



RMSC



Partners MoFA and ASSNAPP



Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research
WOTRO Science for Global Development

WOTRO GCP-ARF PROGRAMME

Improving smallholders' food and income security
through non-timber forest products in reforestation
schemes: A collaborative learning process in Ghana



TREEFARM project Infosheet 01 – April 2016 (update November 2017)

Background

The Forestry Commission of Ghana has adopted forest plantations as a strategy to ensure landscape restoration, enhance environmental quality and develop a sustainable resource base to satisfy future timber demands.

One of the reforestation programmes is the modified taungya system (MTS); a co-management system between the Forestry Commission and smallholder farmers that allows intercropping of timber and food crops. It entitles farmers to 100% of the food produce and a 40% share in the timber revenues in return for their contribution to tree planting, maintenance and protection.

The benefits of the MTS have been amply documented:

- Its contribution to alleviating the scarcity of farming land and improving households' livelihoods;
- Creating a legal source of future timber supply;
- Its gender-friendly character in generating benefits;
- Its contribution to creating climate-smart landscapes.

However challenges have also been reported. One of these is the lack of mid-term benefits for farmers after canopy closure, when food crops can no longer be grown. This creates a disincentive to farmers' commitment to the scheme. The Resource Management Support Centre of the Forestry Commission (RMSC), the University of Amsterdam (UvA), the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) and RUDEYA have formed a consortium to address this challenge. WOTRO Science for Global Development and the Applied Research Fund of the Food & Business Knowledge Platform from the Netherlands fund the research.

Project objectives and activities

Employing a gender-sensitive and stepwise learning approach, the 3-year project running from 2016-2019 seeks to integrate nutritious shade-tolerant non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in the MTS and off-reserve tree farms. It aims to improve the production, processing and marketing of products that RUDEYA already introduced in 2011-2012: black pepper, grains of paradise and honey. Collaborative learning involving farmers, practitioners, researchers and policymakers plays a key role in the project.

The project consists of several working packages:

- Taking stock (inventory and baseline survey).
- Exploring NTFP potential in the MTS.
- Exploring the NTFP potential in off-reserve tree farms.
- Improving the marketing and profitability of NTFPs.
- Mobilize farmers and enhance their entrepreneurial skills.
- Capacity building, collaborative learning and dissemination.

The project officially started mid January 2016. Since then the following activities have been carried out:

- Installing a Project Board that acts as a steering committee.
- Designing and pre-testing a questionnaire for a baseline survey to take stock of the current situation.
- Conducting a survey among 147 MTS and off-reserve tree farmers in three forest districts.
- Inventorying NTFPs in MTS plots and off-reserve tree farms.
- Analysis of the baseline data and report write up.
- Defining research topics for MSc students affiliated to partner institutions in Ghana with a view to enhancing capacity building for sustainable results.
- Preparing and organizing the inception workshop.



Baseline survey

In March 2016, inventory and baseline studies have been carried out among 114 MTS and 33 off-reserve tree farmers to take stock of the current situation of the tree farms. The survey covered six villages located in the Nkawie, Mankranso and Goaso Forest Districts in the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Regions where RUDEYA had introduced NTFPs in 2011-2012. Data was collected on households' livelihood portfolios; their time investment in the MTS and tree plots; challenges faced to manage the tree farms and their NTFP component; the availability, source, use and destination of NTFPs; marketing problems; social organization among farmers; and skills and training needs. Preliminary results of the study will be presented and discussed at the inception workshop to be held at the Forestry Commission Training Centre, Akyawkrom, Ejisu, on 21 April 2016.



MSc training

The project has six openings for MSc students to support their fieldwork and thesis writing. Research topics have been identified and potential candidates will be selected among consortium partners in Ghana. The successful candidates will be enrolled in a 2 year MPhil Social Forestry and Environmental Governance Programme at the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) in Sunyani, Ghana.

Who's who?

Consortium partners

Public partner:

- Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC) of the Forestry Commission
 - Mr Edward Obiaw, Project Coordinator
 - Mrs Valerie Fumey Nassah, Project Officer
 - Mr Hamza Mohammed, Accountant

Academic partners:

- 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
 - Dr Mercy Derkyi, Lecturer Dept. of Forest Science
 - Dr Simon Abugre, Lecturer Dept. of Forest Science
 - Dr Richard K Bannor, Lecturer Dept. of Agric-Economics, Agribusiness and Extension
 - Prof. Emmanuel Opuni, Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Practitioner organization:

- Rural Development Youth Association (RUDEYA)
 - Mr Kofi Kyerematen, Director
 - Dr Harris Andoh, Development Practitioner

Project partners

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

Project support team, Forestry Commission Ghana

- Emmanuel Adu Sarpong, Field Coordinator
- Charity Appiah, Administrative support
- Rita Baaba Abekah, Administrative Assistant
- Alex Asare, Social Forester
- Oppon Sasu, Ag. Executive Director FSDFC
- Hugh C. Brown, Director Plantations FSD

Field implementation support

- Regional Managers of the Forest Services Division (FSD) in the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Regions
- District Managers of the Nkawie, Mankranso and Goaso Forest Districts

For more information please contact the project officer at RMSC, Mrs. Valerie Fumey Nassah, P.O. Box 1457 Kumasi, valfn2003@yahoo.co.uk