



# HARMONISING CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES IN GHANA

## The Landscape Approach in Practice

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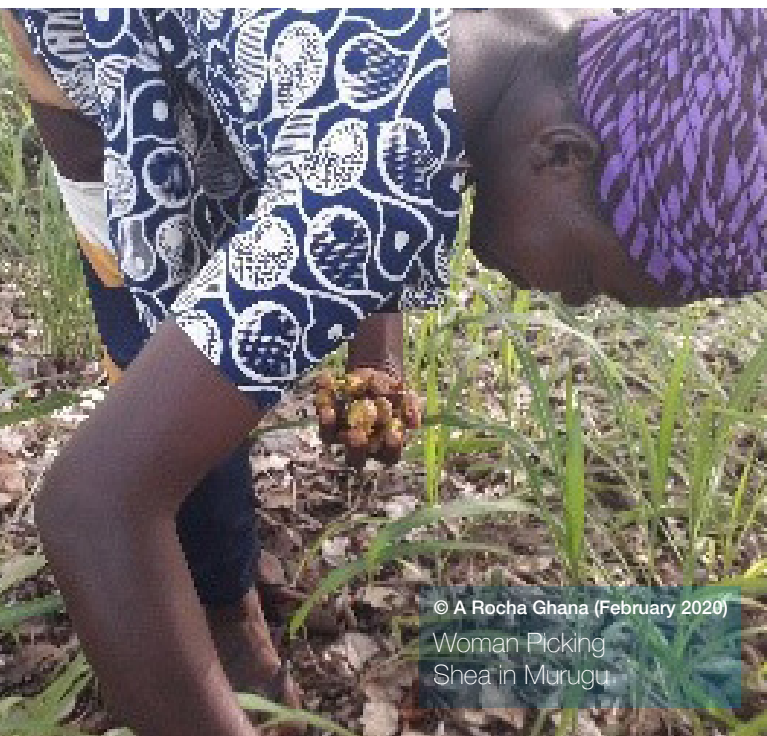
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# WHAT IS PLUS?



© A Rocha Ghana (February 2020)  
Woman Picking  
Shea in Murugu

The Stabilizing Land Use Project (PLUS) is a landscape mechanism promoting IUCN's Protected Area Categories V and VI as avenues for enhancing biodiversity in agricultural land, ecological connectivity and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+).

Category V Protected Areas are areas where human and nature interactions have over time, produced distinct significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic values. The essence is that, safeguarding the integrity of human and nature interactions is vital to protecting and sustaining the areas associated with nature conservation and other values.

Category VI Protected Areas on the other hand, are landscapes where the ecosystems and habitats together with their associated cultural values, are conserved. These areas are typically large and mostly in their natural state with a proportion under sustainable natural resource management. Low-level non-industrial uses of natural resources that are compatible with nature are allowed in this Category.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has been implementing the four-year project (2017-2020) in Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Uganda. The project is supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) through the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

## GHANA AS A FERTILE GROUND FOR FACILITATING SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Ghana's net annual loss of forest cover is estimated at 2%. This trend poses a significant threat to the livelihoods of forest fringe communities, and the ecosystem services and functionality, that support Ghana's agrarian economy (Ghana REDD+ Strategy, 2016-2035). The net annual loss of forest cover does not only deplete biodiversity, but also undermines livelihoods. The situation calls for forging of a balance between natural resources conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

Deforestation and forest degradation are major environmental concerns in Ghana, and for that matter, the Wassa Amenfi Landscape (WAL) and Mole Ecological Landscape (MEL), where the project has been implemented.

Thus, in Ghana, the PLUS project set out to help address key governance and capacity challenges that serve as barriers to effective and sustainable management of landscapes for ecological, economic and social benefits. The challenges include weak local governance structures such as Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) and Protected Area Management Advisory Units (PAMAUs) for effective administration and

management of natural resources; inadequate technical and financial capacity at the local level; and poor development of nature-based business opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. Others are; gender gaps in the access and control of resources and benefits; poor farming practices e.g. slash and burn and chemicals application leading to reduction in soil quality and yield; unsustainable utilization of natural resources; haphazard grazing; poaching; illegal mining and logging, all of which lead to increasing deforestation and degradation; and weak policies/strategies and enforcement of laws for harnessing actions that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

Ghana's two project landscapes provided good grounds for strengthening of existing governance frameworks, testing of innovative governance approaches, and development of new strategies, and learning. The **Wassa Amenfi Landscape (WAL)** is located within the High Forest Zone in the Western Region, while the **Mole Ecological Landscape (MEL)** falls within parts of the Savannah, Upper West, and North East Regions of Ghana's Savannah Zone (Figure 1).

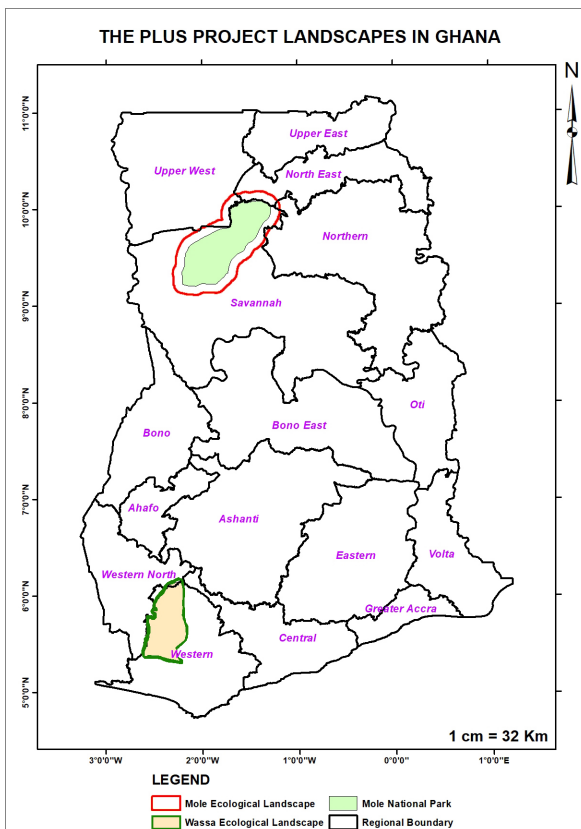


Figure 1: Plus Project Landscapes in Ghana

## OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND STAKEHOLDERS

PLUS implementation in Ghana was done in partnership with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, and the Forestry Commission. Two local NGOs; Codesult Network and A Rocha Ghana, supported implementation of actions at WAL and MEL, respectively. The project also benefitted from the useful guidance of a 12-member National Steering Committee made up of representatives of key stakeholder institutions in the natural resources sector. They include Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), Forestry Commission (FC), Energy Commission, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), Traditional Authorities, and Forest Watch Ghana (FWG).

**Key collaborators** included the relevant Municipal and District Assemblies, Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs), Protected Area Management Advisory Units (PAMAUs), Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP), Traditional Authorities, Opinion Leaders, Producer Groups, Private Companies, NGOs, and Women's Groups.



# GHANA'S THEORY OF CHANGE

To implement the project in Ghana, a Theory of Change (ToC) was developed to align Ghana's expected outputs to the four PLUS Outputs at the global level: PLUS outputs are;

**Output 1:** Improved national and sub-national understanding, consensus and ownership of enhanced landscape governance frameworks;

**Output 2:** Enhanced landscape-level governance frameworks identified with defined structures, mandates and rights holder/stakeholder roles and responsibilities;

**Output 3:** Enhanced landscape-level governance frameworks and actions identified and, where possible, tested and reviewed in the target areas; and

**Output 4:** Sub-national and national-level decision-making and policy formulation processes influenced by project success stories and lessons learned.

The overall expectation is to increase awareness among the target national and sub-national decision makers for forest and landscape management, reconcile conservation and development priorities, and help facilitate gender responsiveness.

Ghana's ToC has six (6) outputs and seven (7) intermediate outcomes (Figure 2).

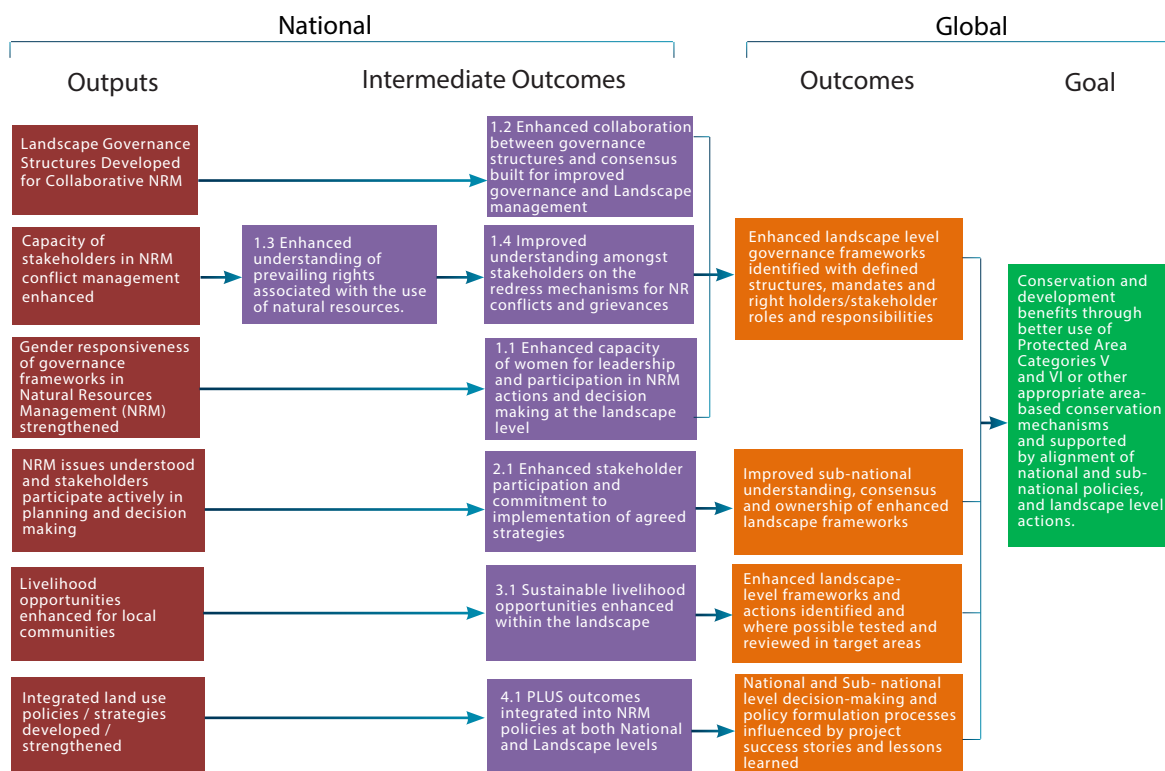


Figure 2: Ghana's Theory of Change

Different approaches and strategies including sensitisation, awareness creation, education, consultation, training and livelihood support services were used, with more focus on gender mainstreaming. These helped to bridge existing gender gaps, as well as empower women and vulnerable groups in sustainable natural resource management and utilisation.

### Key Actions Facilitated at the Landscape Levels

- An existing Multi Stakeholder Platform (MSP) was reconstituted by inclusion of representatives from the Amenfi Central District. This was to broaden the natural resources governance and management space.
- Affirmative action was used to increase women's representation on the Governance Working Group from one (1) to five (5).
- Dialogue platforms were created to provide opportunities for the discovery of some young women who are very confident, passionate and committed to championing sustainable natural resources management issues.
- Thirty (30) members of the Achichire-Sureso-Pebaseman CREMA were trained in local soap (alata samina) making.
- Beneficiaries of the soap making training were provided with start-up inputs to launch their business enterprises.
- Linkages have been facilitated with the Business Advisory Centre to support local communities to access soft loans/credit from Rural Banks, for the growth of their businesses.
- Action plans were developed to facilitate implementation of the Resource Management Plan for the Achichire-Sureso-Pebaseman CREMA. The Amenfi West Municipal and Amenfi Central District Assemblies participated fully in the action planning exercises.
- The GWG has held consultations with traditional authorities and community members to discuss and plan towards reclamation of degraded areas.
- The Land Use Dialogues were used as platforms to enhance collaboration between the Municipal/District Assemblies toward rehabilitation/reclamation of degraded areas.

- Affirmative action was integrated into the constitution of the Protected Area Management Advisory Units (PAMAUs) to provide opportunity for the co-option of more women into the Governance Working Group (GWG).
- The Project facilitated the revamping of the Wa East PAMAU and established the Mamprugu Moagduri PAMAU. These were in addition to the three existing PAMAUs to ensure that each of the five districts within the landscape has a functional PAMAU with representation on the GWG.
- Training was organized for eight (8) first time bee-keepers and 17 beehives were donated to them as start-up inputs.
- A database of beekeepers and shea women's group members has been developed for financial and logistical support. Subsequently, they have been trained in financial and business management, group dynamics and conflict management.
- Mole Ecological Landscape Conservation Trust Fund (MELCTF) has been established with benefit sharing modalities for beneficiary communities.
- Following broad consultative meetings and sensitization, the Trust Fund pools revenues from various livelihood activities in the landscape for conservation of natural resources and up-scaling of livelihood opportunities.
- Action plan on green charcoal model and sustainable grazing modalities within the landscape was developed by the GWG and is being implemented.
- West Gonja Cattle- Herders and Owners Association was formed to regulate grazing within the Municipality.

- Annual Action Plans of the DAs were critically analysed to see whether natural resource management activities had been adequately captured and budgeted for. The findings were presented to the District Planning and Coordinating Units (DPCUs) of the 5 districts.
- Processes were initiated toward establishment of an umbrella body to be known as Protected Area Management Advisory Board Members to constitute the PAMAB have been identified and a constitution drafted.

### Common Key Actions Facilitated at the Landscape Levels

#### WAL and MEL

- Affirmative action was used to facilitate increased women's representation and participation on the Governance Working Groups of the two landscapes.
- GWG meetings provided platforms for discussion of environmental aspects of the Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs) of the District Assemblies. These platforms were also used to establish the role of the GWG in the implementation of the MTDPs.
- Multi-stakeholder processes (LUDs) were facilitated to develop a Landscape Management Strategy (LMS) for each Landscape.
- Natural resource policy and governance baselines have been developed for the two landscapes.
- 40 members of the ASP CREMA and GWG in WAL were trained in natural resources conflict management using the REDD+ Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM).
- Community members have been sensitized on gender issues and the benefits of harnessing the role of women. This has enhanced their appreciation for the participation of women in all activities.

### Key Actions Facilitated at the National Level

#### National

- Supported the organisation of the maiden National Policy Dialogue on CREMAs and sponsored eight participants from WAL and MEL to participate in the Dialogue. A communiqué with recommendations for strengthening the contribution of CREMAs was submitted to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources for consideration in the development of policy and regulatory frameworks.
- Contributed to the development and strengthening of the CREMA mechanism in Ghana through participation in the national CREMA Technical Working Group. The group has initiated advocacy actions towards the passing of the wildlife resource management bill and is following up on recommendations in the communiqué from the National CREMA Dialogue.
- Contributed to the development of Ghana's Safeguards Information System, Country Approach to Safeguards and Safeguards Principles, Criteria and Indicators through IUCN's participation on the National REDD+ Safeguards Sub-working Group.
- Collaborated with the National REDD+ Secretariat towards analysis of landscape governance structures and arrangements for implementation of the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP). The WAL GWG has been recognised and recommended as a useful platform for implementation of the GCFRP at the landscape level.

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF PLUS AT LANDSCAPE AND NATIONAL LEVELS

## Strengthening governance structures as an entry point/foundation

The PLUS project provided technical support to the CREMAs and the PAMAUs in the two landscapes. The aim was to avoid establishment of parallel governance frameworks to implement the project. Consequently, the CREMAs and PAMAUs served as springboards for expanding and strengthening the natural resource governance frameworks into a Governance Working Group (GWG) for each landscape. This was achieved by inviting more stakeholders and particularly, by increasing the representation of women on the GWGs. Indeed, the establishment of the GWGs provided the needed platform for reinforcing the importance of gender mainstreaming and also served as effective structures for spearheading dialogue, capacity building and decision making around sustainable natural resources management.

## Impacts of Enhanced Governance Frameworks

Establishment of the (GWGs) has helped to enhance information flow across the landscapes and created better linked and more coordinated governance mechanisms for management of natural resources across multiple scales. Furthermore, strengthening of the constitutions of CREMAs and PAMAUs, has enabled their leadership and members to self-organise for effective regulation of natural resources utilization. The increased alternative livelihood schemes, improved agronomic practices, resources management planning and strategies, improved collective action and unity among many natural resource management actors, and other achievements, are the results of the expanded governance frameworks.

“ According to Madam Janet Ameseya - the West Gonja Municipal Director of the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) and a member of MEL GWG, *“implementation of the action plans on green charcoal and sustainable grazing (developed with the support of the GWG) has influenced women in charcoal production to be more careful in the felling of trees for charcoal production”.*

Implicitly, such activities help in dealing with the menace of open access resources management, which accounts in part for over exploitation of communal resources.



© A Rocha Ghana (September, 2019)  
Awareness Creation by the Queen Mother of Damongo (Sandapewuriche-Mary Sulemana) at a Climate Strike Event at Damongo.

## Enhanced Participation of Women in Natural Resources Governance

As a result of the sensitization and awareness raising on importance of gender mainstreaming in natural resource management issues, more women are participating actively in natural resource governance within both landscapes. They now play enhanced roles in natural resources conservation and are making natural resources management decisions at the household level.

In MEL, the Queen Mother of Damongo, Sandapewuriche-Mary Sulemana has carried out awareness creation campaigns to sensitize more women to play more active roles in natural resource governance and management.

Two women in WAL have voluntarily sensitised women in particular, on the need to plant trees on farms.

“About 30 women from both within and without the ASP CREMA have each planted at least 200 cocoa-loving commercial trees on their farms”- Madam Dorothy Ewusi, Co-Chair of the WAL GWG.

### Increased Economic Prospects of PLUS Beneficiaries

Many people, particularly women, benefited from livelihood trainings in both landscapes; ie. soap making in WAL and beekeeping and shea nut processing in MEL. The beneficiaries in MEL have been registered into Associations and Cooperatives by the Business Advisory Centre (BAC). The BAC in WAL has created opportunities for the beneficiaries to access loans and credit from local banks. For example, one loan application by a member of ASP CREMA who is based in Sika Nti has been approved, while applications by four other beneficiaries of the trainings are in process at the Amenfiman Rural Bank.

The introduction of Village Savings and Loans Schemes has also encouraged women to mobilise local resources to finance their enterprises. As a result of these opportunities, many training beneficiaries are no longer waiting for external support before production. This has enhanced household incomes and the financial capacities of women in particular, who are able to provide for their basic needs without having to depend on their spouses.

According to the Chairman of the North Gonja PAMAU, Gabasi Wura of Daboya, “men now appreciate the need to give women the opportunity to engage in economic activities. Economic activities of women bring in some income as opposed to the past and this helps a lot”.

The enterprise development outcomes have led to increased uptake of complementary livelihood options. This is to the extent that, several of the beneficiaries of the soap making training for example, produce a variety of soap products for sale (Figure 3).

According to Emelia Arthur of Sureso and Felicity Appiah of Attobrakrom in the Wassa Amenfi Landscape, they are able to make net incomes of about GHS 500 during the peak of the cocoa season (October – February) and a minimum of about GHS 150 during the off season (March – September).

The bee keepers are also reporting significant gains. For example, Mark Bani of the Murugu Mognori CREMA in the Mole Ecological Landscape has been able to reinvest some of his profits by securing 15 more beehives in addition to the 10 that he started with two years earlier.

“Mr. Bani’s example has challenged me and other community members to work hard to increase our beehives from five to 15 in one year”- Seidu Munaba, Chairman of the Murugu Mognori CREMA.

### Reduced Natural Resource Conflicts/improved Resolution

The conflict management training that was given to some actors in both landscapes is also leading to reduction of natural resource conflicts within the two landscapes.



Figure 3: © Codesult (December, 2019), Variety of Soap Products by PLUS Beneficiaries.





Although there are no baseline records of reported conflicts that have had to be resolved, Hon. Amadu Salifu- the Assembly member of the Tantala Electoral Area who doubles as the Organising Secretary of the Mamprugu Mo-agduri PAMAU stated that *“conflicts are now settled satisfactorily at the local community level by some of the training beneficiaries”*. He testifies that, *“referral of conflicts from the local community level to the paramount level by unsatisfied parties has reduced considerably”*.

The development of green charcoal and sustainable grazing action plans for Mole Ecological Landscape, have led to the formation of West Gonja Cattle Herders and Owners Association. This Association is actively engaging with local community flash points to ensure harmony and peaceful co-existence between crop farmers and cattle grazers.

### **PLUS’ Contribution to Ghana’s REDD+ Implementation Process**

PLUS contributed to advancing Ghana’s REDD+ Safeguards frameworks, particularly the development of Ghana’s Safeguards Information System, Country Approach to Safeguards and Safeguards Principles, Criteria and Indicators. This was facilitated through IUCN’s membership on the national REDD+ Safeguards Sub-working Group. PLUS has helped to increase understanding of REDD+ Safeguards related issues at national and local levels, through collaborative trainings and capacity building programmes with the National REDD+ Secretariat at the Forestry Commission.

### **Influencing Implementation of Natural Resource Management Actions by the Local Governments in WAL and MEL**

Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies are by the second schedule of regulation 1(b) of LI 1961 to establish a Natural Resources Conservation Department Forestry Game and Wildlife Division. This Department, is to among other functions, assist the Assembly in the formulation of policies for the conservation of natural resources in the District/Municipality and report on implementation to the District Assembly. This Department is yet to be established in any of the Assemblies within the two landscapes. Therefore, development and implementation of natural resources conservation policies are usually weak and are not given much attention in the MTDPs.

Through the PLUS project, natural resource management activities are more strongly integrated in the MTDPs and Annual Action Plans of the Assemblies

within the two landscapes. Hence, PLUS’ success in getting the local government administrations to integrate more strongly, natural resources conservation issues into their respective MTDPs is a significant contribution to celebrate.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- 1 Sensitised community members cannot be easily taken for granted on matters pertaining to the destruction of their natural resources.
- 2 Women’s empowerment through gender mainstreaming is a contributory factor to ensuring environmental/natural resource security.
- 3 Transparent collaboration between local communities and governmental agencies is critical for the governance and management of natural resources and also imperative in ensuring the integrity of, and harmony between the social-ecological environments.
- 4 Involving both government officials and local community actors in natural resource governance and management, helps to forge more cordial and harmonious co-existence, and provide an enabling environment for safeguarding the security of natural resources.
- 5 PLUS leveraged existing initiatives and ongoing programmes to ensure synergy, strengthened linkages to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, and efficiently achieved its objectives.
- 6 When given enabling conditions, local communities can contribute meaningfully towards the sustainable management and conservation of their social-cultural and natural resources heritage.
- 7 Indigenous knowledge application, women’s participation and their uptake of leading roles is of paramount importance in participatory management of degraded landscapes and natural resources conser-



Local communities can take their destinies into their own hands in the governance and management of their natural resources within the requisite policy and legal framework.



Collective natural resources conservation can support sustainable local livelihoods and improve household economies and wellbeing.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

### **Piloting/Testing of Actions in the Landscape Management Plans**

An opportunity exists for future efforts by IUCN to target the provision of technical and logistical support to the various District Assemblies. Such support should specifically go into testing or implementing some of the actions in the landscape management strategies and green charcoal model and sustainable grazing plans.

### **Collaboration**

An up-scaling of PLUS can benefit from the on-going Connect Project being handled by the National Biosafety Authority (NBA). It is geared towards achieving sustainable development by bringing biodiversity information to the heart of government decision making.

### **Continuous engagement**

There is opportunity for continuous engagement and collaboration with the Governance Working Groups towards testing or implementing follow-up actions that can be developed based on the outcomes of PLUS.

### **Expressed interest**

Two natural resource-based companies – Winrock International and Samartex Timber and Plywood Company Ltd have offered to support reclamation of degraded lands and mined out areas within Wassa Amanfi Landscape.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1

PLUS was implemented at landscape scales that encompass a number of local government and traditional jurisdictions. However, the influences and contributions of the project centred mostly around the district or municipality where the project partners (A Rocha and Codesult Network) are located.

○ In future, where a project is to be implemented at a scale that covers a number of governance jurisdictions, conscious effort should be made to ensure that all the Districts and Municipalities benefit equitably from the influences and contributions of the project.

2

PLUS has done a good job by facilitating the development of Landscape Management Strategies and action plans that have been integrated into the MTDP and Annual Action Plan of the respective Assemblies. However, financial resources and logistics are yet to be allocated for the implementation of these strategies and actions. The long-term nature of the benefits of these actions present the risk of not being prioritised by the Municipal/District Assemblies for implementation.

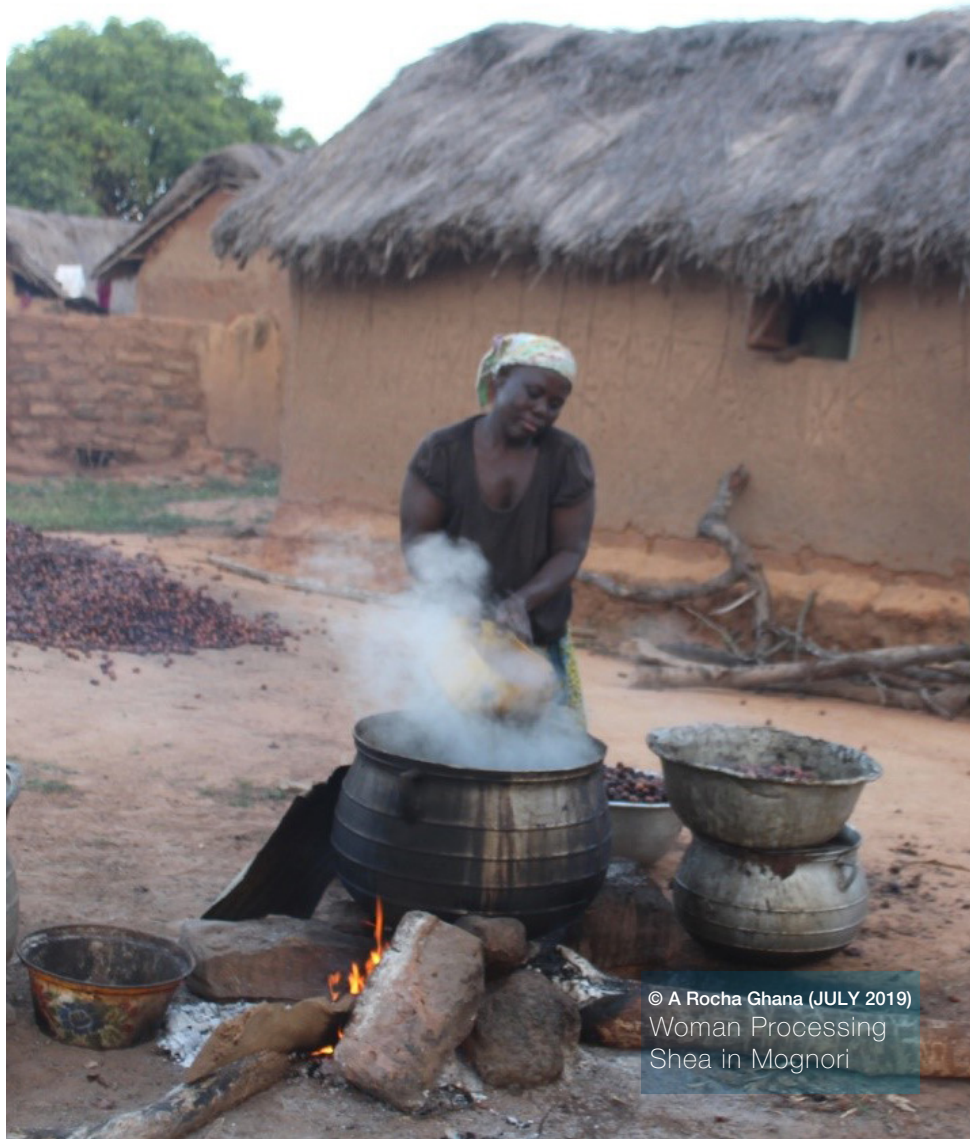
○ Project proposals for a possible second phase of PLUS should among other interests be aligned toward implementation of the Landscape Management Strategies and Actions. The proposal should also consider the opportunities within the landscapes and support the relevant implementing agencies i.e. the Assemblies, and non-decentralised agencies to achieve the objectives of the project. Transparency and accountability frameworks should be developed to mediate the relations between the project and the implementation partners.

# CONCLUSION

PLUS demonstrates unrelenting resolve of local community members to safeguard their natural resources if the right governance environment is set in place or strengthened. It also showcases the boldness of communities to confront the status-quo and contribute to positive change. It is clear therefore, that enlightened local communities cannot be easily taken for granted on matters pertaining to the plundering of their natural resources. It can be said that, the project has contributed to influencing positive attitudes and behaviours toward harmonising conservation and development priorities in the two landscapes in Ghana.



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Woman Processing  
Shea in Mognori

