

Tropenbos International Ghana

Making knowledge work for forests and people



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Artisanal Milling Defined

The process for defining Artisanal Milling as part of operationalising a policy option to supply legal lumber to the domestic market has been concluded during the 9th National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) meeting on 7th November, 2012 at the Forestry Commission (FC) Auditorium in Accra.

In the quest for a viable alternative to illegal chainsaw milling in Ghana, stakeholders of both the EU Chainsaw milling project and a parallel process led by the Timber Industry Development Division (TIDD) of the FC decided that both sawmills and artisanal millers supply the domestic market with legal timber obtained from sustained yield. This option has been elaborated in a policy proposal for the supply of legal lumber to the domestic market.

What has been missing in the policy, however, is a stakeholder consensus on the definition of Artisanal Milling (AM). This definition is critical: without defining what AM is, it will be difficult to develop an effective policy. Several MSD meetings have been held toward defining AM. A parallel process led by the TIDD of the FC also aimed at supporting the definition of AM. None of the two processes could yield a definition of AM acceptable to all national stakeholders. Nevertheless, after two years of desperate search the dust finally settled when a number of proposed definitions was consolidated into one that is widely acceptable to key stakeholders, including the Forestry Commission, Ghana Timber Millers Organisation, Chainsaw Operators and the Domestic Lumber Traders' Association.

The agreed definition which will feed into the national policy is as follows:

"Artisanal milling is small-medium scale milling of timber from specified legal sources by a trained, certified, registered and licensed Ghanaian artisan, using licensed mobile sawmilling equipment that excludes any form of chainsaw machines, capable of recovering at least 50% of dimension lumber from logs, for the domestic market only. This may be processed in-situ or ex-situ".

The EU chainsaw milling project aims to find sustainable solutions to the problems associated with the production of lumber for local timber markets by involving all stakeholders in dialogue, information gathering and the development of alternatives to unsustainable chainsaw milling practices. In Ghana, this project is being carried out by Tropenbos International (TBI) in collaboration with the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) and the Forestry Commission (FC). See www.chainsawmilling.org.

Honey producers in Atebubu supported

On June 29, 2012 TBI Ghana donated a honey press and a refractometer to the Atebubu-Amantin Honeybee Keepers' Association. With this equipment they will soon be able to formally produce high quality honey for the market.

Most honey producers in Ghana including the Atebubu-Amantin Honeybee Keepers' Association are not licensed and certified by the Food and Drugs Board and the Ghana Standards Authority partly due to their inability to use approved methods to process and package the honey. The donated equipment will be crucial in the processing and testing of honey to meet the standards required for producing and marketing honey in Ghana.

Preceding the donation was the launch of two sourcebooks that provide relevant information on small and medium scale forest enterprise characteristics, activity centres, product markets, support institutions and service providers. The publications have been produced under the Forest Connect Ghana project implemented by TBI Ghana.



Forest Connect Ghana

The Forest Connect Ghana Project forms part of an international Forest Connect alliance that seeks to support small and medium forest enterprises by linking them better to each other, to markets, to service providers and to policy makers.

Forest Connect is active in 13 countries under the coordination of the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The intention of the sourcebooks is both to introduce some of the issues facing small and medium forest enterprises (SMFEs) in Ghana today and to increase the visibility of SMFEs and service providers— with the hope that this might prompt a greater quest for support service on the one hand, and a greater incentive to provide such support on the other..

The District Chief Executive of the Atebubu-Amantin District Assembly, Hon. Sanja Nanja launched the sourcebooks. The occasion was witnessed by over 50 participants of 12 amongst others World Vision International Ghana, The Atebubu-Amantin District Assembly, Atebubu-Amantin Honeybee Keepers' Association, The Energy Commission, The Business Advisory Centre of the National Board for Small Scale Industries, Ghana Wildlife Society, Atebubu Traditional Council and the media.

TBI Ghana ends a proposal writing workshop

As part of its programme development process, TBI Ghana in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam (UvA) in the Netherlands organised a four-day training workshop for prospective PhD candidates in Kumasi. The workshop aimed at supporting participants to develop bankable projects with topics within the TBI Ghana research framework, with special emphasis on governance, livelihoods and development.

The workshop moderated by Dr. Mirjam Ros-Tonen of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, UvA, took participants through cutting-edge issues in research proposal development for post-graduate studies.

Participants, mainly mid-career professionals, were selected from TBI Ghana partner organisations including the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, Resource Management Support Centre of the Forestry Commission, Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources and the Faculty of Forest Resources Technology, both of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Others included Civic Response, a civil society organisation and a member of Forest Watch Ghana, and the Ghana Telecom University College.

Candidates with good proposals will be supported in seeking additional resources to support their PhD programmes. When successfully completed, the research outcomes of the candidates will contribute relevant knowledge and information to forest policy, management and practice in Ghana.

TBI Ghana pilots Wood Tracking System for the domestic market

TBI Ghana has developed and started piloting a Wood Tracking System (WTS) for the domestic timber production and trade. This domestic WTS is part of the implementation of a project that aims to link local communities with forest concession holders to produce legal lumber for the domestic market. The project is supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (“FAO”) under the “ACP-FLEGT Support Programme”.

This effort comes on the heel of Ghana committing not only to export legal lumber to the European Market under a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (EU) but also to ensure that the domestic timber market is supplied with legal timber. However, currently about 84% of the domestic market supply is from illegal chainsaw milling. To satisfy the legality assurance criterion of the VPA, Ghana needs to address the trade in illegal chainsawn lumber.

With support from the EU, TBI Ghana has over the years, in collaboration with the Forestry Commission and the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, and through broad multi-stakeholder processes, supported the development of a new policy for supply of legal timber to the domestic market. The policy introduces a concept of artisanal milling that will supply the domestic market with legal timber. To guarantee legal production and trade of artisanal milled lumber a Wood Tracking System is necessary.

Under the FAO-supported project, TBI Ghana trained artisanal millers in pilot regions in business and technical skills and developed different models for producing legal lumber for the domestic market. The WTS is now being piloted with some artisanal mills in the Juaso and Goaso Forest Districts. A team of young officers are now in the field to monitor the process of producing and trading legal lumber, using the developed Wood Tracking System.

The Wood Tracking System (WTS) will provide the mechanism for tracing wood products from their source in the forest, through processing to the point of sale in the domestic market. It will also provide an elaboration of the minimum processes which domestic market operators must adopt during conversion, processing and manufacturing in order to identify the timber, ensure that it is tracked throughout conversion, and also generate supporting data and information in a timely manner for the issuance of a legality license.

A boost for new EU Chainsaw project districts

The EU Chainsaw milling project being implemented by TBI Ghana and partners has successfully held a capacity building session for the leadership of stakeholder groups and members of steering committees of district-level multi-stakeholder dialogue (DLMSD) platforms in two new project districts: Tarkwa and Nkwanta in the Western and Volta Region respectively.

Since 2007, the EU Chainsaw milling project has been implemented in eight forest districts including Goaso and Sunyani in the Brong-Ahafo Region, Juaso and Nkawie in the Ashanti Region, Kade, Oda and Begoro in the Eastern Region and Assin Fosu in the Central Region. The two new districts were added to broaden the frontiers of district-level multi-stakeholder participation in decision making in support of efforts toward finding alternatives to illegal chainsaw milling in Ghana.

Thus, the extension of the project to the forest districts meant setting up new multi-stakeholder platforms and steering committees to support the on-going national discourse for finding sustainable options for supplying legal lumber for the domestic market. To be able to fulfill this function, the EU Chainsaw milling project organized a special training for key actors to shore up their knowledge, skills and general capacity to effectively manage and support the district-level dialogue process.



The training took participants through relevant subjects such as facilitating multi-stakeholder process, dealing with power relations, group management, leadership development and adaptive management. It also provided the requisite technical backstopping on the implementation of the EU Chainsaw milling project in the various districts.

Stakeholders endorse Artisanal Milling Models

Stakeholders have endorsed models for Artisanal Milling (AM) where local communities will be linked with forest concession holders to produce legal lumber for the domestic market. This occurred on September 25, 2012 during a workshop held at the Wood Industries Training Centre in Akyawkrom near Kumasi.

The workshop was part of the project financed by the FAO ACP-FLEGT Support Programme to pilot Artisanal Milling and a Wood Tracking System for lumber supply to the domestic market by linking local communities with forest concession holders. This is dispensed through a multi-stakeholder dialogue and consensus building at all levels of project implementation.

TBI Ghana has facilitated the development of partnerships between local communities and forest concessionaires, and supported the development of models for operationalising Artisanal Milling. During the workshop, TBI Ghana presented proposed AM models to stakeholders who thoroughly discussed, offered constructive feedback and eventually validated the models for implementation. The validation was done by 46 participants drawn mostly from pilot communities.

Institutionalising stakeholder engagement in the forest sector

The EU chainsaw milling project implemented by TBI Ghana and partners held a three-day training workshop on 'Institutionalising multi-stakeholder engagement in the forestry sector of Ghana' for project staff and partners. Since its inception, a key strategy for implementing the project has been the establishment of a multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) to share information, reduce conflict between stakeholders and generate jointly agreed solutions for addressing illegal chainsaw milling in Ghana.

This approach has already yielded results including policy recommendations with regard to the supply of legal lumber to the domestic market. Over the years, the MSD has emerged as a useful national platform for soliciting and incorporating varied views of stakeholders in decision making and implementation of jointly agreed solutions.

In spite of its instrumentality, the MSD process has not been formally embedded in national forest governance structures. Even though the platform includes actors from state institutions, civil society organisations and the timber industry, its operation beyond the

project is not guaranteed. It is feared that if the potential that the MSD offers in fostering multiple views for joint solution is not harnessed and institutionalized, the forest sector risks losing it with the ending of the project in 2015.

The need to institutionalize and profit from the prospects of the MSD is especially crucial now as Ghana is exploring and implementing several multi-stakeholder processes in support of initiatives like FLEGT/VPA, REDD+ and other national forest programme.

To proactively respond to this need, the EU Chainsaw milling project mobilized project staff and partners and other relevant forest actors in a brainstorming and capacity building workshop towards institutionalising the stakeholder engagement in the forest sector. The workshop which took place in Koforidua was facilitated by the Wageningen University Centre for Development Innovation in the Netherlands.

Participants provided requisite guidance for supporting and receiving legitimacy to the embedding process and its eventual implementation. It became apparent that institutionalizing the MSD in the forest sector would require more than just an institutional takeover. Embedding the principles of stakeholder engagement, ensuring democracy and improving joint decision making would be crucial. A key output of the training workshop was an institutional analysis for the identification of key institutions that can positively influence the embedding process.



Toward institutionalising the MSD, the EU chainsaw milling project will however continue to support discussions aimed at improving stakeholder representation, increasing legitimacy, ensuring sustainability and enhancing linkages with other permanent platforms.

A conflict management unit within the Forestry Commission?

Establishing a specialised unit for forest conflict management within Ghana's Forestry Commission could offer the necessary leverage for better dealing with conflicts over the use and management of forest and tree resources in Ghana. This is what Dr. Mercy Derkyi, a TBI Ghana supported PhD graduate of the University of Amsterdam, concluded in her PhD thesis, completed in September 2012, titled 'Fighting over forest – Interactive governance of conflicts over forest and tree resources in Ghana's high forest zone'.

Illicit forest activities especially illegal timber exploitation and chainsaw milling, excessive exploitation of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), illegal farming in forest reserves due to population increase and the need for fertile soils for crop cultivation play an important role in forest conflicts in Ghana's high forest zone.

These conflicts have been partly blamed for the failure of some interventions supported by government, civil society and development partners, to yield the desired impact of promoting good forest governance and livelihood innovations.

Unresolved forest tenure issues in Ghana – some of which date back to colonial times – impede the proper implementation of national forest policy; and that hierarchical governance – a top-down style of state-citizen relationship – still prevails despite national policy initiatives which are intended to embrace more participatory approaches.

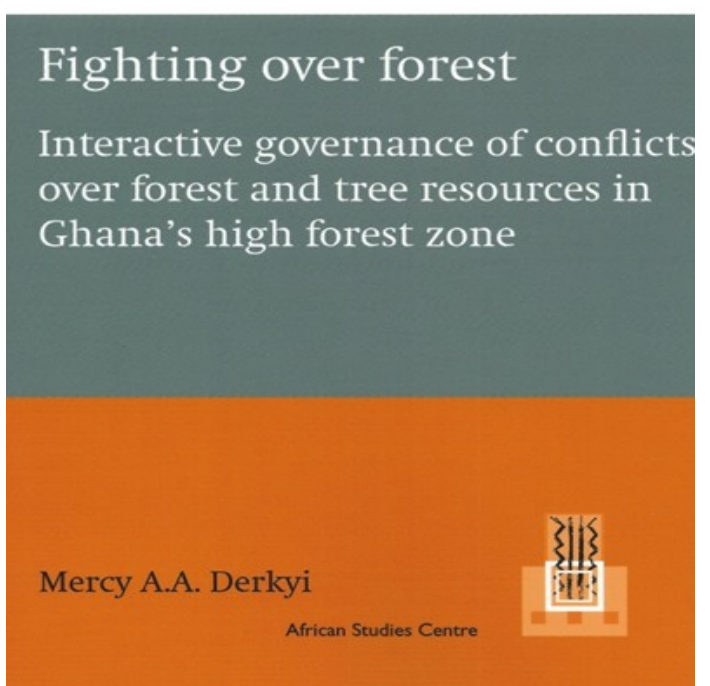
In her thesis, Derkyi bemoans the lack of strict enforcement of legal sanctions and low fines for forest offences in Ghana. She therefore calls for more effective cooperation between the Forestry Commission, the Ghana Police Service and the Judicial Service to improve forest law enforcement.

She also advocates a reform of the judiciary system in a way that recognises the importance of forest offences and argues that Ghana's Forestry Commission should be handed a prosecution mandate in order to facilitate the adjudication of forest offences.

She also recommends that the conflict management capability of frontline staff such as forest guards, district managers and (where applicable) customer service officers should be enhanced, as well as those of community leaders and timber operators. The conflict management role of traditional authorities also needs to be recognized and better utilised.

Derkyi makes a case for the integration of non-violent conflict management strategies into forest policy and management as a key to ensuring better forest governance. This requires the establishment of a specialised unit for forest conflict management within the Forestry Commission (FC) which could be integrated in the Legal Division of the FC.

This PhD study has been supported by TBI Ghana. It is part of the 'Governance for sustainable forest-related livelihoods' programme carried out by TBI Ghana, the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) at the University of Amsterdam and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.



A close-out workshop of the FAO/ACP-FLEGT project held

A workshop to formally end the implementation of the project aimed at linking local communities with forest concession holders to produce legal lumber for the domestic market was held on Wednesday December 19, 2012 at the Noda Hotel near Kumasi.

In January 2012, TBI Ghana began the implementation of the one-year project financed by the FAO under the ACP-FLEGT Support Programme. The objective of the project was to develop and pilot systems for linking local communities with forest concession holders to produce legal lumber for the domestic market. This was done by promoting stakeholder collaboration in resource access whilst strengthening structures and systems for legal compliance in the domestic lumber trade.

About forty (40) participants drawn from the timber industry, the Forestry Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, chainsaw operators, the Domestic Lumber Traders' Association and forest communities were on hand to share in key project results. Project outputs include developing models for partnership between artisanal millers and forest concession holders, developing monitoring system for tracking lumber meant for the domestic market and piloting system for supplying legal timber to the domestic market as a contribution to the FLEGT objectives.

The project also created awareness and offered requisite business training to over 460 persons from eight forest communities and relevant technical skills for about 80 chainsaw operators.

TBI Ghana witnessed an unparalleled support from project partners comprising the Timber Industry Development Division, Forest Services Division, Resource Management Support Centre, Timber Validation Division, Ghana Timber Association, Domestic Lumber Traders' Association, forest communities and District Assemblies.

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