**2017 ANNUAL REPORT SUBMITTED BY GHANA COCOA BOARD**

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| **Project Title** : **Environmentally Sustainable Production Practices in Cocoa Landscapes (ESP) - Phase II** |
| **Implementing Agency: Ghana Cocoa Board** |
| **Date**: 15/12/2017 | **Reporting Period**: January to December 2017  |

| **1. RESULTS PERFORMANCE/ACHIEVEMENTS** |
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| **Project Results** *State Project Results**(outcomes of outputs from approved project document or workplan)* | **Indicators** *The project outcome or output indicators as stated in the M&E framework and/or AWP* | **Target** *Targets agreed by the project team on each indicator* | **Update on Results***A brief analysis on any relevant changes pertaining to the outcome or output achieved with respect to targets* | **Comments** |
| **Outcome 1: Mainstreaming environmentally sustainable production practices into farmer level practices** |
| *Output 1.1.1* *Farmers trained and equipped in environmentally sustainable production practices* | 1.1.1 Number of trainers trained on environmentally sustainable production practices | 200 | Two training sessions were held for extension trainers during the period under review. The first was for **1,008** Trainers made up ofCHED CEAs drawn from both mainstream CHED and those appointed by CL, Community Animators and staff of other Cocoa Life IPs and Lead Farmers from all the CL communities in each District. They were trained on ESP’s tree integration and silviculture practices in 5 of the Cohorts 3 Districts. They were trained on the multiple benefits of enhancing tree & carbon stocks on farms and tree-tenure regulations that ensure farmers’ ownership rights of planted trees. Breakdown of Participation was as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Districts*** | ***CHED CEAs*** | ***Other CL IPs*** | ***Community Animators*** | ***Lead Farmers*** | ***Total*** |
|
| Sekyere East  | 5 | 4 | 48 | 139 | 196 |
| Ahafo Ano North | 6 | 5 | 36 | 129 | 176 |
| Bia West | 14 | 8 | 28 | 162 | 212 |
| Juabeso | 20 | 10 | 80 | 130 | 240 |
| Awutu Senya | 5 | 3 | 35 | 141 | 184 |
| **TOTAL** | **50** | **30** | **227** | **701** | **1,008** |

*(Note: 52 % of participants were Females)*Participants are expected to act as lead trainers in their respective communities after the TOT. They were trained on the following:1. Importance of overhead shade on cocoa farms
2. Shade management on cocoa farms
3. Tree selection – desirable and undesirable trees
4. Ecological basis of desirable and undesirable tree species in cocoa farms
5. Proper method of eliminating undesirable trees from cocoa farms
6. Planting techniques including space determination in both new and existing farms
7. Tree seedling planting procedure in newly established as well as in existing farms
8. Maintenance and care/nurturing of planted trees
9. Ownership right for planted tree and registration procedures

The right of the farmer over existing naturally regenerated trees on farmsThe second TOT was for **660** CHED CEAs – mainly CL appointed - Community Animators, Lead Farmers/Environmental Committee members and staff of other CL IPs in 5 Districts. The main objective of the training was to build and enhance their technical capacity in selected environmentally sustainable production practices. The content of the training was based on the ESP supplementary training materials on sustainable practices – including the flipchart and the handouts that accompany the main manual.Breakdown of Participation was as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Districts*** | ***CHED CEAs*** | ***Other CL IPs*** | ***Community Animators & Environmental Committees*** |
| *Sekyere East*  | *4* | *10* | *125* |
| *Ahafo Ano North* | *5* | *3* | *125* |
| *Bia West* | *5* | *7* | *155* |
| *Juabeso* | *5* | *6* | *100* |
| *Awutu Senya* | *4* | *6* | *100* |
| ***TOTAL*** | ***23*** | ***32*** | ***605*** |

*(Note: 54 % of participants were females)*The training curriculum covered the following topics as outlined in the ESP trainer’s guide: Cocoa productivity improvement practices (GAP with sustainability content); Deforestation and tree integration on farms; Wildlife habitats protection; Waste management on farms; Soil Conservation; Water Conservation and safe handling of agrochemicals and Basic Extension Methods. The knowledge and skills gained by the trainees at the two training sessions has proved very useful to them during their subsequent interactions with other farmers who were not part of the ToT. Random interviews in selected communities with farmers indicate the trainers are dutifully impacting the knowledge and practices to other farmers who are also practicing them on their farms. | The target has been exceeded. Unlike the other Cocoa Life (CL) Implementing Partners (IPs), ESP, as part of its objectives to mainstream environmentally sustainable practices into Ghana’s cocoa production system through capacity building, is working with Community Extension Agents (CEAs) of the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) COCOBOD as well as CEAs hired directly by CL and also the Community Animators who act as liaison for the project in each community. The project has also decided to train Lead Farmers in each community to assist with its peer learning initiative. This led to an increase in number of trainers that were trained in 2017. |
| *Output 1.1.2. Farmers enhance trees and carbon stocks on cocoa farms* | 1.1.2. Number of cocoa farmers trained in environmentally sustainable production practices. | 7,000 | This is an on-going activity spearheaded by CHED CEAs and the Community Animators using the knowledge and skills gained from earlier trainings under ESP I and II. Over **42,914** farmers (38 % females) have been trained in both sustainable natural resource management practices and sustainable eco-system management practices in 2017. The Field Coordinators are providing extra technical backstopping for the trainings held at both farm and community levels. The break down is follows:

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| --- | --- |
| **Districts** | **Number of Farmers Trained** |
| *Males* | *Females* | *Total* |
| Bia West | 2,870 | 1,800 | 4,670 |
| Juabeso | 2,319 | 1,962 | 4,281 |
| Sekyere East | 2,112 | 1,100 | 3,212 |
| Ahafo Ano North | 1,199 | 982 | 2,181 |
| Amansie West | 1,419 | 882 | 2,301 |
| Asunafo North | 3,240 | 2,978 | 6,218 |
| Awutu Senya East | 2,030 | 781 | 2,811 |
| Wassa East | 2,566 | 1,334 | 3,900 |
| New Juabeng | 2,000 | 1,200 | 3,200 |
| Fanteakwa | 1,570 | 897 | 2,467 |
| Suhum | 2,700 | 1,100 | 3,800 |
| West Akyem | 2,775 | 1,098 | 3,873 |
| **Total** | **26,800** | **16,114** | **42,914** |
|   | % | 38 | 62 |

 | Target exceeded mainly due to heightened awareness by farmers in environmental sustainable issues, their interest to acquire “new” skills and knowledge and the increase in the number of trainers. ESP’s primary target is the 30,100 farmers in the 447 communities where CL is working directly. ESP is however using the landscape approach and has therefore expanded beyond the CL registered farmers and communities. Current estimated coverage is about 40,000 farmers – in both CL and non-CL Communities. A rapid appraisal carried out in December 2017 shows a 65% adoption in the environmentally sustainable practices the project is promoting. This would however be confirmed through a formal survey at the end of ESP II. |
| 1.1.3 % of farmers adopting soil improvement practices in Cocoa Life Communities | 25% | Soil improvement practices such as the application of organic and inorganic fertilizers, erosion control, and proper use of agro-chemicals to control weeks, disposal and management of farm waste, among others, are treated as components of the holistic extension package of good agriculture and sustainable practices ESP is promoting.  | Soil improvement practices are part of the environmentally sustainable practices package and therefore are also estimated at 65% adoption. This percentage has been boosted by COCOBOD’s free fertilizer distribution scheme. |
| *Output 1.1.2. Farmers enhance trees and carbon stocks on cocoa farms* | 1.2.1 Number of shade trees procured and distributed | 400,000 | As part of the tree integration program, a total of **336,170** economic tree comprising of 5 spp (Mahogany, Ofram, Kokodua, Hyedua & Mansonia) were procured from commercial nurseries (198,000 seedlings) and the Forestry Commission (FC) Forest Investment Programme (137,170 seedlings), supplied and planted by 11,901 farmers (28% females) from 223 communities in 7 Districts (Bia West, Juabeso, Sekyere East, Ahafo Ano North, Asunafo North, Awutu Senya and Wassa East) as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Districts** | **Number of Tree Seedlings Supplied** | **Source of Seedling** | **Number of Communities Supplied** | **Number of****Farmers Supplied** |
| Bia West | 60,000 | ESP | 31 | 2,089 |
| Juabeso | 40,000 | ESP | 20 | 1,171 |
| Sekyere East | 43,000 | ESP | 24 | 1,200 |
| Ahafo Ano North | 50,000 | ESP | 25 | 1,133 |
| Asunafo North | 79,260 | FC | 35 | 1,500 |
| Awutu Senya East | 6,000 | ESP | 24 | 400 |
| Wassa East | 57,910 | FC | 116 | 4,408 |
| **Total** | **336,170** |  | **275** | **11,901** |

*Note: 28% of the number of seedlings supplied went to females.*As indicated above, all the farmers who adopted the tree integration practice were trained prior to receiving the seedlings.  | In all, 21,010 Ha (16 tree/Ha) were planted in 2017.The seedlings from the FC came a bit late into the season and some were in bad conditions when they arrived in the districts, which may result in significant losses after planting. Arrangements made by the FC to transport the seedlings from where they were procured to the districts was poorly coordinated resulting in long delays and costs in transportation for the projectThe seedlings planted are yet to be monitored to confirm the exact numbers that survived. The total number of seedlings planted will be updated once the field monitoring is completed. |
| 1.2.2 Number of shade trees planted on cocoa farms in the project districts | 400,000 |
| 1.2.3 % of farmers with adequate shade trees on their farms to enhance biodiversity | 30% |
| 1.2.4 Number of hectares planted | 22,200 |
| *Output 1.3. Tree registration and tree tenure policies for the adoption of environmentally sustainable cocoa production practices developed* | 1.3.1 Number of CHED CEAs and farmer cooperative leaders trained on tree registration modalities  | 168 | Under Phase I, ESP worked closely with the FC and other forest sector stakeholders to develop a form for the registration of trees planted on farms. But just when preparation were being made to pilot the registration exercise using the forms in the Asunafo North District, it emerged the FC has again amended the forms. After some further delays the amended form was eventually released for the piloting. Among other indicators to be captured on the form, is the requirement that the farm and all trees planted in it should be geo-referenced. Two options were considered for the field data collection including the geo-referencing: either the use of GPS handsets to record the GPS position of each farm and the planted trees and then after transfer the coordinates/ recording manually onto the tree registration forms or to use a mobile web-based application which would enable the entire tree registration form including the geo-referencing of the planted trees and the coordinates of the farm to be completed electronically using a smartphone device. After a detailed evaluation, the electronic application option was chosen. The project has since hired a consultant to develop the application that is currently undergoing field testing. A full roll out of the tree registration exercise would take place in the 1st quarter of 2018. Again, this output could not be fully achieved in 2017. | It has been very frustrating dealing with the FC about tree registration. ESP has been pursuing this agenda since Phase I and it remains an unfinished business. There is a lot of foot dragging from the FC coupled with constant shifting of the goal post. But with mounting pressure from other projects including the FIP, it is expected that some progress would be made in 2018. |
| 1.3.2 Number of trees registered  | 800,000 |
| 1.3.3 Number of farmers registered | 3,960 |
| **Outcome 2: Natural resources and ecosystems management in cocoa production landscapes** |
| *Output 2.1. CREMAs established* | 2.1.1. Suitable areas for CREMA establishment identified, delineated and 2 new CREMAs established | 2 | Under ESP II, 2 additional CREMAs are to be established. This is to be preceded by the evaluation of suitable sites to establish their feasibility or otherwise.The Atobease area in the Wassa East District has therefore been recommended for the establishment of one of the additional CREMAs after the evaluation exercise – while further assessment to identify a second area would continue in 2018. A consultant has since been hired to undertake the development of the new CREMA in the Atobease landscape comprising of 41 communities. An inception report has been submitted and approved. In a stepwise manner, the following key activities are on-going towards the development of the CREMA:1. Community entry and sensitization on the CREMA concept
2. Appointment/selection of liaison persons in each community to serve as the main link between the Consultant and community going forward
3. Election and training of Community Resource Management Committees (CRMCs)
4. Election and training of CREMA Executive Committee
5. Development of CREMA constitution and by-laws through a consultative and participatory process
6. Special Meetings of the Environmental, Justice and Security Sub-committees of the Wassa East District Assembly to discuss draft constitution and bye-laws
7. Special Meeting of the Assembly Executive Committee to review the draft documents for adoption by the Assembly for subsequent gazzetting at the Assembly Press.
 | 1 suitable area identified and the establishment of an additional CREMA underway. Work is in progress to identify a second area for the 3rd CREMA in 2018. Target achieved - the CEC held 4 meetings (1 per quarter) in 2017. The CRMCs on the other hand have been holding monthly meeting to review progress and plan specific activities for their communities. Instead of 4 planned quarterly meetings, they rather choose to hold monthly meeting and met 12 times per community in 2017 – target exceeded |
| 2.1.2 Number of CEC/CRMC meetings held in the Ayum-Asuokow CREMA | 4 | Meanwhile work is on-going to enhance the functionality and sustainability of the Ayum Asuokow CREMA. Accordingly, the following key activities were carried out in the CREMA during the period under review:-Information bill boards on the dos and don’ts in the CREMA designed, printed & mounted in all 36 CREMA Communities to serve as a constant reminder on what is permissible or not in the CREMA. -CREMA assisted to open a bank account as part of its financial mobilization drive-Regular monthly community meetings organized to discuss conservation issues within the CREMA-Various Task Forces formed in each community – including the election of leaders for each Task Force to oversee specific CREMA activities – among others. | Resource mobilization in form of cash to support the work of the CREMA however remains a key challenge |
|  | 2.1.3 50% of Operational Cost covered by internally generated funds by the CREMA | 50% | The CREMA is yet to start generating any internal funds – especially in cash. CREMA communities have however contributed in-kind to the running of the CREMA in terms of time for meetings and other CREMA related events, communal work (eg. Afforestation along waterways), awareness creation among peers, among other. In quantitative terms, this constitutes about 20% of the operational cost of running the CREMA.To address the issues of funding and sustainability, the CREMA has decided to levy all CREMA residents who are 18 years and above, a one-time fee of GHC 10 as foundation contribution to support CREMA activities. This has been endorsed by the Mim Traditional Council who has also pledged an unspecified amount to support the CREMA. |  |
|  | 2.1.4 Number of farmers practicing sustainable ecosystem management practices | 6,000 | Baseline estimates of the population of the 36 CREMA communities are about 20,000. It is estimated through field observations and other rapid assessment methods that at least 14,000 of them are practicing sustainable ecosystem management practices. A formal survey would be conducted at the end of ESP II to specifically establish the rate of adoption. |
| 2.1.5 Number and percentage of Water bodies in Cocoa Life Communities protected  | 25 | 12 of the 36 CREMA communities have been identified as having water bodies on which the communities rely for water for household use. All the 12 communities have planted economic trees along these water ways to protect them from drying up during the dry season. The trees also act as buffers. |
| *Output 2.2: Three community fire prevention volunteer brigades established and trained in the CREMAs* | 2.2.1. Three priority fire-prone areas identified  | 1 | In consultation with the relevant stakeholders including the CREMA and the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS), a total of **200** Community Fire Volunteers (CFV) (5% females) drawn from all 36 CREMA communities have been trained in the following basic principles of firefighting: a) Fighting bush fires (demonstrationb) Creation of standard fire beltsc) Operation of fire extinguishers e.g. CO2, Dry Chemical Power (DCP) d) Usage of fire beaters to quench out burning firese) Physical training sessionf) Foot drillsg) How to practically handle candles in rural homes.Each Volunteer received the following sets of equipment after the training:a) A pair of wellington bootsb) A pair of leather hand grovesc) One cutlassd) One flashlighte) Overall uniformThe CFVs are working to provide guidance to community members on how to handle naked fire both at home and on the farms. The forth coming dry season would be used to assess their efficiency.The entire CREMA have benefited from various training events in ecosystem management practices since its inception in 2015. For the 2017 period, over 10,000 farmers have been reached with direct extension services with messages on ecosystem management. | The Ayum-Asuokow CREMA benefited from the first CFV training of 200 members. Based on their performance, the concept would be extended to the others now under development. Farmlands protected resulting from the performance of the CFVs would be assessed after the 2018 dry season. The target for training in sustainable ecosystem management practices has been exceeded. |
| 2.2.2 Number of community fire prevention brigade members trained | 1 |
| 2.2.4 Hectares farmlands protected from bush fires in Cocoa Life Districts | 60 Ha |
| 2.2.5 Number of farmers trained on sustainable ecosystem management practices | 200 |
| *Output 2.3. Enhance capacities of traditional authorities and community opinion leaders to enable them enforce traditional conservation practices to conserve biodiversity* | 2.3.1 Number of community dialogues and capacity building trainings organized | 30 | Under this output, the project planned to hold community dialogues with CREMA stakeholders including traditional authorities and opinion leaders and farmers on the enforcement of traditional conservation practices. The first in the series of the planned dialogues took place in the Ayum-Asuokow CREMA with all members of the Mim Traditional Council that includes all the Odikros and Sub Chiefs from all 36 CREMA communities. The Mim Traditional Council has traditional jurisdiction of the CREMA lands and communities. The seminarchaired by the Mim Omanhene, provideda forum for Chiefs to discuss some of the time tested traditional norms and regulation that were hitherto useful in the conservation of natural resources in the traditional area and examine how they can be revised and enforced to help the CREMA achieve its aims and objectives. It was also used to build the capacities of participants on the gazetted CREMA by-laws and regulations including the roles and responsibilities of the Traditional Council and its members in the various CREMA communities. Additionally, it discussed the roles of Traditional Authorities in designing/developing land use agreements including sharecropping arrangements that can contribute to the conservation of the environment.Among other things, the Chiefs agreed to also develop into bylaws, all the traditional norms and regulations in their jurisdiction and get it gazetted – just as has been done with the CREMA bylaws. They also endorsed the community levy to support the CREMA and pledge their support. Other key decision taken at the meeting is captured in a draft communique that was developed after meeting and would be signed by the Omanhene when finalized for immediate implementation by all Council members. | 36 communities participated in the 1st dialogue.120 farmers and landowners including chiefs participated in community dialogue sessions in Mim. |
| 2.3.2 Number of communities sensitized | 35 |
| 2.3.3 Number of farmers and landowners including chiefs who participated in community dialogue sessions | 300 |
| **Outcome 3: Funding Mechanisms** |
| *Output 3.1. Investigate additional funding mechanisms and develop new proposals* | 3.1.1 Number of proposals developed | 2 | ESP has been working with the UNDP Green Commodities Program to identify funding sources to supplement the current funding from Cocoa Life. Already discussed are some initial ideas on scaling up CREMA activities and Tree nurseries through private sector approaches. The project has also signed a letter of Intent with the Forestry Commission and CL to be part of the FIP implementation.1 idea note was developed and submitted to the Partnership for Forests (P4F) by DFID. The project entitled “Reforestation of Ghana’s High Forest Zone through Commercial Shade Tree Production and Distribution in the Cocoa Sector” is currently under review by P4F. It is expected to proceed to next stage of full project proposal development in 2018. |  |
| *Output 3.2. Donor dialogues in Ghana and globally with the support of UNDP Green Commodities Programme to explore other funding opportunities* | 3.2.1 Number of dialogues held | 3 | 2 separate dialogues were held in Ghana 1) Discussions with the Forestry Commission, Mondelez and COCOBOD has led to the development of an MOU and action plan to establish a collaborative partnership to implement the Ghana Cocoa Forest Programme.2) Participated in the national discussions under the Cocoa Forest Initiative to provide inputs into the development of a Joint Framework of Action to end deforestation and restore forest areas in Ghana. |  |

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| 1. **2.** **GENDER SPECIFIC RESULTS** *[Please report specific gender disaggregated results]*
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| * 28% of the number of farmers who planted trees in 2017 were females
* 10% of members of the various CREMA governance structures were females
* 50% of the Community Animators are females
* 52% of the trainers who participated in the TOT on tree integration and silviculture practices were females
* 38% of trainers who participated in the TOT on selected environmentally sustainable practices were females
* 38% of farmers directly trained on sustainable natural resource and ecosystem management were females
* 5% of the Community Fire Volunteers are females
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| **3. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES** *[Observed or experienced challenges that are generic, related or not related to any specific output, which have or could affect the project implementation and propose a way forward]* |
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| Challenge  | Proposed way forward |
| * How to align ESP field activities with the general Cocoa Life Program including activities of the other IPs
* Farmers’ low perception and appreciation of environmental sustainability issues and their impact on their productivity. Majority of them do not consider most of their current practices as damaging to the environment and do not see the need to do something about it – to them it is business as usual.
* Current land and tree tenure policies do not provide enough incentives for farmers to adopt environmentally sustainable production practices. The lackadaisical attitude and lack of commitment from state standard bearers to initiate meaningful reforms to incentivize farmers to adopt best practices is not helping the situation.
* Weak capacity, especially of CHED staff to extend sustainable production practices to farmers
* Donor fatigue on the part of farmers – too many cocoa sector projects all seeking the attention of the same group of farmers leading to farmer apathy.
* Ownership of the project – the project was implemented based on UNDP’s direct implementation guideline which restricts COCOBOD to only administrative roles. Project finances were controlled by the UNDP and field level implementation by the PMU – limiting the involvement of COCOBOD as the national implementing partner
 | * ESP worked closely with the other CL IPs to institute regular quarterly review meetings to update each other on planned activities and to harmonize them as much as possible. This is necessary in order not to take too much of farmer’s time on CL related activities
* Changing Farmers’ low perception on environmental sustainability issues requires some level of attitudinal and behavioral change – this is a slow process that requires time to occur. ESP II is a welcome extension that is allowing some of these anticipated changes to occur in a meaningful way.
* ESP is working with other key stakeholders to address some of these issues. For instance, the Community Dialogue Series with Traditional Authorities on land tenure and the enforcement of traditional conservation practices and norms are all efforts meant to educate the traditional authorities on their roles and responsibilities with respect to the management of the natural resources under their care. Also, the project has collaborated with the FC to look into tree tenure and tree registration. Series of meetings and consultations were carried out and a planted tree registration form is now ready for deployment for use by farmers to register trees planted on farms. The project is taking the lead in piloting this.
* An elaborate program was developed to build the capacity of CHED staff on sustainable production practices. Several training manuals were also developed to facilitate the process.
* As much as possible, ESP collaborated with other donor projects in its focus districts in order not to duplicate extension messages and other related activities
* The PMU endeavored to forge a close working relationship between the three arms and it is holding for now but there is the need to entirely allow COCOBOD to handle the operational funds of the fund to ensure its sustainability.
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| **4. LESSONS LEARNED AND OPPORTUNITIES** *[Please describe new understanding or insights gained from project activities that can contribute to improving project implementation and future project design]* |
| **Lesson # 1: MAINSTREAMING OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:** For now, COCOBOD has a major mandate to undertake most of the cocoa extension work in Ghana and for sustainable production issues to be adequately addressed by farmers through extension and on a wider coverage, ESP has learned that its activities would generate greater impact if they are mainstream with the work of CHED and the other Cocoa Life IPs. This was achieved using the trainer of trainers’ model by developing training modules and training Community Extension Agents (CEAs) and other field level staffs such as the Community Animators, in selected environmental sustainable farming practices. This has become necessary due to the large number of project participants/communities and ESP’s limited staff capacity to effectively reach out to all the CL cohorts. COCOBOD begin to gradually get more involved in the implementation of the project for a bigger impact.**Lesson # 2: ABANDONED COCOA FARMS AND FOREST REGENERATION:** From the perspective of biodiversity conservation, it is more profitable for farmers to employ more intensive management practices on their cocoa farms for greater productivity rather than reclaiming abandoned cocoa farms, which may be on their way to forest regeneration in heavily degraded landscapes. Biodiversity conservation therefore provides a window of opportunity for farmers who engage in practices that promote the protection of abandoned old cocoa farms that are located near protected forest frontiers and corridors to be rewarded to serve as an incentive for farmers to avoid deforestation.**Lesson # 3: EXPLORATION OF INNOVATIVE ECONOMIC INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE BIODIVERSITY-COMPATIBLE COCOA:** As indicated elsewhere in this report, farmers’ have low perceptions on environmental issues. It is therefore necessary to put into place compensation packages for ecosystem services, carbon offsets, and integration of buffer zone cocoa into landscape management plans and financial supports as mechanisms to encourage environmentally sustainable cocoa production. These mechanisms would bring on board additional funding to support such incentive packages. It is not just enough to undertake capacity building activities to improve production methods – the adoption process would be faster when farmers receive some immediate benefits.**Lesson # 4:** **MANAGE COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND EXPECTATIONS**It is notable also that community members and farmers were treated as partners in this project and not only beneficiaries. This is highly commendable; they were consulted in every step of the project. Participation remains voluntary but as also indicated elsewhere in this report, there are too many cocoa sector projects – all employing varied implementation strategies including free distribution of inputs and other items/equipment. This makes community members think all “new” projects should also do same – giving out free goodies. It is necessary to manage these expectations well in order not to deviate from planned strategies. ESP was not too successful in this regard as the project was compelled to adjust its tree seedling distribution strategy which was to only supply free seedlings for year 1 and subsequently train farmers to raise their own seedlings. But due to widespread “free distributions” everywhere including cocoa seedlings, the project had to defer the start date for farmer involvement in raising their own seedlings to allow time for further consultation.**Lesson # 5: CAPACITY BUILDING IS EFFECTIVE WHEN IT IS PRACTICAL AND FIELD-ORIENTED** Capacity building for Extension Staff and Farmers in good and sustainable agricultural practices was carried out based on both practical and theoretical sessions and supported with pictorial training aids such as flipcharts, posters and handouts. This was very effective for three main reasons:* Training was by observation and hands-on practice, with farmers trying their hands on what they were being taught after they were theoretically taken through the science behind each topic with practical and common place examples
* In the case of Farmer training, they did not have to change their daily routines – training sessions were organized on-farm. They went to the farm as they always would and learn better techniques right there on their farms
* The cost of training in a hotel or classroom was averted.

It was learned that not all trainings need to be done in a “standard” workshop setting. Technical capacity (knowledge and skill) is well transferred through practical work on the field rather than in multiple workshops. More of such trainings should be considered in future projects.**Lesson # 6: LINKING AWARENESS RAISING WITH SOCIAL MOBILIZATION YIELDS ATTITUDINAL CHANGE AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR**Community members and farmers show commitment and ownership when they are sensitized and made responsible for producing results. Merely informing communities on the concept, consequences, laws and alternatives to natural resource management for instance does not necessarily translate into their support to avoid habitat degradation including illegal lumbering and hunting. ESP coupled awareness-raising to community action through the design, development and implementation of the CREMA that involves high level of community mobilization and the establishment of the appropriate governance structures. As a result, awareness-raising produced the community mobilization that yielded real action against the unsustainable us of local natural resources in the CREMA. For this reason, awareness-raising needs to be maintained and increased as a means of continuously mobilizing the community and indeed entire landscapes to act and protect/conserve their environment |
| **5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED ACTION**  *[Actions on any matter related to outcome, progress of outputs and corrective measure taken or to be taken with responsibilities time]* |
| To transform the environmentally damaging and unsustainable practices of cocoa agriculture and related land uses in Ghana in such a way that biodiversity is conserved, forest regenerated and sustainably managed, and farmers’ livelihoods improved, with a scaling up strategy, the following recommendations are made:* Government, and for that matter, COCOBOD, traditional authorities and other opinion leaders and farmers support the integrated management and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity through appropriate discussion and decision-making institutions/bodies that decide in a participatory way on land use and resource management issues. In this regard, ESP recommends a landscape approach instead with dealing with individual farmers and communities.
* Current land tenure rights encourage forest clearing by both migrants and locals and do not encourage the adoption of sustainable practices by farmers. COCOBOD and other stakeholders in the sector should work to adopt a system of land use planning and tenure that incorporates natural resource management and biodiversity conservation objectives. Tenure issues related to migrants, women and other groups can be addressed by focusing on their implications for biodiversity conservation and mechanisms for the application of statutory and customary laws and regulations of relevance to biodiversity and targeted at the subnational level instead of a one-fit-all national framework – as demonstrated through ESP’s Community Dialogue series.
* Cocoa Extension Services remains low resulting in the situation where Farmers continue to use poor cocoa production practices that reduce productivity and threaten biodiversity. CHED’s Extension staff numbers are low and limited coverage. To address this issue, ESP was allowed to hire 5 Field Coordinators who, among other responsibilities, also perform extension duties. The 5 are however not enough as some are currently handling 2 Districts. We recommend that each of the 12 districts where the project currently works should at least have its own Field Coordinator
* The implementation of the CREMA concept is fraught with several field level challenges – key among them is the issue of sustainability. ESP has observed that most CREMAs are only active during the period when donor funds are available to support them both technically and financially. Several of them become defunct once this support dries up. In the light of this, we recommend that the entire CREMA concept be re-examined and re-designed if possible to ensure they outlive the donor support period. Closely tied to the sustainability issue is the role of the FC and its own internal understanding of the concept and willingness to allow it to work as envisaged. There seems to be some operational misconceptions between the Wildlife and the Forest Services Divisions of the FC – they don’t seem to be singing from the same page. We therefore recommend a national round table to discuss and redesign the CREMA regulations
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| **6. KEY ACTIVITIES FOR 2018** *[Please outline key activities planned for 2018]* |
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| **No** | **Summary of Project Activities Planned for 2018** |
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| **Outcome 1: Mainstreaming environmentally sustainable production practices into farmer level practices** |
| 1 | Continue to trained and equipped farmers in environmentally sustainable production practices with a greater focus on farm/community level trainings to be conducted by the FCs with support from the CEAs, Community Animators, Environmental Committee Members and the leadership of the various unions |
| 2 |  Continue to support Farmers to enhance trees and carbon stocks on cocoa farms through the supply of economic tree seedlings. Supply of seedlings would be through 3 sources:1. From commercial nurseries
2. From the FC
3. From community nurseries

Priority would be given to those Districts that did not benefit from the 2017 planting program |
| 3 | The registration of all project supported planting that are above 1 year in all Districts to serve as an incentive for the adoption of environmentally sustainable cocoa production practices improved |
| **Outcome 2: Natural resources and ecosystems management in cocoa production landscapes**  |
| 1 | Establish a third CREMAs in the Bia West District |
| 2 | No new community fire prevention volunteer brigade would be established during the period – rather the one established in the Ayum-Asuokow CREMA would continue to be supported to become more functional. An assessment of its performance would be carried out at the end of the year to determine its success or otherwise and the lessons learnt used to guide the establishment of 2 more brigades in project year 3  |
| 3 | Capacities of traditional authorities and community opinion leaders in the Atobiase CREMA enhanced to enable them enforce traditional conservation practices to conserve biodiversity build |
| **Outcome 3: Funding Mechanisms** |
| 1 | Additional funding mechanisms investigated and new funding proposals developed  |
| 2 | Donor dialogues in Ghana and globally with the support of UNDP Global Commodities Programme to explored for other funding opportunities |

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