



**Moving Forward in the Implementation of
the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on all
Types of Forests in Ghana**

TRAINING MANUAL

For Preparing a District Forestry Plan

2011

This publication has been prepared by Tropenbos International Ghana for the Forestry Commission of Ghana (FC) under the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI) Project". It is supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ). The content is a reflection of the views of the key stakeholders in the forestry sector, who were consulted by Tropenbos International Ghana, and not necessarily that of the FC, GIZ or the FAO.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBAG	Community Biodiversity Advisory Group
CFC	Community Forest Committees
CREMA	Community Resource Management Area
DA	District Assembly
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FC	Forestry Commission
FSD	Forest Services Division
GIZ	German Development Cooperation
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NLBI	Non- Legally Binding Instrument
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
RMSC	Resource Management Support Center

1. INTRODUCTION

The District Forestry Plan concept is a new intervention that essentially seeks to help optimise the contribution of forests to environmental sustainability, national development and local livelihoods by broadening participation in forest management at the district level. The concept was born out of the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument (NLBI) on All Types of Forest project, which seeks to integrate forestry issues into national development at the district level through the District Development Plans. The concept is being promoted by the Forestry Commission in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.

A District Forestry Plan outlines the forest and wildlife resources in the given district, their contribution to local livelihoods, challenges to their sustainable and equitable management, and an action plan for optimising their contribution to environmental sustainability and local livelihoods.

In 2010, the Forestry Commission and FAO through the NLBI tasked Tropenbos International Ghana to facilitate the development of District Forestry Plans for two pilot districts: Assin Fosu Forest District, focusing on Assin North Municipal and Assin South District Assemblies in the Central Region and Lawra Forest District focusing on Lawra and Nadowli District Assemblies in the Upper West Region. This manual has been developed to serve as a guide for the other districts to develop their own District Forestry Plans. The prescriptions in the manual were informed by the experiences in developing the two District Forestry Plans.

The manual outlines the materials required, stakeholders to be involved and the procedure to be followed for developing a District Forestry Plan.



2. MATERIALS NEEDED

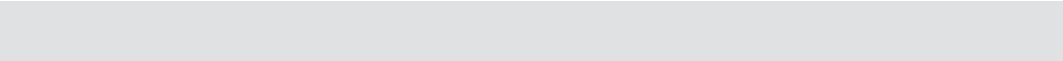
To develop a District Forestry Plan for a given district, the following materials are needed:



Materials Required

Sources of Materials

1. Copy of the District Development Plan	• District or Municipal Assembly
2. Copies of management plans for forest reserves, national parks (wildlife reserves), and community forests where they exist	• Forestry Services Division (FSD) • Wildlife Division (WD) • Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC)
3. Reports on the forest and wildlife resources in the districts	• Forestry Commission • Resource Management Support Centre
4. District Natural Resources (Forestry) Map	• FSD, • WD, • RMSC
5. Sample District Forestry Plan (from The forest districts of Assin Fosu and Lawra)	• District Assemblies, • FSD, • WD
6. Other relevant national development plans (e.g. GPRS, Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) etc.)	• District Assemblies, • (MDAs)
7. Consultations with the local people for any relevant information needed	Contact with leaders of local communities and Traditional Authorities



The District Development Plan provides background information about the district and its broader development agenda of the district. It will help to situate the District Forestry Plan within the broader development context of the district.

The management plans and reports on the forest and wildlife resources in the district contain information on the coverage and condition of the resources. This background information will be useful when setting objectives for the District Forestry Plan.

The sample District Forestry Plan provides examples of what goes into the different sections of a District Forestry Plan.

3. STAKEHOLDERS TO ENGAGE

The development and implementation of a District Forestry Plan requires the participation of all stakeholders ,or at least representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups.

The Forestry Commission with support from the District Assembly(DA) and Traditional Authorities will initiate the process of developing the plan.

A quick stakeholder analysis with key stakeholders will inform the process about relevant stakeholders that need to participate in the development of the plan.

A fair gender representation should be encouraged. Further, people with the requisite skills should be taken into consideration.

The following are considered stakeholders in the development and implementation of a District Forestry Plan.



The District Assembly



Forest Services Division

1. The District Assembly
2. The Forest Services Division in the district
3. The Wildlife Division in the district
4. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) in the district
5. The Environmental Protection Agency in the district /region



The Wildlife Division office in the district



Traditional Authorities



Assembly persons and Unit Committees

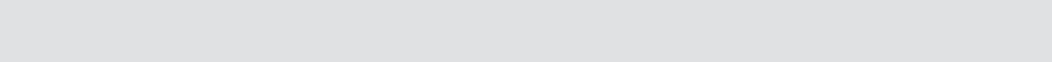


**Contractors, Chainsaw Operators
, NTFP gatherers, hunters, etc)**

6. Environmental and development NGOs operating in the district
7. Forest Forums if they exist
8. Traditional Authorities
9. Assembly persons and Unit Committees
10. Community Resource Management Committees such as Community Forest Committees (CFCs), CREMAs, Community Biodiversity Advisory Groups (CBAGs), *Taungya* Groups, or recognisable farmer/youth /gender Groups.
11. Forest Resource Users (timber Contractors, Chainsaw Operators, NTFP gatherers, hunters, farmers miners etc)
12. Other relevant stakeholders who may affect or be affected by natural resource management.



Women Groups.



The participation of the District Assembly is crucial because it is the local government body that oversees all development issues in the district. It is appropriate that the Assembly coordinates the implementation of the Plan.

The government institutions concerned with natural resources management (the Forest Services Division, Wildlife Division, MOFA and EPA) have to be involved early in the process to obtain their sense of ownership and commitment in providing technical support to the development and implementation of the District Forestry Plan.

The early involvement of all other stakeholders especially those at the community level (Forest Forums, Traditional Authorities, Assemblymen, Unit Committees, CREMAs, CFCs, CBAGs and other recognisable groupings of local people) is important in order to instil in them a sense of ownership of the Plan and hence their commitment to its development and implementation.

The environmental and development NGOs are useful sources of information and technical/financial support for the development and implementation of the District Forestry Plan.

Where it is not possible to involve all the community level stakeholders at the stage of developing the District Forestry Plan, efforts should be made to have them represented by the community based forest organisation and obtain their support and participation during the implementation stage.

Other relevant stakeholders that may vary from different districts and identified during the stakeholder analysis should be consulted appropriately.

4. THE DISTRICT FORESTRY PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

This section presents the process to follow when preparing a District Forestry Plan.

4.1 Planning Team formation

A three- member team comprising the District Assembly, the District Forest office Service Division and Traditional Authorities should be formed by the initiating body to Plan the process.



Three member Planning Team formation

4.2 Preparatory meeting

This meeting will seek to make initial contact with key stakeholders on the need for preparing District Forestry Plans.

The expected outcome of the meeting will be stakeholders' commitment to developing the plan, proposed timeline for the preparation of the plan and a list of stakeholders with their roles and responsibilities towards the inception meeting. Stakeholders who will be involved in this meeting should include Forestry officials, FC, the proposed coordinating organization, District Assemblies representatives and forest forum representatives.



Inception meeting

The planning team will plan the inception meeting (dates, venue, materials, funds).

4.3 Inception meeting

The inception meeting is the first meeting on the District Forestry Plan involving the stakeholders mentioned in Section 3.

The meeting is meant to sensitise the stakeholders on the need to develop a District Forestry Plan and agree on what will go into developing and implementing the Plan.

At the meeting, it is important that the stakeholders come to appreciate the need to develop a District Forestry Plan, the process of developing the plan, and indicate their support for the plan. The tasks for developing the plan should be discussed and shared. For instance, some stakeholders could be tasked to provide some of the materials mentioned in Section 2, or review information/data to provide some of background to the plan .

At the meeting, the stakeholders should formally appoint a stakeholder/organisation who will facilitate/coordinate the development of the Plan. This stakeholder will act as the Secretariat for the development of the District Forestry Plan. Its specific responsibilities will include calling the other stakeholders for meetings on the Plan and coordinating execution of tasks assigned to the various stakeholders. Where the required capacity is available, the same stakeholder will be responsible for drafting the Plan based on outcomes of the discussions with the other stakeholders.



An appointee stakeholder/organisation

The capacity required for the secretariat is skilled personnel and facilities for transforming the outcomes of discussions into a draft District Forestry Plan document for further discussions. Civil society organisations by virtue of their capacity and neutrality are normally suited to facilitate such processes. However, where a civil society organisation is facilitating the process, active participation and ownership of the outcome by the stakeholders Mentioned in Section 3 should be ensured.



skilled personnel

The meeting should set timelines regarding when tasks should be completed and when subsequent meetings will be held. As with any other meeting, the minutes of the meeting's proceedings should be recorded and approved by participants.

4.4 Reviewing information materials

This will involve review of the information materials mentioned in Section 2, namely the District Development Plan, Management Plans for forest and wildlife reserves and community forests in the district, and reports on forest and forest resources in the district. These materials can be obtained from the District Assembly, District Forestry Office, District Wildlife Office, and offices of environmental NGOs in the district;

The tasks of gathering and reviewing the documents can be shared among the stakeholders. When tasks are shared, it is necessary that the facilitating stakeholder coordinates to ensure that the stakeholders conduct their given assignments by a date mutually agreed upon.

The review should aim at deducing background information about the district and the coverage and condition of forest, wildlife and other landscape development resources in the district, including forest reserves, wildlife reserves, community forests, plantations, trees on farm and fallow lands, water bodies, etc. The review should also aim at deducing information on how the resources contribute to District revenues, business profits and local livelihoods and identify challenges to th management.



Reviewing information materials

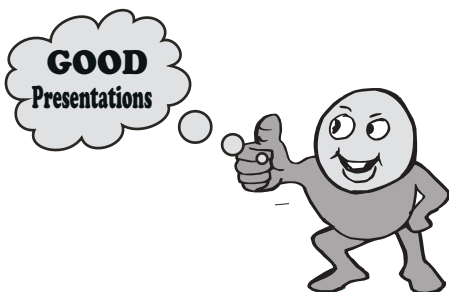
4.5 Holding meeting to discuss objectives for the District Forestry Plan

Having collated the necessary background information on the district and its resources, a meeting should be held to discuss possible solutions for the main challenges identified, and from here, extract the objectives and activities to pursue in the District Forestry Plan.



Presentations by stakeholders

The meeting should begin with presentations by the stakeholders tasked to collate the background information. The presentations should be followed by a discussion on how the forest, wildlife and water resources in the district contribute to livelihoods in the districts and the challenges to their sustainable and equitable management. When consensus is built on these issues, the meeting should set objectives for the District Forestry Plan. The objectives should be as specific and measurable as possible.



For each objective, the stakeholders should discuss activities for achieving them. The stakeholder/organisation responsible for each activity and the resources required should also be discussed. Efforts should be made to include stakeholders who are not represented but have roles to play in the proposed interventions.

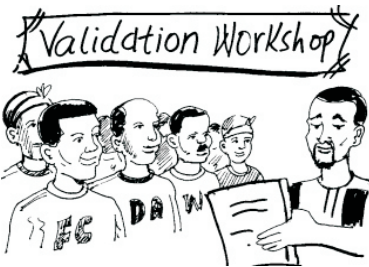
4.6 Drafting District Forestry Plan



Draft District Forestry Plan

Having obtained the necessary background information, and the objectives and their corresponding activities for the Plan, the facilitating organisation should draft the District Forestry Plan document using the outline in Section 5. Where the facilitating organisation does not have the required capacity, another organisation with the capacity should be tasked to draft the Plan document with the support of the other stakeholders.

4.7 Holding validation workshop



Representatives from each of the identified stakeholder groups.

Once the draft plan has been developed, stakeholders should be consulted to validate the information to ensure that all relevant provisions have been made in the plan. The validation workshop should bring together at least one stakeholder representative from each of the identified stakeholder groups. The FSD and DA should be adequately engaged in the workshop. Other resource persons may be invited to provide technical advice and expertise to enhance the development of the plan

4.8 Meeting to finalise the District Forestry Plan

When the draft Plan document is ready, a stakeholder meeting should be held to verify that the content of the draft plan reflects the outcomes of the earlier discussions. Any



necessary correction should be noted and made to finalise the plan. The meeting should discuss how the stakeholders will obtain copies of the finalised Plan. The meeting should also discuss the next step with regard to implementation of the Plan.

4.9 Endorsement of Plan by District Assembly and FSD

The finalized plan must be endorsed by the District Assembly and the District Forestry office to ensure ownership and enhance effective implementation of the plan by all stakeholders.



Endorsement of Plan by District Assembly and FC

4.10 Assigning roles to stakeholders

1) Coordinating/Facilitating Stakeholder

(organization)- NGO, FC, (M)DA, Consultant

- Organization of meetings
- Facilitation of stakeholders meetings
- Identification of resource persons
- Collating of relevant information, data and materials
- Management of resources and logistics
- Development of draft plans



2) Forestry Commission(FSD)



- Collation of relevant forestry and Wildlife related information
- Provision of technical support

3) District Assemblies



- ❓ Making available to the coordinating stakeholder the District Development Plan
- ❓ Provision of financial support for implementation of plan

4) Traditional Authorities



- Mobilize communities and provide support for the implementation of the plan
- Participate actively in the planning process

5) NGOs



- Provide support for development and implementation of District Forestry Plans
- Provide facilitating or coordinating role
- Build capacity of stakeholders to participate in plan development and implementation

6) Communities



- Participate actively in the development and implementation of the plan

4.11 Possible Sources of Funding

Possible sources of funds for the development and implementation of the District Forestry Plan include the following:

The District Assembly's share of forestry revenue

- The District Assembly Common Fund
- Government budgetary allocation to Ministries, Department and Agencies
- Donor funding e.g. Natural Resources and Environmental Governance (NREG) facility

5. OUTLINE OF A DISTRICT FORESTRY PLAN

A District Forestry Plan should have the outline below:

1. Introduction:

This introductory part should explain what the Plan is all about and its relevance. It should also mention how the Plan was developed and which stakeholders took part.

2. Forests and forest resources in the district:

The second chapter should present:

- a. Brief background information of the district (population, socio-economic structure, natural Resources and agricultural resources).
- b. An assessment of forest, wildlife and land resources in the district (including reserved forests, off-reserve forests, ecotourism sites, water bodies and areas ideal for plantation establishment and cultivation of non-timber forest products). It should also include traditional practices related to forestry.
- c. Current land and forest utilisation activities.
- d. Key forestry-related challenges in the district, particularly those that hamper optimisation of forestry contribution to local livelihoods and poverty reduction as well as key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.
- e. Strategies to achieve sustainable and equitable management of forest, wildlife and land resources.

3. Local livelihood and poverty reduction objectives to pursue:

The third chapter should focus on local livelihoods and poverty reduction objectives and activities to pursue in the Plan. The section should highlight the current contribution of forest and land resources to local livelihoods and poverty reduction, and objectives for optimising their contribution to local livelihoods and district revenues. The various livelihood interventions should be highlighted as well as its associated implementation challenges and possible solutions.

4. Governance objectives to pursue:

The fourth chapter should focus on governance objectives to pursue in the Plan. It should highlight what constitutes good forest governance, the current forest governance challenges in the district, and the objectives to pursue in the Plan to achieve good forest governance.

5. Capacity building:

The fifth chapter should focus on capacity building objectives to pursue in the Plan. This should include (but not limited to) capacity building in:

- a. Resource development
- b. Livelihoods and poverty reduction
- c. Climate change
- d. Resource governance
- e. Benefit sharing

6. ACTION PLAN

This chapter should detail out an action plan for the District Forestry Plan covering the four key thematic areas of forest resources, livelihoods, governance and capacity building. For each objective, the action plan should define the activities to be undertaken, institution/person responsible, timelines and resources required as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Outline of the action plan for a District Forestry Plan

Theme	Objective	Activities	Stakeholder responsible	Resources required	Time frame
Theme 1	1. Objective 1	1.1 Activity 1.1 1.2 Activity 1.2			
	2. Objective 2	2.1 Activity 2.1 2.2 Activity 2.2 2.3 Activity 2.3			
Theme 2	1. Objective 1				
	2. Objective 2				



7. FUNDING

This chapter should present the possible sources of funding for implementing the District Forestry Plan. The possible funding sources include the District Assembly's share of forest revenues, the District Assembly's Common Fund and donor funding e.g. Natural Resources and Environmental Governance (NREG) facility. It should also include other budgetary allocation to participating Ministries, Departments and Agencies, who should build this into their operational plans.

8. MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The monitoring framework is relevant for monitoring the implementation of the District Forestry Plan. For each activity, the monitoring framework should indicate the stakeholder responsible, the monitoring indicator, means of verification and important assumptions as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Outline of the monitoring framework for a District Forestry Plan

Theme	Activities	Stakeholder responsible	Indicator	Means of verification	Important assumptions
Theme 1	1. Objective 1				
	1.1 Activity 1.1				
	1.2 Activity 1.2				
	2. Objective 2				
	2.1 Activity 2.1				
	2.2 Activity 2.2				
	2.3 Activity 2.3				
Theme 2	1. Objective 1				
2. Objective 2					

