TREE TENURE IN GHANA
A review of progress made by

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Background

- Deforestation rates in Ghana
  - Alarming rates (highest change rate in the world)
  - Major drivers are illegal mining, agriculture (cocoa production is highest), illegal harvesting of timber.
  - Reduces the potential of local economic development in rural areas
  - Loss of biodiversity (including the ability of environment to sustain livelihoods)
The solution

Adoption of national approach to halting deforestation
- Building partnerships
- Inclusiveness
- Shared resources
- Compliance/alignment with global activities
The solution - Tree Ownership and Registration

• One of the suite of enabling environment actions taken to help halt deforestation, improve tree cover, and enhance farmer incomes

• Tree tenure policy was developed as a first step to ensure that farmers are incentivised to plan trees on their farms
  o Targets off-reserve areas
  o Published in 2016 by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
  o Policy was based a call from various stakeholders for the need to incentivise people to undertake massive tree planting activities to help improve tree cover.
  o A study was initiated and through a multistakeholder process the policy was developed.

• Policy deals with 3 main issues
  • Naturally occurring trees (Trees on farms, secondary forests, CREMAs, others)
  • Planted trees
  • Benefits to farmers
The solution - Tree Ownership and Registration

**Planted trees On Reserve**
- 2 models currently being implemented with Forestry Commission
  - Commercial lease agreements with private developers
  - Modified Taungya System (MTS) with farmers

**Planted trees Off Reserve**
- 100% ownership by farmer
- Farmer has right to negotiate benefit sharing with land owner (usually part of land use lease agreement)
- If not in a plantation, farmers need to prove ownership of trees through tree registration
- Tree registration is expensive (individual farmers are not able to pay for it, usually financed by private sector and government)
- Land ownership/ lease agreements did not take into consideration tree planting.
The solution- Tree Ownership and Registration

**Naturally occurring trees On Reserve**

- Currently there are no issues for trees that occur in the protected areas since there are laid down ways of distributing proceeds from sales of timber.
- Usually proceeds that go to traditional authorities, local governments, have been contested and allegations made of their misuse.

**Naturally occurring trees Off Reserve**

- Most controversial aspect that needs attention.
- 3 types of management regimes depending on governance in place (CREMAs, On farms, Secondary forests).
- Government does not own trees under these schemes but benefit arrangement in place with all previous agreements on land respected.
- CREMAs and dedicated forests have legal documentation – by laws, constitutions, management plans, etc.
- Local people need education and capacity to manage these kinds of innovations.
Where are we going?

- There is a shorter route
  - The concession Act 1965
- Longer and expensive route
  - Complete processes for registering planted trees on farms
  - Publishing the benefit-sharing of naturally occurring trees on farms and other off-reserve areas

The most dominant conclusion from the study is that the existing tree tenure should be reformed such that ownership of naturally occurring timber trees are vested in persons or entities with management, exclusion and alienation rights to trees and land. The implication is that holders of alodial and freehold land titles under customary land ownership would exercise ownership right over naturally occurring trees on their lands. This would incentivize critical stakeholders, such as farmers and forest-adjacent communities, to invest in forest management and conservation for effective implementation of any tree growing mechanism.
Merci beaucoup