

### Small Grants – Project Progress Report

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| <b>Organization Name</b> | A Rocha Ghana   |
| <b>Project Title</b>     | Supporting Community Resource Management Areas to strengthen their role in protecting the Atewa Forest, Ghana |
| <b>Grant Number</b>      | CEPF-116038   |
| <b>Date of Report</b>    | 19 March 2025   |

#### **PART I: Project Progress**

- 1. Provide a brief description of progress toward your short-term impacts and any accomplishments achieved during this reporting period.**  
*(Add or delete lines if needed. This section should be consistent with the logframe: short-term impacts and associated indicators. Please also send us your means of verification (evidence) where relevant)*

| <i>Nr</i> | <i>Short-term impact (from logical framework)</i>   | <i>Progress (use indicators from your logframe)</i>   |
|-----------|---|---|
|           | By the end of the project, 30 hectares of the Atewa Forest will be better managed and protected by the 3 CREMAs | <p><b><i>Activity 1.1.1</i></b> One meeting for women and men in each of the 3 CREMAs (total 3 meetings) to discuss and outline their respective CREMA by-laws on forest protection and the activities permitted within their CREMA</p> <p><b><i>Activity 1.1.2</i></b> 3 core teams of women and men draft their by-laws and share for feedback from members</p> <p>Atiwa West CREMA, held 3 workshops to discuss and draft their CREMA by-laws on forest protection and the activities permitted within their CREMA. The drafted by-law has been submitted to the Atiwa West District Assembly for review by the assembly's sub-committee on Environment and Mining.</p> <p>This has equipped the community members to understand the need to protect and manage their natural resources sustainably and how best to contribute to their protection. The by-laws will serve as a guide for managing the natural resources, which are crucial for the sustainable management of natural resources and the economic well-being of local communities.</p> <p>In addition to the CREMA members, participants of the workshop included District Planning Officers, District Coordinating Directors, Environmental Health Officers,</p> |

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|  |  | <p>Social Welfare &amp; Community Development Officers, Environment and Mining Sub-Committee members, and the assembly member from the Atiwa West District.</p> <p>Some members from the Atiwa West CREMA (specifically Kwabeng area) reported an invasion into the forest by illegal miners using an excavator near a community called Yaw Mahama. The information was promptly acted upon by the ARG and FSD to stop the illegal mining from operating in the forest.</p> <p><b>Activity 1.2.2</b> Prepare TOR and seek a consultant to map the state of Atewa’s rivers to show the impacts of illegal gold mining on Atewa’s rivers and their water quality. This will be compared with data on water quality monitoring collected during ARG’s CEPF project to provide information for advocacy by the CREMAS</p> <p>A Terms of Reference (ToR) document has been produced which outlines the methodologies for assessing the health of 12 key river systems within the Atewa Range Forest Reserve.</p> <p>The assessment is envisaged at providing scientific data as an advocacy tool for CREMA (Community Resource Management Areas) members, enabling them to raise awareness about sustainable resource management and advocate for conservation actions.</p> <p>The project has since initiated the process of selecting a suitable consultant.</p> <p>The selected consultant is expected to use the methodologies in the TOR to assess the water quality and produce a pollution source map as part of the final assessment report, which will entail the findings, trends, and conservation recommendations.</p> <p>A data-driven information will therefore be produced and will be compared with data on water quality monitoring collected during ARG’s previous CEPF project.</p> <p>These insights will serve as a guide to conservation strategies and inform policy decisions aimed at restoring and protecting the river systems of the Atewa Range Forest Reserve by the CREMA’s (Community Resources Management Areas).</p> |
|  | <p>By the middle of the project, individual trees of 9 rare and threatened species found in Atewa will be monitored regularly by women and men</p> | <p><b>Activity 2.1.1</b> Educate core (8) women and (8) men CREMA teams on the rare and threatened tree species identified in Atewa Forest under our Foundation Franklina-funded project and educate them on how to locate and check the individual geotagged trees</p>  |

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|  | <p>CREMA teams and replaced as needed to ensure their survival.</p> | <p>Twenty (20) community monitors from the three (3) CREMAs were trained on the theoretical and practical aspects of tree identification, specimen collection, conservation techniques, and biodiversity monitoring best practices. The training was facilitated by two Ghanaian botanists after they were trained by Dr. William Hawthorne from the University of Oxford, UK. Participants have been equipped with hands-on experience in plant morphology, field data collection, and specimen preservation, as well as the use of technical tools such as clinometers, diameter tapes, and Global Positioning System for geotagging tree locations.</p> <p>A significant component of the initiative involved field trips to key locations within the Atewa Range Forest Reserve and Apedwa Forest Reserve, where participants successfully identified and documented 9 threatened tree species, some of which were previously unrecorded in those areas. The training effectively enhanced participants' knowledge and conservation skills while fostering community involvement in environmental stewardship.</p> <p><b>Activity 2.1.2.</b> Lead the women and men CREMA teams on field visits to monitor the geotagged trees to check their health, status and growth (and report any forest threats detected during monitoring).</p> <p>16 CREMA members have undertaken twelve (12) into the forest to monitor and record the phenology of the tree species, check their health, status, and growth, and report any forest threats detected during monitoring to the authorities for the sustainability of the Forest Reserve.</p> <p>Spatial Monitoring Tools such as SMART and GPS are being employed in the data collection Process.</p> <p>Data gathered so far on tree health, status, and growth are being used in the development of a phenological chart to guide future propagation endeavors.</p> |
|  |   | <p><b>Activity 2.1.4.</b> With the women and men CREMA teams, collect individual tree seedlings from the community tree nursery and use them to replant any lost, damaged, or sick geotagged trees.</p> <p>Three (3) CREMA members from the Atewa and Ayensuano CREMAs after understanding the tree monitoring protocols</p>  |

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|  |  | have collected 7 seeds of <i>Cola reticulata</i> (vulnerable tree species). These seeds have since been nursed at the community nursery at Owuratwum and Dompem awaiting maturity and transplanting into the Atewa Range Forest Reserve. Two members collected the seeds on their way to their farms, while the third person collected the seeds from the tree close to his farm.                  |
|  | By the end of the project, ARG will be sharing project impacts more effectively. | <p><b>Activity 3.1.1.</b> Enroll M&amp;E staff in database design, management, and analytics program to build their capacity to be able to adequately manage, share, and update the impact results on the ARG website</p> <p>M&amp;E staff is yet to enroll in the database design, management, and analytical program. A suitable package is being explored. Staff will enroll in 2nd quarter</p> |

## 2. Progress against results

*(Add or delete lines if needed. This section should be consistent with the logframe: results and associated indicators. Please also send us your means of verification (evidence) where relevant)*

| <i>Nr</i> | <i>Result (from logical framework)</i>  | <i>Target (use indicators from your logframe)</i>   | <i>Progress (use indicators from your logframe)</i>   | <i>Proposed changes (if any, e.g. in activities, timing etc)</i> |
|-----------|---|---|---|--|
| 1.1       | 3 by-laws enacted for the 3 CREMAs  | CREMAs have the legal backing to carry out their activities (target; 1 per CREMA)   | The by-law for Atiwa West CREMA was drafted and engagement with stakeholders at the assembly level is ongoing. Drafting and validation of the by-laws for Ayensuano and Atewa will begin in quarter 2 |  |
| 1.2       | Biodiversity and water quality data have been analyzed, and the state of Atewa's rivers mapped, and a report prepared.  | CREMAs will have enough evidence to carry out advocacy (target: One report on Atewa's biodiversity and State of the Rivers) | Terms of Reference (ToR) for consultant developed, consultant identified and in contractual phase, assignment to commence in quarter 2  |  |
| 1.3       | CREMAs have used biodiversity reports and state of the river maps in 3 meetings with forest sector stakeholders to advocate for stronger actions and improved participatory | CREMAs carry out evidence-based advocacy  | Data gathering ongoing  |  |

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|     | management for the Atewa Forest   |   |   |  |
| 1.4 | CREMAs have created awareness of the importance of the Atewa Forest and the need to protect it, during World Forest Day | CREMAs carry out roadshow and community durbar  | To be carried out in 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter during the International Day of Biodiversity                 |  |
| 2.1 | 36 forest visits by women and men CREMA teams to monitor rare and threatened tree species have been completed.          | Effective monitoring and management of rare and threatened tree species in the forest | 12 forest visits carried out by CREMA members   |  |
| 3.1 | One ARG impact database shared online and updated regularly   | Impact databases created and put online   | M&E staff to enroll in the database design, management, and analytical program in 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter |  |

**3. Describe any difficulties or challenges faced in delivering the project so far, operationally or programmatically.**

The main challenge has been getting women involved in the monitoring by themselves for security reasons. The women have concerns that most of the illegalities happening in the forest are by men who are also sometimes drug addicts so it is unsafe for them to go on monitoring by themselves.

In an attempt to address this challenge, the team pairs male counterparts with females for security and also makes the women feel safer in carrying out their monitoring.

**4. Describe how you have managed any risks identified at the planning stage, and have any new risks developed? (Add new lines if needed)**

| <b>Risks identified at the planning stage (LOI A)</b>                                       | <b>Mitigation measures implemented</b>  |
|---|---|
| Risk of obtaining seedlings of threatened trees to replace those that may need replacement. | Seeds will be procured from the Plant Genetic Resources Research Institute (PGRRI) who are expert in propagating these trees. |
| <b>New risks that have emerged during implementation</b>                                    | <b>Mitigation measures implemented or planned</b>   |
| No new risks identified   |   |

**5. If relevant, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social or environmental safeguards that your project may have triggered.**

Safeguard 9: Health and security of staff: all community members undergoing monitoring in the forest received safety and security briefings before they began their monitoring activities. No incidents have been recorded since the project began.

**6. Describe the interaction with stakeholders in the project implementation so far (e.g. project partners, local communities, government representatives etc).**

The project has and is still enjoying great collaboration with the various stakeholders in the course of implementation. Through the introduction to implementation, the team has worked with the community members as well as stake institution representatives relevant to the project. Key among these stakeholders include the Forest Services Division (FSD), members of the assemblies' committee on environment and mining, CREMA executives, Assembly members from the various communities, etc. The ARG team has selected some members of the communities as 'supervisors' who serve as liaisons between the team and the communities to facilitate engagement and continuation/sustainability of activities being implemented under the project.

**7. If relevant, provide updated information about the project staff (*departure, new staff. If not relevant, please put N/A below*)**

N/A

**PART II: Lessons and sharing**

**8. Describe any lessons learned during implementation of the project so far, including any related to organizational development or capacity building.**

Logistical challenges hinder the ability of State institutions to adequately address illegalities within the forest. Engagement of community members is augmenting State institutional efforts. Collaborations are therefore key in addressing forest infractions.

Communities can become demoralized if communication lines are not open between all key stakeholders in addressing forest infractions. It is therefore important to ensure open communication between all parties to foster greater collaboration efforts.

Another lesson is that threatened tree species are difficult to obtain naturally because of habitat loss and the impact of climate change on fruiting and seeding patterns. The data being gathered on the identified threatened tree species is contributing better understanding of their phenology for easy planning and management of the species.

**9. Describe and submit any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project so far.**

No tools or methodologies developed yet

**10. Link to any online articles or social media stories which featured project activities.**

**11. Provide any relevant, clear, high-resolution photographs which may have been taken during the project (attach to email or via online tool).**



Mr. Hopeson Eli Etsra (Project Manager ARG). explaining the training objectives to community members during community monitors training at Apampatia. ***Photo credit: Ransford Agyei***



Participants identifying, geo-tagging, taking records, and collecting specimens of *cola reticulata* within the Apampetea enclave of the Atewa Range Forest Reserve. **Photo Credit: Eli Etsra**



Mr. Emmanuel Antwi, Forest Services Division (FSD) District Manager making an input during the technical meeting on Atiwa West CREMA Bye-Law. *Photo credit: Eli Etsra*

**Additional Comments/Recommendations**

**12. Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or to the CEPF Regional Implementation Team.**