Limiting Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Burkina Faso

Semi-arid forests cover around a quarter of Burkina Faso’s territory, or over 50,000 km², and are home to a complex ecosystem of plants and animals, many endemic to the country. Forest-based economic activities – like making charcoal, and selling forest products – contribute over 25% of rural household income, and 5.6% of GDP. Properly managed, forest ecosystems provide food security and environmental protection, storing around 74 tons of carbon per hectare. Burkina Faso’s forest are under threat: the country lost an estimated 17.3% of its forest cover from 1990 to 2010, at a current rate of deforestation of around 0.8% per year, with increased biodiversity loss and degraded soil production.

Launched in 2012, the $11.4 million Gazetted Forests Participatory Management Project for REDD+ (FFP) Institute Payments for Ecosystem Services (IPES), involving communities near selected forests to participate in afforestation campaigns, with a monetary reward for the planting and protection of seedlings, and assistance in benefitting from non-wood forest products. The project is the major component in the implementation of Burkina Faso’s $30 million Forestry Investment Program, developed with the involvement of local stakeholders operating in the forestry sector, including various ministries, private sector representatives, civil society associations, and users of forest resources. It was designed to help Burkina Faso reduce deforestation and forest degradation, to strengthen its carbon sequestration capacities by reducing pressures on forests, and to ensure synergies with the agriculture, livestock and environmental sectors. The project area covers six gazetted forests with a total area of 284,655 ha in 31 municipal councils belonging to 4 administrative regions: the Boucle du Mouhoun, the Centre-West, the Southwest and the East.

The first component of the project, Reinforcement of Forest Governance, involves strengthening the legal framework for sustainable forest management under REDD+, developing a national benchmarking system for forest management; building the capacity of both the administration and civil society bodies through training; and revising forest exploitation standards. The second component is the Participatory Development and Management of Gazetted Forests.

The project has directly benefited households, in whom it paid $0.62 for every tree planted under PES scheme. It also supplied them with forest product exploitation and processing equipment, providing local populations with forest product storage facilities, beehivekeeping equipment, cooking stoves and bio-digesters. The General Directorate of Forestry and Wildlife was supplied with soil restoration and forest maintenance machines. Finally, the project has supported local communities through the construction of five basic community facilities, and the project has supported local communities through the construction of five basic community facilities, and the implementation of the Environmental and Social Management Plan.

The operational components are supported by a third, Project Coordination and Management, involving the planning of project activities, procurement, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FIP

Key results

- At least 149 green jobs created
- FSC Certification for ongoing sustainable business practices
- Over 4,693 ha of degraded forest land restored and transformed into commercial forestry plantations since 2017
- Successful benefit-sharing agreement put into place between private sector, local communities surrounding forest reserves, and Government of Ghana

The state of Ghana’s forests has been in decline since the 1970s due to severe overpopulation. Ghana now has over 300,000 ha of highly degraded forest reserve land.

To address the issue, the African Development Bank agreed in 2016 to fund the Restoration of Degraded Forest Reserves through the Certified Plantation project. Form Ghana, a forest plantation management company based in central Ghana, partnered with the Bank, the FIP and the government of Ghana, to undertake an innovative public-private partnership in its forest sector.

During the year 2021, a total area of 138.59 ha was planted with teak reaching a total of 7,048 ha since the beginning of the project. 9.55 ha were planted with indigenous species for a total of almost 2,000 hectares.

Rain run-off used to make potholes across the commune. We realized that if we didn’t make dikes, our roads would become inaccessible.

Baron Salifu
Forest Officer
Form Ghana

Key results

- Over 550 households benefitting from clean biodigester energy and another 4,282 from clean cookstoves
- A total of 12 gazetted forests totaling 94,013 hectares secured for sustainable management
- 6 forest management committees established
- 12 forests infrastructure constructed
- Reforestation of 3,027 ha of gazetted forests
- At least 288,960 persons benefitting from improved forest-based livelihoods

The project will improve the resilience of the local population to climate change through the diversification of income sources; results indicate that the 5,400 participants in the PES scheme experienced less food insecurity than non-participants across multiple levels of severity. The direct beneficiaries are smallholders and vulnerable women who are particularly dependent on forest products for their livelihood. The project also indirectly benefits the 848,000 people – 52 percent of them women – in the 31 neighboring municipalities. In addition, the project involves specific activities targeted at women, including the structuring and training of 90 women’s groups, and the training of 1,000 women in wood product exploitation techniques and management, and women are involved in the project implementation process, notably in forest management groups and committees.

In the forests managed by Form Ghana, illegal farming was widespread in the past. The company currently offers about 700 farmers the option to participate in intercropping.

Form Ghana sets an example for me as a chief. Amongst my community members, I now promote the planting of trees as a long-term investment. This will give farmers additional income.

Osabarima Ofori Mensah
Chief of Oforikrom in Berekum

REForesting Ghana’s FORESTS

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