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Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014

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1. ACTIVITY/MECHANISM OVERVIEW

Activity/Mechanism Name:	Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project
Activity/Mechanism Start Date and End Date:	October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2016
Name of Prime Implementing Partner:	United States Forest Service International Programs
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 (States/Provinces and Countries):	Six coastal districts of the Western Region of Ghana
Reporting Period:	October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014

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 these 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, improved livelihoods, better land management of existing natural resources, increased soil fertility, and increased carbon stocks. Moreover, improved land management and livelihoods 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.

2. ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

2.1 Progress Narrative & Implementation Status

The workplan for fiscal year 2014 focused on:

- Identifying the pilot communities for VSLA and other project interventions in the six coastal districts;
- Prioritizing livelihood options in the communities where interventions are occurring; and,
- Establishing good collaborative and effective relationships with key government institutions (at both district and regional levels) and with partners and stakeholders.

This focus was relevant in view of the fact that CSLP is building a constituency within the six coastal districts. Throughout this process, the project staff took advantage of the legacy of the predecessor Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance Project implemented by the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center which ended in early 2014. This previous project laid

the groundwork for some of the activities being carried forward by CSLP and established an important history of collaboration between some of the key stakeholders being re-engaged by CSLP in the Western Region.

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

Sub IR 1.1: Provide capacity building for targeted community groups to effectively manage and conserve natural resources in priority areas

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Result	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned Date of Completion
1.1.1 Identify, prioritize and implement natural resource management related livelihood options	<p>Identify/prioritize livelihood options</p> <p>Identify interested individuals and build their capacity to implement livelihood options</p>	<p>Interested farmers are identified for livelihood options</p> <p>Livelihood options are identified and key reasons for comparative advantage selected</p> <p>Training modules drafted for the selected livelihood options</p>	August 2014
1.1.2 Support implementation of the Greater Amanzule Management Scenario developed by the Greater Amanzule Working Group	<p>Identify relevant stakeholders and create awareness on wetland conservation</p> <p>Constitute management structure and facilitate participatory drafting of constitution and by-laws</p> <p>Facilitate the development of action/management plan for the development of the Greater Amanzule Wetland</p>	<p>Common understanding of the functions and value of a Greater Amanzule Wetland Management option among stakeholders recognized and functioning management structures in place</p>	June 2014 – September 2016

As a key component of the assessments carried out by the CSLP staff and partners during the community prioritization exercise, community members and farmers were asked to identify important livelihood options they would like assistance in pursuing. Six livelihood options of interest were identified. These included establishing beekeeping within existing patches of secondary forest, integrating vegetable production within an agroforestry system, establishing

cassia woodlots for sustainable charcoal production, establishing snail production facilities, developing livestock production facilities, and creating the means for fish farming. Within these six, the CSLP team identified three with comparative advantages of being linked to project objectives and resources. The team sought activities that are compatible with existing knowledge and livelihoods of the communities and where some level of knowledge already exists on how to manage such activities. Additionally, the team sought activities that would meet low emissions development strategy objectives and for which there is demand for products on the local market.

The team has therefore prioritized the following livelihood and natural resource management activities to be implemented with interested farmers and communities:

- Vegetables/food crops within agroforestry systems (e.g. improved fallow system and climate smart agriculture);
- Three-year *Cassia spp.* (or other suitable species) woodlot cycle for charcoal production; and,
- Bee-keeping to enrich existing secondary forest patches within communities to conserve existing tree cover and reduce likelihood for further degradation and deforestation.

A total of 170 farmers, including 50 women, were identified for interactions during the first year of the CSLP's implementation with the various livelihood options.

Four on-farm training modules have been developed to complement the prioritized livelihood options. These include modules on:

- Beekeeping,
- Vegetable production,
- Integrated pest management, and
- Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*) extract pesticide preparation.

Farmers will be taken through these modules beginning in fiscal year 2015 to prepare them for planting during the next rainy season.

The facilitation of the Greater Amanzule Wetland management process will be initiated in fiscal year 2015. Once started, via a grant mechanism with Hen Mpoano, partner staff will work with 23 communities in and around the Greater Amanzule Wetlands area to include the three coastal districts of Jomoro, Ellembele and Nzema East. As a result of the increased communities reached through this collaborative effort with Hen Mpoano, CSLP interventions will be taking place with a total of 50 communities across the Western Region.

Sub IR 1.2: Identify, develop and demonstrate appropriate agroforestry and reforestation methods (technology and practices) that restore native ecosystems and improve livelihoods

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Results	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned date of Completion
1.2.1 Design and implement agroforestry and forestry interventions	Identify communities/sites and facilitate participatory design of agroforestry and/or forestry options Identify capacity gaps and train farmers to be able to implement agroforestry and forestry interventions and monitor	Communities selected for intervention Farmers interested in agroforestry/forestry interventions identified Training modules for agroforestry and forestry options crafted	August 2014
1.2.2 Production and acquisition of tree seedlings to be outplanted	Identify nursery sites In consultation with relevant stakeholders, review the agroforestry objectives and compile list of potential native trees and NTFP species. Identify seedlings/seeds sources and procure for nurseries. Facilitate capacity building for nursery establishment	Nursery sites selected Seedlings and seed stock sources for each nursery site identified Enhanced nursery management skills provided	August 2014

An initial set of 17 communities was identified for interventions during the first year of the CSLP. Due to access constraints to two of the communities, 15 communities have initially been involved in CSLP activities. During the upcoming dry season, these two communities will be reengaged.

Within these 15 communities, a total of 308 farmers were identified as interested in participating in agroforestry/forestry and livelihood options through CSLP (summarized in the table below).

Summary of Enlisted Farmers per CSLP Participating Community

Community	Districts	Female	Male	Total
1 Akwidaa	Ahanta –West	3	17	20
2 Aketekyi	Ahanta –West	2	13	15
3 Tumentu	Ahanta –West		9	9
4 Cape Tree Points	Ahanta –West	14	18	32
5 Aduasuazo	Jomoro	1	11	12
6 Fawoman	Jomoro	8	11	19
7 Tweako Navrongo	Jomoro	5	17	22
8 Tweako # 1	Jomoro	3	19	22
9 Adubrim	Ellembelle	4	48	52
10 Ayawora	Ellembelle	10	18	28
11 Bokoro	Ellembelle		3	3
12 Asonti	Nzema East	6	30	36
13 Dwemo	Shama		22	22
14 Yabiw	Shama		14	14
15 Krobo	Shama		2	2
Total		56	252	308

Of these enrolled farmers, 246 have designated a total area of 402 hectares for agroforestry/forestry interventions with the CSLP. An agroforestry/forestry training module has been drafted and the 246 farmers will be taken through the module to prepare them to implement and manage their agroforestry/forestry activities.

The CSLP responded to the strong demand for tree seedlings by many farmers to augment their existing timber stands on their farm lands and secondary forests. In late September 2014, 1,392 tree seedlings were procured, distributed and planted by 78 farmers in four communities. Most of these seedlings were *Garcinia afzelii* (Nsokor chew stick) and *Terminalia superba* (Ofram) species (including 536 of the former and 720 of the latter). Most of these trees were planted in cocoa plantation sites with a few planted in food crop production sites. Additionally, the project plans to work with farmers to introduce nitrogen fixing tree species in some of the food crop production sites over the coming months of year two.



Photo 1. Farmers participating in tree planting training.

The communities receiving these seedlings were Ayawora, Adubrim (both in Jomoro District), Tumentu in Ahanta West District and Asonti in the Nzema East District. In advance of undergoing the training module, farmers participated in hands-on training demonstrations on effective tree planting methods in order to ensure proper planting was carried out by each recipient of the seedlings to increase the rate of success.

The CSLP also facilitated the design of a four-hectare site belonging to B-BOVID (a private sector/social entrepreneurial company) at Angu that is earmarked for the production of vegetables. The design harnesses the value of trees/shrubs to complement and enhance the production of vegetables while diversifying the economic value of the site. The CSLP is working with B-BOVID and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to have this serve as demonstration site for area farmers to encourage the adoption of these techniques as a contribution to climate smart agriculture and low emissions development on their lands. The site will soon contain other examples of the actions being promoted by the CSLP including using trees to enhance secondary forest cover, integrating bee-keeping within the farmscape, stabilizing stream-banks to prevent erosion, and integrating fruit and nut trees within farm fields.

Four tree nursery sites, averaging 0.3 hectares each, have been identified in four communities. These are located in Tumentu in Ahanta West District, Adubrim in Ellebele District, Tweako #1 and Fawoman, both in Jomoro District. Farmers have indicated their preferences for timber and non-timber forest products species and the CSLP is discussing with the Forest Services Division of the Forestry Commission, the sources of seeds and/or seedlings for these species. Since most seeds mature and are available from November to March, the nurseries are being prepared in order to receive these planting materials as soon as possible. The nursery management module will be ready by the third week in October 2014, and farmers will then be trained to enable them to prepare the sites according to the best practices for tree nursery management.

Sub IR 1.3: Promote incentives to implement improved natural resources management to improve livelihoods, foster biodiversity, land potential and sequester carbon

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Results	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned date of Completion
1.3.1 Establish VSLAs	Identify pilot VSLA communities and facilitate awareness and orientation about VSLA Enlist VSLA Groups Develop/adapt VSLA training modules and build capacity of the groups to function Monitor the activities of the groups	Increased awareness on the VSLA in CSLP communities At least three VSLA groups identified for training VSLA training modules implemented	September 2014

A great deal of awareness has been created on the values of VSLA in all 15 communities where the CSLP is currently engaged. Awareness-raising activities implicated chiefs and elders,

opinion leaders, assembly members, women, men and youth. These activities emphasized some of the core concepts of the VSLA model including the principles of the self-selection nature of members to the VSLA as well the fact that members contribute, manage and keep their funds which cannot be taken by a non-group member. This concept was especially important to emphasize given the experience many communities have had with previous projects where community funds were absconded through less reputable savings programs that were managed by outside persons or groups.

Given this history of abuse of funds by outside groups, many communities have been skeptical to sign up to the VSLA concept. Despite this challenge, given the trust the CSLP team has built with the 15 communities through repeated visits and follow through on agreed-upon action plans, five VSLA groups have been formed throughout the project area. Additional VSLAs will likely be established based upon growing interest. At this time, the project has chosen to remain focused on these initial five in order to better focus efforts and hopefully later leverage these five groups as role models for expansion with neighboring communities.

The initial five VSLA groups are currently working through the seven training modules necessary to become fully functional as a VSLA. All groups have completed at least one training module and others have progressed to the 2nd or 3rd module in the series.

Two VSLA groups have been identified in Adubrim in Nzema East District, and one each in Tweako-Navrongo and Fawoman in Jomoro District and Ayawora in Ellembele District. CSLP has adapted the universal VSLA Training Guide¹ used by CARE International and other leading VSLA organizations, for use across the six districts. The groups represent a nearly 50/50 split of male and female members with a total of 38 men and 37 women, averaging 15 members per association. The link between the VSLA concept and NRM related activities is described further in section 3.4 of this report.

Sub IR 1.4: Increase capacity for interagency coordination and extension services for government of Ghana partners

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Results	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned date of Completion
1.4.1 Natural resources management-related policy fora	Participate in natural resources management-related policy roundtables and workshops	Participate in at least two natural resources management-related fora	September 2014

During this project year, CSLP actively participated in several natural resource management-related policy roundtables and workshops. CSLP participated in three meetings involving civil society organizations in Ghana facilitated by ClientEarth designed to build civil society capacity

¹ Allen, H. and M. Staele. 2007. VSLA Programme Guide, Field Operations Manual. VSL Associates. 141p.

in its engagement with the Forestry Commission during the review and consolidation process on Ghana's forest laws. The workshops were held with the intent of helping to make laws concerning the ownership and benefits from Ghana's forest resources to be more community friendly.

CSLP staff participating in these events contributed primarily from its community farmer perspective. The majority of the farmers that the CSLP works with are migrants to the Western Region and work with lease holding arrangements. Current laws recognize the benefits of having trees on the farm landscape but incentives for the farmers to plant them or to assist with natural regeneration of their leased farms are not clear. More often than not, it is the landowner who receives the benefit from forest tree products that come from his land, not the farmer leasing the land. Therefore, CSLP is working to help clarify these laws and policies with the appropriate working groups and to achieve more incentives and benefits for the farmers, and ultimately for the landscape, and the carbon being sequestered with tree growing and management.

The CSLP team participated in a workshop organized by the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission in collaboration with the Ecosystems Alliance. The Ecosystems Alliance is a coalition of six NGOs in Ghana including Tropenbos Ghana, The Development Institute, Rural Environmental Care Association, Nature Conservation Research Centre, IUCN and A Rocha Ghana. The objective of the workshop was to review the CREMA processes as have been implemented in Ghana for the past two decades and assess the CREMA structure suitability as a platform for the implementation of REDD+ practices. The workshop concluded that while the CREMA satisfies all the REDD+ conditions such as the "free prior informed consent" (FPIC) and equity in benefit sharing and negotiation conditions through the participatory development of the constitution and by-laws, Ghana's CREMAs continue to be challenged by low citizen participation and a lack of clearly defined boundaries. CSLP's argument here surrounds the issues of continued transparency in the groups and the need to ensure that this happens through broader, regular and more active participation. Communities need to be continually reminded of the benefits of cooperative management of these resources and be able to realize some of those tangible benefits, if not to themselves as individuals, then at least to the communities to which they belong.

Intermediate Result 2: Strengthened Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination on Sustainable Landscape Management

Sub IR 2.1: Improve public awareness on the relationship between ecosystem services and livelihoods

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Results	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned date of Completion
2.1.1 Enhanced public awareness on critical coastal	Organize district level inception meetings Develop IEC materials	Increased awareness on the environment and relationship with livelihoods	September 2014

landscape issues	Organize community durbars		
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Community inception meetings (or durbars) were organized with each of the communities of intervention during the period. The objectives of the meetings included:

1. Notifying communities about the CSLP;
2. Assessing gaps in knowledge related to natural resource management issues to help orient CSLP training and intervention activities;
3. Discussing livelihood options with community members to restore natural resources within the community; and
4. Enlisting individuals interested in landscape restoration.

In addition to the community-wide meetings, focus groups were established with special interest groups including women and youth. These focus group discussions were meant to ensure that perceptions, challenges and experiences of various age and gender groups are integrated into the project activities.

In order to ensure greater sustainability of project activities, CSLP is actively engaging district assembly members and staff. There were interactions with five of the districts whereby the CSLP project was introduced, the geographic focus area explained and the thematic topics of the project discussed. Two of these meetings, involving the district chief executives, district chief directors and other major officials of the assemblies, were facilitated by the District Manager of the Tarkwa Forest Services Division of the Forestry Commission and introduced the CSLP to the Jomoro and Ellembele Districts which fall under his jurisdiction.

Initial IEC materials have been printed including a brochure that contains an overview of CSLP, the expected impact and outcomes, as well as result areas/activities. More will be produced early in the upcoming project year.

Sub IR 2.2: Promote coordination and communication between stakeholders about policy reform and project implementation related to coastal natural resources

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Results	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned date of Completion
2.2.1 Promote stakeholder engagement and coordination at all levels	Hold six planning meetings with district assemblies Hold quarterly meetings with regional and national bodies and district assemblies	Awareness of CSLP within the communities and district/local government officials and stakeholders increased	September 2014

Official district level planning meetings were postponed due to the fact that CSLP had not received the letter of introduction to the six district assemblies from the Western Region Coordinating Council (RCC). As the letter was received late in the project year, this is a priority for the first quarter of 2015.

The first regional level stakeholders meeting took place during June 2014. The meeting involved all the critically relevant partners of the project under the auspices of the RCC. Chaired by the Acting Regional Coordinating Director, the RCC pledged its full support of the CSLP's objectives and emphasized the need to collectively facilitate a lively partnership to ensure success and sustainability. Two critical agreements were made: first that RCC would write an official letter of introduction to introduce the CSLP to the six district assemblies, and second, that the stakeholder meeting be staged quarterly for the CSLP to brief and update the major regional partners on implementation progress and to seek advice, counsel and support on potential challenges. The institutions that participated in the initial stakeholder meeting included the Regional Coordinating Council, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Town and Country Planning Department, the Economic Planning Unit, and the Wildlife Division and Forest Services Division of the Forestry Commission.

Sub IR 2.3: Promote platforms that support sustainable landscapes management

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Results	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned date of Completion
2.3.1 Support/promote natural resources management platforms	Hold quarterly information sharing and capacity building meetings with Cape Three Points CREMA (Strengthen voice of community champions relative to sustainable landscapes) Participate in national/regional dialogue platforms	Increased awareness on the environment and relationship with livelihoods Platforms identified in the six coastal districts	Life of Project

Capacity building was facilitated for 89 CREMA executives coming from five CREMAs in the CSLP operational area, including 13 female executives. The training included an overview of CSLP, lessons on the differences between the environment and an ecosystem, discussion on the types of ecosystems and the services they provide, exploration of how ecosystems support livelihoods, analysis of problems leading to degradation of ecosystems, and conversations surrounding the role of CREMAs in nurturing the ecosystem/environment.

The CSLP also participated in a workshop on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) and the role of mangroves in REDD+, which was held in Elmina in the

Central Region of Ghana. The workshop was organized by the Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) Program, a US Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded project, in collaboration with the US Forest Services International Programs (USFS-IP). The goal was to increase awareness and importance of mangroves for climate change adaptation and mitigation within the context of REDD+. During the workshop, the CSLP Spatial Planning Specialist presented on the background of the project and learned of the ongoing work of other stakeholders related to carbon sequestration especially as it relates to mangroves and coastal forests.

Intermediate Result 3: Enhanced Capacity for Ecosystems Services Monitoring

Sub IR 3.1 Provide capacity building on forest and wetland carbon and other ecosystems services measurement

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Results	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned date of Completion
3.1.1 Assessment of capacity needs of partners in terms of spatial data management and planning by districts	Identify partners (RCC, DAs, FC, EPA) Identify training needs of partners Identify tools/equipment	Draft report of capacity needs assessment of partners	Life of Project

With the recently received letter of introduction from the Western Region Coordinating Council, CSLP can now be introduced officially to the six coastal districts. This will allow the project team to fully engage the district economic and development planners so as to begin to assess their spatial planning and data management capacity and needs.

Working alongside the Forestry Commission offices of the Wildlife and Forest Services Divisions, the team is in the process of identifying the needs of the two respective offices and has planned for collaboration with these two offices for the coming project year.

Sub IR 3.2 Collect and utilize biophysical and socio-economic data to inform landuse planning and policy decision-making

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Results	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned date of Completion
3.2.1 Determine areas (Ha) of coverage (e.g.	Participatory mapping of areas of intervention within target communities by	List of GPS data on agroforestry and forestry sites	Life of Project

degraded sites and protected areas)	community members Procure regional and district maps (digital, hard copy and GIS layers) Procure landcover stratification of project area	District maps relative to landcover Training modules for selected community members to map farms and boundaries	
3.2.2 Baseline carbon stocks assessment for the different landcover types within the CSLP project area	Assess carbon stocks for the different landcover types Review and use existing carbon stocks data where available Collect new carbon stocks data in landcover types where there are data gaps	District maps relative to landcover	Life of Project

All activities of Sub Intermediate Result 3.2 will commence early in project year 2015 upon the start of the grant/partnership with Hen Mpoano.

Sub IR 3.3 Apply lessons learned on the national level monitoring, reporting and verification system into a regional REDD+ compatible framework

Table of Planned Activities

Intermediate Results	Activities to be Implemented	Expected Outputs	Planned date of Completion
3.3.1 Develop contacts and linkages with national institutions leading the climate change related issues in country	Liaise and work with the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Agriculture, Forestry and Other Landuses (AFOLU) team ○ REDD+ Secretariat and attend climate change related workshops 	AFOLU meeting reports	Life of Project

The CSLP participated in two meetings of the National Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Uses (AFOLU) Working Group. The first was the third National Greenhouse Gas Inventory Accounting Retreat under the auspices of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Forestry Commission's Resource Management Support Center and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture

that was held in Kumasi. The second meeting, hosted by the CSLP in Takoradi, worked to finalize the draft Biennial National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) due in December 2014.

While the group was in the Takoradi meeting, they reviewed the CSLP Indicator Tracking Sheet and provided recommendations for the consideration of CSLP. In all instances, CSLP's Spatial Planning Specialist was integrally involved in the discussions and planning efforts.

2.2 Implementation Challenges

Due to changes in the directorship of the project early in this first year and the challenges of establishing a new project office, the first year of project activities was limited in breadth. The first annual work plan covered just over a quarter of the project year. Nonetheless, the CSLP team has made substantial progress within this first year and has established a solid base from which to expand the reach of the project and achieve targets for the coming project year.

The project was initially limited to one project vehicle which greatly hindered the ability for the team to move effectively in the field. In addition, the several months' delay in receiving a promised letter of introduction from the Western Region Coordinating Council introducing the project to the districts, caused significant problems in achieving several of the objectives set forth in the first year work plan.

There were heavy rains during the period just after the development of the first annual workplan and this affected roads to some communities. In fact, interactions with two communities were suspended entirely because of poor road access. This will continue to pose challenges and has been accounted for, where possible, in planning exercises for this next year.

2.3 M&E Plan & Implementation Update

The CSLP participated in meetings that provided useful insight into M&E planning and implementation including a Feed the Future Implementing Partners meeting in March 2014, in Accra and the METSS/USAID M&E Workshop in Tamale in June 2014. These meetings gave more insight into PMP drafting, setting baseline and targets, and data quality issues.

CSLP activities for the period from May 2014, when the first annual workplan was developed until now, has mainly focused on understanding the socio-economic, bio-physical and ethno-cultural background of the project area that led to the choice of initial communities, individuals and sites from which to begin activities. This scoping exercise comprised most of the efforts during this first project year and thus the reason for why the CSLP has not been able to achieve most of the indicator targets it set for the year.

With more understanding of the communities within the operational area, CSLP will now be able to set more realistic targets for the second year following the drafting of the second annual workplan.

The USAID standard indicators being tracked for the CSLP (for the life of the project) are found in Annex 1. This also includes a discussion about the annual targets and the deviation from the targets. The CSLP activities implemented in the first year, or the lack of their implementation, has resulted in some significant deviations from what was targeted for some of the indicators. These are discussed below.

Indicator 4.8-7 Quantity of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, measured in metric tons of CO₂e, reduced or sequestered as a result of USG assistance.

The CSLP's strategy in the six districts is to build local institutional and community capacity in a manner that is transparent and develops skills and expertise in a hands-on fashion. Following the initial stakeholder meeting, the RCC was quite clear in its edict that the CSLP not engage in any formal technical activities in the districts until the Western Regional Coordinating Council formally introduced the project. Due to the 3-month delay with this introduction, the CSLP was not able to officially undertake any capacity building activities in the districts, or even in the communities.

With the official introduction made in September of the last quarter, the CSLP is now engaged in the technical activities with communities and districts that will allow the project to move forward with the actual measurement of the GHGs in its operational area. Trainings with local farmers and district personnel will be initiated early next quarter to establish the parameters of these measurements and to collect the data that will contribute to their estimation.

The CSLP has set up a small grant mechanism with Hen Mpoano that will also facilitate the expansion of engagement into 23 other communities into the biologically-rich Amanzule Wetland area. The CSLP wants to capitalize on Hen Mpoano's previous relationships with traditional authorities in this area to facilitate a transparent capacity-building process, not just for enhancing the NRM processes, but also in the measurement of GHGs in this portion of the project's operational area as well. Once again, the RCC's delay in formally introducing the CSLP to district and regional authorities has figured in the inability to begin any improved NRM processes, data collection and subsequent GHG estimation in this area.

Developing estimates for GHGs in the CSLP's operational area will take time to develop. The baseline for this quantity of GHGs reduced or sequestered is zero because the USG assistance had not yet started in the operational area. A zero target for year one is also the most likely scenario given the time required to both work with farmers and establish initial estimates.

The CSLP has developed a specific series of steps to collect the information on GHG emission estimation using nationally recognized guidelines developed within the UNCCC's mandate. Trainings will be instituted early in the next quarter that have district officials work directly with farmers in measuring land use and land use changes with GPS units on individual farms. The data will be collected using a systematic and monitored process, plotted within districts and used to update baseline map information collected initially by Hen Mpoano. Using recognized coefficients for land use cover types developed by AFOLU in Ghana, carbon stocks will be estimated. Farmers adopting activities that contribute to improved NRM, avoided deforestation

and other destructive land use practices will be applied and contributions of USG assistance estimated on a per hectare basis within the operational area of the CSLP.

Indicator 4.8.1-26 *Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved NRM as a result of USG assistance.*

Actual area measurements of polygons within the CSLP operational area that are being improved with the project's technical assistance will be initiated early in the next quarter. The CSLP will engage assistants in each community of intervention to be trained in the use of GPS tools and the collection and recording of area data. Planning technicians in the district assemblies will also be engaged in these trainings. The community assistants, with close supervision and monitoring of the CSLP technical team, will be responsible for measuring and recording the cover types of land for each of the farmers engaged with the project. This information will be collected and disaggregated by farmer, gender, community and district within each of the improved NRM activities being promoted by the CSLP. The data will be linked to carbon stocks and transferred to the base maps for each district in order to estimate carbon stocks.

In the last quarter of the fiscal year, the project (as noted elsewhere in this Annual Progress Report) worked with a number of farmers with secondary forest patches on their land. The project's efforts helped to convince the farmers, who were ready to clear the land of trees for other land uses (e.g., cocoa, rubber plantations), to avoid the secondary forest's destruction in favor of other livelihood alternatives. In addition, 1,392 forest tree seedlings of five indigenous tree species were planted on farmers' lands in four communities with CSLP assistance prior to the end of the fiscal year. These were planted as improvements to fallow lands to increase the stock of indigenous trees alongside vegetable crops, as part of an introduced agroforestry system and as complements to enhance existing tree crops. The goal is to provide more acceptable shade for farms (mainly cocoa), improve soil physical conditions and provide timber and non-timber products in the longer term. The different species selected also helps to increase tree diversity on farms and enhances species diversity in general.

At the end of the fiscal year, detailed measurements of areas with the tree plantings and the avoided deforestation had not been completed. Nonetheless, rough estimates of the number of hectares under improved management are provided below. More accurate figures will become available in the next quarter (and moving forward) as these farms and cover types are individually mapped and areas calculated.

The hectares under improved management calculation is estimated assuming the average number of seedlings planted by the 78 farmers is 18 (minimum of 14 seedlings and maximum of 25 seedlings). Using the recommended planting density of 18 trees per hectare (i.e. the recommendation for cocoa farms), the CSLP estimates the area of land planted in FY 2014 to be 78 ha. Thus, natural resources management, including biodiversity conservation, has been improved on at least 78 ha of farm landscapes.

This is a modest figure from one tree planting exercise during one week of the first year. Planting plans for FY 2015 are aimed at a dramatic increase in this number with the establishment of nurseries and a more intensive planting campaign with CSLP-registered farmers. The avoided deforestation area could not be estimated at the end of the fiscal year because farm areas in

fallow land and secondary forest patches have not yet been differentiated, nor have their separate areas been measured. These figures will become available during the first quarter FY 2015 following GPS trainings with community assistants and will likely lead to an increased estimate for hectares under improved management for reporting early in 2015.

Indicator 4.8.1-6 *Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable NRM and conservation as a result of USG assistance.*

At the end of the fiscal year, the number of people receiving economic benefits had not accrued due to the late start of project activities. As a result, the figure reported in the Annex 1 table for this indicator is zero.

In the coming year, the economic benefits that will accrue to CSLP-registered farmers and others will include increased savings and discretionary funds from participation in VSLAs, improved income from increased production of produce within agroforestry systems as a result of improved soil and water quality practices, and improved production techniques and associated income from charcoal production and other NTFPs.

It is hoped that by year three, farmers will be receiving income from production of honey as a result of beekeeping activities, further improvement in produce as a result of agroforestry and climate smart agriculture activities, income from sustainable charcoal production and further savings and income from VSLA activities. The table below summarizes some of the linkages between CSLP activities and the benefits expected to accrue from their implementation.

Type of benefits and linkage to CSLP activities for Indicator 4.8.1-6

Type of benefit	Source of benefit	Associated CSLP activity
Increases in wages	Increases in farm production Sales from NTFPs	Agroforestry training Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) training Enhanced charcoal production Bee keeping training, management and support Identification of niche value NTFPs
Increases in communal revenue	Increases in farm production Sales of NTFPs	Agroforestry training Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) training Enhanced charcoal production Bee keeping training, management and support VSLA formation and support for best practices Identification of niche value NTFPs Mangrove rehabilitation
Increases in non-cash benefits	Farm and site enhancement Tree ownership to tree planter with FC registration	Planting of commercial tree species Farmer assisted natural regeneration training Soil improvement, stabilization and conservation techniques

		Mangrove rehabilitation
Increases in benefits to ecosystem services	Farm/community site enhancements Increases in carbon stock Avoided destruction of carbon stocks	Planting of commercial tree species Farmer assisted natural regeneration training Soil improvement, stabilization and conservation techniques Conservation of secondary forests (avoided deforestation) Identification of niche value NTFPs Bee keeping training, management and support Mangrove rehabilitation

3. INTEGRATION OF CROSSCUTTING ISSUES AND USAID FORWARD PRIORITIES

3.1 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment

The CSLP field team is conscious of the importance of empowering women throughout the project and is working to ensure female involvement. Out of the list of 308 individuals who have committed varied portions of land for engagement with the CSLP, 70 are female (23 percent). One main constraint in engaging more women with some of the forestry related activities is that in mostly migrant communities, the men have led the women into those places after the men have secured the land. Access to the land is mostly led by the men. There are a few instances where women are on their own which may be due to death of their spouses, divorce or few situations where husbands have earmarked places for their wives. Despite this constraint, CSLP staff are seeking out women who are interested and willing to participate in activities, wherever possible.

In the realm of livelihood development, females will be encouraged to be involved in agroforestry activities with vegetable production since this is a traditional role for women. The Village Savings and Loans Association initiative also involves many women. As earlier indicated, 50 percent of the members enrolled are women and some of the groups are chaired by female members. By promoting female leaders wherever possible, CSLP hopes the project and its activities can serve as inspiration for more women to take leadership roles.

3.2 Sustainability Mechanisms (including local solutions and partnerships)

CSLP's strategy for ensuring sustainability is through the involvement of local institutions, both government (e.g. district assembly and their associated offices) and civil society (e.g. NGO, CREMAs, and other community-based organizations).

CSLP has signed formal letters of intent with the Forestry Commission as well as B-BOVID, an agribusiness oriented entity that runs an NGO wing called TRACTOR. The latter collaboration is intended to build the capacity of the two organizations to be able to share the experiences in climate change related farming with their wide-reaching network of several hundred out-grower farmers in communities beyond the scope of the initial CSLP intervention area.

In addition, CSLP is pursuing the signing of letters of intent with government institutions including the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency. A letter of intent is also being pursued with Hen Mpoano, the local NGO formed at the conclusion of the USAID-funded Integrated Coastal Fisheries and Governance (ICFG) Project. This is to build upon the ICFG successes and continue the collaborative management activities of the Greater Amanzule Wetland and to further ensure sustainability after the life of the CSLP.

The goal of these various letters of intent is to ensure effective collaboration with partners, especially those of government counterparts, and to leverage their cooperation and expertise within the project wherever possible. CSLP hopes that by sharing information, ideas and best practices, all can benefit and a more sustainable set of activities can be carried forward that will be able to be managed by communities with support from local and regional government agencies as needed.

3.3 Environmental Compliance

CSLP has drafted the Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (EMMP) and is ready to implement and monitor its provisions as necessary. While limited in need during this first year, it will become more important during this next year of implementation when actual field activities (e.g. nursery establishment, tree planting, etc.) will begin in earnest.

3.4 Integrating VSLAs in Order to Improve Livelihoods and Improve Natural Resources Management Practices

The CSLP is working to establish and support VSLAs in the communities where it is engaged in other NRM and LED activities. The membership of the VSLAs is comprised of the farmers that the project works with and includes a higher proportion of women than in the overall population of the CSLP-registered farmers. Once fully established, the goal of the VSLAs in the short term is to create a stronger ability to save so as to help households better fare during times of financial challenge especially as it relates to drops in market prices or poor growing seasons which can be exacerbated by climate change. With even modest amounts of funds available, it is hoped the VSLA can provide the support needed for farmers to fare more favorably during these challenging times and thereby reduce likelihood of undertaking unsustainable farming and natural resource management practices that may be commonplace during times of crisis.

In addition, the VSLA can serve as a tool for building the savings and financial strength of households over the longer term. As many of the NRM-focused livelihood activities being undertaken by communities in collaboration with CSLP may take months or years before they provide substantial financial returns to households, the VSLA can start to provide funds for economic activities much more quickly. These funds may also allow enrolled farmers to be able

to cost share with the CSLP by funding portions of their proposed NRM-related livelihood activities which we hope will prove to be a more sustainable means of ensuring buy-in to the various livelihood options.

The CSLP is also encouraging the VSLAs to formally adopt objectives in their constitutions that stipulate a certain set-aside of association funds for conservation and NRM activities such as the purchase of agroforestry inputs for their farms. The number of VSLA constitutions with specific NRM goals will be a custom indicator measured annually.

The VSLAs, once fully self-sufficient, can also be recognized as a formal group given they have a constitution and bylaws. As a formal group, they have more leverage in linking themselves to other groups that provide amenities and inputs for their own community needs. This is an important criterion in the future relationship that the CSLP is working to develop with the USAID-funded Ghana Supply Chain Development program that works to enhance business practices and management of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in the Western Region. VSLAs, with LED and NRM objectives, may be viewed as model SMEs with low emissions development components. In addition, their development as stand-alone groups can promote USAID Forward initiatives by supporting local groups who can be their own engines of growth and progress.

4. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Recognizing the need for sustainability for its activities and the fact that this hinges on local government institutions as well as non-government institutions, CSLP has identified critical institutions with which to forge collaborations. These include the Forestry Commission of Ghana (namely with the Forest Services and Wildlife Divisions), Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Western Region Coordinating Council (including the Regional Economic Planning, Regional Town and Country Planning department and the six district assemblies along the coast of the Western Region of Ghana).

The Western Region Coordinating Council (WRCC), upon seeing the wisdom in collaboration with the CSLP, proposed a relationship that is transparent and beneficial to all concerned. Thus, they suggested the need for CSLP to be officially introduced to the six coastal districts for effectiveness.



Photo 2. CSLP and B-BOVID/TRACTOR staff discussing agroforestry design for vegetable production site at the Angu B-BOVID farm.

Recently an official letter of introduction was delivered that will facilitate some of these collaborations.

B-BOVID (an agribusiness institution that is interested in environmentally conscious agriculture) has an out-grower NGO wing called TRACTOR that has an objective to promote environmentally friendly and business-minded agriculture among farmers within the catchment area of B-BOVID. As discussed above, the CSLP has signed a letter of intent with B-BOVID/TRACTOR. This has led to the establishment of an agroforestry-vegetable demonstration on a four-hectare plot belonging to B-BOVID for training their out-grower farmers.

The CSLP facilitated the first quarterly regional stakeholders meeting in June 2014 as proposed by the WRCC and which implicates all of the stakeholders noted here. This forum is intended to update the major stakeholders every quarter of activities undertaken and receive feedback. It will also provide opportunity to discuss areas of support needed and how they can be engaged on the ground during the ensuing quarter.

5. LESSONS LEARNED

Given the relatively short time frame for the project, the team realized that the initial intent of including policy revisions as a major outcome would be too ambitious. Thus, the project has chosen to stay abreast of national level policy work by sharing lessons learned from the field while simultaneously learning of changes to natural resource-related policy, while maintaining the key focus of the project on livelihood and management interventions on the ground. Staffing and financial priorities were adjusted accordingly.

The interactions with the WRCC staff revealed a perception that the WRCC holds of some projects and NGOs operating in the region. CSLP's lesson learned from previous projects is that communication to the higher levels of the council was not clear or consistent. Previous projects and organizations dealt primarily with officers of the various bureaus but the information was not conveyed to the council officials. CSLP will, therefore, take every opportunity to copy the senior staff of the WRCC on all correspondence related to collaboration with the WRCC staff at any level. Additionally, the proposed quarterly regional stakeholders' meeting will be pursued and taken seriously as a means of ensuring senior officials are kept abreast of CSLP activities.

Given the constant challenges posed by frequent power outages, loss of access to communities due to heavy rain and other unpredictable political challenges, CSLP has learned from the first year of activities that while efforts are made to plan for the unknown, it is not always possible to plan for the unexpected. As the project enters its second year, the CSLP team will continue to monitor progress and adjust priorities as needed in order to make the best use of time and resources while avoiding being significantly delayed due to the challenges beyond our control.

6. UPDATES ON ISSUES/COMMENTS RAISED BY AOR FROM THE LAST PROGRESS REPORT

Peter Trenchard, Director of USAID/Ghana's Office of Economic Growth, created the opportunity for discussions on choices of livelihood options to be considered. The recommendation was for CSLP to select options that are sustainable with the least amount of effort, compatible with the local ecology and climate, and substantially beneficial to farmers. Integrating these concepts into livelihood activity considerations will allow CSLP to develop activities that will last beyond the life span of CSLP. This recommendation has been given keen consideration in the selection of the three livelihood options so far being pursued with farmers.

7. PLANNED TASKS/INTERVENTIONS FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

Planned interventions for the first quarter of the new fiscal year (FY 2015) are focused on technical training activities and on greater engagement with the technical services and planning units in each of the districts. The letter of introduction from the RCC that was provided by the regional authorities at the end of the last quarter, following a 3-month hiatus, means that this is an active catch-up period especially as it relates to engagement with district level officials.

IR 1: Improved Livelihoods through Enhance Natural Resources Management Practices

The emphasis within this IR will be on specific technical and practical training for farmers in the target communities. Training modules have been developed and trainings are scheduled in the areas of natural tree seed selection and in-farm seedling site identification, beekeeping management and climate smart agriculture techniques for vegetable growers. Each of these activities are directly linked to low emissions development objectives that serve as alternatives to more disruptive activities for natural forests, wetlands and reserves.

The Village Savings and Loan Association trainings (a seven-step process of modules) are scheduled for completion with the five VSLAs organized last quarter. It is anticipated that another round of awareness building for the VSLAs will be launched in other communities where the CSLP is working.

Work will also continue at the B-BOVID farm demonstration site where the CSLP is working alongside the MoFA to expand agroforestry and climate smart agriculture with farmers producing vegetables for the local Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Area markets. The demonstration site will, with the CSLP's assistance, gain a beehive and staff and farmers will receive training along with stream bank protection plantings and enhancement planting of the secondary forest located at the site.

IR 2: Strengthened Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination on Sustainable Landscape Management

The initial push for the next quarter will be for close collaboration with each of the district assemblies, and their planning units in particular, to coordinate the CSLP activities with each of

their Medium Term Development Plans (MTDP). These development plans for 2014 to 2017, are due to be completed and submitted to the national coordinating body in October/November. The team's interaction with the assemblies since September has been very positive in this regard and we are hopeful for inclusion in district assembly activities as a result of this engagement.

Community durbars are also planned in the 2 communities where access was impossible during the last fiscal year due to the extreme rain events in July and August. The CSLP will use these meetings as the starting point for the socioeconomic assessments and individual farmer interviews.

Meetings with community chiefs and other traditional authorities are planned for the next quarter. These will be especially important as the Hen Mpoano grant (see below and elsewhere in this report) is implemented in the Greater Amanzule Wetland area. This will provide the opportunity for additional communities to take advantage of the CSLP technical and advisory activities. Given the significant influence traditional authorities have on land use and tenure issues in the region, it is important to have these institutions fully on board.

The second regional stakeholder meeting is planned for this quarter. This will provide the WRCC and the regional technical services to be apprised of the CSLP actions to date, to receive their feedback, counsel and advice, and serve as an opportunity to be a part of the planning for upcoming district-level interventions.

IR 3: Enhanced Capacity for Ecosystem Services Monitoring

In conjunction with the district planning meetings and discussions with district-level planners, the CSLP will also be assessing district capacities in adaptive management awareness and planning linked to climate change issues. Gaps will be identified and, with the Town and Country Planning units, trainings will be organized to improve their capacities to address climate change issues tailored to their specific districts. Regional planners from the RCC office will also be invited to participate in these events. One activity directly related to the district plans will be the identification and mapping of open degraded areas and sites where greening activities can take place. These types of sites can easily benefit from basic low emissions development activities such as tree plantings. The districts' capacities can also be immediately improved through the application of practical hands-on trainings from the CSLP in the area of spatial planning and related management and budgeting.

The CSLP's Spatial Planner will also train Community Assistants (already identified by the team in late fiscal year 2014) in the use of GPS units. These trainings, which will also involve planning specialists from the districts, are aimed at gathering practical information about participating farmers' land areas. The attributes will be mapped and added to the database being formed and maintained by the CSLP's collaboration with Hen Mpoano. These data will also form the basis for the measurement of current carbon stock and be the baseline from which additional carbon may be added as a result of the CSLP's (and others) actions with the community farmers.

There will also be close collaboration in the quarter with Hen Mpoano's GIS unit as land use/land use change is mapped for the six districts and other themed maps are developed under the terms of the micro-grant from the CSLP that will be implemented in this quarter.

Other Activities

Very early in the quarter the CSLP team and USFS IP staff from the US will collaborate, in a weeklong workshop setting, and develop the project's fiscal year 2015 (Year Two) Work Plan. This plan will build on the experiences and lessons learned from the previous six months to chart technical and administrative activities for the project's second year.

The CSLP has also been preparing a micro grant mechanism with the local NGO, Hen Mpoano. An initial activity phase covering three months will begin in the next quarter and the CSLP staff will also be engaged in monitoring the activities that will be undertaken. The main focus of this first phase of activity is to re-start the collaborative process with the traditional authorities in the Greater Amanzule Wetland Area for cooperative management of the natural resources and biodiversity that exist in the 23 communities of the region. Part of the grant activities in the quarter will also be used to generate base maps and thematic maps to be used in the CSLP's interaction with the district assemblies and for calculating carbon stocks in the project's operational area.

A second grant is being planned with another NGO called Transforming Rural Agricultural Communities Through Organic Re-engineering (TRACTOR). The design of this grant will be completed this quarter and its implementation started in December. The objective is to build the NGO's capacity in agroforestry as a component of climate smart agriculture. Two TRACTOR agriculturalists will be seconded to the CSLP and work closely with activities planned and being implemented under the CSLP's IR 1. The CSLP will also benefit from increased contact and networking with TRACTOR farmers who have had the advantage of regionally-tailored organic farming training through the private sector social entrepreneur B-BOVID.

During the quarter the CSLP will continue to explore and work with the USAID-funded Ghana Supply Chain Development Project (GSCDP) on areas where there are opportunities for collaboration and leveraging resources. The GSCDP trains small and medium enterprises and groups that work with oil and gas industry businesses in the same operational area as the CSLP. Fisher folk groups in the Amanzule area, organic farmers procuring for local food supply chains, and charcoal producers are the initial potential beneficiaries being examined.



Photo 3. CSLP staff and farmers discussing charcoal production and potential sustainable tree species to use for production.

Finally, the CSLP expects to engage with the other two components of USAID's FCM program for coordination strategy meetings once they come on-line as expected during this quarter.

Annex I. Summary Results to Date

CSLP Life of Project Targets¹

Indicator	Baseline	FY2014		FY2015		FY2016	
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Development Objective (DO): To promote low emissions development in Ghana's Western Region by strengthening community-based natural resource management and monitoring.							
4.8-7 Quantity of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, measured in metric tons of CO₂e, reduced or sequestered as a result of USG assistance	0	0	-- ²	20496		43188	
4.8.1-26 Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved NRM as a result of USG assistance	104,304 ³	300	78 ⁴	1200		1800	
4.8.1-29 Number of person hours of training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation supported by USG assistance	0	3000	435 ⁵	9600		14400	
4.8.1-6 Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable NRM and conservation as a result of USG assistance	0	300	0 ⁶	600		900	
4.8.2-14 Number of institutions with improved capacity to address climate change issues as a result of USG assistance	0	20	6 ⁷	50		70	
4.8.2-29 Number of person hours of training completed in climate change as a result of USG assistance	0	1000	165 ⁸	4800		7200	

¹ See a narrative discussion in the text (Section 2.3) for more details on deviations from targets

² Technical activities linked to the estimation GHGs in the project areas were delayed due to the lack of official operating permission from regional authorities. Engagement with communities in formal technical activities and with district technical services would have been severely jeopardized had the CSLP moved ahead with anything other than a transparent process.

³ The baseline figure is the total area of Forestry Commission gazetted forest reserves and national parks within the six coastal districts.

⁴ There was no spatial plan data collection (i.e. no area measurements undertaken on farms in the communities); there were also no measurements taken that would allow for the calculation of areas such as the avoided deforestation and degradation set aside by cooperating CSLP farmers. These measurements, following specific trainings, will begin early in FY 2015.

The hectares under improved management calculation is estimated assuming the average number of seedlings planted by the 78 farmers during the last quarter of 2014, is 18 (minimum of 14 seedlings and maximum of 25 seedlings). Using the recommended planting density of 18 trees per hectare (i.e. the recommendation for cocoa farms), the CSLP estimates the area of land planted in FY 2014 to be 78 ha. Thus natural resources management, including biodiversity conservation, has been improved on at least 78 ha of farm landscapes.

⁵ Training activities in the districts were delayed until the CSLP was formally introduced to the district assemblies. The reported figure is from the last month in the quarter, after the official recognition was made.

⁶ The initial group of 300 farmers had been expected to begin gaining economic benefits, but the trainings and the ability to engage with them in an official and transparent nature happened so late in the FY that measurement of the benefits was not possible.

⁷ CSLP could not engage the district stakeholder institutions until the very end of the FY due to the fact that the CSLP was not introduced formally to the districts. The number here, therefore, highlights institutions engaged during the last month of the year. These include four CREMAs (Cape Three Points CREMA, Amokwa CREMA, Ohiamadwen-Fiasolo CREMA, Aiyinase-Ayawora CREMA), one non-governmental institution TRACTOR, and one government organization, the Wildlife Division (Ankasa Conservation Area) of the Forestry Commission.

⁸ Training activities were started late in the year due to the directive from the WRCC stipulating that the CSLP wait for the formal introduction (letter) from the WRCC before beginning field activities.

Annex 2. TraiNet Report

Not Applicable

Annex 3. Success Stories

WESTERN REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS READY TO SUPPORT CSLP IMPLEMENTATION

Western Regional Authorities have expressed their readiness to take active part in the implementation of the *3-year USAID funded Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP)* to collectively achieve goals of the project within the stipulated timeframe. This happened at a Regional Stakeholders meeting held on Monday, June 23, 2014, under the auspices of the Western Regional Coordinating Council. As the CSLP team commences activities in the six coastal districts of the Western region, the need was identified to hold such a meeting in order to chart a common understanding of the goals and objectives of the project.

The inaugural Regional Stakeholders meeting offered participants the opportunity to discuss critical coastal landscape issues and general conservation efforts in the region, possible areas of synergy, and strategies for working together at the district and regional levels.



Quarterly Regional Stakeholders Meeting initiated by CSLP

The Western Regional Coordinating Council has promised to officially introduce CSLP to each of the coastal districts in Ghana's Western Region

It was attended by representatives of the Regional Coordinating Council, regional managers of the Forest Services and Wildlife Divisions of the Forestry Commission, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD), Economic Planning Unit and local non-governmental organizations.

The participants of this initial stakeholders meeting agreed to a quarterly meeting in order to be updated on implemented and planned activities of CSLP, challenges and successes of the project, and as a means of offering advice and guidance, where necessary. The regional stakeholders pledged their support and active participation in the planned activities of CSLP.

The Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project is being implemented by the US Forest Service/International Programs. The project targets all six coastal districts of Ghana's Western Region and aims at strengthening capacity for low emission development through improved coastal forest landscape management.

OVER 300 FARMERS REGISTER WITH CSLP

More than 300 farmers in the coastal districts of Ghana's Western Region have shown interest in the 3-year USAID funded Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP). The small-holder farmers, of which 48% are female, wrote down their names and provided details of their land and farming activities to the CSLP team to demonstrate their eagerness to participate actively in the project. They have expressed appreciation to the American people for the kind gesture of contributing to improve their livelihoods through improved coastal landscapes management. This was a result of a series of community interactions and focus group discussions conducted by the project team.

The CSLP team has selected 16 communities from an initial assessment list of 74 and held community meetings/durbars and focus group discussions in the selected villages to discuss the project goals and objectives. A key outcome of the interaction was the enlistment of interested persons to the project. Major crops grown by these

Community Durbar at Akwidaa in Ahanta West District



Farmers expressing interest to work with CSLP at Ayawora community meeting



farmers include cassava, plantain, cocoa, oil palm, coconut and vegetables. CSLP hopes to work with these newly registered farmers to integrate agroforestry practices into their current methods and develop new, sustainable alternatives that will improve their livelihoods, where possible.

Farmers identified the need to change their current farming practices to enhance restoration of tree cover and soil fertility.

Most male farmers have shown interest to acquire skills and knowledge to produce honey as an additional livelihood option.



CREMA EXECUTIVES VOW TO PROMOTE AGROFORESTRY PRACTICES



The Executives of the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) in the Ahanta West, Ellembelle and Jomoro Districts of Ghana's Western Region have promised to encourage their communities to adopt best practices for agroforestry. This was the result of a one-day training organized for a total of 89 of the executives by the USAID funded Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP) from August 20-22, 2014. The trainings, noted by the participants as very beneficial, focused on the linkages between the environment, ecosystem services and livelihoods. It was facilitated jointly by the CSLP and the Ankasa Protection Area of the Wildlife Division. In Ahanta West, the executives unanimously agreed to embark on a community sensitization exercise on the potential benefits of the Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project and the need for continuous protection of the Cape Three Points Forest.



The trainings were a good platform for officials of the Ankasa Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission who utilized it to address genuine concerns of the CREMA Executives and communicated activities of the Wildlife Division to the stakeholders.

In all three districts, participants noted that it had been over a year since they had met together at the district level. They noted the training was very useful and timely. In each of the districts, a quarterly training session was agreed to and will be organized jointly by CSLP and the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission.

Pictured: From top, participants at Ahanta West and Jomoro district trainings, respectively

COMMUNITIES WELCOME VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOANS ASSOCIATIONS

A significant number of residents in 16 communities of Ghana's Western Region have warmly welcomed the Village Savings and Loans (VSL) model and are eager to start implementation. The concept was introduced to the communities by the 3-year USAID funded Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP). Over 75% of the interested people are women engaged in farming, fish mongering/processing and petty trading.

"My children, look at an old woman like me, I made little susu (savings) each day to a SUSU Group thinking my money is safe but they vanished with the money and all attempts to trace them have proved futile so if your project is to teach and help us to save in our village and lend out to

--As expressed by a 62 year old woman in Ayawora, a community in Ellembelle District

According to them, this approach to savings by CSLP is timely and most appropriate as several financial and non-financial institutions have over the years absconded with their savings.

Similar experiences of projects and companies absconding with savings of the rural folks was mentioned in almost every community. Based on sensitization by the CSLP team, the Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) approach to savings and lending has been welcomed by the communities and observed by many residents as "great sign of relief" following years of financial disappointment from other institutions.



VSLA is a member/community managed group of 15-25 people who save together and take small loans from those savings. Each member has a passbook for the recording of share purchases (savings) and loans. The VSLA normally also establishes a social fund to be used for grants when members are in distress due to unforeseen circumstances. CSLP is hopeful residents in the coastal districts of Ghana's Western Region will cultivate a better savings culture to enhance their livelihoods through the Village Savings and Loans Association either through sustainable natural resource management oriented activities or by reducing their dependence on unsustainable natural resource extraction activities.

AVOIDED DEFORESTATION

The Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP) has embarked on an important climate change mitigation activity by encouraging farmers to avoid deforestation. In most of the project intervention communities, farmers have, on average, an acre of secondary forest at the borders of their farms. Before the arrival of CSLP, they were keen to extend their farming activities to cover the secondary forests. Now, with the arrival and intensive sensitization efforts of the CSLP team, the farmers have rescinded their decisions to deforest these areas after learning the values of adjacent secondary forest. For instance, in Navrongo, a farming community in Jomoro District, 55 year old Walter Cudjoe noted during a training session that *“I have been enlightened and will change my current practices because I planned clearing my secondary forest but has changed my mind. Again, I will reserve a portion of my secondary forest & oil palm for beekeeping”*. The picture below shows Mr. Cudjoe (in green shirt) showing the project team and some farmers the secondary forest he had intended to clear.



Farmers who planted trees initiated by past climate change projects with promises of receiving cash rewards, were at the verge of completely cutting down those trees as no such rewards were received. However, with the outreach interventions by the CSLP team, the remaining trees will remain on the land as farmers are now willing to keep them without expecting any financial rewards. In the next couple of weeks, the project will train interested farmers on bee-keeping and provide them with the needed tools to commence additional livelihood activities. Undoubtedly, the move will contribute towards increasing the number of people with increased economic benefits as a result of the United States government intervention.

CSLP PLANTS 1392 TREES

After successfully building some critical enabling conditions, the USAID funded and US Forest Service managed Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP) on the week of September 15, 2014, distributed 1392 trees to 77 farmers in four communities across three coastal districts of the Western Region and guided them to plant the trees on their farms. The project purchased the tree seedlings, comprising of five species and distributed them to some enlisted farmers within its focal communities. The species were *Garcinia afzelii* (known in Twi as *nsoko*), *mahogany*, *Heritiara utilis* (*nyankom*), *Terminalia superba* (*ofram*) and *Guarea* (*kwabohoro*). The table below provides details of the number of trees planted in each community.

District	Name of Community	Trees planted
Ahanta West	Tumentu	206
Ellembelle	Adubrim	479
	Ayawora	357
Nzema East	Asonti	350

The planting was preceded by a 3 hour training session on principles of agroforestry and tree planting basics, including practical components on tree planting.



Trees delivered to some farmers at Tumentu



Hands-on training session at Asonti

The number of seedlings requested by farmers for this year is in excess of what is currently available. In the coming weeks, the project will, in addition to following up on other seed sources, establish tree nurseries to meet the demands by enlisted farmers.