



**GUIDELINES ON COMMUNITY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEES**

Collaborative Resource Management Department

Resource Management Support Centre

Forestry Commission

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EUROPEAN UNION /ACP FLEGT/RMSC CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECT

‘Integrating Civil Society in timber harvest validation processes for improved governance and reduced illegal logging under the European Union and Ghana Voluntary Partnership Agreement’.

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1.0 Introduction

Before 1994, forest and wildlife resources were managed either for the timber or wildlife resources without consultations with other interest groups or other stakeholders, especially forest fringe communities.

This was largely because there were no acceptable, recognisable and informed groups or bodies through which the then Forestry Department could liaise with in order to solicit their input in taking some management decisions.

Thus there was a lack of representative voice to drum home the interests of forest fringe communities in the area of policy making at the district, regional as well as the national level. Consequently, there was a general lack of awareness and knowledge in forests and forests management, especially people's rights, within communities as well as what roles and responsibilities forest fringe communities could play such as monitoring roles in ensuring that tree and land resources are properly managed, exploited and equitably distributed.

The conscious and active involvement of forest fringe communities and other Civil Society Organisations in forests resource management in Ghana takes root from the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy following which the concept of Collaborative Resource Management (CRM) was established in Ghana. The CRM could be defined as a "*working partnership between different stakeholders which enhances the management and development of forest and wildlife resources and leads to equitable distribution of benefits*". Thus the establishment of the then Collaborative Forest Management Unit at the Resource Management Support Centre in Kumasi. Now the Collaborative Resource Management Department (CRMD)

In accord with the mandate of the CRMD a number of strategies and policy initiatives have been developed to promote public awareness, consultative and participatory approaches in order to engage and enhance stakeholder participation in land and tree tenure, poverty reduction, gender equality and more importantly to ensure equitable sharing of forest resources among all stakeholders and to promote employment for overall national development.

Following these policies, strategies and initiatives, a project was piloted with funding from the ITTO in trying to institutionalise community-initiated structures to promote sustainable management and development of natural resources. The output of this project was overwhelming as the CRMCSs proved very enthusiastic in their participation in various forest management issues especially bordering on Forest Policy Formulation, Forest Management Planning as well as Execution of Forest Operations such as forest boundary maintenance, patrol duties, wildfire prevention and control etc. This then paved the way for the establishment of other complementary bodies and groups such as Community Biodiversity

Advisory groups (CBAGs), CREMAs, CMCs, CMABs among others. All these groups serve one basic purpose which is to be effective, credible, and equitable agents of development as well as mouthpieces of forest fringe communities on issues relating to forests and wildlife management and also serve as replacement agents, filling in the ranks left by states and by donors in driving the development agenda. Thus these groups or bodies could be appropriately classified as Stakeholder-based Civil Society Organisations (SBCOs).

SBCOs include Community Resource Management Committees (CRMCs), Community Biodiversity Advisory Groups (CBAGs), Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs), Traditional Authorities (TAs), District/Regional/National Forestry Forums (D-NFF, R-NFF) and similar bodies or groups who are mandated to assist state institutions such as the Forestry Commission (FC) in forest protection, forest management and governance activities at various levels to ensure sustainable forest management.

SBCOs are seen as critical actors in forest management and forest governance as they strive to inject transparency, discipline and equity especially in forest resource allocation, protection and utilisation.

As Ghana prepares to implement the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) it is important to identify relevant SBCOs within the various TUCA, design and implement appropriate training programmes to adequately strengthen their capabilities and capacities for effective performance of their roles and functions in the chain of custody processes and overall legality assurance system (improved monitoring and validation of timber harvested) as a contribution to sustainable forest management.

2.0 Background information on SCBOS)

This information is collated from CFC guidelines, evaluation report on CFCs and other documents available.

Genesis of Community Resource Management committees

In a bid to devise an appropriate community forest management structure, the FSD in conjunction with communities and timber concessionaires implemented a project that explored and developed what has now come to be known as Community Resource Management committees (CRMCs). The original project aim was to devise innovative schemes by, which timber and forests outside forest reserves could be managed by communities and timber concessionaires with technical assistance from the FSD. Under the project, consultations were held with major stakeholders connected with forest management outside forest reserves to identify important forestry issues requiring attention. A strategic plan was therefore formulated to address the issues. At the early stages of project implementation, it became apparent that there was the need to form exclusive management structures at the community level to link up with the FSD to execute the project's activities.

Formation processes

Under the ITTO/FSD sponsored collaborative project, a strategy was drawn up to investigate and devise a suitable community forest management structure that could stand the test of time. The activities that were executed in order to achieve the formation of the structures have been refined and are outlined in the Box below. Once the structures were formed there was the need to come out with a suitable name. After extensive deliberations the name Community Forest Committees (CFCs) was arrived at though some other names such as Forest Management Committees, etc. were considered to be equally suitable. The term committee was already familiar amongst the rural populace thus they could easily understand the role such a body was to play. Also the term community and forest describe those who are to constitute the committee as well as the kind of activity they are to be engaged on.

Community Forest Committees Formation Processes

1. Undertake publicity campaigns amongst the target community on the need to form community forest management committees.
2. Conduct PRA to determine the form of the management structure.
3. Conduct education to explain modalities of selecting representatives and operating CRMCSs to all interest groups.
4. Set date and time to elect interest group representatives.
5. Hold rallies to introduce selected representatives to entire community.
6. Jointly formulate working modalities and programmes with CRMCS members and community.
7. Provide adequate resources for implementation of CRMCS activities.
8. Put in place monitoring, reporting and review mechanisms.

Membership Criteria

Membership of the CFCs was agreed to be from the major or primary identifiable groups or stakeholders within the community. Stakeholders that must of necessity have at least one representative on a CFCs are as indicated in Table 2. Members constituting a CFCs at the village level should be a total of seven, nine or eleven persons. The executives are to be selected from the members.

Criteria for Stakeholder Representation on Local CRMCSs

Primary Stakeholder	Description	Number of representatives
Rulers	Odikro, Ohene, Omanhene, Sub-chief or a selected representative	One
Landowners	Elected family head	One
Farmers	A member of a farmers' or crop association or farmers' elected representative.	One or two
Women	Queen-mother or representative, a member of a broad based women's group or elected representative.	One or two
The Youth	Youth associations or elected youth representative.	One or two
Migrants	Elected representative.	One
NTFPs Exploiters	Elected representative.	One
Unit committee chairperson	Elected representative.	One
Assembly person	Elected representative.	One
Others	Elected representative	One to three
Ex-officio members	Representatives of Statutory Agencies, e.g. Forest Services Division, The Police Service, MOFA, etc.	

Tenure of office

By way of tenure it is proposed that elected representatives should serve for a maximum of four (4) years after which they could be re-elected for a second term only. Communities or interest groups have the prerogative to recommend the removal of their representative(s) if there is cause that they are not performing as expected. The final authority to cause removal should rest with a majority decision by the respective CFCs with endorsement by the District Forest Manager or a delegated officer.

3.0 Functions of Community Resource Management Committees

At their fully functional state, the Community Resource Management committees are to be the main channel through which the statutory forest management agency, that is, the FSD is to implement its collaborative forest management activities. To this end, the CRMCSs will

operate from the grassroots up to the highest levels of forest management. The involvement of the CRMCs in forestry will focus around the three levels of forestry, namely:

- Forest Policy Formulation
- Forest Management Planning
- Execution of Forest Operations.

Forest Policy Formulation

It is an enshrined provision in the Forest and Wildlife Policy of Ghana to involve communities in the adoption of decisions through a decentralised democratic system. The CRMSs together with other forest forums in existence will contribute towards the formulation of forestry policies at the national, regional and district levels.

Since it is envisaged that there shall be district, regional and national forest committees, they shall represent the communities at each level whenever any forest formulation consultations are taking place. With the existence of these bodies it is expected that those in charge of forest policies will consciously assign a role to the CRMCSs in the course of the policy formulation procedures.

Forest Management Planning

CRMCSs are the communities' representatives it is expected that they shall be consulted at all the stages of the forest planning process

Conducting Socio-economic surveys to determine the felt needs of the communities

- Holding of interest group consultations
- Holding of reserve planning workshop with communities and other stakeholders
- Endorsement of draft forest management plans.

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Community Execution of Forest Operations

In terms of community involvement in forest operations the CRMCs are to play an immense role in supporting the FSD to assign tasks, roles and responsibilities to communities in return for commensurate rights, benefits and remuneration. Basically, communities can be involved in any aspect of forest operations since it is on record that some community forests are already being managed solely by the communities themselves with all tasks and forest operations being executed by the communities. The envisaged areas in which communities are to be involved in forest operations are broadly categorised into four:

1. Forest Information Acquisition
2. Forest Protection
3. Forest Regeneration
4. Forest Resource Exploitation

5. Commercial Forestry Operations
6. Livelihood Ventures

Forest Information Acquisition

In pursuit of involving communities in every aspect of forest management, FSD staff are to tap the indigenous knowledge base of communities to acquire data for forest management planning purposes.

Forest Protection

It is expected that CRMCSs will be involved in the mobilisation of their communities towards effective protection of forests and forest resources as enshrined in forest management plans. These include Special Biological Protected Areas, Hill Sanctuaries, etc.

Reforestation.

It is in the area of forest regeneration that CRMCSs are really to prove their worth since they are viewed as the best bet for involving communities in plantation investment. The main functions of the CRMCSs in this direction are to:

- act as managers of community nurseries.
- provide training to the community members on plantation development techniques after undergoing a training of trainers course themselves.
- play an active role in negotiations by ensuring that community interests are catered for on such issues as access to degraded lands in forest reserves as well as off-reserve areas, access to credits and grants, formulation of agreements and any other envisaged issues.

Forest Resource Exploitation

Another crucial role expected to be played by the CRMCSs is in the area of regulating timber and non-timber forest products exploitation. In this respect, the CRMCSs are to be consulted in all matters pertaining to the award and monitoring of TUCs. The Community Resource Management committees are expected to lead the communities in terms of the following aspects of forest resource exploitation.

- Determination of TUC coverage areas
- Formulation and negotiations on SRA
- Implementation of development projects under SRAs
- Monitoring of operations of TUC holders
- Arbitration in cases of compensation payments
- Reforestation in connection with TUC requirements
- Negotiating for community access to timber for local use
- Negotiating on incentive payments for farmers who tend timber trees
- Management and production of NTFPs.
- Determination and monitoring of NTFP harvesting quotas.

Commercial Forestry Operations

Since communities are now equal partners in forest conservation and management they might as well derive a fair share of the benefits accruing from forests. In this respect CRMCSs are to explore possibilities of enhancing the incomes of their communities through forest-based livelihood activities. These activities range from the running of commercial nurseries, plantation investments, taungya farming, contract works, small-scale timber conversion ventures, NTFPs processing and marketing, and a host of others.

Working Modalities

This section outlines the modalities by which CRMCSs could effectively carry out their assigned roles and responsibilities. As with every new human institution, it is essential that whatever modalities prescribed, is subject to refinements following the necessary review processes to achieve improved workable modalities

Maintaining Constant Interaction

The foremost requirement of the CRMCSs is to maintain constant interaction with the communities they serve and the interest groups they represent.

Notice boards to be mounted at each village or township are to be used in communicating information on meetings and other important issues.

Training

Since the CRMCSs are to be the links between the communities and the foresters, it is expected that they acquire knowledge on basic forestry issues to enable them offer the necessary services to their communities. FSD staff and other NGOs are to provide the technical expertise for training the CRMCSs. The training is expected to cover all the various aspects of forestry including new developments. Normally such training should take the form of workshops, practical working sessions, demonstration and field visits.

Basis for Legal Recognition

Since it has been confirmed that the CRMCSs are functioning effectively at the pilot sites, it is proper that they are given formal legal recognition in the nation's forestry statutes. To this end they must be accepted as part of the forest management institutional make up. The Forest Services Division Charter, for example, makes provision for the recognition of such community structures.

Even in the absence of formal laws of recognition, the FSD or other forestry agency could initiate the formation and operationalisation of such structures and grant them formal authority by way of administrative directives and procedures.

The main important paraphernalia that CRMCSs are to possess as proof of their authority are:

1. Standardised Identity Cards endorsed by the Head of the FSD or the representative

2. Rules, agreements and MOUs endorsed by the FSD, the relevant CRMCS and other collaborating partners.
3. Certificates of attendance at workshops and seminars
4. Relevant badges, Uniforms, Caps, etc. as may be appropriate.
5. Finally, as part of the continuing education programme, CRMCSs are to be supplied with copies of all the relevant laws and documents that could aid them in their assignment.

Code of Conduct

Generally for such human institutions there is the need to guide against abuse of power. There is therefore the need for members of the CRMCSs to observe a moral code of conduct that will prevent them from any abuses of power. The following unexhaustive list was presented as a guide to the members:

- Act transparently in all their dealings with their communities and outsiders
- Place the interests of the communities above that of CRMCS members and executives.
- Properly document all transactions and distribute copies to as wide an audience as possible
- Boldly point out shortcomings of members and prescribe appropriate sanctions including dismissals where necessary.
- Be accountable to the people they are serving by constantly holding meetings to keep them informed of all major developments.
- Declare and rescind from partaking in activities, which involve conflicts of interest.

4. Capacity of CRMCS to support forest management initiatives

With the establishment of CFCs at pilot areas various activities were implemented by the committees .An evaluation conducted in 2007 of the activities performed by the CRMCS in various capacities indicated that with training and awareness on forestry issues the communities and stakeholder groups can be important partners in sustainable forest management

Table below indicate communities' perception of impacts and sustainability of CRMCS activities

Forestry Activity	Site					
	Dunkwa		Offinso		Nkoransa	
	Impact	Sustain ability	Impact	Sustain ability	Impact	Sustain ability
Protection of watersheds	***	*	*	**	**	*
Control of illegal timber	****	***	**	**	****	***

exploitation						
Fire prevention & control	**	***	*	**	**	***
Plantation development	****	****	****	***	****	****
Nursery management	****	****	***	****	***	****
Negotiations on crop damage	**	*	*	*	*	*
SRA negotiation	**	*	**	*	*	*
Public education on forestry	**	**	***	**	***	*
Promoting NTFP livelihoods	*	**	*	*	*	***

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Impact

Highly positive ****

Fairly positive ***

Positive **

Negligible *

Sustainability Prospect

Highly sustainable ****

Fairly sustainable ***

Sustainable **

Negligible *

5 Way Forward

It can be deduced from information above that with further training and mobilisation of stakeholders groups they can support and ensure successful implementation of the VPA which is a bilateral agreement between the EU and wood exporting countries to improve forest governance and ensure that the wood imported into the EU has complied with the legal requirements of the partner country.

Knowledge of forest resource allocation procedure, formula and stumpage disbursement procedure, SRA and its negotiation procedure and beneficiaries, chain of custody-permitting system, detection and procedure for reporting illegalities, Awareness and advocacy strategies etc are recommended as areas for further training as highlighted in section below

Annex

Role of stakeholder based civil society organisations in the VPA Process

- **Civil Society as an active participant & Adocator of VPA:**
 - ✓ Make a strong representation in the TVC
 - ✓ Know the Legality Assurance System of the VPA and the obligations of each player.
 - ✓ Extension service in the form of advocacy on VPA.

- **Civil Society organisation(s) as expert contributor to Legality Assurance System (LAS):**
 - ✓ Show interest in the pilot WTS and offer critique and suggestions.
 - ✓ Look for grounds to collaborate with and complement the efforts of FC in capacity building requirements especially SMEs: examples; record keeping/documentation, internal wood control systems, ICT etc(efforts by KWC)
 - ✓ Lending support to TVD verification and field audit duties.
 - ✓ Opportunity to build partnerships/local affiliates of external third party independent monitor of the LAS.

- **Civil Society Organisations as contributors to VPA-related impact studies to guide policy interventions:**
 - ✓ Cost/benefit Analysis of post VPA implementation
 - ✓ Fallouts from VPA and livelihood (socio-economic dimensions); efforts from Tropenbos International are worth mentioning.

VPA Stages for Civil Society Engagements

Legal Standard definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verification of legality including the licensing system and associated institutional arrangements• Certificate of legal compliance• Certificate of legal origin
Chain of Custody System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Log /wood tracking system
Impact Assessment Mitigation Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restructuring of Timber Trade sector• Domestic legal timber supply• Livelihoods• Repositioning• Legality assurance system
Governance and law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness creation• Revenue share and disbursement• Transparency• Planning and decision making
Monitoring System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent monitoring systems• Community and district level monitoring bodies

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