

# Developing a deforestation-free climate-resilient sustainable cocoa landscape: process and approach

## A case study narrative on Ghana's Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape programme



## About Proforest and the Production Landscape Programme

Proforest is an independent mission-driven organisation that specialises in practical approaches to sustainability in the production and sourcing of agricultural and forest commodities. We support companies to work both within and beyond their own supply chains, to deliver positive environmental and social outcomes in the places where commodities are produced. We foster collaboration between companies and other stakeholders, including peer companies, governments and civil society. This builds the foundation for individual companies to engage with sustainability issues across landscapes and sectors beyond their own supply chains.

The Production Landscape Programme (PLP) was established in July 2018 with support from UK Aid under the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme. The programme aims to support the private sector to align their actions on deforestation and other sustainability issues with national and sub-national policies and initiatives, including those led by civil society.

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## The Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape at a glance

The Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape is one of the major agro-commodity production landscapes in Ghana that is noted for cocoa production and accounts for about 10% of the national cocoa output. Of the total landscape area of 328,512ha, 62% is under agricultural production of which cocoa is a major component. Forest is a significant feature in the landscape, accounting for 32% of the land area. As with most agro-commodity production landscapes, deforestation caused by agricultural expansion into forests, and logging (both legal and illegal), is high in the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape. Located in the Ahafo Region of Ghana, the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape encompasses three administrative districts namely: Asunafo North, Asunafo South, and Asutifi North and is one of six priority Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs) in Ghana, identified by the Forestry Commission (FC) for its flagship emission reduction programme – Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP).

The landscape has an estimated population of 312,435 inhabitants of which 50.88% are female. The settlement pattern is nucleated with the majority of the population residing in rural areas. Inhabitants of the landscape are mainly indigenes with a considerable migrant population due to rich natural capital endowments, ranging from minerals to timber and arable lands for farming. Land ownership and access rights are governed by traditional systems, with about 80% of the lands owned by Stools . Access to land for farming in the landscape is mainly through family inheritance. Besides family inheritance, other means of access to land for farming include permanent lease and the “Abunu ” and “Abusa ” sharecropping systems, with the Abunu being the most prevalent.

Figure 1: Asunafo Asutifi landscape at a glance



There are eight Traditional Councils within the landscape and each Council is made up of Divisional Chiefs and Queens and headed by Paramount Chief. The Traditional Councils are Goaso, Mim and Akrodie in Asunafo North; Kukuom and Sankore in Asunafo South; and Kenyase I, Kenyase II and Ntotroso in Asutifi North. All the Paramount Chiefs owe allegiance to and are answerable to the Golden Stool (Asantehene).

Cocoa is the main socio-economic activity of the landscape and consistent with the general trend in Ghana; cocoa cultivation in the landscape is mainly by smallholder, low-income, aging farmers who cultivate on a rather small-scale with farm sizes ranging from less than a hectare to about ten hectares. Cocoa productivity is generally low with majority of the farmers within the low to medium production level (400 – 700kg/ha). This situation has been occasioned by low-scale of production, inadequate investment of inputs, inadequate adherence to good agricultural and environmental practices and the prevalence of low-yielding, old and moribund cocoa farms. There are several cocoa productivity and environmental sustainability projects in the landscape, but these are limited in scope, scale and time, resulting in uneven impacts across communities within the landscape.

These factors have created a unique challenge requiring approaches that embrace working at landscape scale, where all actors are brought on board, and provides scope to support change on specific issues across the geographical landscape or political/ administrative jurisdiction.

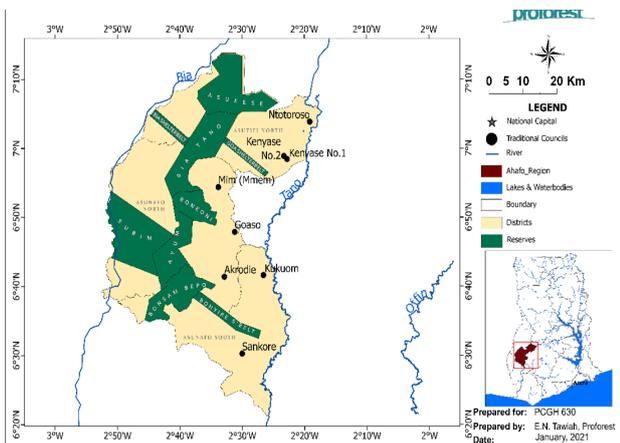


Figure 2: Map of the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA showing the eight Traditional Councils.

1

## The Production Landscape Programme (PLP): A catalyst for the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme

Commodity agriculture and forestry are an integral part of national development strategies for many countries in the tropics as they contribute significantly to local livelihoods and national economic development. Despite their immense contribution to local livelihoods and national economic development, agricultural production and forestry are beset with a myriad of environmental and social challenges. National governments have put in place legal and policy frameworks to help address associated challenges at the national level. Agro-commodity companies have variously committed to produce

and source agricultural and forestry commodities in an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible manner and are increasingly looking for ways to deliver on their sustainability commitments at a scale that goes beyond their own direct supply base. It has been generally recognised that the best and most sustainable way to attain environmentally sustainable and socially responsible production and sourcing, is to align with existing and ongoing national and subnational policy processes, frameworks, and initiatives.



Image 1. Farmers explain how they tend to their cocoa crops in Ghana  
Credit - Proforest

There are, however, questions of how companies should engage; with whom and on what issues and how. The Production Landscape Programme (PLP) is aimed at helping companies and other stakeholders throughout the agro-commodity production landscape to align with national policy processes to address challenges such as deforestation, child labour, low productivity, smallholder inclusion, access to land, and gender equality inherent in agro-commodity production. The PLP is a three-year programme being implemented in Ghana, Cameroon, Liberia, Indonesia and China, with funding support

from the UK Aid through the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate (FGMC) Programme to help companies align with national initiatives to reduce deforestation and improve social and environmental outcomes of agricultural commodity production. The implementation of the PLP in Ghana, provided the opportunity for Proforest to get actively engaged in the production landscape, bringing on board its vast experience and expertise in responsible sourcing and responsible production principles and approaches to facilitate the development of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme.

## 2

### **The Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme and the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme**

Based on the opportunities identified under the PLP as basic elements for success in addressing key landscape environmental and social challenges, the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme is being developed under the framework of the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP). The GCFRP is the Ghana government's move to articulate the world's first commodity-based landscape-level emissions reduction programme funded by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). It is one of five programme interventions and a cross-cutting policy-focused initiative, which Ghana is pursuing

in the implementation phase of REDD+. The GCFRP represents an innovative and highly ambitious approach that seeks to significantly reduce emissions by reducing the high rates of deforestation and degradation in the 5.9-million-hectare agro-forest mosaic landscape within Ghana's High Forest Zone. This is envisaged to be achieved through the promotion of appropriate climate-smart cocoa production approaches, including intensification and yield enhancement throughout the agro-forest mosaic landscape.



**Image 2. Stakeholders from the landscape discuss the management and investment plans needed for Asunafo and Asutifi Credit - Proforest**

The GCFRP represents the largest fully functional jurisdictional programme in Ghana that provides the framework for engaging multiple government institutions, private sector, civil society, traditional authority and community representatives in addressing the key deforestation and forest degradation issues as well as community livelihood improvement, whilst building climate resilience in agro-commodity production. GCFRP is designed to be implemented in a manner that will secure the future of Ghana's forests, and significantly improve incomes and livelihood opportunities for farmers and forest users. A results-based planning and implementation framework has been established through which the government, the private sector, civil society, traditional authorities, and local communities can collaborate for the programme implementation.

### Goal of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme

The overall goal of the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape programme is to establish a Landscape Governance Structure in collaboration with key landscape stakeholders and a consortium of private sector companies to implement a Landscape Management and Investment Plan to eliminate deforestation risk; adopt and implement climate-smart cocoa production standards; deliver cocoa agroforestry models including tree/carbon stock enhancement in the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape; deliver improvement in landscape-wide smallholder livelihoods; and address key landscape environmental and social challenges, using appropriate tools and approaches in the cocoa sector and through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The programme articulates a wider and deeper level of integration and engagement with different stakeholders and offers the most credible and practical opportunities for all relevant stakeholders to meet their sustainability commitments as it has an underpinning emission reduction payments agreement fully executed between the government of Ghana and the World Bank. The programme has identified six priority Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIA) for immediate concentrated interventions at the farm to landscape level. These HIAs were selected based on the assessment and comparison of key parameters such as: (i) deforestation trends, (ii) cocoa production, (iii) drivers of deforestation, (iv) potential scale of impact, and (v) the presence of stakeholders. The Asunafo-Asutifi landscape is one of the priority HIAs.

### The Cocoa Forest Initiative (CFI) Joint Framework for Action

The signing of the Cocoa Forest Initiative (CFI) Joint Framework for Action in 2017, by the government of Ghana along with about 34 cocoa supply chain companies, has given further boost to end cocoa-driven deforestation in the agro-forest mosaic landscape in Ghana. In signing the Joint Framework for Action, the Government of Ghana and signatory companies have committed to work together to end deforestation and promote forest protection and restoration in the cocoa production landscapes in Ghana. The Joint Framework for Action defines core commitments, verifiable actions, and time bound targets required for a deforestation-free and forest positive cocoa supply chain in Ghana. Developed through multi-stakeholder process, the Framework is structured around the three themes namely, (i) forest protection and restoration; (ii) Sustainable production and farmers' livelihood and (iii) Community engagement and social inclusion. To provide direction for the implementation of the CFI Joint Framework for Action, Ghana has developed the National Implementation Plan for the CFI Joint Framework for Action. The implementation plan outlines modalities for the implementation of priority actions for the CFI. Along with the national implementation plan, the signatory companies have each developed a corporate action plan to help them meet their commitments under the CFI Joint Framework for Action. The GCFRP provides a solid framework and opportunities for companies to meet their sustainability commitments and the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape programme provides a practical collaborative opportunity for cocoa supply chain companies to meet their commitments under the CFI.

## Justification for the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme

The development of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape programme is building on the following factors inherent in the landscape:

There are about 10 initiatives focused on enhancing cocoa productivity and environmental sustainability in the landscape and these appear to have achieved significant improvement in cocoa productivity and livelihood of farmers. Ongoing interventions aimed at cocoa sustainability in the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape include the Mondelez International Cocoa Life Programme, Touton Cocoa Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (CORIP), and the COCOBOD Cocoa Artificial Hand Pollination. All these interventions are primarily aimed at helping farmers with the necessary ecological and economic investments to ensure sustainable optimum cocoa production.

The Cocoa Life Programme (CLP) was launched in 2012 to empower at least 200,000 cocoa farmers and reach one million community members. This effort builds on the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership, which was founded in Ghana in 2008. The programme has three areas of intervention namely: sustainable cocoa farming businesses, empowerment of cocoa communities and forest protection and restoration. Programme activities are currently being implemented by Agro Eco through the cooperative societies of the Asunafo North Municipal Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Union. Specific areas of programme intervention include farming, community development, additional livelihood, youth development and environmental sustainability. The Asunafo North Union has 67 primary cooperative societies of which 41 are directly linked to the CLP.

Funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and supported by the Ghana government, CORIP continues to intensify its operations in the cocoa rehabilitation and replanting programme. This is meant to assist farmers to rehabilitate and replant moribund and diseased cocoa farms. Rehabilitation and replanting of over-aged cocoa trees with hybrid cocoa seedling, plantain suckers and economic shade trees is ongoing in parts of the landscape under the supervision of Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) of COCOBOD. The CORIP-Ghana when fully adopted and implemented in the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA

will lead to increased productivity and improve tree cover as the aspect of inter-planting the cocoa seedling with indigenous (15 to 18 permanent shade trees per hectare as recommended by COCOBOD) will provide shade and protection to the young cocoa tree.

Cocoa Artificial Hand Pollination started in 2017 against the background that cocoa is naturally pollinated by insects called midges, but with only an average of 10-20% of flowers being pollinated, whilst about 80-90% is aborted. The hand pollination exercise was originally restricted to seed-gardens, but has now been extended to farms to boost yield. The selection criteria of cocoa farms for hand-pollination include hybrid farms; farms that are between 8-20 years; farms free from Cocoa Swollen-Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD); and accessibility. In addition, farmers must be willing to maintain their farms by brushing regularly, pruning, controlling pests and diseases, as well as the willingness and preparedness to apply the required amount of fertiliser to help achieve the desired results of increased productivity. The artificial hand pollination exercise has been undertaken in some farms and is still ongoing at a steady rate within the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape.

However, these initiatives and interventions are limited in their scope, scale, and time, resulting in uneven impacts across communities within the landscape. Cooperation among the different interventions in the cocoa sector in the landscape appears non-existent, resulting in conflicting and inconsistent productivity and sustainability extension messages and practices across the landscape. The development of the landscape programme therefore provides the potential opportunity to leverage on existing interventions and scale up to other parts of the landscape for maximum impact.

Following the signing of the Cocoa Forest Initiative (CFI) Joint Framework for Action and the development of the National Implementation Plan that outlines modalities for implementing priority actions for the CFI, the signatory companies have each developed a Corporate Action Plan to help them meet their commitments. The Asunafo-Asutifi landscape programme provides a good opportunity for companies to implement their corporate action plans.

There is stakeholders' recognition that issues of deforestation and productivity are common, widespread, and are often more difficult to address by one company alone. Addressing such issues require collaboration among companies working together in a wider landscape. Furthermore, environmental and

social challenges inherent in the production landscape are usually not limited to a single commodity or a sector. Therefore, it is prudent that a more holistic and inclusive approach, involving all relevant stakeholders, including government, is adopted to address them. The landscape approach, where environmental and social challenges associated with commodity production are addressed at a landscape level by bringing together all relevant partners and stakeholders to identify key issues and challenges in the landscape, agree on shared goals and intervention measures, and alignment of activities among partners and stakeholders, is becoming the preferred option globally. There is a general appreciation that this approach requires identifying landscapes that are of high priority from a risk perspective, and where collectively, companies potentially have

leverage to achieve positive impacts through shared responsibilities and opportunities among buyers to address common issues in a shared supply base.

There is synergy with existing projects and activities to scale up investments and impact. The Asunafo-Asutifi landscape programme is entirely hinged on the GCFRP, which is being implemented by the FC. As part of the GCFRP process, landscape programmes involving the HIAs must follow the established general framework for effective coordination. The GCFRP provides a Environmental and Social Management Framework that outlines guidelines to mitigate all anticipated adverse impacts, during the planning and implementation of the various sub-projects under the strategic interventions.

### 3

## The Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme Process and Approach

Working as a Facilitator, Proforest is leading the development of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape programme through a multi-stakeholder collaboration with key stakeholders such as the National REDD+ Secretariat of the Forestry Commission, Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), and the World Cocoa Foundation, which is facilitating private sector participation. There are also broader landscape partners such as the local government and the traditional authorities within the landscape as well as cocoa farmers and organised farmer groups. Together with the stakeholders, Proforest is facilitating the development of a deforestation-free, climate-resilient sustainable cocoa landscape in the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA. The process commenced with a coordinated design phase that benefitted from engaging with national and sub-national actors, private companies, traditional authorities and local farmer organisations in the landscape. COCOBOD, one of the implementing partners of the GCFRP, is excited about the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme and sees it as supplementing its efforts to increase cocoa productivity in the landscape. “More specifically the programme aligns with COCOBOD’s objective of increasing the productivity of cocoa farmers to 1000 kilos per hectare by 2026/27 crop year,” says Michael Amoah, a Research Manager at COCOBOD’s Research Department. When contacted, he expressed optimism that “the development of the landscape programme

will attract the needed private sector investments into the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape. This is expected to lead to an increase in productivity of the cocoa farmers and also enable them to earn additional income from additional livelihoods.”

The approach and shape of the intervention design phase activities were informed by the following three guiding principles: leveraging existing initiatives; defining common objectives, goals and interventions between existing initiatives; and focus on providing solutions to key sustainability challenges and incentives for smallholder producers, to help improve their livelihoods and ensure their inclusion into sustainable supply chains.

The first key activity in the development of the programme was the establishment of a partnership based on a comprehensive understanding of the social, political, environmental and business dynamics of the landscape. This entailed a baseline landscape assessment to appraise and understand the ecological and socio-economic conditions of the landscape, establish the drivers and root causes of environmental and socioeconomic challenges as well as define opportunities to address identified risks and threats at the landscape level. The rationale for this activity was to identify key stakeholders and supporting partners including the FC, COCOBOD, communities, civil society and the consortium of companies to form the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape programme partners.

Subsequently a baseline landscape study, funded by the 8 cocoa and chocolate companies and commissioned by the World Cocoa Foundation, was conducted to establish:

- a high-level ecological condition study of the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape to understand the structure and function of ecosystems in order to develop improved management options;
- an assessment of the socio-economic baseline condition to understand and document the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the landscape prior to commencement of the programme activities;
- a coarse-grain landscape HCSA/HCV screening to provide vital landscape information and
- a GIS and land cover analysis of the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape to map out the different land use/land cover types and their spatial distribution within the landscape.

This holistic approach adopted for the baseline assessments was to ensure that the resulting comprehensive management and investment plan for the landscape covered not only agriculture commodity production and how it affects forest cover, but also other socio-economic and environmental aspects of the landscape.

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### **Socio-economic and ecological characterisation of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape**

The result of the socio-economic and ecological assessment indicated that, within the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape, there are several cocoa and chocolate companies as well as other stakeholders working closely with the COCOBOD, and through farmer cooperative societies to implement interventions aimed at improving cocoa productivity, environmental sustainability and livelihoods of farmers and communities.

The study established that cocoa cultivation is the main socio-economic activity within the landscape, accounting for about 70-80% of the land use under agriculture. However, the study found out that while cocoa productivity was generally low in the landscape, productivity was relatively higher among farmers involved in the various productivity and environmental sustainability programmes, in what appears to be the impact of the technical and logistical support available

to those farmers.

This also goes to show the potential benefits and impacts of well-designed and implemented long-term cocoa sustainability interventions.

Again, the study showed that despite the numerous interventions and the huge numbers of cooperative farmer associations in the landscape, the majority of cocoa farmers are independent and not aligned to any organised farmer group or an initiative. This appears to have had implications on mobilising farmers for extension support and the intended impacts of interventions. Lack of cooperation among entities in the cocoa value chain in the landscape has also resulted in the absence of harmonised data of farm productivity, farmers' income level, condition of farms and other critical farm and farmer data.

Additionally, the study revealed that the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA, has significant socio-economic, ecological, and cultural values. These are evident in the major land use types, including forests in various conditions, classes and level of degradation; agricultural land; waterbodies and human settlements with forests and cocoa farms being the main land use forms identified by the study in the landscape. There are nine forest reserves, which together make up about 37% of the landscape. Forest condition score assessments showed that the nine forest reserves have experienced various degrees of degradation from human-induced disturbances including logging (legal and illegal), wildfire, encroachment of food crop farms and illegal expansion of admitted farms. Among these forest reserves, Aboniyere Shelterbelt Forest Reserve was found to have a comparatively higher degradation, dominated by farmlands and grass as well as the invasive alien species, *Broussonetia papyrifera*, with hardly any significant cover of close forest.

### The Landscape Investment and Management Plan Development Process

The absence of a landscape management and investment plan for any agricultural landscape is a recipe for ad hoc decision making, which is counterproductive and often results in duplication of efforts by a multiplicity of stakeholders, and hence has

the propensity to result in possible role conflicts and a blame game. However, the availability of a Landscape Management and Investment Plan has the potential to provide opportunity for key stakeholders to be involved in important management decisions. It also ensures standardisation and uniformity in landscape management actions since management decisions are premised on landscape characteristics and peculiarities situated within the framework and objectives of a broad national policy. With the goal of establishing a deforestation-free, climate-resilient sustainable cocoa landscape, the management and investment plan is aimed at defining interventions that will work towards achieving those goals as well as bringing in the needed investments to ensure the long-term sustainability of the interventions. The Landscape Management and Investment Plan is basically intended to direct and focus the intervention measures needed to achieve the intended goal of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme.

To develop a Management and Investment Plan with multi-stakeholder input, an Ad-hoc Technical Committee with members drawn from the FC, COCOBOD, SNV, WCF, Proforest and a representative of the eight cocoa and chocolate companies working together to develop the landscape programme, was set up to work with a Facilitator. Having a multi-stakeholder approach in developing the plan



**Image 3. Farmers drying cocoa beans**

ensures the views and interests of all stakeholders are adequately represented. This notwithstanding, working with multiple stakeholders is potentially cumbersome as the views and interests of the different stakeholders have to be balanced.

The Landscape Management and Investment Plan is being developed, with the baseline socio-economic and ecological assessment report, the national GCFRP Implementation Plan and the CFI National Implementation Plan as the key reference documents. Other activities conducted for the development of the Plan included a review of all relevant study reports, and broader landscape stakeholder consultations through workshops and meetings including working sessions with the National REDD+ Secretariat (NRS) of the FC and COCOBOD. The broader landscape stakeholder workshop held in Goaso gave the opportunity for key landscape stakeholders to make inputs into the management and investment plan. During the working session with the NRS, the need for an ad hoc technical committee to work with a Facilitator to develop the management and investment plan was proposed and adopted. The Ad-hoc Technical Committee members are providing the necessary technical input for the Management and Investment Plan.

### **Features and components of the Management and Investment Plan**

The Management and Investment Plan focuses on forest protection and restoration, cocoa productivity enhancement and livelihood improvement among smallholder farmers in the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA. It covers six main thematic areas – protection and restoration of degraded forests, including protected areas and forest reserves; enhancement of tree stock in degraded off-reserve farmland areas through agroforestry; farm productivity enhancement through the climate-smart production system; and traceable and transparent supply. The others are legal or customary land use rights by all producers; and livelihoods improvement of smallholder farmers and community development.

The Landscape Investment and Management Plan outlines detailed activities necessary to achieve the key objectives of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape programme, roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders for implementation, timeframes and required budget as well as commitment of partners to be involved in the implementation phase. It also

contains key performance indicators (KPIs) and a monitoring system to measure implementation success.

### **Proposed interventions and investment areas for the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape**

The investment plan outlines two main investment categories namely: on-farm and off-farm investments.

Under the on-farm category, six investment packages are proposed and these are:

(i.) Sustainable Cocoa production models. This presents a.) The Climate Smart Cocoa production model and/or b.) Cocoa agro-forestry model;

(ii.) Setting up landscape governance structures;

(iii.) Financial Inclusion provides three investment options – a.) Digital Financial Services, b.) Rural Service Centre to provide technical and logistical support to farmers, and c.) Village Savings Loan Associations;

(iv.) Law enforcement (for the security of farmers, communities, and FC Staff). Five investment options are identified here as: a.) Farm development plans, b.) Farm mapping, c.) Strengthening law enforcement on forest management, d.) Establishing and strengthening governance structures at the community level; and e.) Fire management;

(v.) Landscape Restoration in on and off-reserve areas (Payment for Environmental Service – PES). Here, the two investment options are a.) Tree registration and b.) Landscape Trust Fund; and

(vi.) Social development with a.) Safeguards implementation, b.) Child welfare and development and c.) Gender and youth, as the main investment options.

The off-farm related investment is basically focused on a cocoa by-product based rural cottage industry. This presents three investment packages, namely: a.) Processing cocoa pod husks into soda ash, b.) Harnessing and processing cocoa bean sweatings and c.) Processing of discarded cocoa beans into cocoa butter and other products.

### **Proposed implementing mechanism of the Landscape Programme**

Within the Framework of the GCFRP all HIA interventions are designed to be carried out essentially through a landscape governance structure. The establishment of a landscape governance structure

is therefore a key activity in the development of the landscape programme. The Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Governance Structure is currently being developed by the Forestry Commission through Tropenbos Ghana under a World Bank Accelerated REDD+ facility. Stakeholders involved in the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA Landscape Programme development are also providing input and support for the governance structure. For instance, Proforest will provide capacity building support for the functional units of the governance structure through its IKI-funded “Linking ‘no-deforestation’ supply chains and national climate mitigation initiatives” programme. Proforest has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Forestry Commission and the development of the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA is one of the key joint activities under the MoU.

The governance structure will be modelled on the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) concept, with the Community Resource Committee (CRMC) at the community level being the basic functional unit of the governance structure. A number of CRMCs in a given area within the landscape will come together to form a CREMA and a number of CREMAs come together to form a sub HIA. Hence, within the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape, a number of sub HIAs are expected to be established and these together will constitute the HIA Management Board. Once established the HIA Management Board will sign a Framework Agreement with the Consortium of private sector, state actors and civil society organisations and other stakeholders working in the landscape, to pave way for the rollout of intervention measures in the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape. All the interventions that will be outlined in the Management and Investment Plan will be carried out through this governance structure under the supervision of the HIA Implementation Committee (HIC), which will comprise representatives of the HIA Management Board, the private sector, state actors and other relevant stakeholders in the HIA.

### Key lessons from the multistakeholder approach in programme development

- Early consensus building and active involvement of stakeholders (individuals, institutions, organisations and community members), with different backgrounds and expertise to enrich the process, is a boost for stakeholder buy-in and ensures local content for the investment and management plans. Thus, smooth implementation is also assured, because all the stakeholders who matter are involved.
- The process should be participatory and inclusive, and stakeholders need to be engaged appropriately.
- Community participation and inclusiveness are key in landscape initiatives. The Manager of the Asunafo North Cocoa Farmer Cooperative, Patrick Owusu testifies that farmers in the area have been sensitised on the project and are very much aware of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme. He stated: “We were not left out of the discussions, but Proforest officials contacted us and so we have been part of the deliberations right from the beginning. During the period we were able to educate other community members about the project and solicited their views and comments to be incorporated in the plans. Therefore, we are proud to have contributed to the process.”
- The establishment of a diverse range of partnerships including relevant government entities private sector, research institutions, NGOs/CBOs, farmers and communities, is of utmost importance to successful landscape restoration.
- Adherence to laid down procedures established under the GCFRP, facilitates smooth and well-coordinated development and implementation, even though it may slow down the progress of work.
- Adequate private sector buy-in with technical support and funding. This posture is empowering them to meet their sustainability and deforestation commitments, while, sustaining their businesses. Participating companies are: Cargill, Ecom, Lindt, Mars, Mondelez, Olam, Sucden and Touton.

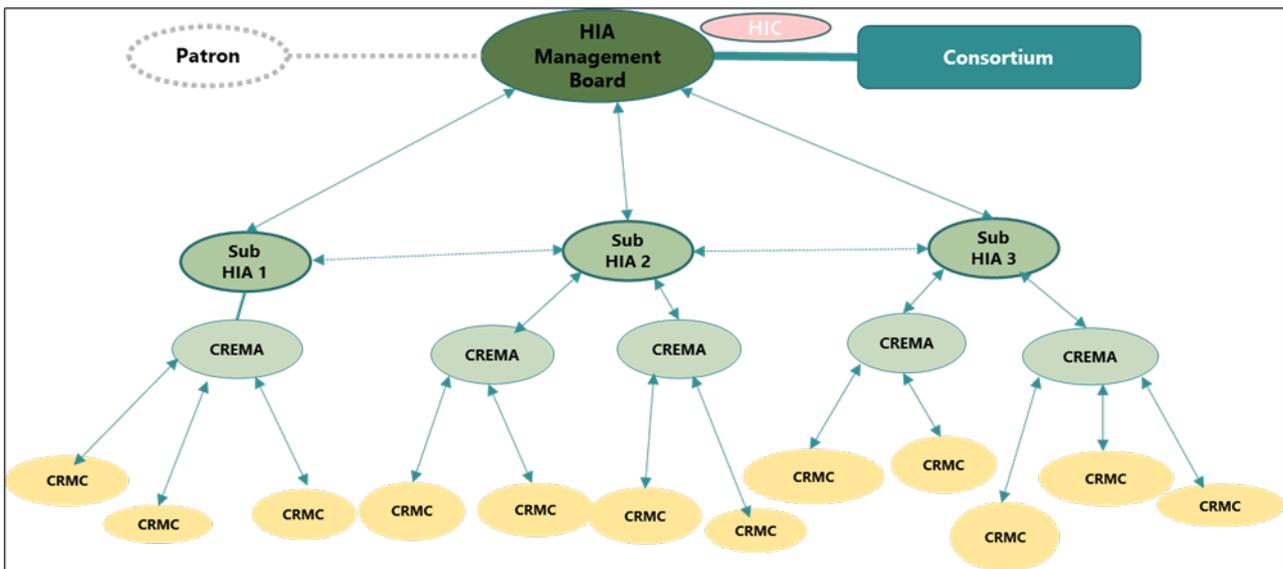


Figure 5 A diagram of the proposed governance structure of the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA

Vincent Awotwe-Pratt of the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) notes that the landscape approach is engendering collective private sector involvement for greater reach and impact among cocoa farmers. “The landscape approach will enable us to reach more farmers and do it at scale. This is because the landscape approach involves collective action, where you bring the companies together to work together, so that they can achieve the scale and the impact that they need to,” he said. Vincent recalled that “in the past, cocoa companies were implementing their own sustainability programmes and they were working in silos,” noting that “... though the quantum of investment that has gone into the various landscapes is huge, it does not really correspond with the impact and the scale that they want. You realise that the company may be working with farmers who are receiving multiple interventions from different companies.”

The process has created an opportunity to re-channel existing huge financial resources into climate smart and sustainable practices for restoring forest landscapes.

### What is next?

Upon the establishment and inauguration of the governance structure, the Framework Agreement will be signed to pave way for commencement of the landscape programme with the implementation of the Landscape Management and Investment Plan. The implementation of any landscape project linked with the GCFRP requires a formal relationship through an MoU with the FC and other statutory organisations. Following the earlier signing of the MoU with the Forestry Commission, Proforest is now officially a partner in the GCFRP implementation in Ghana.

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For more information, contact:

Augustus Asamoah, Principal Project Manager, at [augustus@proforest](mailto:augustus@proforest).



Proforest's Production Landscape Programme is funded by UK aid from the UK government, via the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme.

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### Proforest contact information:

**International Office (UK)**  
T: +44 (0) 1865 243 439  
E: [info@proforest.net](mailto:info@proforest.net)

**Africa (Ghana)**  
T: +233 (0)302 542 975  
E: [africa@proforest.net](mailto:africa@proforest.net)

**Latin America (Brazil)**  
T: +55 (61) 3879 2249  
E: [latinoamerica@proforest.net](mailto:latinoamerica@proforest.net)

**Latin America (Colombia)**  
T: +57 (2) 3481791  
E: [latinoamerica@proforest.net](mailto:latinoamerica@proforest.net)

**Southeast Asia (Malaysia)**  
T: +60 (0)3 2242 0021  
E: [southeastasia@proforest.net](mailto:southeastasia@proforest.net)

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