



Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Collaboration Opportunity

Why collective action is needed for sustainability for cocoa sector and farmers

Ghana is the world's second-largest cocoa producer and relies mainly on smallholder farmers for cocoa production across a 5.9 million hectare agro-forest mosaic landscape in the high forest zone. This region has experienced high deforestation rates due to intense agricultural activities, including cocoa farming, as well as logging and mining. The expansion of cocoa cultivation into forest areas continues to contribute to deforestation.

Asunafo-Asutifi has been identified as one of six priority Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIA) by the Ghana Forestry Commission, as part of its emission reduction programme, Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP). While forest accounts for a third of the land area, almost two thirds of the land is under agricultural production. In fact, Asunafo-Asutifi produces about 10% of the country's national output of cocoa.

The region has been prioritized for collective action as part of the Cocoa & Forest Initiative (CFI) Framework for Action and National Implementation Plan. Collective action is essential to support strong governance processes, conservation and restoration beyond individual farms, and to ensure aligned action among companies. The goal is to eliminate deforestation, within the CFI framework, while ensuring cocoa productivity and local livelihoods are improved. We work on aligning all stakeholders, policy, and investment decisions with the needs of the landscape and its people.

A Plan for the Future

Proforest and the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) facilitated a process to develop a Management & Investment Plan for Asunafo-Asutifi. This was validated by all stakeholders in the landscape in November 2021, enabling private and public sector investment for implementation.

The multi-stakeholder process engaged the Ghana government, civil society organizations (CSOs), companies and traditional authorities. World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), brings in private sector, and represents eight companies with interest in the landscape. The Plan is also aligned to Asunafo-Asutifi landscape governance structures, so as to ensure local ownership and sustainable management.

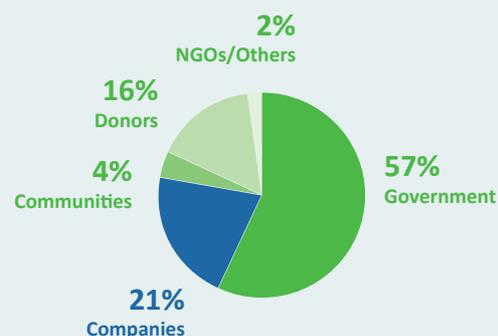
The plan guides all interventions, future investment and activities, including agroforestry, sustainable forestry, and additional livelihoods and cocoa farm rehabilitation to boost smallholder incomes. This aligns with the strategic goals of the GCFRP and serves as a framework to eliminate cocoa-driven deforestation, restore degraded forests and improve livelihoods. Among other key activities, the plan seeks to restore about 1200 ha of grossly degraded on-reserve areas using the Modified Taungya System (MTS) and a further 2278 ha of riparian zones through enrichment planting. It is also envisaged that about 21000ha of forest reserves will be actively patrolled and protected to secure their integrity.

Collective Investment

The Management and Investment Plan includes actions that will need to be funded and led by the private sector, others by the government, while other activities will need involvement of civil society and communities, and the international donor community.

The programme activity will be delivered over three phases between 2023 and 2032.

- **Phase I** of the Project (2023 – 2025) requires a total investment of \$25M, with contributions from government, companies, NGOs, donors and the community to catalyse the action plan.
- **Phase II** will look to scale implementation, from 2026 – 2030.
- **Phase III** will be a mechanism to Sustain results and secure impact, from 2030 – 2032.



Funding Engagement

The Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Project offers stakeholders an opportunity to drive cocoa sustainability, conservation, and mitigate environmental impacts through targeted activities and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Government funding

The investments from the government (FC and COCOBOD) is expected to go mainly into the rehabilitation of CSSVD-affected farms as well as the provision of multipurpose tree seedlings for planting in existing and rehabilitated cocoa farms. Besides this, government funding will support the landscape governance structure and distribution of seedlings, and contribute to training farmers in climate-smart cocoa production.

Company funding

Company funding will focus on four key activities within the management plan: Strengthen landscape governance structures, conservation of protected on-reserve areas, restoration of degraded on-reserve and riparian areas, rehabilitation of old and moribund cocoa farms.



REDD+ funding

About \$1M of the Landscape's share of the Emission Reduction (ER) payments is expected to go to support livelihood activities as required under the ER payment benefit-sharing agreement as well as the provision of economic tree seedlings for planting.

Donor funding

Investments from the donor community will work alongside company funding to support the rehabilitation of old and moribund farms to boost productivity, strengthen landscape governance structure, support on-reserve and off-reserve rehabilitation, training of farmers in Climate Smart Cocoa and the supply of multipurpose tree seedlings for existing farms as well as rehabilitated farms.

Seed funding

A \$1 million grant will initiate carbon focused activities in the future, starting with a carbon assessment for the landscape.



Governance

In line with the GCFRP implementation process, the Project will be implemented through a participatory multi-stakeholder engagement involving state actors, the landscape governance structure (represented by the HIA Management Board (HMB)), the private sector, civil society organizations, traditional authorities, farmers' groups, and landowners.

A Joint Coordination Board (JCB) of the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA Project will oversee the implementation of investment activities and is comprised of key stakeholder institutions of the Asunafo-Asutifi partnership.



To discuss funding opportunities:

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