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Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project

QUARTERLY REPORT: OCTOBER 2013 — DECEMBER 2013

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PROJECT PROFILE

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US Forest Service Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project

Quarterly Report to the USAID/Ghana Mission October-December 2013

This quarterly report provides an update on achievement towards USAID indicator targets including a narrative summary of implementation progress and critical issues related to the CSLP for the start-up period of October through December 2013.

During the current reporting period, progress with CSLP start up and project work planning included the following key achievements:

- Orientation of project management team (Program Manager, Director and Assistant Director) to USAID, Government of Ghana partners, Western Region government counterparts and local partners and communities
- Development of key CSLP staff job descriptions and initial recruitment of core project team
- Development of Letter of Intent with the Ghana Forestry Commission—the main Government of Ghana counterpart agency
- Participation in key national-level environment and natural resources policy workshops convened by IUCN and the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund
- Development of the draft CSLP Performance Monitoring Plan
- Review of project office space
- Recruitment for a new project Director



A. Project Implementation – Successes and Challenges to Date

In this quarter, the CSLP management team was established and the Director and the Assistant Director began working in Takoradi. This period was spent working on project start-up activities, which comprised of orientation of the Director and the Assistant Director with US Forest Service and USAID, introduction of the project, introduction of the new Director and the Assistant Director to partners and initial discussions on potential partnerships, as well as administrative set up.

Orientation for the Project Director and the Assistant Director

The orientation was facilitated by Jim Beck, the then outgoing USFS IP Manager, and Adam Welti, the then incoming USFS IP Manager in Washington, D.C. for the Coastal Sustainable Landscape Project. The first week of the orientation occurred in Accra and offered the opportunity for the team to interact with most of the partners in Accra, while the second week took place in Takoradi, and offered the opportunity for the team to interact with partners in the Western Region, which is the home of the project. The orientation goals were to:

- Understand the project (background, reporting, and the way forward)
- Understand the various contractual mechanisms that USFS-IP uses to conduct work
- Address contractual issues as it relates to personal contracts and working abroad
- Understand roles and responsibilities of Director, Assistant Director, eventual other staff, USFS-IP, METI, and USAID
- Develop and initiate implementation of action plan for project start up and launch, and,
- Set the stage for effective project communication and coordination with all levels of project management.

Discussions with the Director and the Assistant Director covered all areas of management of CSLP and shared ideas on what are required by way of regulations from the USFS and/or USAID. Time was spent with the two-member team to run through the CSLP implementation document to enable the team to grasp the project background, goals, outcomes, and outputs as well as linkages with national and international initiatives such as the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) of USAID/Ghana, Ghana's REDD+ processes, Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance (ICFG) of the Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island in the US and the USAID/Washington Participating Agency Program Agreement (PAPA) with the US Forest Service.

Discussions on project management covered areas such as:

- Start-up plans
- Office space
- Ideas on Baseline Assessment
- Financial policy issues e.g. VAT exempt
- Project M&E and the role of Monitoring Evaluation and Technical Support Services (METSS)



- Reporting schedules
- Participation in quarterly implementers meetings, and,
- Ghana National Policy areas that require the influence of the project, namely the CREMA, tree tenure and REDD+/climate change policy.

In Accra, apart from the meetings within the USAID, eight other institutions were met at different times within the eight days spent there. These included:

- Forestry Commission Headquarters represented by staff from
 - o Donor Relations
 - o REDD/Climate Change Unit
 - o Wildlife Division
 - o Forest Services Division
- World Bank
- Community Land and Development Foundation (COLANDEF)
- Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support Services (METSS)
- IUCN
- Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS)
- United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (UN FAO), and,
- Serengeti Capital

Similarly in Takoradi, the following institutions were interacted with as potential partners in the Western Region:

- The Western Regional Coordinating Council (The Regional Minister and the Regional Coordinating Director)
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture
- Coastal Resources Center Ghana/ICFG
- Friends of the Nation
- Wildlife Division
- Forest Services Division
- West African Primate Conservation Action (WAPCA)
- Conservation Foundation
- Local Governance and Decentralization Program (LOGODEP)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Science of the University of Cape Coast, and,
- B-BOVID.

Other institutions that were met as potential partners outside of the Western Region and Accra were:

- Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust of Cape Coast in the Central Region
- The Collaborative Resource Management Department of the Resource Management Support Centre of the Forestry Commission in Kumasi
- Tropenbos International Ghana of Fumesua, Kumasi, and,
- Forestry Research Institute of Ghana of Fumesua in Kumasi.

During the interactions, CSLP shared and explained the project document with these institutions and went on to seek their respective functions and identify potential areas for collaboration. CSLP has maintained relationships with all of these institutions and hopes to engage them effectively at the appropriate time and through the appropriate channels once field activities begin.



Development of key CSLP staff job descriptions leading to recruitment of core project team

In the recruitment plan, six positions are to be filled, namely:

- Finance and Administrative Specialist
- Natural Resources Governance and Policy Specialist
- Communications and Outreach Specialist
- Environmental Services and Spatial Planning Specialist
- Community Benefits Specialist, and,
- Driver.

Out of the six vacancies, job descriptions have been finalized for all except the driver's, which is underway. Apart from the full version of job descriptions, shorter versions were produced for the newspaper advertisements in the Daily Graphic newspaper.

The five have all been advertised and a large volume of applications have been submitted for each of the five technical positions. Shortlisting began and interviews are to be conducted in January 2014.

Development of Letter of Intent with the Forestry Commission of Ghana

The meeting with the Forestry Commission in their Headquarters in Achimota, Accra, suggested a need for the development of a Letter of Intent (LOI) between the US Forest Service and the Forestry Commission of Ghana. The LOI, which has been drafted by the CSLP, has been reviewed and finalized by the Forestry Commission awaiting final signature.

Draft LOIs have been prepared separately by the CSLP for the review and signing by the Western Region offices of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Similar to the Forestry Commission, these two institutions have very strong impact and influence on the landscapes of the six coastal districts of the Western Region. These institutions have pledged their commitment to collaborate with the CSLP with their profound experiences and constituencies and hence the desire to leverage formal commitments from these government partners.

Participation in key national level environment and natural resources policy workshops

In line with outcome one of CSLP and the aim of forming partnerships with NGOs and Civil Society Organizations to champion legal reforms that create greater incentives for chiefs, landowners and communities, the team participated in three national level workshops in Accra. These meetings were under the auspices of the ClientEarth, the Wildlife Division/Ecosystems Alliance, and IUCN/Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund.

ClientEarth Workshop

The Ministry of Lands and Natural resources and the Forestry Commission have the intention to review and consolidate forest legislation before the end of 2014 which is seen as necessary to adapt forest legislation in light of the new 2012 Forest and Wildlife Policy (which was to be launched in December 2013). The revision and consolidation is considered as part of the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union's Forestry, Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade (FLEGT) policy, which promotes sustainable timber production through Chain of Custody regulation.

Thus the SSAT workshop, which was facilitated by ClientEarth's staff of environmental lawyers was to build the capacity of civil society in Ghana to participate in the proposed forest laws consolidation and reform and therefore provided the opportunity for participants to achieve/understand the following:

- The current legal environment and its implication on forest management in the light of issues such as:
 - Ownership
 - Control
 - Management and use rights
- Benefit sharing, and,
- The law making process in Ghana and points where civil society can interface with policy makers and influence outcomes.

The two three-day workshops were attended by civil society groups including:

1. Friends of the Earth Ghana
2. Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD)
3. WWF Ghana
4. National Forest Forum Ghana
5. Tropenbos Ghana
6. Western Region Network for NGOs (WERENGO)
7. Conservation Foundation
8. Forest Watch Ghana
9. Forestry Research Institute of Ghana

The civil society groups committed themselves to submit timely and as much as possible joint position papers when called upon. They also committed to consult and engage with their members, constituencies, communities, and partners throughout the process. CSLP was able to meet all the civil society partners and begin to develop potential partnerships for project activities.

CREMA Workshop

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 namely Tropenbos Ghana, The Development Institute, Rural Environmental Care Association, Nature Conservation Research Centre, IUCN and A Rocha Ghana. The objective was to review the CREMA

processes as have been implemented in Ghana for the past two decades and assess its suitability as a platform for the implementation of REDD+ practices.

In principle, the workshop concluded that 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. On the other hand, challenges that face the CREMA are participation and boundary issues.

It was concluded that a small group comprising of representatives from the Wildlife Division, Forest Services Division and some NGOs be constituted to further examine the CREMA processes and recommend structural reforms where necessary to properly align the CREMA for REDD+ implementation. The group should also obtain a copy of the Wildlife Bill currently in Parliament, in order to review it and, where necessary, recommend reforms to ensure consistency with the new Forest and Wildlife Policy 2012, which was approved after the wildlife bill was drafted.

Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF) Workshop

A three day workshop organized under the auspices of the IUCN, UNEP and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre provided the opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to development of the strategic investment program for the conservation and sustainable development of the Guinea forest ecosystem. The workshop was meant to set priority to ensure that key biodiversity areas are being managed for biodiversity conservation longevity and resiliency and also benefit from CEPF funding which opens in 2014.

CSLP was part of the Ghana focus group, which identified the Amanzule Wetland Complex as a key biodiversity area. This will ensure that the Amanzule is included in the future UGFE hotspot map.

Development of the draft CSLP Performance Monitoring Plan

The Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) for the CSLP has been drafted. This was done with the support of documents received from the Monitoring Evaluation Technical Support Services (METSS). The draft PMP has been shared with responsible persons in METSS and the USAID for their review and comments and will be finalized this quarter.

Review of project office space

The CSLP team explored potential office accommodations including sharing space within the Forestry Commission’s Timber Industry Development Division (TIDD) space in Takoradi as well as numerous private office and residential spaces. Based upon an initial estimate of the cost of renovations necessary to bring the space within the TIDD to usable standards, it was determined that the space was not practical. The team is currently exploring sharing office space with the Hen Mpoano organization in Windy Ridge in Takoradi which would allow the projects to leverage one another’s



extensive knowledge of the communities and activities in the Western Region and continue to partner on project activities.

Recruitment for new project director

The CSLP Director, Mr. Jordan Kimball, chose to resign his position in order to pursue opportunities in the United States at the end of the first quarter. US Forest Service has begun recruiting for his replacement and aims to interview candidates for the position and make an offer within this second quarter of the fiscal year.

B. Critical Issues to Anticipate

Critical issues/activities for early next quarter are:

- a) Registration of the project in Ghana and opening of bank accounts
- b) Assess and conclude the selection and renting of office accommodation
- c) Conduction of interviews and hiring of critical staffs
- d) Engagement with partners leading to signing of MOUs and contracts
- e) Finalizing the workplan and the draft PMP
- f) Hiring new CSLP Director