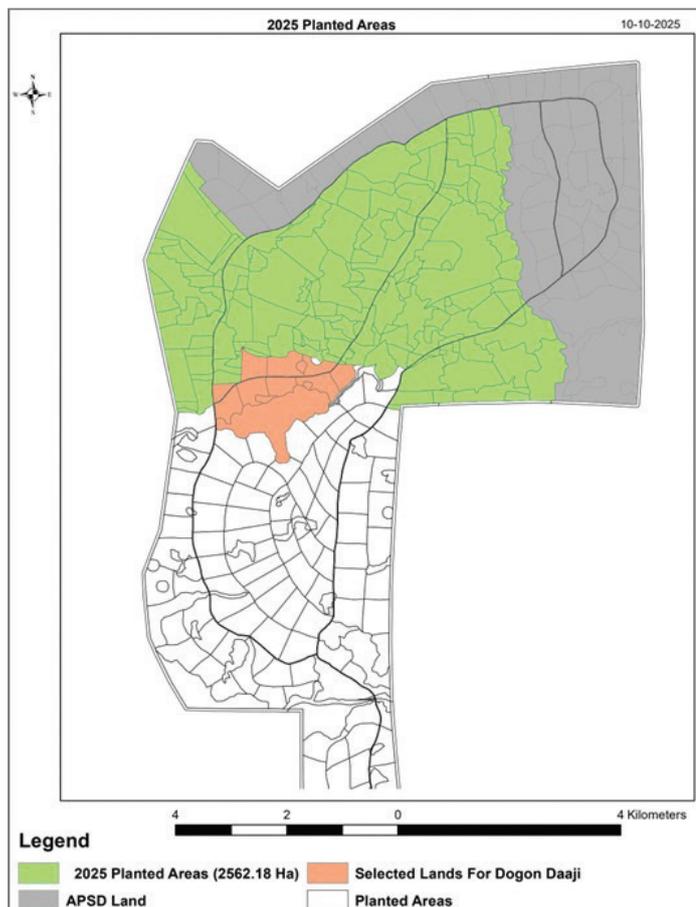


Figure 4. Total area planted in 2025 of natural forest restoration: 2562.2 hectares.

Table 4. Issues raised by participants at MSP Meetings⁷

Issue
Communication
Better gender representation
Farmer representatives
Land tenure
Low participation of migrant farmers
Balance between arable crops and tree crops
Bushfire management and control
Disturbance by wild hunters and Fulani herdsmen ⁸
Managing the survival trees, burnt and abandoned farms

⁷ Full MSP reports are available at the project's website.

⁸ Fulani herdsmen are nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists from West Africa, primarily engaged in livestock rearing. Found across the Sahel and semi-arid regions, they have migrated further south into savannah and tropical forest areas due to climate changes.

Indicators - tree targets

The revised target for 2025, following the expansion agreed in 2024, was to plant **4,857,082** trees, with **3,986,670** surviving. As the agreed expansion was agreed in 2024, it was possible to accelerate implementation in 2024 to reduce pressure in 2025. Given this, by the end of the 2025 planting season, **3,202,772** trees had been planted in natural forest restoration (NFR) within the APSD concession, and **117,367** fruit trees and **45,892** timber trees had been distributed and planted by local farmers under the agroforestry programme.

In natural forest restoration areas, initial monitoring shows an 82% survival rate. This result is coming from the monitoring of 125 PSPs planted in 2025 under the NFR component. As per the agroforestry programme, initial post-planting monitoring present a survival rate for mango, cashew, and timber trees were 88%, 81%, and 65%, respectively. In both cases, survival rates are within expected ranges at this early stage of the dry season. Monitoring of seedlings survival rates in the 2025 plots will be assessed after the dry season as usual. The unexpected drought during the rainy season in 2025 has dried both soils and vegetation earlier than usual, increasing the risk of wildfire across the landscape during early 2026. Although some rains in the dry reason may reduce the number of occurrences.

Survival rates of seedlings planted in natural forest and agroforestry in 2023, 2024 and 2025 will be reassessed after the dry season (end of March 2026).

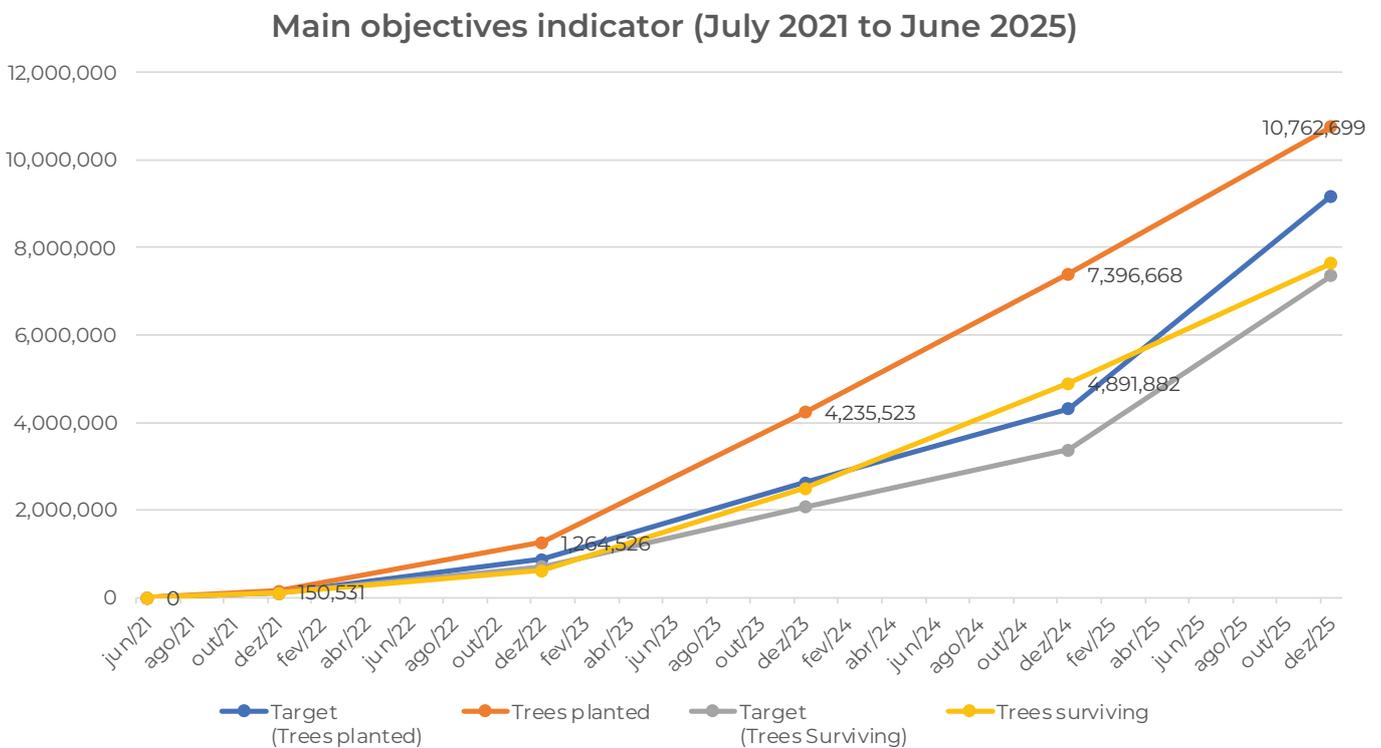


Figure 5. Comparison between targets and actual results of trees planted and trees surviving until December 2025.



Challenges and lessons

There is no project without challenges.

What is important is continuous reflective learning to do things better.

Challenges:

1. Long drought in the landscape:

There were droughts again in 2025, and this prolonged drought negatively impacted planting schedules and survival rates of seedlings planted. It also affected communities and farmers who depend on rainfall for their agricultural activities. When the rains finally came, it was close to the dry season, and some farmers were unable to plant their food crops, such as maize and cowpea, because they feared the rains might stop early. The Natural Forest component also struggled heavily; about 40% of the planted seedlings didn't survive this drought and were replanted once the rain resumed.

2. Abandonment of farms:

Monitoring shows that some 20% of farmers have abandoned their farms. Key reasons include frequent fires and cattle destroying seedlings. To address these issues, we have collaborated with some communities and their local authorities to establish community fire volunteer programmes. Volunteers help reduce fire incidents in communities by assisting farmers in creating fire belts and controlling burning when they prepare their lands for yam cultivation, for instance. In addition, cattle herder representatives have been invited to and attended MSP meetings, and improved dialogue and understanding should help to minimize damage caused by grazing. Additionally, Traditional Chiefs will also support this effort to bring back some of the farmers that left the project

3. Cattle Grazing:

Uncontrolled cattle grazing continues to pose a major challenge to the project, with cattle damaging and trampling newly planted seedlings in some sites, leading to reduced survival rates and increased need for replanting and protection measures.

Lessons:

1. Establishing community seedling distribution points.

Many seedlings die even before they are planted, because of the shocks they experience during handling and transportation from supplier to farmer. Establishing community distribution points, where seedlings can be stored carefully and kept watered, will give seedlings the chance to recover from these shocks. The community distribution will also enable farmers to plant early, immediately after the rains set in.

2. Support of vulnerable farmers.

High seedling mortality rates from previous planting seasons due to late planting by farmers necessitated the formation of youth teams to help farmers with planting in the 2025 planting season. Farmers who benefited from the youth teams were carefully selected based on criteria including age, gender and farm size. This initiative helped farmers to plant their seedlings immediately the rains started and improved upon the survival rates from previous planting seasons.

3. Data recording and management.

As the project scales up, reliable data becomes essential. Standardised templates and simple digital tools (e.g., KoboToolbox and ODK) are improving record-keeping, traceability, and the quality of monitoring data collected by lead farmers and field teams.

4. The natural forest restoration approach is delivering results.

Feedback from external carbon auditors confirmed that the natural forest restoration approach is effective in recovering degraded land for forest regeneration. The combination of enrichment planting, assisted natural regeneration, and active fire management has enabled forest cover to re-establish in areas that were previously highly degraded. This assessment is reinforced by biodiversity monitoring results, which show an increasing number of flora species in areas planted in 2022 and 2023. The observed rise in plant species richness indicates that ecological processes are recovering and that restored areas are beginning to function more like natural forest systems.

5. Community fire volunteer programmes.

Critical for protecting planted trees and farms across the landscape. Their effectiveness depends on regular training, basic equipment, and close coordination with local authorities. When well supported, these volunteers help raise awareness thus reducing fire incidents, protect investments, and encourage long-term commitment from farmers and communities.

Communications

The project partners have developed a communications strategy, which is reviewed annually for local and international purposes. This aims to:

- **Develop impactful communication materials to achieve the project objectives.**
- **Share and showcase success stories, good practices and lessons**
- **Increase the intended audiences' awareness of the project and project partners**
- **Encourage and facilitate the active participation of diverse stakeholders and policymakers and pose calls to action.**
- **Secure the commitment of stakeholders to the project objectives.**

Tree for Life

Tree for Life, formally known as Green Ghana Day, is an annual event promoted by the Government of Ghana to raise awareness of the need for more tree planting and management. This year, it was held in June. iNovaland's team joined the Bono East Regional lunching at Atebubu and also organized a local planting event and agroforestry training to mark the day and highlight the project's contributions to its goals. Bono East Regional Minister, Forestry Services Division, and Traditional leaders in Atebubu to mark the occasion.



Figure 6. Tree for Life Ghana Day event with the Forestry Commission Ghana team, and Bono East Regional Minister, Hon. Francis Owusu Antwi and Mrs Lucy Amu Ntim (Regional Manager of FSD-FC, Ghana).



Figure 7. Tree for Life Ghana Day event with the iNovaland team.



Figure 8. Refreshers Training for local fire volunteer groups from project communities on fire prevention and management skills and techniques.



Figure 9. Community seedlings collection points established to reduce the transportation shocks from the community nursery operators

Website

The project's website was updated regularly during 2025. Project documents and achievements are available in a simple and clear format to promote transparency to the community and other stakeholders. See:

<https://atebubu.inovaland.earth>

Social media

Many notes about the project were posted on **iNovaland's LinkedIn** page.

Radio Shows

The project was featured on several radio shows, with appearances from iNovaland's team, community members and other partners, like the Ghana National Fire Services and extension officers from Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the National Disaster Management. They discussed issues including the importance of agroforestry, the impacts of climate change and how restoration initiatives can support communities, reaching a wide regional audience. Radio broadcasts also helped raise awareness about fire management, and an announcement on fire risk was created to be run daily on both local radio stations during the entire dry season.



Figure 10. iNovaland team, Ghana National Fire Service, and National Disaster Management at Atoobu FM on Fire sensitization and Education.

Reflection

The year 2025 marked an important phase of consolidation and learning for the Atebubu and Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration Project. Building on the foundations laid in earlier years, the project matured from an establishment phase into one characterised by strengthened systems and procedures, deeper community engagement, and increased external scrutiny. This transition provided valuable opportunities to reflect on progress, test assumptions, and further align project implementation with international best practice.

A significant milestone during the year was the carbon validation audit conducted in September under the Verra Verified Carbon Standard (VCS). External audits provide a structured and independent lens through which project design, governance, monitoring systems, and on-the-ground implementation can be assessed. The validation process confirmed the overall high quality of the project, recognising its robust technical design, strong community-centred approach, and credible systems for delivering long-term environmental and social benefits. At the same time, the corrective actions identified through the audit have offered practical guidance to further strengthen project systems and prepare the project for verification in 2026. In this sense, the audit was not only a compliance exercise but also a constructive learning opportunity that reinforced the project's commitment to transparency, rigour, and continuous improvement.

Beyond formal audits, 2025 reaffirmed a central lesson of landscape restoration: success is driven as much by people, values, and relationships as by technical interventions. While tree planting, survival rates, and biodiversity indicators remain essential measures of progress, the long-term resilience of the landscape depends on sustained community participation, shared ownership of outcomes, and tangible benefits for local livelihoods. Experiences during the year – particularly around wildfire management, drought response, and farm-level decision-making – highlighted that improving yields, reducing fire risk, and supporting vulnerable farmers are as critical to project success as restoration targets themselves.

The growing scale of the project in 2025 brought both opportunities and complexity. Expansion in area, partnerships, and activities increased operational demands and the need for robust coordination, accurate data management, and communication. At the same time, this growth enhanced the project's resilience by diversifying risk, strengthening institutional partnerships, and embedding restoration across a wider social and ecological landscape. In 2026 the final year of large scale planting, the core principles underpinning the project remain consistent: early and meaningful engagement, high-quality planting at the right time and in the right places, and strong community mobilisation to minimise fire risks and support tree establishment.

Ultimately, the success of the Atebubu and Wiase FLR Project rests on a shared and evolving vision among all partners – communities, traditional authorities, implementing organisations, funders, and government institutions – for healthier ecosystems and more resilient livelihoods. This vision is not static; it continues to develop in response to learning, external feedback, and changing environmental and socio-economic conditions. The experiences of 2025 demonstrated that ongoing dialogue, trust-building, and adaptive management are essential to sustaining momentum and ensuring that the project remains relevant, credible, and impactful over the long term.



Targets for 2026

2026: Targets and Main Activities

This year is another opportunity to showcase the potential of forest landscape restoration in building community and ecological resilience. We will continue supporting the 2,000+ agroforestry farmers to better manage the trees already planted and expand to new farmers within the 32 main communities. Our revised targets are:

- Restore circa **3,000 hectares of degraded natural forest** using native tree species.
- Improve food and timber production in circa **900 hectares of agricultural lands** through smallholder-led agroforestry.
- Continue providing technical, practical and **peer-to-peer capacity building for farmers** in climate change adaptation, agroforestry, land use and fire management.
- **Monitoring, evaluation and learning** to ensure better survival rates for planted trees and long-term community impact, and biodiversity protection and enhancement.

Key Dates

- **February to May**
Farmers mapping, registering and agroforestry trainings: February to May
- **April to September**
Natural forest planting
- **June to August**
Agroforestry tree distribution and planting
- **February, April, June, August, October and December**
MSP meetings (6)
- **October 2026 to March 2027**
Wildfire management

Appendix

Table 5. Key project people.

Entity	Name	Role in the project
iNovaland	Abraham Yelley	Project Coordinator
iNovaland	Andrew Heald	iNovaland Chair
iNovaland	Andrews Asante	GIS and Data Officer
iNovaland	Emmanuel Kwarteng	Community Liaison Officer
iNovaland	Moro Seidu	Community Liaison Officer
iNovaland	Vera Yvonne Gyamboa	Administrative Assistant
iNovaland	Rose Kobusinge	Communications Officer
iNovaland	Rui Barreira	iNovaland NGPTA Director Project Lead
NDF	Mustapha Seidu	MSP facilitator Advisory Board Chair
Community Leader	Bantama's Honourable Anthony Owusu	MSP Chair
APSD	Celestina Nsor	Natural Forest Restoration
APSD	Finn Jacobsen	Natural Forest Restoration



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- **Astra Zeneca Ethics Helpline**
Concerns about the project can be raised via this independent helpline: [\(Click Here\)](#)



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It is not intended to provide financial or legal advice, or to address all circumstances that might arise.

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