

FOOD & BUSINESS APPLIED RESEARCH

Improving smallholders' food and income security through non-timber forest products in a reforestation scheme and tree farms – a collaborative learning process in Ghana

Consortium members

- **Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC) of the Ghana Forestry Commission**
 - Mr Edward Obiaw, Project Coordinator
 - Mrs Valerie Fumey-Nassah, Project Officer
 - Mr Hamza Mohammed, Accountant
- **University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands**
 - Dr Mirjam A.F. Ros-Tonen, Associate Professor, Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research
- **University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR), Sunyani, Ghana**
 - Dr Mercy Derkyi, Lecturer Dept. of Forest Science, Acting Head Centre for Climate Change and Gender Studies
 - Dr Simon Abugre, Lecturer Dept. of Forest Science
 - Dr William Quarmin, Lecturer Dept. of Forest Science
- **Rural Development Youth Association (RUDEYA)**
 - Mr Kofi Kyeremateng, Director
 - Dr Harris Andoh, Development Practitioner

Project partners

- **Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA)**
 - Mrs Beatrice Asante Mante, Director Agric
 - Mr Peter Kwame Amoako, Extension Officer
- **Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP)**
 - Mr Larry Amekuse, Director

Project description

Duration: 3 years (2016-2019)

Overall objective: To enhance food and income security of farmers in the modified taungya system (MTS) and tree farmers in off-reserve areas after canopy closure.

Specific objective: To generate knowledge and build capacity that enables the integration and production of shade-tolerant non-timber forest products (NTFPs) (black pepper, grains of paradise and honey) in on- and off-reserve tree farms and their successful processing and marketing.

Sub-objectives:

1. To take stock of the current status of NTFPs in MTS/tree farms and problems that farmers encounter to sustainably manage, harvest and market them.
2. To improve yields of NTFPs in the MTS through participatory seedling production and on-farm trials.
3. To explore the potential of integrating NTFPs in off-reserve tree farms.
4. To examine and improve market opportunities/constraints and profitability.
5. To enhance entrepreneurial skills, farmer groups, and group enterprises.
6. To enhance collaborative learning processes on sustainable NTFP production and marketing, involving farmers, policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers.

Impact activities and preliminary results

- Project infosheet disseminated, emphasising the need to enhance income opportunities from the modified taungya system (MTS) and tree farms after canopy closure.
- Survey among 147 MTS and off-reserve tree farmers in three forest districts revealed importance of food crops in the MTS and need to find profitable markets for NTFPs.
- Inventories in on- and off-reserve tree farms revealed occurrence of un-planted NTFPs and medium to high survival rates of planted NTFPs under both open and closed un-burnt canopies, but no NTFPs in plots affected by wildfires.
- MSc students affiliated to Ghanaian partner institutions recruited to enhance capacity building for sustainable results.
- Inception workshop organised for stakeholders.
- Writeshop for staff and MSc students affiliated to consortium partners.
- Project enhanced a firmer position of the MTS in Ghana's new plantation strategy.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

- Ghana's National Plantation Strategy highlights the MTS as one of the main plantation development strategies.
- Recognition of NTFPs as an integral part of the plantation strategy.
- MSc students selected among staff of consortium partners guarantees sustainable project results.

Challenges

- Erratic rainfall pattern might affect NTFP plot establishment.
- The most common tree species in the MTS do not allow for undergrowth.
- Disbursement scheme of funds challenges the implementation of activities scheduled for year 1 (e.g. nursery and experimental plot establishment).
- Profitable markets for NTFPs.

