

CONSERVING SACRED FOREST WITHIN THE MAFIA C LANDSCAPE OF SEFWI WIAWSO STOOL LAND FOR SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

PROJECT FINAL REPORT
MAY, 2016



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Preface and Acknowledgement

This is the final report of the Conserving Sacred Forest within the Mafia C landscape of the Sefwi Wiawso stool land for social, cultural, ecological and economic benefits which discusses the actions and achievements of the project. The project was implemented between 2015 and 2016 with financial support from the Rufford Foundation based in United Kingdom. The findings in this report do not in any way reflect the official position of the funders, Rufford Foundation.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The project is about indigenous and community protected sacred forest harboring indigenous tree species and other biological diversity in the Sefwi-Wiawso Stool Land located in between the Krokosue Hills Reserve (a globally significant biodiversity area) and the BIA National Park in an area referred to as Mafia C. Therefore, there is an urgent need for ecological restoration and protection.

The main goal of this project is to support a community-led effective protection and sustainable management of the ten Sacred Forest within the Mafia C.

Bio-cultural diversity conservation in Mafia C has an area of 24,000ha with thirty four communities found within the landscape. The BIA National Park and the Krokosua Hills Forest Reserve are home to several wildlife. The project activities at Mafia C will provide buffer protection to this Protected

Areas and also serve as a migratory corridor between the two protected areas. Sixty-two species of mammals are known to live between the two protected areas. They include chimpanzees, forest elephants, and the highly threatened bongo species. Over 160 species of birds including the threatened white-breasted guinea fowls live here. There are 10 sacred forests in the Mafia C landscape; these areas are owned by the community which has been entrusted in the chief. These areas have been protected up to this time by community cultural norms. The sacred forests are of paramount spiritual importance to the well-being of the people. It is believed that the ancestors and gods stay in the sacred groves to protect the community and their members. The project thus seeks to protect the sacredness of forest which in essence was meant to conserve and protect the diversity of flora and fauna species and associated historical, socio-cultural, ecological and economic benefits for many generations locally, nationally and even globally (and also serve as carbon stocks for climate change mitigation).

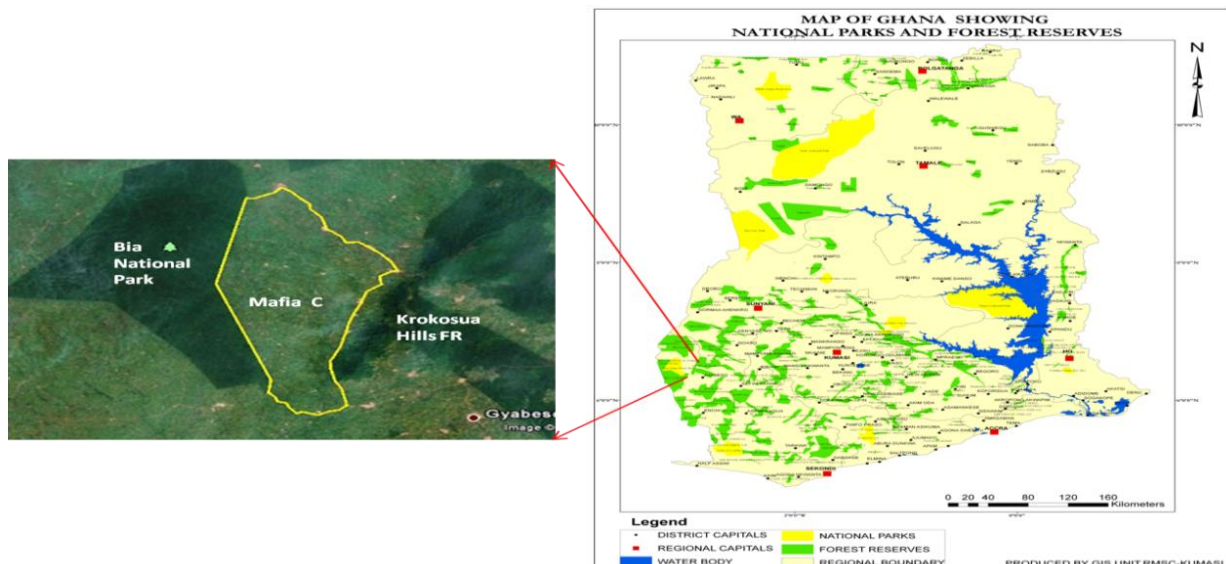
There are 10 sacred grooves in the Mafia C landscape; these areas are owned by the community which has been trusted in the chief. These are community protected areas and entry is only done when providing meals to the ancestors on some occasions. A libation is poured before they are allowed to enter to perform any rites. Divisional chiefs and non-divisional chiefs in the areas have access to these sacred grove and its resources and they grants user rights of the resources but the chiefs in these respective communities act on their behalf. These areas has been protected up to this time by community cultural norms and anyone who violates the norms is punished by paying a ram and a bottle of schnapps for the chief to pray to the ancestors for forgiveness.

The sacred groves are irregular in shape and surrounded by cocoa farms and other side by river Bia and Krokosuo Hills Forest. They contain trees with few timber species and because of the nature of these sacred areas which are often muddy and floods periodically, the tree species are not big like other forested lands. There are animals' species and their numbers increase during the dry seasons and reduce during raining season because more animals tend to come there for water when water is scarce and terrestrial animals tend to move from the site during flood days (raining season). During flooding there is always stagnant water like ponds which people can fish from.

The forest cover in the sacred grove has reduced compare to the ancient days partly due to the 1983 wild fires in Ghana. The vegetation is however regaining its nature because these areas are protected and no human activity occurs in these areas again. There are however illegal logging and encroachment by farmers over the years which keeps reducing the size annually.

There are timber species like wawa, odum, mahogany etc., non-timber forest products (NTFPs) like chewing sticks, pestle, robes etc. in the sacred groves. There are a lot of animal species in the area even though the numbers have reduced over the years. Some of the species found are grass cutter, porcupine, antelopes, black monkeys, pythons, etc.

The sacred groves are of paramount spiritual importance to the well-being of the people. It is believed that the ancestors and gods stay in the sacred groves to protect the community and their members. Even though economic potentials exist in the area people are not allowed to enter into the sacred grove to exploit any products, only some NTFPs that can be taken in some occasions especially some rites are to be performed there.



2 TECHNICAL APPROACH AND METHOD

2.1 Overall Approach

In this section the project team outlines general approach to delivery of the project. These are guiding principles and practices that the project team employ throughout, from definition to delivery of the entire project, based on many years' experience of delivering such technical project, the team believe the following themes inform a comprehensive and sustainable approach to delivering the project. The key to my approach to this project was a flexible approach to implementation which was responsive to all stakeholders and, most importantly, maximizes the community ownership of both the process and the outcomes. The project was a community initiative, my role is facilitation. Flexibility that allows for community understanding, participation and acceptance is therefore the appropriate approach the team adopt. My experience has shown that the model and style of

project management adopted has a major bearing on these factors, and in turn, the overall success of the project outcomes. My role as Team Leader was therefore expected to coordinate activities, build relations between players and act as the project focal point, enabling us to respond quickly and appropriately and to identify functional and technical gaps.

On the strength of the foregoing we adopted a participatory approach to gaining the outcomes of the project by ensuring that the process is underpinned by extensive stakeholder participation and consultation, and drawing on the widest circle of stakeholders. The team adopted a participatory and consultative approach in the delivery of this project. A conscious effort was made through the use of requisite participatory methods such as briefing/debriefing sessions, participatory mapping, group discussions, etc. to ensure key stakeholders participation. These approaches were to enhance ownership of the assessment by all stakeholders.

The main goal of the project is to support a community-led effective protection and sustainable management of the ten Sacred Forest within the Mafia C landscape

The following objectives was achieved during the implementation of the project

a) Enhance ecological restoration of the sacred forest for community, regional and global benefits

A conscious effort was made through the use of requisite participatory methods such as briefing/debriefing sessions, participatory mapping, group discussions, etc. to ensure key stakeholders participation. These approaches were used to enhance ownership of the assessment by all stakeholders. This also provided the background information needed for the development of the management plans. Over 10,000 seedling were raised and supplied to all the ten sacred forest within the Mafia C landscape, with a total of 73.10 hectares within the sacred forest cover has been improved significantly with 70% survival rate of planted trees which has increased the state of wildlife and forest resources (fauna and flora) in the Mafia C landscape.

b) Strengthen the capacities of the mafia C landscape communities, the traditional authorities and community institutions on the national forestry policies and regulations and empower them to effectively protect the resource

The management plan has been developed for all the ten project communities. Key development issues in the plan has been captured by the decentralised local governance system (District Assembly) for implementation (this is to ensure sustainability of the impacts/outcomes of the project). In the Mafia C traditional area.

Community rights manual developed to simplify versions of the relevant forest and wildlife policies with all the 10 communities

c) Establish and promote a community framework for effective community-based forest protection that will preserve sacred forests sacredness, socio-cultural, economic and socio-ecological benefits

All the ten project communities have received information on the sustainable use and conservation of sacred forest. They have also received information on

forest sector policies and laws relevant for the sustainable use of sacred forest. Monitoring and evaluation framework, sustainability strategy, further build capacity of the community members has been develop and yet to produce dissemination and replication strategies.

2.2 Project outcomes

- i. The adoption of a participatory Rural Appraisal and Community needs Assessment approach/tools for gaining the outcomes of the project by ensuring that the process is underpinned by extensive stakeholder participation and consultation, and drawing on the widest circle of stakeholders. An important aspect of the project was to ensure that the right information is gathered at the right source and to reflect the implicit expectations of what the project seeks to achieve in all the ten project communities through the use of various tools, processes and systems developed and used through a collaborative and participatory approach to develop management plan for the protection of sacred forest.
- ii. The level of awareness of the community members in the project communities has been enhanced through the implementation of the project and together with the implementation of the management plan this will reduce to the minimal level the encroachment and destruction of Sacred forest in the Mafia C landscape
- iii. A management, synergy building and conflict management plan for the ten project communities in relation to sacred forest conservation in place. This plan has the buy-in of the local government system (the District Assembly) and will be used to feed into broader national level discourse on Mafia C landscape. The plan has enabled communities to identify development approaches and paths that is consistent with their aspirations of economic growth and development and still conserves and maintains the integrity of their respective sacred forest in the Mafia C landscape.
- iv. Over 5000 community members capacity have been built on forest management (3500 males,1500 females)
- v. Report of the project and other relevant information materials produced and distributed to wide range of stakeholders including the communities, NGO coalitions including Forest Watch Ghana (FWG) and government (the District Assembly).
- vi. Over 10,000 seedling were raised and supplied to all the ten sacred forest within the Mafia C landscape, a total of 73.10 hectares of land cover within the sacred forest has been improved significantly with 70% survival rate of planted trees which has increased the state of wildlife and forest resources (fauna and flora).
- vii. The project activities at Mafia C landscape has provided buffer protection to these Protected Areas and also serve as a migratory corridor between the two areas BIA National Park and Krokosuo Forest. Sixty-two species of mammals are known to live between the two protected areas. They include chimpanzees, forest elephants, and the highly threatened bongo species. Over 160 species of birds including the threatened white-breasted guinea fowls live here.
- viii. The project team made a conscious effort to ensure maximum publicity of the Rufford Foundation in the implementation of the project. During all the community meetings, the Rufford Foundation

was mentioned as the funder of the project. The project implementation team went ahead to explain the interest of the funders in funding the project and the conservation of ten sacred forest in the Mafia C landscape. In the interactions with other stakeholders at the district level, Rufford Foundation was mentioned as the funding partner of the project. All correspondence to stakeholders especially in the arrangement and implementation of the district stakeholder's workshop mentioned Rufford Foundation as the funder. The T-shirts was given to project communities members with Rufford logo and banner developed for the workshop carried the logo and acknowledgement of the Rufford Foundation for maximum visibility (this is also shown in one picture from the project presented in the project pictures document). The products developed for the project including the reports, information materials carried the logo and acknowledgement of Rufford Foundation.

- ix. One of the key tools identified by the project for effective achievement was the CREMA concept.

The CREMA concept aims at strengthening local governance capacity and enabling engagement with other actors at multiple scales to articulate local interests and aspirations with the aim of achieving linked conservation and development as a key goal. The concept is modelled around the local land tenure systems which are at the core of decision-making around lands in Ghana.

Seedlings Planted In the 10 Sacred Forest within the Mafia C Landscape June –July 2015

No.	Community	Estimated sizes of the Sacred forest	Number of species planted	Survival rate	Name of species planted
1	Mafia site 1	2.3 ha	300	70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminalia ivorensis • Khaya ivorensis • Mahogany • Neuclea diderrichii
2	Komeama	2.3 ha	300	80%	
3	Asempanaye	3.1 ha	450	80%	
4	Mafia site 2	13.1 ha	1000	70%	
5	Eteso	2.7 ha	570	70%	
6	Nkra	2.6 ha	550	70%	
7	Brekrom	17.9 ha	2000	70%	
8	Kaneako	19.4 ha	4000	70%	
9	Dominebo	0.5 ha	100	70%	
10	Seniegya	9.9 ha	850	80%	
	Totals	73.10 ha	10,120		

3 BASELINE SURVEY

3.1 Description of Sacred Groves

3.1.1 Brekrom

The name of the sacred forest is "Ahentamoo" which means hidden stone. The area is owned by the community which has been trusted in the chief. It is a protected area; they only enter the place when providing meals to the ancestors in some

occasions. A libation is poured before they are allowed to enter to perform any rites. Bonsaa Chief who is the paramount chief of the area have access to the sacred forest and its resources and he grants user rights of the resources but the chief in the community act on his behalf.

The whole area which is estimated 17.9ha is covered with stone and river Bia flowing at one end of the land. It is about 2 km from the community and 3 km to Seniagya. The area has been protected up to this time by community cultural norms and anyone who violates the norms is punished by paying a ram and a bottle of schnapps for the chief to pray to the ancestors for forgiveness. The Rufford Foundation support to the project has helped to:

- Reduced the effect of group hunting
- Reduced water pollution
- Reduced bushfires
- Encourage tree planting
- Build their capacity in forest resource management.

The area is covered with shiny stones and river Bia is flowing at the edge. At some point one can see the bottles and utensils used by the ancestors or gods of the area and at some point one could see where the gods played "oware", the area is scented with nice flower-like plants and leaves do not fall in a spot even though there are trees. The area looks like tourist attraction area even though 1983 wildfire had destroyed most of the ancient remains but some still exist to show.

The forest cover has reduced compare to the ancient days this is so because of the 1983 wild fire which occurred but its regaining its nature because the area is protected and no human activity occurs in the area.

Flora and Fauna

There are timber species like wawa, odum, mahogany etc., Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) like chewing sticks, pestle, robes etc. can be found in the area. There are a lot of animal species in the area even they have reduced comparing to the olden days. Some of the species found are grass cutter, porcupine, antelopes, black monkeys, pythons and "dwarfs".

The area believed to be where the ancestors and gods stay to protect the community and their members. Even though economic potentials exist in the area but they are not allow to exploit only some NTFPs are allowed in some occasions especially when they go there to perform some rites.

The main treat to the forest is wild fire because no human activity is allowed in the area they believe that with education it can be checked.

The history behind the area is that according to oral history, a hunter went for hunting and got lost in the bush. While searching to come home he met a short being believed to be a dwarf who directed him to find his way home. That being warned him not to step there again for hunting expedition but gave him a stone to use in healing. It also promised him that he will give more birth and it came to pass where the man and his wife gave birth to 15 children and finally gave birth to a stone. Some of the grand children still exist and the chief of the community is one of them.

The Rufford Foundation support to the project has helped to:

- Reduced the effect of group hunting
- Reduced water pollution
- Reduced bushfires
- Encourage tree planting
- Build their capacity in forest resource management.

3.1.2 Seniagya

The name of the forest is Fa wo ho bo Yesu (rely on Jesus). After the 1983 wild fire, the community decided to set aside a portion of the community lands as a forest. The area is surrounded by cocoa farms and river Boamah and its estimation is 9.9ha which is about 1 mile from the community. CREMA which was CARE International Project is only forestry project in the community and the Project had helped them to preserve the resources in the area which has able to protect the river Boama which is the drinking source of water for the community.

The area is muddy with a lot of raffia palm and other non-timber forest products (NTFPs) like robes for building, canes etc. It is irregular in shape. There are a lot of economic tree species like makore, masonia, wawa, framu etc. Monkeys, grass cutters, pythons are some of animals that can be found there.

The purpose of the forest was to reserve the area as building material supply base for the community and this purpose has not been changed then. Anyone who enters the forest without authorization from the community leaders are charged to pay GHC10 plus a bottle of schnapps.

Hunting expedition and logging were identified as main drivers of degradation and bush fire is the major treat to the forest. The agents of the degradation of forest were the group hunters, palm wine tappers, chain saw operators and the activities occur mostly around December to march (dry season period). The community members believe that with continue education, their activities could be minimized. Fire volunteers and CREMA executives are community stakeholder in forest management in the area.

The Rufford Foundation support to the project has helped to:

- Reduced the effect of forest degradation and deforestation
- Reduced water pollution
- Reduced bushfires
- Encourage tree planting
- Build their capacity in forest resource management.

3.1.3 Komeama

The area is called Komeama sacred grove which belongs to the community. The area was their ancestral home and after moving to the present community used that area as burial place for their chiefs. The area has been protected by the traditional norms and believes up till this time. Anyone who violates and enters there is being punished by paying a ram and a bottle of schnapps and any amount decide by the chief and his elders. It has been there since 1964 and estimated size is 2.3ha. It is about two miles from the community. The forest is surrounded by cocoa

farms and a stream at one end of it. The estimated population of the community is about 1500.

The forest consists of different timber tree and animal species and the nature of the forest has changed for the better because no activity takes place in the area. There is a place which has earmarked for the preparation of ancestors' food and pouring of libation for the protection of the community. Some of the timber tree species in the forest are wawa, ofram, oyina, adenam, pronoo etc. In terms of the animals some of the species have gone on extinction and others have reduced in terms of numbers due to human activities around the area. Some species still found there include antelopes, monkeys, pythons, tortoise, snails etc. There are non-timber forest products (NTFPs) some of these are ropes, sponge, different types of herbs for healing, different types of spices etc.

The purpose of reserving the area has not changed overtime (burial place of their chiefs) and it also serves other purposes. The resource there is for future generation to enjoy the benefits and know different types of tree and animal species. It may also serves as a place of interest in future. It also protects the two rivers Amoya and ebene bon which serve as sources of drinking water for people who farms there.

Hunting expedition, logging, agricultural practices are main drivers of deforestation and degradation which are the threats on the forest in the community. During their hunting expedition, that there is likely hood of setting fire in the forest and they do this because of "bush meat". This can be arrested if there is alternate source of additional income during off cocoa season.

According to the elders of the community, anyone who go there secretly for resources without permission of the chief and his elders, the fellow is being punished by the gods or the ancestors of the land by death. The fellow will narrate his or her own story before he/she dies. They said that there were three friends who went to the forest for hunting and NTFPs and no one saw them and at the point of their death, they narrated their story of entering the place for resources and they finally die.

There was another hunter who went there to set traps and strangely his materials for the trap were picked and hanged on the tree top. He narrated his story and the chiefs pour libation to ask for forgiveness. These stories which are known by the community members are some of the driving behind the protection of the forest up to date. The Rufford Foundation support to the project has helped to:

- Reduced water pollution
- Reduced bushfires
- Encourage tree planting
- Build their capacity in forest resource management.

3.1.4 Mafia

A sacred grove estimated about 15.4 ha. In two separated areas in Mafia It is a place their deaths and a vast stretch of forest which is muddy and difficult to engage in any agriculture activity. The sacred grove is owned by the community but the other stretch of forest, part is owned by individuals and part by the traditional leaders.

The forest at both areas has been there more than 100 years and the nature has not changed in the stretch of muddy area but the nature of the sacred grove have changed drastically because of logging which took place there by timber contractors. It now contains few timber tree species but the NTFPs are still there even though they have reduced.

They identified agricultural activities; logging and bushfire are the drivers of deforestation and degradation. They are more severe between January and April. The Rufford Foundation support to the project has helped to:

- Reduced the effect of forest degradation and deforestation
- Reduced water pollution
- Reduced bushfires
- Encourage tree planting
- Build their capacity in forest resource management.

3.1.5 Nkra

The area was an old settlement area of Nkra and when they moved to the present day Nkra then decided to preserve. The chief and his elders decided to use that area as burial place for their people and pour libation in there to serve their departed souls. They have protected the area over 100 years. Nkra has estimated population of about 600.

It is estimated 2.6ha and surrounded by cocoa farms. Part of it which constitutes the larger portion is thick forest with tall trees with strong twine and robes but other part looks like secondary forest due to the wild fire experienced in 1983 but it is regaining its forest status. There are timber species like wawa, dahoma, ofram, dadea etc. are found in the area and animals like antelopes, grass cutters, rat, snails etc. are some of animal species found there. Apart from the animal and trees species other non-timber forest products like robes, herbs, spices etc. are found in the area. Logging has ever taken place before in some parts of the area but is hardly to notice it (more than 20 years ago).

According to the people even though the area is served as cemetery, it also serves as traditional prayer ground for protection of the community. They also feel that it will attract tourist in future and for future generation to meet the resources there.

The traditional believes and norms are used to protect the area and anyone who violates the norms is being punished by paying a ram and a bottle of schnapps.

The community considered logging and hunting as main drivers and chain saw operators and hunters are the agents of degradation and deforestation in the area. Their activities are more prominent in dry season (Dec.-Feb). They feel that if there is any income generating activity like palm oil extraction machine, grass cutter rearing and aquaculture, forest degradation will be reduced.

The Rufford Foundation support to the project has helped to:

- Reduced the effect of forest degradation and deforestation
- Reduced water pollution
- Reduced bushfires
- Encourage tree planting

- Build their capacity in forest resource management.

3.1.6 Kaneako

Kaneako community forest area was earmarked by the chief and his elders during the olden days. The area is estimated 19.4ha and the total population is about 600. In the olden days the early settlers tempted to farm there and even started planted cocoa and because of the flood nature of the area, they could not established and moved away from the area. The chief and elders decided to use there as community forest since it was hardly to farm there.

The area is irregular in shape and surrounded by cocoa farms and other side by river Bia. It contains trees with few timber species and because of the nature of the area which is muddy and floods periodically; the tree species are not big like other forested lands. There are animals' species and their numbers increase during the dry seasons and reduce during raining season because more animals tend to come there for water when water is scarce and terrestrial animals tend to move from the site during flood days (raining season). During flooding there are always stagnant of water like ponds which people can fish inside.

The community forest was created for future use of the resources for example building materials, mat for drying of cocoa, food etc. Also for the future generation to see some of animal and trees species which have extinct in many locations.

Community's bylaws are used to protect the forest and anyone who violates pay a ram and a bottle of schnapps to the chief and his elders, refusal of this, the fellow is handed over to the police.

The community members believe that agriculture is main driver of degradation of forest follow by logging and hunting. They feel that if the agents engage in an income generating activity in off cocoa season, the degradation will reduced. Wild fire was considered to be most threat to forest degradation and deforestation and through education it can be controlled.

The Rufford Foundation support to the project has helped to:

- Reduced the effect of forest degradation and deforestation
- Reduced water pollution
- Reduced bushfires
- Encourage tree planting
- Build their capacity in forest resource management.

3.1.7 Eteso

Eteso community forest was ancient community of Eteso and after moving to settle in the present community, the chief and the elders of the community decided to use the place as cemetery and up till now it is the burial place for the people of Eteso. The area consists of the cemetery and a place the traditional leaders perform their rituals including pouring of libation and cook for the ancestors. It is surrounded by cocoa farms and one side by river Bia. No one can enter there without the permission of the chief. The size is estimated about 2.7ha.

Initially the purpose was to use the place to bury their deaths, and create an area to feed the ancestors and perform their rituals but now realize that it will serve a

purpose of supplying materials for community buildings in future. They can also derive some income from the NTFPs like marbles for oware.

Some of the tree species found there are wawa, oyina, ofram, dannaa, odum and animal species found there tree hyrax, ahwea, squirrel, bush baby etc. It also contains some NTFPs like bamboo, robes, oware marbles, snails, leaf wrappers etc. Both animal and tree species have reduce overtime because of its nearness to the community (noise), farming around it and people were entering for some of the resources till they realised to protect the area. Anyone who violates the traditional norms and enter the place are made to pay a ram, a bottle of schnapps and any specify amount depending on the resources taken from the place and how you comport yourself in the chief's palace.

They identified hunting, farming practices and logging as the main drivers and they occur in Jan-March. They suggested that it can reduce if interventions like grass cutter rearing, aquaculture, vegetable farms are participated by the community members during off cocoa seasons.

1. Mafia (Site One)	N 06° 46.173' W 002° 92.768'	2.3 ha	602 m
2.Mafia (Site Two)	N 06° 46.173' W 002° 92.768'	13.1 ha	2.59 km
3.Nkrah	N 06° 48.466' W 002° 91.644'	2.6 ha	900 m
4.Asempaneye	N 06° 50.201' W 002° 90.987'	3.1 ha	969 m
5.Eteso	N 06° 53.201' W 002° 90.738'	2.7 ha	742 m
6.Dominebo	N 06° 51.493' W 002° 91.674'	0.5 ha	305 m
7.Brekrom	N 06° 42.616' W 002° 93.137'	17.9 ha	2.39 km
8.Seniagya	N 06° 43.534' W 002° 93.359'	9.9 ha	1.68 km
9..Kaneako	N 06° 47.569' W 002° 92.612'	19.4 ha	4.21 km
10. Komeamaa	N 05° 44.701' W 002° 93.066'	2.3 ha	789 m

The Rufford Foundation support to the project has helped to:

- Reduced the effect of forest degradation and deforestation
- Reduced water pollution
- Reduced bushfires
- Encourage tree planting
- Build their capacity in forest resource management.

3.1.8 Dominebo

The forest is at end of the community. And estimated 0.5ha and has been degraded and the project has supply seedlings to bring the forest back to normal The Rufford Foundation support to the project has helped to

- Reduced the effect of forest degradation and deforestation
- Reduced water pollution
- Reduced bushfires
- Encourage tree planting
- Build their capacity in forest resource management.

3.1.9 Bremang/Asempaneyeye

Breman community forest in the olden days was cemetery for Breman and Asempaneyeye communities. After settling at the present sites, a new area was selected to bury their death. The chiefs and elders of the twin communities decided to protect the area for the ancestors. The whole community agreed because everybody was afraid to do any activity in the area. The forest is over 100 years. Breman community estimated the size is 3.1ha.

4 NEXT STEPS

The important next step includes follow ups the project report that were shared with all relevant stakeholders including Rufford Foundation, Ghana Forestry commission, Sefwi Wiawso Traditional council, Juaboso District Assembly, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Department of Silviculture and Forest Management) and Conservation NGOs Also the key findings of the report will be incorporated into the recommendations by the Wildlife Bill before parliament and ensure sustainability of the important outcomes/impacts of the project (will use my influence as part of the legal Working group working on position papers to support the Wildlife Bill. It is also important that in order to keep the aspirations of the community in suitable balance, different proposals need to be developed by NGOs and civil society organisations using the information from the project to explore the options of attracting donor funding to implement actions identified in the Management Plan. It is also anticipated that Rufford Foundation as a key and strategic partner will use the information in this report to engage with other donors to streamline and provide funding options for implementing a suit of capacity building.

Follow up on government's long term policy decision on Traditional sacred sites to be considered national protected areas and planning agencies and protected area managers who have to engaged with the custodians of these sacred forest in addition provided a dedicated fund for the sustainable management of the sacred forest which will help improve the ecological integrity of the sacred forests in Ghana

There is wider populace demand from the communities, the District Assembly and other relevant stakeholders to continue the work. So far the management plan identifies possible collaborations between different stakeholder groups including NGOs to carry on some aspects of the project including the community sensitisation aspects through formation and sensitisation of Community Resources Management Area committees (CRMAs) one of the key tools identified by the project for effective achievement was the CREMA concept.

The CREMA concept aims at strengthening local governance capacity and enabling engagement with other actors at multiple scales to articulate local interests and aspirations with the aim of achieving linked conservation and

development as a key goal. The concept is modelled around the local land tenure systems which are at the core of decision-making around lands in Ghana.

The management plan has also identified a long-term perspective for sustainable development, adapting strategies as needed to address dynamic social and economic changes thus contribute to the conservation and sound use of the sacred forest. The action plan has also tasked implementers of this project and other NGOs to look for additional support (grant funding) to build the technical capacities of community members.

The district stakeholder's workshop was to consider actionable/arising issues and develop plans to implement them looking at the synergies and potential conflicts among stakeholders in the sustainable management/conservation of sacred forest. It is important to note that through the community sensitization meetings, the level of awareness on the drivers of deforestation and destruction of all the ten sacred forest has been fully appreciated. The ten communities have also received information on the various laws that govern forest management in the country. The communities have resolved to engage in sustainable forest management practices and also protect sacred forest in the Mafia C landscape. About 5000 community members (3500 males, 1500 females) from the project communities have directly received the awareness and this is expected to provide benefits to over a thousand community members indirectly through its ripple effect.

4.1 Management/Strategic Plan-2015-2016

Arising Issues	Implementation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Community/stakeholders
Government support	<p>1. Strengthening local governance capacity and enabling engagement with other actors at multiple scales to articulate local interests and aspirations with the aim of achieving linked conservation and development as a key goal.</p> <p>2. Advocate and lobby government to enforce recommendations from the forest and wildlife policy 2012 for the protection of sacred site for traditional religious purposes shall be protected from logging and harvesting</p> <p>Incorporate Conservation and environmental issues in the MTDP</p>	September 2015-June 2016	Juaboso District Assembly Service Division Forest Watch Ghana NGOs	All project communities Juaboso District Assembly Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council Central Government NGOs Forestry Commission

	by the District Assembly.			
Support and strengthening of traditional Institutions	Explore options of enacting additional legislation to provide support and incentives for traditional institutions to enact bye-laws and put in place structures/systems that protect sacred forest in Mafia C landscape	August 2015- June 2016	District Assembly (Coordinating Director) Forest Watch Ghana Traditional Council members CIKOD	District Assembly (Coordinating Director) Forest Watch Ghana Traditional Council members CIKOD
Strengthening Community Resource Management committees (CREMA)	Develop and adopt a participatory tools and options of engaging community members as Community Resources Management committees to feed into the CREMA concept Collaborate with the Forest Services Division of the Forestry Commission for the provision of technical support to communities on forest protection and management beyond the project life span	June 2015- December 2016	CREMA members NGOs Forestry Commission DA	CREMA members NGOs Forestry Commission DA
Sensitization and awareness creation	Develop awareness Creation packages on forest resource management Collaborate with District Assembly to incorporate Conservation of forest resource management issues in their District Medium Development Plan and support sub structures in the assembly responsible for Forest and environmental	May 2015- December 2015	CREMA Executive members NGOs- Conservation Foundation District Assembly Chiefs Media houses (Rainbow FM)	NGOs-Conservation Foundation District Assembly Chiefs Media houses (Rainbow FM)

	management to enact bye laws to regulate the resources in the landscape			
Improve alternative livelihood	Develop and implement viable, sustainable and profitable alternative livelihoods for fringe communities	June 2015-July 2016	DA Collaborative Resource Management Support Centre (CRMSC) NGOs	DA NGOs Communities
Promote the status of all sacred forest within the Mafia C landscape	Document experience and lessons from the project to provide additional evidence to support policy options of the elevation of the status of all sacred forest within the Mafia C landscape	May 2015- May 2016	Project team (Rufford supported team)	District Assembly, Forestry Commission, National House of Chiefs Forest Watch Ghana Legal Working Group-Client Earth

5 CONCLUSION

The Rufford Foundation grant support has been extremely useful in terms of making resources available for the project team to do what it believes in to conserve nature around the world. With the grant we are taking the gradual but important step to conserve all sacred forest in the Mafia C landscape (conserving several hundreds of fauna and flora species) for present and future generations. The corporation and effective collaboration with all stakeholders involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project has been helpful.

It is the hope of the project team that Rufford Foundation will continue its enormous work of conserving the world's ecosystems. We look forward to continuous engagement with the foundation.