



PROFOREST INITIATIVE AFRICA 2023/24 ANNUAL REPORT

Driving Positive Change in the
Agricultural Commodities Sector

Version 1
October 2024

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Cover: Adjoa Sarah is a beneficiary of the revolving farm who used her money to cultivate a 3 acre rice farm at Dadiesoaba, Ghana.

Photo Credit: Abdul Hafiz

Message from the Executive Director, Global and Africa

This annual report highlights our progress and commitment to promoting the responsible sourcing and production of agricultural commodities in Africa. We are happy to share our contribution towards delivering positive social and environmental outcomes.

Within these pages, you'll find a detailed account of our accomplishments in the 2023/24 financial year. We have made significant strides in managing multi-stakeholder platforms through the Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI) now Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative; harnessing technology to improve human rights in the cocoa and oil palm sectors in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire and empowering communities to develop land use plans for their lands.

Proforest combines consultancy services where we work directly with supply chain companies, with programmes involving a wider group of stakeholders over longer timeframes. This makes us much more effective at both, allowing us to use our understanding of company production and supply chain activities to inform our work on landscape and sectoral initiatives and vice versa.

Proforest Africa works with many stakeholders - governments, companies and civil society organisations and supports them to develop sustainability policies and to implement sustainable agricultural production and sourcing in commodities including cocoa, palm oil, coffee, shea, soy and rubber.

We are proud of the work we have done with governments, civil society organisations and communities to have a positive impact on the environment and society at large.

As we reflect on the past year, we are reminded of the critical role that sustainable practices play in addressing systemic issues within a landscape to drive long-lasting positive change. Proforest remains committed to driving positive change in the agricultural commodities sector, working tirelessly to promote environmentally conscious practices, social responsibility and community ownership.

The year ahead will see us continue to push for impactful environmental practices, developing innovative solutions, and inspiring collective action. We are ready to work with others to ensure a thriving future for our planet.

We are grateful to all partners, donors and stakeholders who have made this possible. We look forward to more collaborations that will have positive impacts on people, nature and climate.

Abraham Baffoe

Executive Director, Global and Africa,
Proforest

About Proforest Initiative Africa

Proforest Initiative Africa (PIA) was established in 2016 to support its mission to drive commodity production and sourcing that delivers positive social and environmental outcomes for people, nature and climate. PIA supports this mission by making our global expertise accessible to sustainability initiatives, governmental and non-governmental organisations, the private sector and civil society organisations in Africa through the development and implementation of programmes.

Our Mission

Supporting the transition to agriculture commodity production and sourcing that delivers positive social and environmental outcomes for people, nature and climate.

Our Vision

Commodity agriculture and forest supply chains contribute to sustainable livelihoods in sustainable landscapes.

Our Core Values

- Mission driven and solution oriented
- Collaboration
- Kindness and Honesty
- Equity and Inclusion
- Diversity and Respect

Our Footprint in Africa



Proforest Africa is part of a global mission-driven organisation, focused on the production base and supply chains of agricultural and forestry commodities including soy, sugar, rubber, palm oil, cocoa, coconut, beef and timber. We work with governments, companies, and collaborative organisations, to address systemic issues beyond the supply chain, within a landscape or a sector, to deliver positive outcomes at scale.

Figure 1.
Our footprint in Africa

Our Programmes

Our programmes are implemented over longer timeframes and with multiple stakeholders, supporting landscape and sector-wide multi-stakeholder initiatives and approaches to build common understanding, shared goals and collaborative action to address systemic environmental and social issues and deliver positive outcomes at scale. Our programmes are delivered through three thematic areas:

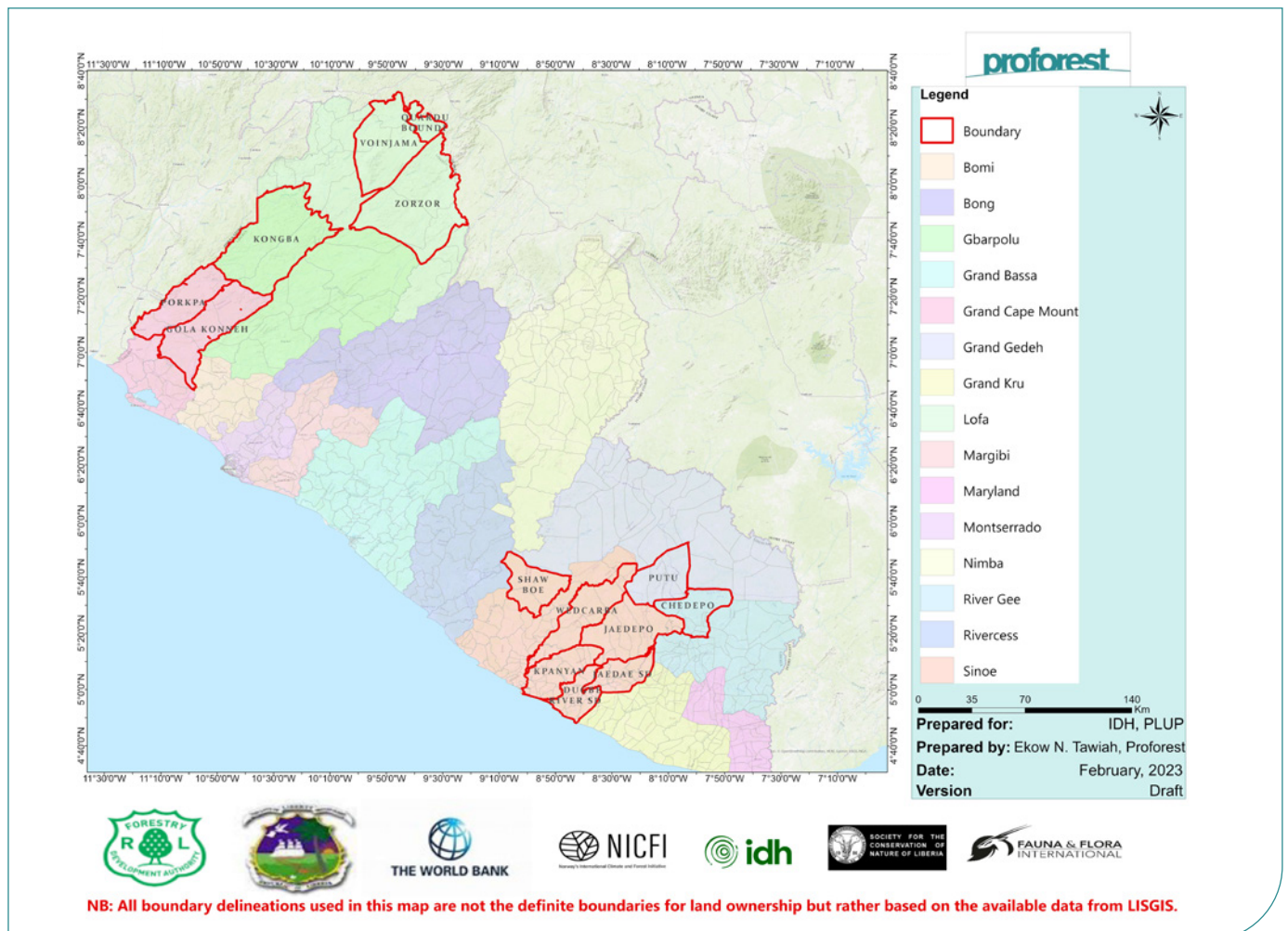
- Production Landscapes,
- Multi-stakeholder Initiatives
- Capacity building and tools

Specific donor-funded projects implemented under our long-term Production Landscapes and other multi-stakeholder initiatives programme are:

1 Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) Project in Liberia

The PLUP project was implemented in two priority landscapes in Liberia (The Southeast and Northwest landscapes) covering a total area of 1,883,399.41 ha. The two landscapes combined contain most of the remaining Upper Guinea Forest Hotspot in West Africa and are classified as centre of endemism and biodiversity in West Africa. The PLUP project covered a total of 101 clans in 25 districts in Sinoe, River Gee, Grand Geddeh, Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu and Lofa counties.

Figure 2.
Districts with PLUPS in place - Northwestern and Southeastern Liberia



The process for developing the PLUPs and related maps used a participatory, bottom-to-top approach, guided by application of the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The process was inclusive, firmly based on deep consultation with the people of each clan and informed by their perspectives, as well as consultation with organisations implementing conservation initiatives in the landscape. This enhanced forest management practices and technologies, sustainable livelihoods, and participatory land use planning in targeted community clusters. The PLUP approach **empowered communities to assert their rights to use, own and manage their lands**.



Figure 3.
Community mapping exercise at Gole Konneh, Liberia

Key Achievements

- The PLUP process complemented other processes in the Liberia Forest Sector Project which has helped local communities to identify and better understand some existing issues such as conflicts, extent of community boundaries, ownership, and user rights. It also provided the opportunity and platform for all stakeholders at both local and national levels to address these issues.
- Local communities have developed land use plans with clearly delineated areas for agriculture, conservation and other land uses for future development and decision making. For example, local communities would now be able to obtain secure tenure and certificates of title over traditional community lands.
- Local communities would have better control over socioeconomic activities, protect available resources and manage conflict effectively.
- Environmental and sociocultural assessment report, soil and crop capability report, land cover, High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) maps of each county district have been developed and shared with the appropriate authorities for further action.

Lessons from the project

- The process of engagement generated positive discussions on sustainable land use planning which guided the development of the action plans for the various districts.
- The development of the land use plans was participatory, and it ensured the involvement of key stakeholders including local communities in the development of the plans.
- Data collection at county level rather than community level did not allow for certain accuracy assessments to be conducted. For example, land cover mapping, ground truthing, mapping out the specific location of existing facilities and identifying specific coordinates to geolocate plans could have been achieved on a much smaller scale.

OUR IMPACT

Community Land Ownership

The land use plans (important documents under the Liberia Land Right Act of 2018) supported the clans and districts to continue with the community land formalisation process to hand over clan, family and traditional lands back to the local people under the Land Right Act of 2018. The land cover, HCV and HCS and proposed national protected areas boundary maps enabled the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) identified overlaps of legalised community forests boundaries with those of proposed protected areas. The FDA is following up to engage with the communities to harmonise the boundaries to avoid conflicts with the communities in the future. The entire PLUP process unearthed key potential threats to forests and biodiversity conservation in the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) Priority landscapes in Liberia. This has provided the basis and key information/data that can be used to develop actions/initiatives for addressing them. Organisations such as BirdLife International, IDH, FFI are using this information and data to develop actions to address the threats.

“This land use plan will hand over lands to communities and will help us incorporate the traditional and cultural way of protecting and using our resources especially protecting our medicinal plants”

Cecilia Blayee,
Petroken Women’s Group
Secretary, Liberia.

2

Building a Deforestation-free and climate-resilient cocoa landscape project in Asunafo-Asutifi

This project is funded by Walmart Foundation (WF) to contribute to Proforest’s sustainable landscapes programme in Ghana. The project is being implemented in partnership with the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and the Asunafo-Asutifi Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA) Management Board. It is part of the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP) by Forestry Commission to pilot implementation of the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA Management Plan. A building to host the secretariat of the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) for the Dadiesoaba zone of Asutifi South Sub HIA, equipped with a Rural Service Centre (RSC), has been constructed. The CREMA centre will facilitate efficient technical training and farm management services delivery to about 15,000 farmers within the project target area. The secretariat is envisaged to enhance collective action in landscape natural resource governance to improve farmer productivity.



Figure 4.
CREMA centre
at Dadiesoaba
in Asutifi South
District, Ghana

Key Achievements

- A revolving fund to provide an easily accessible low interest loan facility for local community members has been established and is functioning. A total of 312 women from the project target area have received funding for various livelihood activities.
- The governance structure will provide a collective action platform for natural resource and environmental governance within the Dadiesoaba Zone of the Asutifi South Sub HIA. It has been strengthened and made functional with all the structures of the landscape governance now in place. The by-law for the Asutifi South Sub HIA has been validated and awaits gazetting to make it an enforceable law in the district, and the process of securing devolution of management authority is near completion.
- Rehabilitation of grossly degraded on-reserve areas using the Modified Taungya System (MTS) is ongoing in compartment 12 and 13 of the Abonyere Forest Reserve. Tree stock in over 3000 ha of cocoa farms has been enhanced with the enrichment planting of about 50000 multipurpose tree seedlings.
- A community based Rural Service Centre has been constructed and equipped to enhance service delivery to farmers to enable them to function effectively. This resource centre will provide much-needed technical training and farm management services to about 15,000 farmers within the project area to help improve their productivity. The Centre's activities will also have a focus on women, training at least 100 women in ways to diversify incomes and improve livelihoods.



Figure 5. Afforestation of the degraded Abonyere Forest using the MTS

Lessons from the project

- Alignment of planned activities with the collective landscape goals produces sustainable impactful outcomes that address specific local needs and contribute to achieving long term goals.
- The existence of the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape management plan has guided priority setting and actions.
- Specific investments such as the setting up of the revolving fund and the construction of the CREMA Secretariat have engendered local interest and support for the project.
- Activities such as the rehabilitation of degraded on reserve areas have enhanced the relationship with key government agencies such as the Forestry Commission, particularly at regional and district level in the Ahafo region.

3

Labour Rights in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire palm oil and cocoa sectors

The Labour Rights Project (LRP) leverages technology to enable workers to access rights-based information and safely share their feedback to advance human rights and labour compliance. The LRP focuses on 6 key geographic regions with a high concentration of cocoa and palm production. In Ghana, the project is being implemented across four districts: Mpohor and Ahanta West, which are major palm oil producers, and Asunafo and Asutifi, which are key cocoa-growing regions. In Côte d'Ivoire, it covers the San Pedro region with particular focus on San Pedro and Tabou departments because of their cocoa production.

The 4-year project (2022-2025) is led by Ulula in partnership with Proforest. Other collaborating partners are local Civil Society Organisations (Colandef, WiLDAF), an international certification organisation (RSPO), producers (Wilmar, Norpalm), associations and cooperatives (OPDAG – Oil Palm Development Association of Ghana), smallholders, processors and traders (Cargill), and private-sector brands (Mars, Mondelez).

LRP is creating accessible and anonymised monitoring systems for beneficiary communities. The project is targeting approximately 35,000 direct beneficiaries (20,000 women and 15,000 men) to report labour rights abuses. It is intended to give local organisations, governments, and companies the opportunity to design and implement sustainable and scalable solutions which will drive the cocoa and palm oil sectors towards labour rights compliance. The beneficiaries are comprised of vulnerable workers like women, young people and migrants. The project will also benefit 250,000 indirect beneficiaries -including workers' families, and other stakeholders such as processors and traders, distributors, Traditional and community leaders.

Key Achievements

- **Stakeholder mapping/analysis of cocoa and oil palm sectors in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire has been completed.** The exercise identified relevant stakeholders at both the landscape and national level, and through this process, human rights issues affecting smallholder farmers would be addressed within the commodity value chain. Through continuous engagement, the project has secured commitment and buy-in from producers and like-minded organisations such as the International Cocoa Initiative, Benso Oil Palm Plantation (BOPP) Limited, and Cocoa cooperatives in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire to support implementation.
- **Data from workers/farmers and landscape actors collected:** The project has successfully demonstrated the use of the mobile-based platform to workers and smallholder farmers for their direct feedback on improving key features of the app. Workers have been informed about some of the risks while leveraging digital technology and the opportunities to address and improve grievance mechanisms that exist. More than 150 farmers in the cocoa and oil palm sectors took part in this field exercise.
- **Baseline Data collected:** The data which was collected from Ghana oil palm (Mpohor) and cocoa (Asunafo-Asutifi) geographical areas has been analysed to understand and prioritise human rights issues amongst workers for the purposes of education and awareness raising. The data is being used to design technology accessibility tools to help farmers. These tools will assist farmers to report on labour constraints issues in their communities. And receive options available to address them.

Lessons from the Project

- **Multi-stakeholder Approach Essential to Delivering Positive Outcomes:** Collaboration with like-minded organisations like WILDAF and COLANDEF helps to leverage skills and expertise from gender and land rights experts in cocoa and oil palm production.
- **Continuous and early engagement with farmers and landscape actors important:** Early engagement on the project increased participation from farmers and buy-in from landscape and government actors such as CHRAJ, COCOBOD, and social welfare as part of the landscape coordinating team.
- **Knowledge transfer to communities:** The project relies heavily on technology and infrastructure; as a result smallholder farmers are learning from the project's initiatives to address human right issues and are also contributing to strategy development.

“There is no such thing as joint ownership of farmland or crops when women and men farm on the same land. Once you help cultivate a piece of cocoa farm, the proceeds and financial benefits belong to the man. Men are fond of selling crops without consulting their wives or partners and every attempt for the women to push for their rights for benefit sharing has been unachievable.”

A correspondence shared during the baseline survey.

4

Linking 'no-deforestation' Supply Chains and National Climate Mitigation Initiatives.

Many global companies involved in the trading and use of agricultural commodities have made public commitments to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains. These commitments offer potential for transformational impacts on reducing deforestation but because supply chains are usually complex, companies generally require a combination of actions both within and beyond the supply chain to achieve efficiency and scale. This approach also maximises the wider positive impacts for the people and places where commodities are produced. Implementing a private sector approach of working within the supply chain has, to some extent, contributed to addressing deforestation and social risks associated with commodity production. However, there is a limit to what working within supply chains can deliver because for many issues, such as tackling deforestation, companies cannot be effective working in isolation and just within their own supply chains but need to work also beyond their supply chains. This means they need to work with government because tackling deforestation requires better enforcement or a change in policy or legislation. For transformational impacts, collaboration with key stakeholders in producer countries and other companies is key.

In addition, there is the need for companies to align with producer countries' initiatives for addressing deforestation. This programme engaged and provided guidance to agro-commodity companies to help them implement no deforestation commitments in a way that supports and builds on national climate mitigation and REDD+ programmes.

In Africa, the focus countries were Ghana (Asunafo Asutifi) and Côte d'Ivoire (San Pedro). Proforest engaged with major supply chain companies and multi-stakeholder platforms at regional and national levels to implement country-level strategies. The project, with funding from the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Government, worked with stakeholders to promote a more sustainable landscape where forests are safeguarded, restored, and biodiversity is conserved through a climate-resilient agriculture, whilst uplifting community living conditions.

Pilots in real supply chains and production landscapes were combined with knowledge creation and capacity building. Lessons from these activities were used as the basis to provide practical guidance for companies and key actors on how to work collaboratively with national initiatives to reduce deforestation. At an international level, lessons and findings from pilots and capacity building were used for dialogues with influential international policy makers and initiatives to improve alignment of supply and demand side activities for tackling deforestation.



Figure 6.
San Pedro
Management
and Investment
Plan meeting in
San Pedro, Côte
d'Ivoire

Key Achievements

- The Project contributed to knowledge by providing clarity on how supply chain companies should engage with landscape/jurisdictional approaches and national initiatives to help them implement their no-deforestation commitments to achieve positive impacts beyond their direct supply chains. This was done through preparation of guidance, engagement with companies and key actors, awareness-creation and capacity building and piloting collaborations with landscape initiatives on the ground.
- The project established a landscape initiative in the San Pedro Region with an approved landscape management and investment plan through a multi-stakeholder process in collaboration with the San Pedro Regional council, WCF, GIZ and the REDD+ secretariat in Côte D'Ivoire
- The project actions have also resulted in pledges by companies to invest in landscape initiatives; others are aligning their commitments with ongoing landscape and jurisdictional approaches and national and subnational initiatives.

Lessons from this Project

- To effectively align private sector action with nationally led initiatives to address deforestation in the long term, there should be a strong focus on identifying local and national solutions, based on existing mechanisms, that meet downstream regulatory and company requirements, as well as producer country needs. This is what producer-consumer partnerships entail.
- Companies should engage through precompetitive collaboration so that resources can be pulled together to maximise impact and avoid duplication of effort.
- Before engaging in any initiative, actors should consider that multi-stakeholder processes with robust mechanisms and processes take time to establish and, as much as possible, companies should build engagement on existing initiatives.

Our Impact

The multi-stakeholder approach used by the project in Ghana to carry out the capacity needs assessments, analysis of adopting the CREMA concept for the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape governance structure and preparation of the landscape training plan materials enabled the Forestry Commission of Ghana to review its planned landscape governance structure and training courses for other landscapes where the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP) is being implemented. The project contributed significantly to development of an effective landscape governance structure for the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape through capacity building of the landscape governance structure and government institutions that will support implementation of the management and investment plan. The multi-stakeholder process used, from the national to the regional levels in selecting the San Pedro landscape, carrying out the baseline assessments and developing the landscape management and investment plan, could in the medium to long term contribute significantly to the protection and restoration of forests in the landscape and positive social outcomes for farmers and communities.

The San Pedro Regional Council has indicated that they will incorporate the landscape management and investment plan into their 10-year development plan for the region to promote a green economy. The completed landscape management and investment plan provides the needed information and basis for resource mobilisation to implement the plan.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES

5 Proforest, World Economic Forum and Tropical Forest Alliance (WEF- TFA) Collaboration (TFA Phase III)

The Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI) is the first signature initiative of the TFA, which Proforest has coordinated since 2015. The goal of the APOI was to develop and support the implementation of national and regional principles for responsible oil palm development and sustainable palm oil production that take account of the ambitious development plans of countries in Africa, while addressing both environmental targets for reduced deforestation, land use and greenhouse gases.

Through national engagement and actions, the APOI led the development of a Regional Declaration on responsible oil palm development and sustainable palm oil production. Ten palm oil producing countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone) are currently engaged in the APOI.

The APOI which has transitioned to Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative (ASCI) continues to build and expand on the 'Marrakesh Declaration for Sustainable Development of the Palm Oil Sector' signed by seven African governments at CoP22 in 2016, which acknowledged the role of agricultural commodity development as a driver of deforestation, while emphasising the critical role of forests and forest conservation in addressing climate change. The ASCI is a single set of principles for the responsible production of agricultural commodities in Africa. It puts producer countries in Africa at the forefront of defining the principles for the sustainable development of cocoa, rubber, palm oil, coffee and other commodities, in a way that improves livelihoods and protects natural resources, including forest.

Key Achievements:

- Completion of Oil Palm Case Studies for Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon:** Three oil palm case studies were carried out to build on the findings and recommendations of Proforest' first phase of assessment (Case Study) to identify the opportunities and challenges for investment in the oil palm sector in Ghana. The studies will be used among other things to advise and engage with governments, development partners, investors, private sector companies and other relevant actors to attract investment in sustainable oil palm development into the three countries

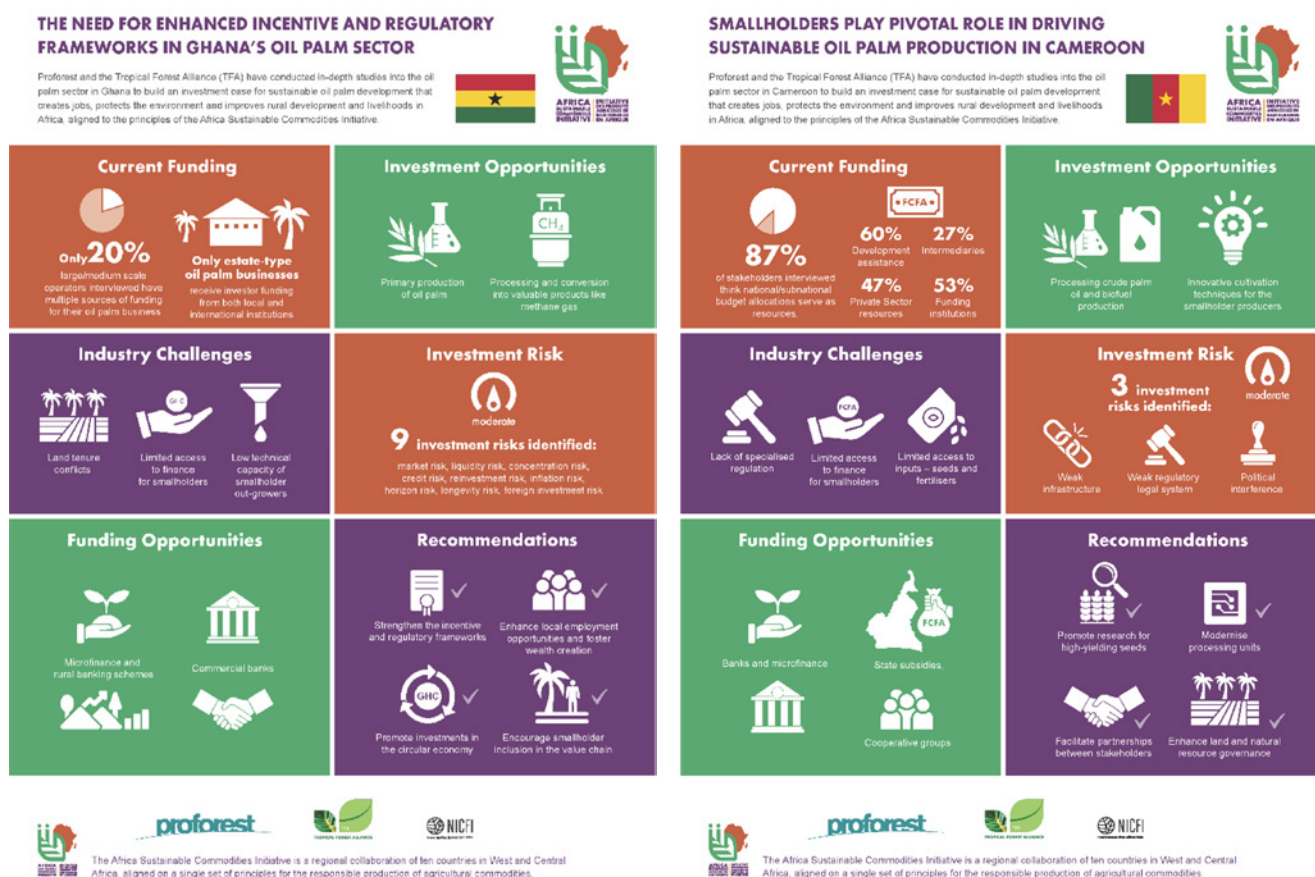


Figure 7. Summary of Oil Palm Investment Case study for Ghana and Cameroon

- Successful Collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund in Congo Basin for reengagement with stakeholders.** The programme continues to engage technical government officials and key stakeholders on implementation of action plans to reflect the regional commitments (ASCI Declaration) signed at COP27. The country facilitators are supporting the national sustainability plans by helping to secure funding for its operationalisation. The support to the Congo Basin is helping to ensure that there is legal backing of sustainability tools (such as Free Prior Informed Consent, FPIC; High Conservation Value, HCV; High Carbon Stock; HCS)

Engaging Landscape Initiative Actors in Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon:

TFA has shown interest and supported landscape initiatives discussions such as the Green Commodity Landscape Programme (GCLP), led by the Sustainable Trade Initiative and the World Wildlife Fund in Cameroon and the San Pedro jurisdictional initiative in Cote d'Ivoire.

To help accelerate collective efforts towards implementable landscape and jurisdictional initiatives in the two countries. TFA through this collaborative agreement supported an engagement with landscape initiative actors in the San Pedro Landscape in Cote d'Ivoire. The San Pedro landscape initiative (which was implemented by a coalition made up of Proforest through its Production Landscape Programme (PLP), the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and Impactum through its Tai Landscape Programme (TLP), GIZ, and San Pedro Regional Council) was supported through this collaboration to conduct a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Analysis. This provided geographically specific information for effective gender and social inclusion in the San Pedro landscape initiative specifically in developing and implementation of the landscape management and investment plans and framework for monitoring.

The GESI Analysis found that in the areas within the San Pedro Region targeted in the study was characterised by negative gender norms which hinder women's access to natural resources and opportunities as well as their participation in traditional governance and development projects. Overall, the study found that women's participation in decision-making processes remains limited. They also face limited access to support and training services, technologies, and information to develop their initiatives. In addition, the weakness of technical and institutional capacities in taking gender and social inclusion issues into account does not facilitate the development of initiatives with strong potential for transforming gender roles.

The GESI Analysis provided an understanding of the gender and social issues inherent in agro-commodity production and natural resources management in San Pedro Region, providing a better understanding of the dynamics in the landscape and facilitated the development of a landscape management plan which avoids inadvertently excluding or discriminating against women or men or any marginalised group.

Recruitment and hosting of TFA Africa Coordinator: Proforest in collaboration with the TFA, recruited a regionally based TFA Regional Coordinator and worked in the Proforest Africa Regional Office in Accra. The Job description and a recruitment process was jointly developed and implemented with the TFA. The TFA Africa Regional Coordinator successfully worked in collaboration with Proforest to coordinate ASCI Activities within the ASCI member countries.

National and regional engagement processes towards ASCI Ministerial Session at CoP27: The Marrakesh Declaration was signed by 7 governments from Central and West Africa, as a single set of principles to guide the sustainable development of oil palm. Proforest and TFA believed that expanding the scope of the Declaration to include other forest risk commodities was critical as a landscape /jurisdictional approach is needed to address critical issues such as deforestation risks. Fortunately, the Central and West African governments who are signatory to the Marrakesh Declaration understood the urgent need for action to be taken and gave their mandate to TFA and Proforest at Marrakesh+5 session at CoP26 to update the Marrakesh declaration that was signed at CoP22 in Morocco to include other forest risk commodities.

Proforest and TFA in collaboration with key stakeholders developed a roadmap on how to engage and update the Marrakesh Declaration. At CoP27 a Ministerial Session was held for the governments to recommit and for those that are not yet signatories to commit. The Declaration was expanded to include other commodities. It was renamed and is currently known as the Africa Sustainable Commodities Declaration - moving from the original focus on palm oil to a set of principles that encompass all relevant commodities in the production landscape.

For more information visit the ASCI website: [Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative](#)

Ghana Private Sector Competitiveness Programme Phase II (GPSCP II)

Proforest Africa Initiative in partnership with NIRAS as a consortium launched the GPSCP II in January 2024 following initial work on the design phase in 2023. The programme will contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth through enhanced trade and competitiveness in the cashew and oil palm value chains. The GPSCP II is structured to find a holistic remedy to promote competitiveness by working with the Government of Ghana to build the needed policy and business environment for the tree crops. The programme is working closely with the Tree Crops Development Authority (TCDA) and other ministries, departments, and agencies. It will work with private sector actors to increase the productivity in the cashew and oil palm value chains by seeking solutions to challenges such as access to finance, skills or standards. Three implementation modalities of the programme are outlined below:

- **Strategic Cooperation Partnership (SCP):** The programme has entered a strategic cooperation partnership with TCDA to support the institution with its mandate of regulating the cashew and oil palm sectors and facilitate high-impact reform initiatives. This includes the development of strategies for the generation of its own funds and to facilitate finance and investment into the value chains, as well as internal organisational development.
- **Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM):** The RRM is a fund, from which the Government of Ghana can access finance to support and align reform initiatives that lead to a systemic benefit for both value chains. The RRM will be used for a variety of activities including contracting expert consultants, commissioning feasibility studies, capacitating working groups responsible for policy development and review to improve the speed and accuracy of developing private sector driven reforms.
- **Development Partnership with the Private Sector (DPP):** This matching grant fund is for the private sector to strengthen production, processing, market linkages, service provision, sector associations, access to finance, and skills development in the cashew and oil palm value chains with co-financing of the beneficiaries of the fund. The DPP also has the potential through its call for proposals mechanism to drive engagement and innovation through joint initiatives with the private sector, business associations or training institutions.



Figure 8. Launch of GPSCP II in Accra with Proforest, Niras, the Swiss Ambassador and partners

Key Achievements

- **Sector Specific Root Cause Analysis:** A root cause analysis was used to identify the underlying causes of market failures and inefficiencies. The programme has adopted the market systems methodology to systematically identify and address the issues in the two value chains hampering competitiveness. An important part of the market systems methodology is to fully understand why a system is not functioning as well as it should be. This was a critical step to avoid designing interventions that address the symptoms of a problem without the root.
- **Design and Development of Activities under Each Modality:** After the sector analysis which identified the root causes of the identified issues / challenges, targeted activities have been developed to deliver the outcomes under each modality – SCP, RRM and DPP.
- **Development Partnership with the Private Sector (DPP):** The Programme launched its first call for concept notes online, via print, and via the TCDA website which received 176 concept notes. Of these, 131 are in the oil palm value chain and 45 in the cashew value chain; 58 are female-headed companies / applicants (20 in cashew and 38 in oil palm), 64 are youth applicants (27 females, 37 males), and 5 applicants are persons living with disabilities (PWD). Following the review conducted by the Programme Management Unit, the total number of concept notes submitted was shortlisted to 93, with 83 applicants failing to meet the selection criteria. A significant portion of these rejected applicants were involved in upstream activities, and did not provide complete or adequate documentation; or had not commenced their downstream operations. After evaluating the concept notes, a training session was conducted for the successful applicants and twelve project intermediaries, who were also selected via a competitive open call. This training aimed to offer additional guidance on the proposal requirements, with a particular focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and Environment and Climate Change.
- **Cashew processing companies secure DPP grants to enrol managers in the Master Training Programme run by African Cashew Alliance (ACA).**

The GPSCP II under its DPP modality shortlisted 17 applicants (10 females, 7 males) to participate in the African Cashew Alliance Master Training Programme (MTP). The first training session was held in Sunyani, Ghana and focused on the organisation of the cashew market and implementing instruments for a Master Trainer. The first session was composed of three modules with the following learning objectives:

 - To become aware of the cashew value chain concept.
 - To learn about the dynamics of the cashew market.
 - To be able to develop training material.

The training included a field visit to the Wenchi Agricultural Research Station, allowing participants to engage in hands-on experiences related to the topics discussed in the conference room. The practical sessions included grafting, top working, and the development of new plantations, among others.

Additionally, participants toured two cashew demonstration fields to gain insights into the significance of implementing effective agricultural practices in cashew production.

The second training session of the Master Training took place in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire in June 2024. This session was focused on value addition and cross cutting issues in the cashew environment. The final training was held and completed in August 2024.

Partnership with GIRSAL to enhance opportunities for SMEs: The Programme has initiated discussions with GIRSAL (a non-banking financial institution in Ghana) to sign a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at improving access for SMEs to secure guarantees for their loans. A draft of the MoU is being prepared and is expected to be finalised by November 2024. The Programme has also commenced discussions with GIRSAL on a partnership to facilitate training for financial institutions focused on lending to oil palm and cashew processors. This initiative is being conducted in collaboration with GIRSAL and the Ghana Banking College. A terms of reference has been designed with GIRSAL for the recruitment of a consultant to design improved, value chain-specific training materials to launch this initiative.

- **Strategic Cooperation Partnership (SCP)**

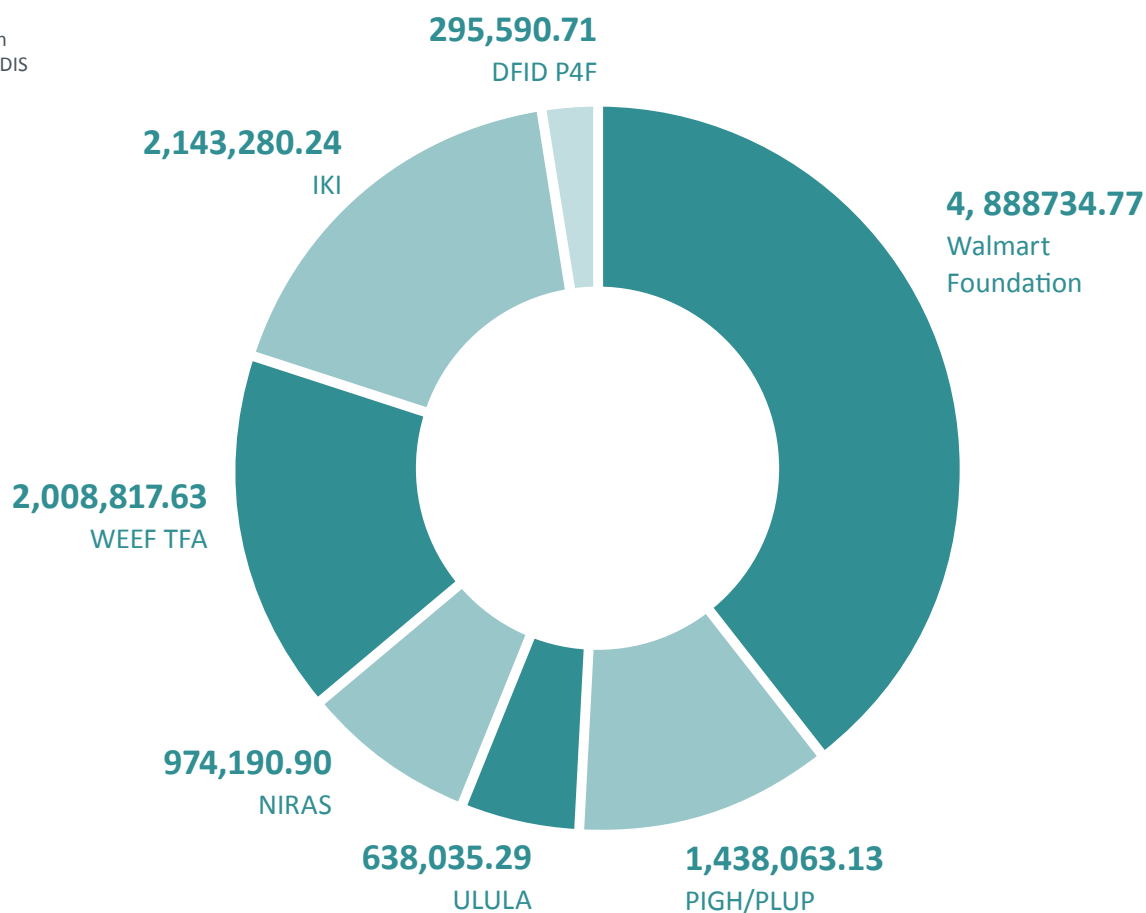
The activities under the SCP began with a focus on three out of ten outlined activities agreed on between the Tree Crops Development Authority and the GPSCP II in the signed Memorandum of Understanding. The activities are intentionally sequenced, each building on the GPSCP II programme design and TCDA’s internal processes which considers on-going programmes and projects such as the Ghana Tree Crops Diversification Project being implemented by the World Bank.

“ Entrepreneurship and partnership are key ingredients of development. We need to create an enabling environment for the private sector to expand and grow and become more competitive. We need concerted effort from all parties and stakeholders to make this programme a successful one ”

HE Simone Giger,
Swiss Ambassador

Financial Information for 2023

Figure 9.
Funding in
Ghana CEDIS



Future Projections

The Proforest Group's strategic goal is to support producer implementation of sustainable agriculture and forest management; enhance capacity of government, companies, NGOs, and other stakeholders to support sustainable practices; increase the inclusion of smallholders within sustainable production and supply chains; increase the impact and effectiveness of sustainability and governance initiatives; and support the development and implementation of landscape/jurisdictional programmes. The overarching aim for the strategic direction of Proforest Africa is to **maintain our strong reputation and leadership in the responsible forestry and agro-commodity production and sourcing sectors in Africa, and expand our services to new countries within and outside our focus sub-regions**. The following **four key strategic objectives** have been identified to guide Proforest Africa's actions in the next five years as part of implementing our Business Impact Plan:

- Maintain Proforest Africa's strong reputation in the sustainability sector through improved internal capacity for overall quality and timely delivery of services.
- Build on our expertise and links with key stakeholders to influence policy processes at the national, sub-regional and regional levels for effective and workable policies and frameworks and governance structures to support responsible production and sourcing of agro-commodity and forestry products.
- Build on our reputation as honest, neutral and trusted facilitator for multi-stakeholder processes to address key issues at landscape/jurisdictional and sectorial level.
- Grow our reach through increased and targeted capacity building and technical support for responsible resourcing and production (including sustainable smallholder commodity production) and investment.



Figure 10.
The Proforest
Africa Team

Proforest Africa has unparalleled experience and expertise in the natural resource sector in Africa. Our expertise covers all aspects of the natural resource sector, from sustainable forestry and agricultural commodities production to responsible sourcing, supply chain management and investment. We are confident that our strategic initiatives and unwavering commitment to our mission will position us for continued success.

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Proforest is a dynamic non-profit group with a global presence that has established itself as a leader in the development and implementation of sustainable production and responsible sourcing. Its activities in Brazil focus on soy, beef and palm oil, addressing topics such as traceability, deforestation and human rights.

www.proforest.net