

# INFO BRIEF

## GHANA REDD+ STRATEGY



### Key Messages

- Ghana's REDD+ Strategy has served as the blueprint for REDD+ by providing a guidance and framework for REDD+ implementation.
- Ghana's REDD+ Strategy is well-anchored within a very favourable policy environment.
- REDD+ drives major changes in tenure and rights regimes, pushing forward the decentralization of landscape level land-use planning, enforcing of forest laws, and introducing a new system for monitoring forests and impacts.
- REDD+ fosters new types of economic opportunities and incentives that strengthen natural resource governance and enables stakeholders and land users to prosper as Ghana conserves and grows forests.
- An inclusive and comprehensive national process has been crucial to the success of REDD+ in Ghana.
- Private sector Engagement in addressing deforestation along commodity value chains is an imperative.
- High level political engagement is crucial in mobilizing strategic and political support for REDD+.

### INTRODUCTION

Ghana's net annual loss of forest cover is estimated at 2% with forest degradation generally acknowledged as more prevalent as compared to deforestation. To address these challenges, Ghana's REDD+ Strategy was developed to meet the requirements of the Warsaw Framework on REDD+ and other decisions of the UNFCCC. In addition to the Strategy, Ghana has submitted a Forest Reference Level to the UNFCCC, and working towards development of a National Forest Monitoring System and a Safeguards Information System. Ghana's REDD+ Strategy has been largely supported by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) with complementary support by UN-REDD and other partners.



## *THE CHALLENGE*

Ghana's forest resources face pressures from mining, agricultural encroachment, wildfires and poaching. Ghana's economic growth and achievements have come at a significant cost to its forests. Having lost over 60% of its forest cover from 1950 to the turn of the last century (2.7 million hectares), and considering the current deforestation rate of approximately 2% per year (135,000 ha/year), the future of Ghana's forests is an issue of major concern. Forest degradation and deforestation pose a significant threat to Ghana for two main reasons. Forests provide many ecosystem services and functions that support the country's predominantly agrarian economy. Therefore, as Ghana loses its forest ecosystem, the sustainable supply of goods and services is hampered. Ghana acknowledges that while the concept of REDD+ is relatively straightforward, the actions required to achieve REDD+ are complicated and multi-dimensional.

## *GHANA'S RESPONSE*

Ghana's Vision for REDD+ is to significantly reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation over the next twenty years, whilst at the same time addressing threats that undermine ecosystem services and environmental integrity to maximize co-benefits from forests. The goals set by Ghana for REDD+ implementation are to i) reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while enabling carbon stock enhancement through sustainable forest management and forest restoration strategies such as forest plantation establishment, ii) preserve Ghana's forests in order to sustain their ecosystem services, conserve biological diversity, and maintain a cultural heritage for generations to come; iii) transform Ghana's major agricultural commodities and Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) into climate-smart production systems and landscapes; iv) expand platforms for cross-sector and public-private collaboration and sustainable economic development; and v) generate innovative, substantial and sustainable economic and non-economic incentives and benefits to improve livelihoods across all regions of Ghana.

## *NATIONAL REDD+ STRATEGY*

This strategy is envisaged to be a twenty-year working document but is subject to periodic review as new ideas and enhanced understanding of REDD+ emerge from research and on-the-ground implementation of REDD+ activities in Ghana.

The strategy includes a set of strategic options for addressing the direct and indirect drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Each option was assessed based on ten criteria that were grouped according to importance.

This analysis resulted in the identification of three (3) broad interventions representing a strategic grouping of the various strategy options; the idea being that by implementing the strategy options in concert and in accordance with the relevant eco-zones or national context, they will have the highest potential to significantly impact the direct and indirect drivers. The three recommended interventions and the associated strategy options to reduce deforestation and forest degradation are 1) improving land-use and socio-economic development in the high forest zone and the cocoa growing areas; 2) Addressing wood processing and agricultural practices in the savannah woodland zones; and 3) Policy and legislative reforms.

Ghana has included the full scope of REDD+ interventions as part of its strategy, but the implementation of these interventions will depend upon the availability of resources to implement the associated activities and the capacity to monitor and measure emission reductions or removals.

## *IMPLEMENTATION OF REDD+ STRATEGY*

Ghana has adopted a nested approach for implementation of REDD+ in a phased programmatic approach with initial focus on the High Forest Zone and scaling up to cover the other distinct major ecological zones of the country such as the Savanna Zone. The proposed measures and interventions targeted at addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are linked with the production and supply chains of major commodities and defined by clear ecological boundaries. The National REDD+ Strategy is meant to serve as a guide and framework for achieving REDD+ in a well-coordinated manner by pursuing a broad set of actions to tackle deforestation and forest degradation at the landscape level.

Ghana's strategy is to implement REDD+ at a national scale, but to roll out concerted actions and activities at sub-national landscape scales Ghana's strategy is to focus on the implementation of large scale, sub-national programmes that follow ecological boundaries (jurisdictions) and are defined by major commodities and drivers of deforestation and degradation, within a set of over-arching, national activities and the encompassing national REDD+ framework. This dual national-

jurisdictional approach to implementation enables landscape scale actions and cross-sector collaboration, coupled with private sector participation and community-based mobilization that together will produce collective impacts, while promoting the operational and accounting efficiencies that come from using a single set of systems and processes. The eco-zone jurisdictional boundaries were designated based on Ghana's nine forest ecosystem types.

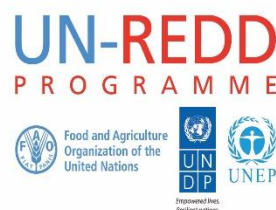
### *NEXT STEPS AND THE WAY FORWARD*

1. Launch of the Ghana REDD+ Strategy at the COP 23 in Bonn, Germany.
2. Submit a project proposal to the Green Climate Fund. This will be Ghana's first GCF proposal and the first time a REDD+ project intervenes in a savanna woodland landscape where shea is considered from a climate change perspective.
3. Implement Forest Investment Programme, which is piloting key REDD+ activities.
4. Continue to leverage partnerships for Ghana's REDD+ programme dubbed Ghana Cocoa-Forest REDD+, including through the Carbon Fund of the World Bank, paving the way to receive some funds in results-based REDD+ payments.
5. Continue engaging stakeholder, including engagement of the Members of Parliament to ensure REDD+ continues to be well positioned in national development processes.
6. Organize targeted donor tables meetings to discuss potential support for the REDD+ strategy. In addition, develop proposals and concept notes for resource mobilization and investments in REDD+.

Ghana is currently poised to transition from REDD+ readiness to implementation and would require support from the international community.



*Photo Caption: REDD+ Ghana*



The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries

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