

Sustainable Forest Utilization in Ghana: Status and Prospects



Key Facts about Forests in Ghana



STATUS OF FORESTRY IN GHANA

Total Land Area	238,500 Km2
Population	22.5 million
Forest Area (Forest Reserves)	1.6 million ha (16,000 km2)
Off-Reserve Forest Area	400,000 ha (4,000km2)
Annual Allowable Cut (AAC)	2 million m3
Installed Processing Capacity	5 million m3
Deforestation rate	65,000 m3/year
Export value	180 Million Euros
Contribution to GDP	6%
Estimated number employed by forest industry	100,000
Source: Forestry Commission (2014)	

Key Facts about Forests in Ghana



- Ghana used to be rich in forest resources and forests were an important part of the economy.
- There is a large local timber sector, which is predominantly export-oriented and unable to fulfil the demands of less lucrative domestic market.
- Today the country's forest resources are highly degraded.

Key Facts about Forests in Ghana



Factors responsible for this unfortunate state of affairs include:

- Bush burning
- Traditional farming system (shifting cultivation)
- Indiscriminate logging including chainsaw milling
- Inefficient utilization of timber species
- Heavily dependence on firewood for fuel.

Institutional and Legal Framework



Chainsaw milling (CSM), including the transportation and trade of its products was banned by law in 1998.

- The ban has however not ended the chainsaw milling and it continues to dominate the supply of lumber to the domestic market.
- Chainsaw milling has therefore become lucrative because there is huge demand for its products, especially small and medium scale wood processing firms and builders





Table 2- Summary of Chainsaw Milling (CSM) Statistics

Total Annual Gross Revenue from CSM	GHC279Million (€57M)
Total Annual Profit from CSM	GHC37 Million (€7.6M)
Net Profit of CSM	GHC 67/m3 (€13.7/m3)
Volume of trees harvested annually	2.5-2.9 Million m3
Number of trees harvested annually	842,000 (745,000-970,000)
Conversion Efficiency of CSM based on total usable tree volume	30%
Number of Species processed by CSM	72
Dominant Species supplied to the market	Mahogany, wawa, dahoma, ofram
Volume of CSM lumber sold in the market	558,000 m3
Volume of CSM lumber consumed in Ghana	496,815 m3
Proportion of CSM lumber in local market	88%

Table 2- Summary of Chainsaw Milling (CSM) Statistics

Number of people directly engaged by CSM

97,000

Annual potential stumpage revenue lost by
Forestry Commission

GHC25Million (€5M)

Source: Marfo (2010)



DRIVERS OF CHAINSAW MILLING

1. Corruption and weak institutional governance
2. A high level of rural unemployment.
3. Strong market demand for cheap lumber and inability of formal sawmills to meet this demand.
4. Political interference in Forest Services Division operations.
5. Lack of potential will to enforce the ban and implement alternatives.
6. An unclear legal framework and inadequate policy response to domestic timber demand.
7. Inadequate tenure arrangements and inequitable benefit sharing of forest resources and
8. Strong support of chainsaw milling by local communities, especially farmers.

Prospects of the Forest Sector of the Ghanaian Economy

Despite these challenges, there are some prospects in respect of the forest sector of the Ghanaian economy



1. Plantation Forestry

- In order to curb the high rate of deforestation, the Forestry Commission of Ghana has established about 200,000 hectares of forest plantation of fast grown indigenous and exotic species such as *Tectona grandis* and *Cedrela odorata*.



Prospects of the Forest Sector of the Ghanaian Economy



2. The modified Taungya System

- 70% of the Ghanaian population are engaged in agriculture and this puts a lot of pressure on forestlands.
- To address this problem, the taungya system has been introduced where degraded forestlands are released to farmers.
- Commercial trees are planted and as the farmers plant food crops, they take care of the trees till canopy closure.
- Profit-sharing is done as follows: Forestry Commission (40%), the farmer (40%), the Stool landowner (15%), and fringe community (5%) of the standing tree volume when harvested.

Prospects of the Forest Sector of the Ghanaian Economy



3. Reducing overdependency on fuelwood by encouraging “fuel mix”.

- Ghana is endowed with a wide variety of wood species for fuel. However, the major challenge is that about 70% of the population still use firewood and charcoal for cooking and heating.
- In order to reduce pressure on the forest the following mitigation strategies are in place:
 1. Replacement of fuelwood and charcoal with LPG at the rate of 10% per year from 1995 to 2020.
 2. Use of biogas and LPG to replace some biomass from 2010 to 2015 when only LPG and biogas will be used.
 3. Gradual use of PV system.
 4. Use of improved cooked stoves.
 5. Massive afforestation or reafforestation projects to rehabilitate degraded lands.

Prospects of the Forest Sector of the Ghanaian Economy



4. REDD+ in Ghana

- As part of government's commitment to ensuring the sustainable management of Ghana's forests, efforts are being made to prepare Ghana for REDD+ (Reduced Emission from Deforestation and Degradation).
- Ghana is one of the first African countries to initiate the development of a national strategy on REDD+ and also participates within negotiations on the development of international mechanism on REDD+.
- There is however still much work to be done at both the national and international levels.

Prospects of the Forest Sector of the Ghanaian Economy



5. Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan (FLEGT)

- Ghana, in its efforts to combat illegal logging, has subscribed to European Union's Forest law Enforcement, Governance and trade Action plan (FLEGT) and the associated Voluntary Partner Agreement (VPA).
- The aim of this arrangement is to ensure that only timber products from legal source are allowed to be exported to the EU market.
- FLEGT and VPA is expected to play a limited role in addressing illegal logging as most of illegal timber are traded in domestic markets.

CONCLUSION

- The forestry in Ghana is saddled with numerous challenges, ranging from scarcity of wood resources to over-consumption of timber and wood for fuel.
- To address these challenges, pragmatic measures such as plantation forestry, taungya system, adoption of fuel mix, adoption of REDD+ and FLEGT, all to ensure sustainable utilization of forest resources.



Thank You