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COASTAL SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES PROJECT

Quarterly Report

SECOND QUARTER – JANUARY 1 TO MARCH 31, 2016

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFOLU	Agroforestry and Other Land Uses
B-BOVID	Building Business on Values Integrity and Dignity
BMP	Best Management Practice(s)
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CREMA	Community Resources Management Association
CRMC	Community Resources Management Committee
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
CSLP	Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DA	District Assembly/ies
EDIF	Export Development Investment Fund (of Ghana)
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FBO	Faith Based Organizations
FC	Forestry Commission
FCM/FCMP	Fisheries and Coastal Management Program
FMNR	Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration
FORIG	Forestry Research Institute of Ghana
FSD	Forest Services Division (of the Forestry Commission)
FY	Fiscal (or Financial) Year
GAW	Greater Amanzule Wetland
GAWCCC	Greater Amanzule Wetland Community Conservation Committee
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHG	Green House Gases
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOG/GoG	Government of Ghana
GSCD	Ghana Supply Chain Development Project
ICFG	Integrated Coastal Fisheries and Management Project
IP	International Programs (of the USFS)
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IR	Intermediate Result
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LULC	Land Use/Land Cover
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METSS	Monitoring, Evaluation and Technical Support Services
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
NBSSI	National Board of Small Scale Industries
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
PAPA	Participating Agency Program Agreement
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPP	Public Private Partnership
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

RMSC	Resources Management Service Center
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SL	Sustainable Landscapes
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
STMA	Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly
TCPD	Town and Country Planning Department
TRACTOR	Transforming Rural Agricultural Communities Through Organic Re-engineering
UCC	University of Cape Coast
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USFS	United States Forest Service
USG	United States Government
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WD	Wildlife Division (of the Forestry Commission)
WR	Western Region
WRCF	Western Region Coastal Foundation

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW/SUMMARY

Program Name:	Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project
Activity Start Date and End Date:	October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2016
Name of Prime Implementing Partner:	United States Forest Service International Programs
Contract/Agreement Number:	AEG-T-00-07-00003
Name of Subcontractors / Sub-awardees:	None
Major Counterpart Organizations	Ghana Forestry Commission (Forest Services Division, Wildlife Division), Ghana Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana Town and Country Planning Departments
Geographic Coverage (cities and/or countries)	Six coastal districts of the Western Region of Ghana
Reporting Period:	January 1 to March 31, 2016

I.1 Program Description/Introduction

Ghana’s Western Region is one of the fastest growing areas of the country and in all of West Africa. Land use pressures are enormous, especially in the high population centers of the region’s six coastal districts. Demand for conversion of forests to agriculture, cash crop development, harvesting of mangroves and other forest species for charcoal and timber production, artisanal mining, and urban development all pose significant threats to forests in this region. High unemployment rates compound these pressures, exacerbating unsustainable natural resource management practices and reducing ecosystem services provided by the region’s forests.

Most land in the Western Region outside forest reserves and other protected areas has been deforested and converted to agriculture. The current situation is one of urgency—to find ways of taking pressure off the remaining reserves and to improve livelihoods and land management outside the reserves. Coupled with the human pressures on the landscape, a warming climate caused by increased atmospheric carbon dioxide poses significant risk to the landscape. In addition to increased temperatures, climate change is associated with jet stream fluctuations causing irregular, more extreme, and unusual weather patterns and events. Changing rainfall patterns and amounts can mean droughts in some areas and floods in others. Changing phenology, distributions of plant species, and rising sea levels are some of the potential adverse impacts on the region from climate change.

To address these growing threats, USAID/Ghana’s Economic Growth office has developed natural resource interventions in Ghana’s Western Region. USAID’s main initiative, the Fisheries and Coastal Management (FCM) Program, has four components: (i) strengthened enabling environment for decentralized fisheries and coastal governance, (ii): increased use of applied science to inform decision-making, law enforcement and the implementation of management plans, (iii) heightened public awareness of trends, challenges and successes in ecosystem management and stronger public demand for sustainable use and conservation, and (iv) improved management of marine and coastal natural resources for multiple benefits.

The US Forest Service, under a participating agency partnership agreement (PAPA) with USAID, manages one component of the FCM program, the Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP). It will contribute in some form to all four components but most of its emphasis is on the fourth component. Operating in the six coastal districts of Ghana’s resource-rich

Western Region (see Figure 1), the CSLP activities target landscape-level engagement with communities, non-governmental organizations, Government of Ghana agencies, the private sector, and international partners. The project's geographic area stretches from the Cote d'Ivoire border eastward through the Greater Amanzule wetlands complex, Cape Three Points, the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Area (STMA) and east to the Central Region border.

Figure 1. The six coastal districts in Ghana's Western Region.



The CSLP responds to the USAID Sustainable Landscapes (SL) Results Framework by focusing on Strategic Objective 1: Accelerate the transition to low emission development through investments in clean energy and sustainable landscapes. The SL interventions will support the second development objective of ensuring sustainable and broadly shared economic growth in Ghana under the USAID/Ghana Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). The goal of the strategy is to support the Government of Ghana in realizing its goal of becoming an established middle-income country by 2022.

To confront the growing threats mentioned above, the CSLP intends to improve carbon sequestration, forest management, and livelihoods in the six coastal districts of the Western Region. The overall long-term impact of the project will be to promote low emissions development in Ghana's Western Region by strengthening community-based natural resource management and monitoring. The project will focus on the coastal landscape, including mangroves, other wetlands, and forests and agricultural areas (within and outside protected areas) all of which are managed under a diversity of land tenure regimes.

Ghana has seen numerous interventions related to forest conservation in the past, many with only limited success. CSLP's primary activities are focused on community-level interactions that work to achieve low emissions development goals. One key component of the CSLP strategy is the application of a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) model—a social entrepreneurial concept that has already enjoyed much success in Ghana. It is employed by the CSLP as a novel vehicle to help encourage and promote activities that maintain and increase forest cover with native and existing tree species. The project's activities are being established within communities where there is an existing and functioning community governance body such as Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) or similar entities. This history of community collaboration provides an entry point to develop a community's capacity to launch their own VSLA and oversee loans to community members. The CSLP is applying the VSLA concept to provide incentives for farmers and landowners to incorporate more indigenous species

of trees on their land while helping provide seed funding for a revolving funding mechanism to work towards improved livelihoods.

With successful implementation, these efforts will contribute to increased employment, more diverse livelihoods, better land management of existing natural resources, increased soil fertility, and increased carbon stocks. Moreover, improved land management and livelihood diversity will reduce pressure on intact areas of forest reserve, protecting their biodiversity, allowing for ecotourism opportunities and enhancing the value of other ecosystem services within the value chains of the local communities.

1.1 Summary of Results to Date

Standard Indicators	Baseline FY 2014	Annual Target	Q1 FY16	Q2 FY16	Q3 FY16	Q4 FY16	Annual Performance Achieved to the End of Reporting Period (%)	On Target? Y/N
4.8-7 Quantity of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, measured in <u>metric tons of CO₂e</u>, reduced, sequestered or avoided as a result of USG assistance	0	5,000,000	-- ¹	4,250,000			85	Y
4.8.1-6 Number of <u>people</u> with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable NRM and conservation as a result of USG assistance	0	900	429	420			94	Y
4.8.1-26 Number of <u>hectares</u> of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved NRM as a result of USG assistance	0	1,300	483	178			51	Y
4.8.1-29 Number of person <u>hours</u> of training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation supported by USG assistance	0	8,000	154	2,795			37	N
4.8.2-14 Number of <u>institutions</u> with improved capacity to address climate change issues as a result of USG assistance	0	70	9	25			48	Y
4.8.2-29 Number of person <u>hours</u> of training completed in climate change as a result of USG assistance	0	4,500	228	1,544			39	N

¹ Protocol for estimations being developed with support from FORIG and the RMSC

2. ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

2.1 Progress Narrative

CSLP's activities during this quarter focused on the planting preparations for the major rainy season that coincides with the third quarter. There were training activities, study tours and skills development all geared towards reinforcing the importance and value of the interventions being promoted by the CSLP. There were also joint field monitoring activities executed with local government officials to help them appreciate the challenges faced by farmers in their areas of jurisdiction. Monitoring of last season's planted seedlings continued during the quarter to help ensure that the farmers are nurturing planted, as well as select naturally regenerated species, to maturity. The exercise also helps the CSLP to continue to learn and adapt its lessons and to guide this year's mode of delivery of seedlings to farmers for planting.

The major achievements of the quarter include:

- Fifty-one new farmers trained in “The Introduction to Beekeeping” and “How to Set Up and Manage an Apiary”. Apiary establishment adds directly to areas of avoided deforestation and degradation (ADD) as the hives are established within secondary forest patches that would otherwise be cleared as part of traditional shifting agricultural practices.
- Ninety-five farmers received training in “The Harvesting and Processing of Honey and other Hive Products” so as to be better able to produce a valuable economic product through their beekeeping efforts.
- More than 100 farmers from the Greater Amanzule Wetland area received training in climate smart agriculture and integrated pest management. These trainings are aimed at helping them produce vegetables with minimal (or zero) use of hazardous chemicals and in an environmentally friendly, climate change resilient manner.
- Seven climate smart vegetable farmer groups have been formed and have begun a series of trainings to help them function well as groups and to help them acquire necessary business skills to eventually serve as vegetable production businesses.
- The Adubrim community nursery has been selected to produce all tree seedlings needed by CSLP farmers this year. More than 16,000 polybags have been filled with soil with seeds of *Acacia mangium*, emire, edinam, and kusia sown in many pots at the nursery.
- The first meeting in Yabiw leading to the development of a wetland management plan for Yabiw/Anto-Tre area has taken place which should result in improved management of key mangrove forests in the Western Region.
- Fifty-two CSLP farmers and three GoG officers (MoFA and the Ghana COCOBOD) participated in a training visit to agroforestry farmers in the Amenfi-West District of the Western Region.
- One additional VSLA was started, and awareness meetings took place in 11 communities in the Greater Amanzule Wetland area. CSLP is waiting for these community members to place themselves into groups prior to establishing additional new VSLAs.
- Two hundred and eighty-two members belonging to 12 established VSLAs have undergone training in record keeping to help them track progress and make informed choices in their various ventures while increasing financial literacy.
- Six CRMCs, four climate change clubs and three VSLAs were trained in the causes and impacts of climate change and importance of wildlife to biodiversity.
- Following the formation of 12 community conservation committees for the first phase of the Greater Amanzule Wetland collaboration with Hen Mpoano, two district conservation committees have been formed in Ellembelle and Jomoro while orientation activities have started in 11 additional communities for the second phase of the partnership.

Intermediate Result 1: Improved Livelihoods through Enhanced Natural Resources Management Practices

Table 1. Planned Activities for IR 1

Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Achievements	Outstanding Activity
Sub IR 1.1: Provide capacity building for targeted community groups to effectively manage and conserve priority areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beekeepers have improved skill in harvesting and processing of honey and other products • Farmers in the Greater Amanzule Wetland area introduced to Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) • Climate smart vegetable producer groups formed • Improved capacity of climate smart vegetable producer groups in entrepreneurship, group dynamics and supply chain analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95 beekeepers (79 males and 16 females) have received initial training in the harvesting and processing of honey and other hive products • Two trainings in the value of CSA and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) have been conducted for groups in Kamgbunli • Seven CSA vegetable farmer groups have been formed in four districts involving a total of 129 members • Three rounds of training have been conducted for 7 CSA vegetable groups on the importance of working together as a group and the development of a group constitution 	
Sub IR 1.2: Identify, develop and demonstrate appropriate agroforestry and forest landscape restoration methods(technology and practices) for native ecosystems and improved livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery established to produce seedlings for planting • Planted trees are monitored to assess survival rate • Charcoal producers of Shama District adopt Best Management Practices (BPM) • The chief and people of Yabiw adopt and implement mangrove management plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 16,000 polybags have been filled with soil and arranged at the Adubrim nursery site • Monitoring is on-going in 13 communities • A monitoring event was organized to a number of woodlot sites in Shama District in collaboration with the Shama District Development Planner • A first community meeting took place in Yabiw to discuss the process and set the tone for the development of mangrove management plan 	
Sub IR 1.3: Promote incentives to implement NRM for improving livelihoods, biodiversity and carbon sequestration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected CSLP farmer champions share experiences with other tree grower-farmers in the Amenfi West district • Improved charcoal kiln piloted in the Shama district • More VSLAs formed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifty-two CSLP farmers (including 12 women) participated in a field visit to agroforestry farmers in the Amenfi-West District of the Western Region • Charcoal producers preferences evaluated and identified as that for small to medium sized mobile metal kilns 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VSLAs function effectively • VSLA members are conversant with record keeping and encouraged to keep records • VSLA members are aware of possible link with financial institutions for their mutual benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One more VSLA was started during the quarter in Bokro in the Nzema East District. Introductory meetings have been organized in 11 GAW communities to create awareness on VSLA • 3 VSLAs completed share out during the quarter • 282 VSLA members (88 males and 194 females) received training in record keeping • Five of the prominent banks/financial institutions operating within the Jomoro, Ellebelle districts engaged 	
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Beekeeping, apiaries, and honey harvesting. Following the installation of 136 beehives within the CSLP communities across the five districts (Shama, Ahanta West, Nzema East, Ellebelle and Jomoro), interest in the program has grown. As reported last quarter, the CSLP stand at the 2015 Jomoro District National Farmers’ Day at Azuleti attracted many people from outside of the CSLP communities. Fifty-one new participants (five being women) have also been trained under the CSLP’s basic beekeeping module. Another seven people (two from the CSLP grantee, Hen Mpoano and five from MOFA) were also provided this training so they could better support farmers conducting beekeeping activities in the region. Of the 51 new farmers just mentioned, 28 are from the coastal forest zone communities and 23 are from the Greater Amanzule Wetland communities.

Having agreed to the condition that they need to reserve some amount of land to be developed into forest where the hives will be kept, these 51 participants were trained in:

- The basics of beekeeping which includes introducing beekeeping as a livelihood option with a win-win outcome to improve natural resources management while providing economic benefits to practitioners; and,
- Provided basic knowledge and skills for interested persons to be able to successfully set-up and manage beehives for economic and ecological benefits.

During the quarter a separate training was also provided to 95 (including 16 women) out of the 136 farmers who received and established beehives. This activity, which had the assistance of an outside beekeeper consultant, focused on practical hands-on information and experiences that trained participants in:

- How to harvest honey and bees wax from Kenyan top-bar beehives;
- How to process and store good quality honey; and,
- How to process good quality bees wax.

The training in honey harvesting and processing was done in three tiers with average of 33 participants per training.

Conservation agriculture and vegetable production groups. Following up on CSLP grantee Hen Mpoano’s livelihood assessment in the Greater Amanzule Wetland (GAW) communities, the project is supporting a group



Photo 1. Participants in a climate smart vegetable training in Kambunli

of vegetable-producing farmers in Kamgbunli (Ellembelle District) to adopt climate smart production methods. This group of farmers (83 women, 24 men) completed two trainings under the CSLP CSA modules: one on agroforestry practices and the other on integrated pest management practices (IPM).

By the end of this quarter, seven climate smart vegetable production groups have been formed in four districts (see Table 1 in Annex C). Total membership is 129 farmers; women make up almost 60 percent of the members. The objectives of these production groups are two fold: (a) to help members pool production to better meet economies of scale at levels requested by the market, and (b) to lessen the overall costs of their production activities. A formal group is also more likely to attract support from some service providers such as banks and supply chain transporters than members would be able to access as individuals.

The CSLP is working to help build each groups' capacity cohesively. Initially, three rounds of training modules have been designed and conducted for the seven groups. These include:

- The importance of working together as a group;
- Group constitution development; and,
- Considering vegetable production as a business.

The CSLP recognizes the fact that in the early formative period of any group, the group's leadership capacity will determine whether they will be successful. Efforts are made in the first module to examine and discuss leadership attributes and to have participants brainstorm the desirable and undesirable qualities in the leaders for certain positions such as the chairman, secretary and treasurer. The group constitution training is then fashioned along with desired roles of the leaders.

Subsequent trainings will be conducted to enable them to analyze the value chain and make choices in connecting with various stakeholders for the benefit of the group and the members as a whole to better meet economies of scale to provide greater quantities to meet market demands. The CSLP anticipates forming more groups in the coming quarters.

Tree nursery production. Based on the previous years' experience, the CSLP decided to concentrate all its tree seedling efforts in one site at Adubrim in Jomoro District. It has been targeted to produce 20,000 seedlings for FY 2016. There have been challenges this year including limited availability of water and topsoil, but as of March 2016:

- The site is cleared and the land prepared;
- Soils for the polypots consists of:
 - Decomposed sawdust conveyed from Aiyinase to the nursery and
 - Loamy soil transported from other sites;
- 40,000 polypots have been purchased and supplied for potting;
- The nursery site is fenced with bamboo and net to protect seedlings from livestock;
- Shade sheds are constructed;
- More than 16,000 polypots filled with mixed soil and arranged; and,
- Quantities of seeds of emire, prekese, edinam, *Acacia mangium*, kusia have been sown and more than 5,000 seedlings already transplanted into arranged polypots.



Photo 2. Adubrim community nursery

In addition, there are 4,400 seedlings including ofram, mahogany, emire, prekese, kyenkyen and *Cassia siamiam* from last year's community nurseries which will be available for planting this year as they were too young to be transplanted last year.

Other seeds requested by CSLP farmers are also being sought for procurement. These include hyedua (*Daniellia ogea*), *Cassia (Senna) siamia* and additional *Acacia mangium*. The project is concerned about not being able to meet farmer demand for seedlings this year, as seeds are scarce. Commercial sources, including those used to supply the Ghana Forestry Commission's nurseries, are reporting a severe scarcity due to extremely dry conditions to date and a poor seed production year.

Tree seedling monitoring on improved NRM sites. Monitoring of tree seedlings planted last planting season is a continuous process with significant support from the CSLP Community Assistants (CAs). While there are five communities (namely Fiasolo, Akwidaa, Tweakor II, Dwomo and Krobo where monitoring has not yet begun), monitoring is on-going in 13 communities. Within the 13 communities that received seedlings, the survival rate is generally good, ranging from between 70 and 93 percent. There are a couple of communities where the survival is less than 50 percent. This may be due to planting at the end of the rainy season or other factors. CSLP staff will work in the next quarter to help ensure better survival for any additional trees planted this year in those communities.

From the monitoring, it is also known that 181 farmers are practicing farmer-managed natural regeneration. Significant numbers of naturally regenerated trees are being nurtured and include cover species such as *Milicia excelsa* (odum), *Terminalia ivorensis* (emire), *Khaya species* (mahogany), *Nauclea diderrichii* (kusia) and *Terminalia superba* (ofram).

Improved charcoal production. The CSLP organized a monitoring visit to the sites of some of the trainees who are practicing charcoal burning from woodlots in the Shama District. The trip included staff of the Shama District Assembly Town and Country Planning Department. They assessed the extent to which farmers are implementing the practices they have learned from the CSLP's best practices training and to help District staff to familiarize themselves with the farmers, their activities, and to understand their challenges so that they may incorporate them in planning efforts at the assembly.

The monitoring visit revealed that some farmers are adopting the recommended practices including:

- Zero burning during land preparation to encourage biodiversity conservation and controlled emission;
- Adopting recommended seedling spacing; and
- Nurturing naturally regenerated trees into maturity.

As further follow-up to its best management practices for woodlot management to charcoal producers in the Shama District, CSLP will work next quarter to introduce an improved charcoal production kiln. The practitioners have told the project that they favor the adoption of a small to medium-sized mobile metal kiln.

Mangrove restoration and management. Following the awareness raising efforts on the importance of mangroves that included video shows, the people of Yabiw in Shama District requested assistance from the CSLP to re-plant a 21-hectare portion of a degraded mangrove site next to the community (reported last quarter). They have since decided to develop community rules and regulations guiding the site and have requested the project's assistance to develop a management plan for selected mangrove and wetland areas in the community.

An initial community meeting involving community elders and opinion leaders included discussion and agreement on the premise upon which the management plan will be developed. The meeting began with a 30 minute video that showed the importance of wetlands and some wetland restoration activities in India. The meeting was followed with a discussion on some of the benefits of the wetland to community members in the past, taking advantage of the presence of the elders in the community.

By the end of the meeting, community members agreed to a plan that would:

- Form a volunteer group to oversee the management of the mangroves;

- Provide community sensitization and education on the ecological importance of mangroves to other communities bordering the wetland;
- Engage two other communities that border the wetlands in the management process; and,
- Conduct radio education and other announcements to stop encroachers, especially from Shama district.

During the quarter, the CSLP moderated a training of trainers activity aimed at mangrove plantation establishment and management implemented by SNV under the USAID-funded Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP). This training took advantage of Shama District's experience in mangrove restoration and the CSLP's presence in these activities.

In a related development during the quarter, the CSLP collaborated in a planning effort with the USAID-funded University of Cape Coast Fisheries and Coastal Management Capacity Building Support Project and two local NGOs (Hen Mpoano and Friends of the Nation). As noted in Section 7 below, the CSLP will engage two communities, including Yabiw, where its activities presently engage junior and senior high school clubs in climate change awareness activities. In this instance, the CSLP will work with the UCC project to help roll out a long-term program that directly engages high schools and their communities in wetland monitoring and reporting thereby providing practical science experience and greater understanding of natural resource management issues.

Agroforestry training tour for CSLP champion farmers. Fifty-two farmers (including 12 women farmers) participated in a CSLP-sponsored experiential training tour for three days to sites in the Wassa Amenfi-West District and Tarkwa in the Tarkwa Nsuaem District. The trainees interacted with farmers that receive support from Samartex (a private company) to grow timber trees and non-timber forest products and produce honey. They also interacted with members of the Sureso-Pebeaseman CREMA where they are practicing cocoa agroforestry. In Tarkwa, they interacted with Mr. Nsiah who has a cocoa agroforestry operation and has made about GH¢10,000.00 from the sale of harvested mature chew stick (nsokor) and nsokor seedlings.



Photo 3. CSLP Champion Farmers sharing lessons in an agroforestry/cocoa farm in Wassa Amenfi-West District

The objectives for the training tour for the CSLP's top-performing farmers included:

- To see first-hand examples of desired tree species to be integrated in a cocoa agroforestry system and also discuss the often misunderstood concepts of tree spacing in the system;
- Examine the establishment of a mixed species plantation near a natural forest;
- Discuss with land stewards, the challenges with managing trees on farms;
- To observe the siting of apiaries and associated management practices; and,
- To understand the need for quality control in the production of honey.

The champion farmers came away more excited and motivated to continue with their own tree planting, especially upon learning that growing trees assured Mr. Nsiah access to the land and saved him from losing access to the land. In fact, some of the participants have started to nurture the idea of acquiring more land and dedicate it to tree planting and agroforestry.

Village Savings and Loan Associations. One more VSLA was started in Bokro in the Nzema East District during the quarter, becoming the 20th VSLA facilitated by CSLP. The total membership of these associations now exceeds 460 members with 66 percent of the membership being women. Table

2 in Annex C provides the most current update on the CSLP-supported VSLAs and their financial statistics.

Capacity building training for the VSLAs continued during the quarter. Ten of the groups have yet to reach the final module—the share out of an association’s profits. Six groups have attained this goal and have re-started the next cycle. Three more will reach the share out stage in the third quarter of FY 2016. One group that shared out during the second quarter mobilized and repaid the highest loan fund to date – over GH¢ 14,000, an equivalent to more than US\$ 3,700.

Members from 12 VSLAs (including 194 women and 88 men), have undergone training in record keeping related to their livelihood activities (mainly agriculture). Many of the trainees acknowledged the importance of keeping records and have committed themselves to begin adopting the suggested best practices. The low level of literacy is a significant challenge and is a limiting factor for many. Some who are affected by literacy have decided to use their relatives such as spouses and children in schools to help them keep records.

Five of the most reliable and widespread financial institutions within the Ellembele and the Jomoro districts were visited by the CSLP to investigate the possibility of the project-supported VSLAs interacting with them to enhance their benefits. The projects wanted specifically to learn if the VSLAs could lodge their excess funds with these institutions and gain some interest, or obtain loans to enhance their funds. The lending rates at these institutions range between 30% and 36% per annum while the earnings on savings per annum ranges between 2.5% to 19.5%. As a result of these informational visits, the CSLP is cautious in promoting such a link. The VSLA lending rates range between 2% to 5% while the individual association savings rate per annum sometimes exceeds 26 percent – far more than a bank is capable of. Therefore, it is not attractive to lodge VSLA funds with the banks, or take loans from them, unless purely as a security measure for group savings. The CSLP is continuing to look at other options to ensure greater security with the VSLA funds, including discussions with other VSLA’s in Ghana supported by USAID-funded projects to learn best practices.

N.B. The success stories at the end of this report include references to the CSLP’s Village Savings and Loan Associations.

Intermediate Result 2: strengthened Engagements and Coordination on Sustainable Landscape Management

Table 2. Planned Activities for IR 2

Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Achievements	Outstanding Activity
Sub IR 2.1: Improve public awareness on the relationship between ecosystem services and livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness created for members of school environmental clubs on natural resources management and climate change • More Climate Change Club formed • CREMA Executives are conversant with the importance of wildlife and conserve biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Climate Change Clubs, received exposition into the causes and impact of climate change • Two new Climate Change Clubs were formed • 6 trainings were organized for 6 out of the 20 CRMCs of the Cape Three Points CREMA on the “Importance of Wildlife” 	
Sub IR 2.2 Promote stakeholder engagement and coordination at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Western Region Stakeholders meeting organized and members updated on CSLP activities • District/Local Government Stakeholders participate in CSLP field monitoring and are briefed on CSLP activities • Traditional chiefs and elders are updated on CSLP activities in their communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Western Regional technical stakeholders meeting was organized at the office of the Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP) • Monitoring visits were organized for the staff of Jomoro, Nzema East, and Shama Districts CSLP farmers’ activities • An update meeting was organized for chiefs and elders from all four CSLP communities from the Ahanta West District 	
Sub IR 2.3: Promote platforms that will support sustainable landscapes management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VSLA members are aware of causes, impacts and mitigation measures of climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three VSLAs were taken through training on the causes and manifestations of climate change 	

Climate change clubs. The Asonti Municipal Junior High School and Adusuazo District Assembly Junior High School climate change clubs were taken through climate change lessons in separate meetings. Their teachers, who are responsible for the respective clubs, facilitated these events. The teachers had training support from the CSLP Communication Officer and the use of the CSLP simplified climate change education brochure. Topics covered included the concept of climate change, signs of climate change, how climate change occurs, and what climate change can do to our ecosystems.

Two new climate change clubs, the MANS District Assembly Junior High School in Jomoro District and Adubrim District Assembly Junior High School in Ellembelle District, were formed during the quarter bringing the total to eight clubs. Both new school clubs have developed action plans for the coming term that include some educational tours and cleaning activities in their schools and communities. Four climate change clubs from three districts were taken on training visits to the two B-BOVID/TRACTOR sites in Pretsia and Angu in Mphohor District. The objective of the training

visits was to expose the school children to agroforestry, biodiversity and farm livelihoods concepts. One hundred and sixty-four members, including 90 females, participated in the one-day training.

Five climate change clubs also received training in the importance of wildlife conservation. Staff of the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission facilitated the trainings that covered issues such as the role of wildlife in seed dispersal, cleaning the environment through scavenging, and reducing the incidence of pests. They also covered portions of the Ghanaian law such as protected animals during the closed season, and requirement of a license to hunt. The training included 251 participants of which 119 were female.

CREMA training with the Wildlife Division. Another training was organized with the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission for six Community Resource Management Committees (CRMCs) of the Cape Three Points CREMA (in Ahanta West District). In total, 67 men and 46 women participated. The training sought to promote better understanding among members of the CRMCs on the importance of wildlife and the invaluable environmental services they provide, apart from their commonly known value as food. It is hoped that they will share what they learned with family and community members.

Other stakeholders. A Western Region Stakeholders meeting to update and discuss the most recent



Photo 4. CSLP Regional Stakeholder Meeting in Anaji

CSLP actions took place during the quarter. Representatives from six institutions (the Regional Minister's Office, Town and Country Planning Department, Environmental Protection Agency, Economic Planning Unit of the Western Region Coordinating Council, Ministry/Department of Food and Agriculture and National Board for Small Scale Industries) participated in the 2-hour meeting held at the CSLP office. There was considerable discussion about the activities involved in honey and organic vegetable production and how to market for premium prices as an incentive for farmers to

continue to adopt the practices. The stakeholders also expressed appreciation about the establishment of the school clubs in order to make them more aware and responsible for the natural environment.

The CSLP organized joint monitoring visits with some local government staff in the Shama, Nzema East, and Jomoro districts. The purpose of these events was to facilitate and enhance the knowledge of the district officials in connection with CSLP activities in their respective districts, to help them learn of the challenges being faced by farmers pursuing their livelihood ventures, and to facilitate the rare opportunity for officials to have discussions with the farmers while on their farm sites. The Shama and Nzema visits involved the Planning Officers; the visit in Jomoro District included the District Chief Executive.



Photo 5. Shama District's Assistant Development Officer meets with CSLP-trained beekeepers

There were also two meetings involving five district assemblies who gathered for updates on the CSLP in their respective districts. The first meeting in Ellembele District included officers from Ellembele, Jomoro and Nzema East Assemblies. The second meeting was with officers from Ahanta West and Shama District Assemblies. The joint nature of these meetings provided the opportunity for people to compare CSLP events in one district to others. The presence of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the districts' Business Advisory Center staff at these meetings also provided greater networking and collaborative opportunities in areas such as beekeeping and conservation agriculture.

The chiefs and elders of the four CSLP communities in the Ahanta West District also met with the project to receive updates on the ongoing activities. The CSLP finds that these meetings with traditional authorities are often very valuable as the chiefs help to obtain endorsements for CSLP community level actions and, in some cases, to help underscore and enforce rules and policies beneficial to positive environmental action. The chiefs often make specific requests for assistance such as support to replant degraded mangroves in one community and tree planting efforts to help demarcate forest reserve boundaries, which also help CSLP identify additional potential avenues for collaboration.

Climate change training for VSLAs. Three VSLAs in three districts received training in the causes and manifestation of climate change in Ghana. Sixteen men and thirty-seven women participated in these trainings that focused on the concept of climate change, the signs of climate change, how climate change occurs and its causes, and what climate change does to our ecosystems.

Intermediate Result 3: Enhanced Capacity for Ecosystem Services Monitoring

Table 3. Planned Activities for IR 3

Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Achievements	Outstanding Activity
Sub IR 3.1 Provide capacity building on forest and wetland carbon and other ecosystems services measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced sharing and lesson learning with institutions involved in spatial planning Protocol for carbon measurement developed and carbon measured for the CSLP intervention communities Carbon stock measured for various land cover types in CSLP intervention sites in collaboration with AFOLU Ghana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More insight into spatial planning management with attendant challenges within the districts has been obtained Carbon measurement protocol has been drafted and is under review In collaboration with RMSC and FORIG, standards have been agreed for the estimation of carbon stocks 	
Sub IR 3.2: Collect and utilize biophysical and socio economic data to inform land-use planning and decision-making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CSLP intervention sites are mapped All stakeholders work together to manage identified green open areas for the benefit of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 178.34 hectares of sites were mapped Some open areas identified 	
Sub IR 3.3: Integrating lessons learned on national level jurisdictional monitoring, reporting and verification systems into a regional REDD+ system framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced linkage and sharing with national lead institutions in climate change issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CSLP, represented by its Spatial Planning and Environmental Services Specialist, presented a paper at the Alexander von Humboldt Seminar held at the University of Ghana in Accra 	

Capacity building in spatial planning. Engagements with the planners across the six coastal districts revealed that there is little institutional activity in spatial planning within the area. Apart from the daily work of the government institutions, Town and Country Planning Department and the Economic Development Unit, there have been only three other spatial planning efforts in the area. Two of these were former USAID-funded projects, the Integrated Coastal Fisheries and Governance (ICFG) Project and its legacy, Hen Mpoano, and the Local Governance and Decentralization Program (LOGODEP). The third was funded by Tullow Oil and implemented by Spatial Dimensions, a consulting firm based now only in Accra. Today, there are no active spatial planning projects or targeted activities in the area. Most of the TCPDs are marking time with meager activities linked to the districts' and the region's Medium Term Development Plans until the economy improves and this year's national elections are complete.

Each of these institutions has had different focal points in spatial planning elements in the region. Most worked over the years to build the capacity of the local government institutions in spatial planning. In effect, all the spatial planning data are lodged with the local government offices often with differing levels of access. Some are available electronically, but most reside on shelves and desks as hard copies—the Spatial Development Framework for the region, the Structural Plans for each district, and the Local Plans for most of the communities.

The CSLP has been sifting through these various plans and held discussions with planning officials and traditional authorities in five of the districts (the STMA is considered a separate case). The objective of the exercise is to identify where the CSLP can best assist these entities with their planning efforts linked to the project's activities at the community level. All the districts named "open areas" as the areas where the CSLP's assistance would be most valuable. Unfortunately, the term "open area" is broadly used to cover several land uses including football fields, recreational areas, sacred grooves, and flood buffer zones. Within the district capitals, most of the open areas have been utilized as built areas. There still remain open areas but many are in undeveloped areas and therefore, as development reaches such areas, they require some engagement with the chiefs who are the custodians of the land to keep them as traditional open areas. The chiefs usually lease out all open areas to become built areas. CSLP will continue to engage with the chiefs to identify sacred grooves, most of which are being lost, and advocate for their restoration and preservation so as to maintain these open, green spaces.

The district planners have also identified basic GIS and remote sensing training as areas where additional capacity is needed. This complements the project's work with mapping land use and land cover types on farms and the Greater Amanzule Wetlands areas in particular. As more data and land use attribute information is collected, the CSLP and its grantee, Hen Mpoano, want to work closely with district level officials to be certain that they can understand the practical nature and usefulness of these data in their everyday planning activities. The information being collected by the CSLP and Hen Mpoano is in a format that is compatible with the district's database and software. Next quarter, the CSLP and Hen Mpoano will provide a 3-day training in each of the five districts to re-acquaint the district staff with GIS data and remote sensing and guide them through the uses of maps and software using district data and hands-on exercises. The training should also help to identify other gaps where the project can assist with practical, hands-on training.

Preserving green space in the STMA. In the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA), the stakeholder group led by the Metropolitan Planner has identified five "open and green" areas on which to focus. The group has also received approval from the Metropolitan Chief Executive to begin actions under collaboration with the CSLP, which will help bring these sites under more formal management.

Collecting LULC data and estimating GHG emissions avoided with CSLP activities. The CSLP developed a draft protocol during the quarter for the estimation of carbon stocks in areas where project interventions occur. With advice from the Ghana Forestry Commission's Resources Management Support Center (RMSC) and the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG), the procedures developed reconfigure and provide a clearer estimate for greenhouse gas (GHG) equivalents of carbon found in the coastal forest landscape of the six districts where the project works. The protocol utilizes research and data from the Ghana Forest Preservation Program's effort¹ to provide estimates of CO₂e for carbon stocks estimated from destructive sampling techniques across various land cover classes in Ghana's nine climatic zones. The program's research has published a look-up table for Mt of CO₂e per hectare by source of carbon for each land use class within each of the climatic zones. The carbon pool sources include aboveground, belowground, deadwood, litter, non-tree and soil. The CSLP applies these per hectare values directly to the land use/land cover

¹ PASCO. 2013. Mapping of forest cover and carbon stock in Ghana. FC-RMSC, CSIR-FORIG and CSIR-SRI, Ghana. 218p.

classes it maps for each farm or community engaged in its activities. In the Greater Amanzule Wetland area, working with Hen Mpoano, the estimates are being applied to farmland and to mangrove/wetland areas. Numerous scientific sources have noted that CO₂e values for mangrove wetlands are substantially higher than equivalent values from upland forest areas. This has direct bearing on the co-management activities with the GAW communities especially when discussing REDD+ implications of avoided emissions.

The project is sharing the protocol document with relevant stakeholders for review, and once endorsed, will use it as the guide for estimating GHG emissions avoided in the future. In the meantime, the CSLP has used the estimated CO₂e equivalents calculated for the moist evergreen climatic zone that encompasses the six coastal districts of the Western Region to revise the project's target for the GHG emissions reduced, sequestered or avoided in FY 2016. This is noted in the indicator tables accompanying this report.

During the quarter, 178 hectares were mapped as CSLP intervention areas. The land use/land cover classes were identified and particular attributes noted. These data were also applied to the CO₂e equivalents estimated for the quarter according to the procedures just noted above.

National level interactions. The CSLP participated in the Alexander von Humboldt Seminar held at the University of Ghana in January 2016. The seminar was held under the auspices of the Alexander von Humboldt (AvH) Fellowship in Germany and was coordinated by Professor Samuel Adiku, the AvH Ambassador in Ghana. The theme of the seminar was “Reducing Ghana’s Carbon Footprint: Your Role in Your Sphere of Influence”. It discussed how each person is responsible for global climate change and how to mitigate these impacts. Participants were primarily scientists from academic and research institutions in Ghana. The CSLP Ecosystems Services Specialist gave a presentation on the drivers of deforestation in the west coast areas of Ghana and discussed what the CSLP is doing to help reduce emissions within the area.

Building capacity for ecosystems management in the Greater Amanzule Wetlands.

Table 4: Greater Amanzule Wetland (GAW) Conservation Activities Achieved

Activities to be Implemented	Expected Output	Achievements	Outstanding Activity
Identify 2 broad groups of communities and/or community clusters	12 communities selected, Phase I; 11 communities for Phase II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community orientation training started in Phase II communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More orientation trainings will be carried out with the Phase II communities
Formation of community conservation committees (GAWCCCs)	23 community level structures in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orientation and training visits to all 23 communities 12 community conservation committees formed 12 committees engaged in participatory resources mapping 	
Identification of livelihood options	Livelihood options identified and implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 farmers from 2 GAW communities linked with TRACTOR for support in cassava production Conservation agriculture training initiated in one GAW community; 100+ participants VSLA concept introduced in 11 communities 	
Formation of district wetlands conservation committees	District Wetland Conservation Committees operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two district wetland conservation committees have been formed in Jomoro and Ellembelle Districts 	

The Greater Amanzule Wetland (GAW) activity is implemented through a grant to Hen Mpoano. The activities under the grant are divided into two phases that divide 23 communities into two groups

across the districts of Jomoro and Ellembelle that encompass the majority of the GAW area. The first phase, started in October 2015, was comprised of 12 communities from the two districts. The second phase, with the same objective and activities as the first phase, brings in the other 11 communities. This division was done to ease the administrative burden of the implementation. It also allowed for challenges to be met, dealt with and learned from, at a simpler scale. By the end of the second quarter of FY 2016, most of the Phase I community activities had experienced the first cycle of planned activities and communities in Phase II were also beginning with their first cycle of planned activities.

One part of the orientation trainings was a nighttime video presentation facilitated jointly by CSLP and Hen Mpoano. The trainings, organized in each of the 11 Phase II communities, sought each community's overall perceptions on the management of its wetland/mangrove areas. Then, following the video that describes their importance as a provider of ecosystem services and as the basis for community livelihoods, discussions were facilitated to help understand what the community can do, or wants to do, about their wetland after having viewed more about their importance and seen what others are doing. The overall goal was to establish the link between the livelihoods of the people and the wetland, particularly mangroves.



Photo 6. Greater Amanzule community members identify mangrove areas on a photo in a participatory resource mapping exercise

All 12 Phase I community committees met at least twice during the quarter. The meetings were held to discuss and help resolve any challenges they faced and to plan the next steps that included drafting a constitution to guide their activities. The communities also carried out a preparatory activity leading to the development of their management plans through community participatory wetland resource mapping. This included demarcating the extent of the various wetland vegetation resources on hard copies of aerial photos. These will be verified on the ground with GPS units and collecting the spatial data in mapped form. This ground truthing will be started in the next quarter for Phase I communities.

Following the assessment of potential livelihood options in the Phase I communities in the GAW, four livelihood options are being pursued. These include cassava production and processing, beekeeping, climate smart vegetable production and village savings and loans associations. Through its association with B-BOVID/TRACTOR, the CSLP and Hen Mpoano have linked 25 cassava farmers with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to provide them with improved cassava planting material. TRACTOR has helped to train them in the land preparation and planting.

Under the other livelihood activities, the CSLP trained 21 GAW farmers (including two women) during the quarter, in introduction to beekeeping and setting up and managing apiaries. In another community, 108 farmers (78 women) were provided training in climate smart agriculture and integrated pest management. All 11 Phase I communities in the GAW were introduced to the village savings and loan association idea. Many of the 485 participants (including 222 women) showed significant interest in forming associations to be trained with CSLP assistance. These will begin to be organized in the next quarter so that the self-selection process can begin.

Consultative meetings for the GAW's conservation and management were also conducted with the Jomoro and Ellembelle District Assemblies. The meetings involved all the heads of departments of both assemblies and noted that the existing environmental sub-committee has a very broad mandate ranging from solid waste to extractive industries. As a result, wetland issues receive a very low level of attention. To improve the situation, the assemblies resolved to form a special advisory sub-committee that will report to the existing environment and extractive sub-committees in each of the

respective districts. During the quarter, the two advisory committees were formed and a terms of reference developed to help guide their actions. Their major task is to ensure that the Greater Amanzule Wetland receives the desired prominence it deserves in the operations of the district assembly and liaise between the assembly, the traditional council and the communities to ensure sustainable management for the benefit of all. Hen Mpoano, with support from the CSLP, will continue to facilitate communication among the sub-committees, the community conservation committees and all the other stakeholders.

2.2 Implementation challenges

The CSLP's geographic area of operation is wide and this continues to pose logistical challenges in terms of vehicle allocation for the various activities being supported and in moving people around the landscape.

There is a general challenge with seed procurement. The institutions such as FORIG and Samartex who have been sources of seeds for us are reporting non-availability of seeds this year. This is attributed, to some extent, to linkages with the El Nino cycle, drought conditions and a below normal year for tree seed production. The CSLP is looking at alternatives including increasing production of seedlings for which there are enough seeds. This also means working with the farmers who had previously demanded the now unavailable species.

Most of the interventions of CSLP are geared towards behavior change and one such intervention is the VSLA that encourages savings among colleagues to support their ventures. Despite the fact that people are accruing benefits from the VSLA, they still require some gentle handholding by the CSLP VSLA Specialist. In effect, the rate of change of behavior is slow but the project is continuing to see good progress.

Partners in the local government offices lack the resources needed for them to attain effective collaboration. In some cases, they are limited in number of staff, and in other cases, they are not mobile and therefore can only move when CSLP is available to provide such assistance which limits their ability to be actively engaged in communities.

3. INTEGRATION OF CROSSCUTTING ISSUES AND USAID FORWARD PRIORITIES

3.1 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment

CSLP cherishes the opportunity of the VSLAs to attract women to become part of the project interventions. During the quarter, the CSLP Administrative and Finance Specialist took time to participate in some of the trainings for the VSLAs in record keeping. The women who, on average, form 70% or more of the VSLA membership, were excited to see a fellow woman as part of the facilitation team and encouraging them in their efforts.

3.2 Sustainability Mechanisms

The training tour organized for CSLP champions to fellow agroforestry farmers in Tarkwa and Amenfi-West exposed the farmers to what their colleagues have achieved. This helped allay some of the fears of farmers—an example being the fear that they will be evicted from their lands one day after their trees mature. During the evaluation, these farmers expressed the increased understanding of the CSLP initiatives and the conviction that agroforestry is a profitable venture. Some farmers regretted not taking the project more seriously because of negative experiences with earlier projects that had introduced tree planting. CSLP will continue to create the opportunity for many more farmers to share in these experiences through such tours.

3.3 Global Climate Change

Address only if your program does not receive GCC funding but can speak to impact in either adaptation and/or mitigation).

3.4 Policy and Governance Support

The CSLP's activities and support for the co-management of the lands and biological resources in and around the Greater Amanzule Wetlands, directly assists local and district governments in the long term management of this landscape. This effort supports the formation of local governance bodies with citizen participation and decision-making concerning these resources. These all contribute to the process that will support regional and national decision makers to develop and enforce policies that can enhance the area's recognition as a landscape with high conservation value and one worthy of global recognition.

The CSLP is working at local, district, regional, and national levels to highlight the benefits of these resources and to support capacity building at the local and district levels for the long-term management processes for the GAW to ensure they are in place and working effectively.

3.5 Local Capacity Development

A number of local capacity development activities took place during the quarter. The educational training tour of the climate change clubs provided significant exposure that will hopefully positively influence students and their parents and friends as they share the knowledge gained from the experience. The participants admitted the fact that they were seeing many of the things they had learned about for the first time in Angu and were beginning to understand the connectivity between the natural environment, climatic change and livelihoods. Following the visit to Angu by the climate change clubs, the district office of the Ghana Education Service in Shama expressed interest in the need for a teacher training in climate change so that they can impart it to larger groups of students.

3.6 Public Private Partnership (PPP) and Global Development Alliance (GDA) Impacts

The United States Geological Survey carried out a scoping mission in the six coastal district of the Western Region that liaised with the CSLP. It is hoped that when the work is completed, it will set some reference in terms of the landscape to make estimation of project impacts easier.

4. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

The CSLP continues to enjoy good relations with stakeholders both at the regional and district levels. During the latest quarterly briefings at both levels, stakeholders expressed great interest in the activities of CSLP and generated discussion opportunities for more collaboration. The challenge, however, continues to be the lack of resources on their part as government institutions. For its part, the CSLP makes a concerted effort to engage the regional and district GOG staff, and traditional authorities in each of its training exercises and review sessions, wherever practical. Invitations are formally provided to the appropriate services and project resources are used to help ensure their participation (when and where applicable). The Forestry Commission's Wildlife Division, the district agents for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the district Town and Country Planning Department staff, the Ghana Education Service and the National Board for Small Scale Industry's district officials are the most consistent participants in the CSLP activities. Regional staff, who are also kept informed, also participate from time to time.

5. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Most of the management and administrative issues confronted by the project during the quarter have been (fortunately) minor. Much of the more durable equipment (vehicles, computers, office equipment) used by the project was inherited from other sources and it was envisioned that the original 3-year life span of the project would be able to “make do” with what it did receive. As the project prepares to move into an extension period of an additional 3 years, replacements are going to be needed. The two older vehicles break down frequently and the maintenance costs are increasing along with the time that they are removed from doing productive work. The two photocopy machines are in a similar state and are out of service almost as frequently as they are in service. The extension period’s budget will bring in some relief, but as estimated budget resources may not be enough, the maintenance issues and challenges are expected to continue.

The project’s full-time administrative assistant/receptionist went on maternity leave during the quarter. The project was fortunate to identify and employ a qualified temporary administrative assistant who is working well in the interim.

To catch up on the backlog of data transcription and analysis that has accompanied the mapping measurements of land uses on CSLP-linked farms, a part time data transcription specialist was hired. The local FSD office of the Forestry Commission provided us with the reference. That consultant is apt to stay engaged on a part-time basis well into the next quarter.

During the quarter, the project promoted its Communications Specialist to Monitoring and Evaluation and Communications Specialist. He has been covering the M&E tasks on an ad hoc basis for some time and welcomes the new and formal responsibilities. Also during the quarter, he has been enrolled in a GIMPA course in Accra that has addressed practical and managerial issues of M&E to further support him especially as the project anticipates adding additional indicators for a potential expansion phase.

6. LESSONS LEARNED

Information sharing has proved to be a very useful tool this quarter, especially in terms of helping carry the CSLP’s messages and behavior change efforts to community members. This became quite evident in three of the activities implemented during the second quarter including:

- CSLP agroforestry “Champions Training Tour” to the Wasa Amenfi-West District to interact with fellow farmers who have planted a variety of trees for the past 15 years;
- The VSLA member trainings on climate change and local adaptation responses; and
- Presenting photographs of 13-year old trees planted on cocoa farms from the CARE International Gwira Bansa Project in 2003.

These activities provided farmers with the opportunity to learn, peer-to-peer, and provided substantial assurance that the practices promulgated by the CSLP have had positive results in areas just adjacent to their own and with similar conditions. The tour also helped to allay some of the fears held by a number of farmers that they would be evicted from their farmland once the trees, that they were now planting with the CSLP’s assistance, became mature.

The climate change training content has been made very simple but contains a lot of practical experiences and events with which the farmers can identify. It helps to make it something they can relate to and triggers a behavioral response on the need to contribute so that they can also benefit.

The CSLP now has an improved capacity to effectively collect reliable data for timely analyses and reporting. The project has trained 34 Community Assistants from 17 communities who act as primary data collectors, map farms (in addition to other field activities) and continue to receive refresher trainings from the CSLP to improve on collection of data. Plans are underway to train other

community members in the GAW. This will help in getting actual size estimates of project intervention sites in a timely manner for reporting on the GHG and the improved NRM area indicators. In addition, after identifying capacity gaps in the GoG institutions, targeted trainings are being conducted to help build their capacity in tracking those indicators for decision-making. The knowledge acquired from the landscape and the commitment and enthusiasm of the constituents are equally helpful in making future adjustments and decisions. Farmers and GoG institutions now better appreciate the CSLP goals and are contributing substantially to the efforts.

The participation of community members in the VSLA, has received an overwhelmingly positive response (more than what the CSLP anticipated at the beginning of the project). The CSLP is being cautious about the numbers of beneficiaries that are now being accrued due to some of the reasons already mentioned in the sections above. While the number of members is high and is a contributor to Standard Indicator 4.8.1-6 (number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable NRM and conservation as a result of USG assistance), it is driving the need for a regular review of the target. It is becoming increasingly difficult to calculate, at least with only one solid year of experience, what the numbers will be in the future. The project will continue to carefully monitor these, but as this is a new experience for the community members as well, and they are still not aware of their limits to how much they can successfully save and/or loan effectively to themselves. So far in each of the communities that have completed the full cycle, there is no one determining factor of what the economic benefit is likely to be. The CSLP will reach out to other VSLA experiences in the country to see if there are predictive parameters that are being used successfully elsewhere.

7. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER INCLUDING UPCOMING EVENTS

Activities in the coming quarter closely resemble those reported on in the sections above. IR 1 events such as beekeeping and its associated trainings will continue as will the conservation/climate smart agriculture activities, especially as the CSLP expands its livelihood base with the Greater Amanzule Wetlands (GAW) communities in its collaboration with grantee, Hen Mpoano. The VSLA training modules will continue and the project anticipates the establishment of up to three new VSLAs (all in the GAW) in the coming quarter.

Awareness capacity building actions will also continue with local, district, and regional Government of Ghana staff, as well as with the interactions with the all-important traditional authorities in the six coastal districts where the CSLP implements its activities. These will continue to focus on spatial planning, climate change adaptation, and conserving/enhancing natural resources management.

As new farmers elect to participate with the CSLP, their farms and cover classes will be measured and mapped. These data will also be made available to the appropriate district institutions (TCPDs).

Significant and new activities to be undertaken in Quarter 3 of FY 2016 include:

- Increased efforts to spatially define/map wetlands and mangroves in the Phase I communities in the GAW under the grant to Hen Mpoano;
- Train district assembly staff in five districts in the basics of GIS and remote sensing and provide hands-on training in the use of spatial data useful to them in planning and decision-making especially in reference to wetlands, mangroves, and other “open areas” in their own districts;

- The CSLP is collaborating with the USAID-funded University of Cape Coast Fisheries and Coastal Management Capacity Building Support Project, along with local NGOs Hen Mpoano and Friends of the Nation. The task is to help roll out the Wetland Monitoring program designed under the former ICFG project. Two communities with wetlands where there is a concentration of CSLP activities (climate change clubs, mangrove restoration activities, etc.) will be focal points, along with four other communities guided by the two NGOs. This will involve close collaboration, training of trainer activities, more community awareness and engagement, and monitoring;
- Additional training with conservation/climate smart agriculture farmer groups in entrepreneurship, connectivity to the organic market chain in the Western Region, marketing and other business-oriented activities. This will also engage, not only MoFA, but also the district Business Activity Centers of the NBSSI;
- The CSLP will continue to work with the USAID-funded Ghana Supply Chain Development Project, as it did last quarter, to provide them with more small business networks and for that project to help provide advice to the farmer groups being formed under the CSLP in conservation agriculture;
- The more experienced VSLAs will continue to receive bookkeeping and other accounting trainings to help them become more effective in the management of their associations;
- The CSLP will continue to explore more risk-averting options for the VSLAs, especially those with higher quantities of cash-on-hand within the cash boxes of their association;
- The CSLP will participate in a national-level roundtable discussion organized by the UNDP along with the COCOBOD and the Forestry Commission to resolve on-farm ownership and registration issues of commercial trees planted on these off-reserve sites;
- The CSLP's M&E/Communication Specialist will participate in an International Climate Change Seminar in California organized with the sponsorship of the USFS International Programs;
- The CSLP's Village Savings and Loan Specialist has been invited to, and will attend a three-week course on Marketing and Livelihoods offered by the Coady Institute in Nova Scotia, Canada. The Institute is providing a full scholarship for the course, including room and board; and,
- The CSLP will again sponsor activities focused on World Environment Day on June 5th. This year's events will take place in Shama District.

8. HOW IMPLEMENTING PARTNER HAS ADDRESSED A/COR COMMENTS FROM THE LAST QUARTERLY OR SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

The project was asked to provide a rationale and timetable for the target figures of two of its seven indicators for FY 2016 and into the extension period of the project. The CSLP has assembled background information and also provided a more sound, science based approach to determining target numbers for the two standard indicators 4.8-7 (GHG emissions avoided) and 4.8.1-6 (area under improved NRM). This was drafted during the quarter and circulated for review at the same time as the submission of this report.

ANNEX A. Progress Summary

Table 1. PMP Indicator progress - USAID Standard Indicators and Project Custom Indicators

To promote low emissions development in Ghana's Western Region by strengthening community-based natural resource management and monitoring.											
Indicator	Data Source	Baseline data		FY 2016		Quarterly Status – FY 2016				Annual Performance Achieved to Date (in %)	Comment(s)
		Year	Value	Annual Cumulative Planned target	Annual Cumulative Actual	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Intermediate Result (IR): 1 Improved Livelihoods through Enhanced Natural Resources Management Practices											
Sub-IR:											
4.8.1-6 <u>Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable NRM and conservation as a result of USG assistance</u>	Field Data	2014	0	900	849	429	420			94%	Some double counting may have been done in Q1; will adjust in Q3. See also Section 6 comments
4.8.1-26 <u>Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved NRM as a result of USG assistance</u>	GPS/GIS Field Data	2014	0	1,300	662	483	178			51%	Revisions made to data collection protocol & target value
Sub-IR:											
4.8.2-14 <u>Number of institutions with improved capacity to address climate change issues as a result of USG assistance</u>	Capacity Building Event Reports	2014	0	70	34	9	25			48%	
Intermediate Result (IR): 2 Strengthened Stakeholder Engagements and Coordination on Sustainable Landscape Management											
Sub-IR:											
4.8.1-29 <u>Number of person hours of training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation supported by USG assistance</u>	Training Reports	2014	0	8,000	2,949	154	2,795			37%	

Intermediate Result (IR): 3 Enhanced Capacity for Ecosystem Services Monitoring											
Sub-IR:											
4.8-7 Quantity of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, measured in metric tons of CO2e, reduced or sequestered, or avoided as a result of USG assistance	Field data	2014	0	5,000,000	4,250,000	-	4,250,000			85%	Revisions made to data collection protocol & target value
4.8.2-29 Number of person hours of training completed in climate change as a result of USG assistance	Training event Reports	2014	0	4,500	1,772	228	1,544			39%	

ANNEX B. STORIES FROM THE FIELD

FROM MISPERCEPTION TO PERFECTION: THE CASE OF THE FAWOMAN VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

FACTS ABOUT VSLAs ESTABLISHED BY CSLP:

- 19 VSLAs formed in 5 coastal districts
- 427 total members
- 67% of members are women; several groups are chaired by women
- The average household size of members is 4 people
- Share-out completed by 6 VSLAs to date
- 12 community members and District Assembly Officials trained as VSLA Village Agents
- One VSLA won Government of Ghana award at the 31st Farmers Day Celebration

Some left the group but the majority stayed. There was confusion all over. “I am leaving the group.” “I am withdrawing all my savings, take your group”. These were some of the reactions of members of the ‘Nyame Nhyira’ Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) at Fawoman in the Jomoro District of Ghana’s Western Region during the early weeks of their group’s establishment. At one point, it took a visit by the entire CSLP team, led by its Washington DC-based Program Manager and an official of the District Assembly to help provide ideas to resolve differences in the group and encourage the group to not give up. Fast forward 9 months later, and it was all smiles and moments of extreme excitement when the group successfully ended their 7-module training cycle and had a share out. As noted by one group member, **“We saved, got loans to improve our farming activities, engaged in petty trading, paid our children’s school fees and still made a huge profit from the group. We thank you (USAID/CSLP). We have not seen this before; we didn’t believe it. God bless you”**. Noting the benefit of the scheme, no member of the group left after their share out, though by their constitution members are free to leave and new members welcomed. In fact, some members called for an increase in their share value for the next cycle. All this, despite the turmoil and challenges the group faced at the outset.

The ‘Nyame Nhyira’ group is among 19 VSLAs formed by the USAID-funded and US Forest Service-managed Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP). So far, six VSLAs have successfully completed their mandatory training cycle and shared out on the savings and



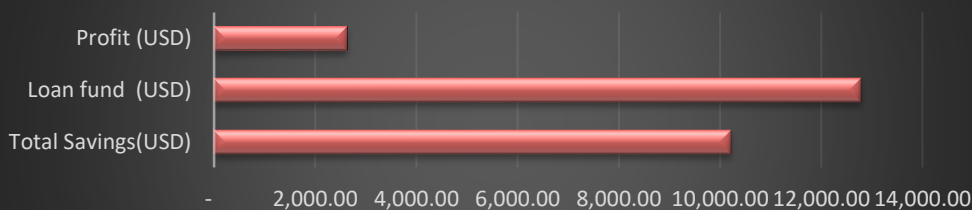
Excited VSLA members displaying their Profit after a share out

profits made from loans given to group members. The cumulative amount saved by the six groups is USD 10, 215, with the lowest return on savings of 16.35% and the highest with 43.35%. In addition to their cumulative loan fund of USD 12, 778, the groups also had a social fund that they used to help members in emergency situations such as deaths, sickness and accidents.

Indeed, the Fawoman VLSA story was not different from other groups. Some farmers and fisher folks within the project’s zone of influence elected not to join the savings and loan groups saying, “They (USAID/CSLP) will abscond with our money; they are not different from the other groups”. This was despite several community sensitizations on the VSLA concept and its linkage to enhancing economic benefits through improved natural resource management practices. Now, many of these formerly reluctant residents are more than eager to join the associations; some having pleaded to join VSLAs that had not yet reached the maximum allowable membership. As a sustainability mechanism, the CSLP has trained 12 community members and District Assembly officials as Village Agents. These agents now have the capacity to facilitate the formation of, and provide mentorship to, VSLAs after the CSLP. In Ghana, too many formal and informal savings and loan institutions have failed to deliver on their

promises and have often absconded with clients’ savings. The VSLA model supported by the CSLP is stemming that tide and providing immediate economic benefits for its members and their households — all done with the members’ own seed funding and management with the CSLP facilitating the module trainings and providing the start-up kits (mainly; cash box, pass books, a calculator and cash sacks).

Performance of Six VSLAs



	Total Savings(USD)	Loan fund (USD)	Profit (USD)
■ Six VSLAs	10,214.74	12,777.71	2,621.39

DCE APPLAUDS USAID INTERVENTIONS

The District Chief Executive (DCE) of Jomoro District, Hon. George William Somiah, has commended USAID/Ghana and the US Forest Service for collaborating to impact the lives of a significant number of farmers in the district through the Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP). Mr. Somiah, who recently assumed the highest central government position in the district, made his remarks during a field monitoring visit to two of the five CSLP intervention communities in the district under his jurisdiction; namely Navrongo and Tweakor No1. He was accompanied by the District's Community Development Officer, Mr. Emmanuel Armoo and the CSLP team led by the Director, Dr. Steve Dennison and the Washington, DC based Program Manager, Mr. Adam Welti.

As part of the trip, the DCE interacted with many CSLP enlisted farmers in both communities, visited several farms and witnessed a share purchase meeting of a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). Impressed with the success of the CSLP, the DCE applauded the donor, USAID and the implementing agency, US Forest Service for the efforts. He was particularly excited about apiary sites managed by women farmers, integration of trees on cocoa farms as shared by enlisted farmers, and the immense financial benefits provided to members of the VSLAs from their accumulated savings and loan activities over the past year. At the farm of Mrs. Gladys Atsu of Navrongo, the DCE noted, ***"...you have been well trained by the CSLP in best farming practices and I will call on you to train other farmers"***.



Mrs. Atsu (left) standing by a tree planted through CSLP support and interacting with the DCE Hon. Somiah (middle) at her cocoa farm. Looking on is CSLP Director, Dr. Dennison.

In both communities, the DCE urged the farmers to keep up the great work being done with the CSLP and promised his support to them, where possible. He called on USAID and US Forest Service to increase the number of its intervention communities within the district to help enhance the living standard of other farmers; noting the farmers in other communities would equally benefit from the project interventions.

ANNEX C.

Background Tables

Table 1. Climate Smart Vegetable Groups Formed

Group Name	Community	District	Membership			Registered with District Assembly	Opened Bank Account
			M	F	Total		
Mmoa Kuo	Cape Three Points	Ahanta West	-	16	16	No	No
Akuafo Mmoma Yenye Na Ebeyeyie	Akatekyi	Ahanta-West	2	14	16	No	No
God is Love	Bokro	Nzema East	15	17	32	No	No
Odo Ye Kuo	Adubrim	Ellembelle	11	9	20	No	No
Nyame Beye	Sendu	Ellembelle	11	9	20	No	No
Elole Kuo	Aduzuazo	Jomoro	10	-	10	No	No
Nyame Beye	Fawoman	Jomoro	4	11	15	No	No
Total			53	76	129		

Table 3: Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) Update

Month: March, 2016

Group Name	Community	Date of First Training	Membership	Date savings started this Current cycle	Total savings (GHC)	Loans outstanding (GHC)	Number of persons with loans	Loan fund on hand (cash box)(GHC)	Social fund balance (GHC)
Dzibodi	Navrongo	28-Aug-14	25	25-Nov-15	5,890.00	5,850.00	15	428.00	925.00
Nyame na Aye	Ayawora	22-Aug-14	25	30-Oct-15		4,704.50	17	902.00	74.00
Nyame Nhyira	Fawoman	23-Sep-14	24	29-Dec-15	3,030.00	2,760.00	13	341.00	325.00
Biakoye	Adubrim	9-Nov-14	25	19-Nov-15	7,856.00	6,100.00	10	1,255.00	351.00
Odo	Adubrim	9-Nov-14	25	10-Dec-15	4,190.00	4,250.00	20	316.00	56.50
Yesu Mo	Tweakor 1	21-Jan-14	30	30-Dec-15	3,468.00	2,800.00	19	1,222.50	33.00
Nebeyin#	Asonti	30-Jan-15	25	3-Mar-16	1,250.00	800.00	3	450.00	20.00
Asomdwie#	Asonti	31-Jan-15	25	10-Mar-16	1,000.00	1,000.00	10	7.00	-
Nyame Ye#	Asonti	4-Feb-15	25	23-Apr-15	11,850.00	1,820.00	6	12,286.40	593.00
Abotare Ye	Krobo	4-Oct-15	19	6-May-15	3,843.00	1,787.50	12	2,203.00	252.50
Biakoye	Ayawora	24-Apr-15	25	22-May-15	5,745.00	4,800.00	14	2,046.50	41.00
Abotare	Asonti	25-Jun-15	23	16-Jul-15	8,112.00	8,260.00	21	1,126.60	148.90
Kanyiri	Asonti	9-Jul-15	25	7-Aug-15	7,982.00	5,600.00	20	3,024.50	8.50
Nyame Nsa Daso	Tweakor 2	13-Oct-15	17	14-Oct-15	3,590.00	3,510.00	10	858.00	338.50
Nyansa Mfitiase	Ayawora	18-Sep-15	25	16-Oct-15	3,015.00	2,950.00	14	192.00	13.00
Nyame Mmere	Adubrim	12-Jun-15	23	26-Nov-15	4,296.00	3,688.00	14	695.00	189.00
Adom Wo Wiem	Cape 3 Point	22-Oct-15	23	26-Nov-15	1,750.00	1,830.00	15	155.50	260.00
Nyame Tumi	Fiasolo	16-Sep-15	17	4-Feb-16	648.00	-	0	650.00	73.50
Onza Nyamenle Ye*	Bokro	12-Feb-16	25	23-Mar-16	125.00	-	0	125.00	12.50
Emmanuel	Dwomo	12-Mar-15	13						
TOTALS			464		77,640.00	62,510.00	233	28,284.00	3,714.90
	* Newly Established VSLA					# VSLAs That Reached Share-out			