What is the problem?
Ghana is currently losing forest cover at about 2% per annum (or 135,000 ha/year). This is threatening the continued provision of ecosystem services and functionality that support a predominantly agrarian economy. Having lost over 60% of the forest cover since the 1950s, coupled with the threat of climate change, the future of forests is becoming a matter of grave concern for the country.

Why is it important?
REDD+ is a pillar of action for the national climate change agenda, and an effective pathway for sustainable, low emissions development.

To maximize the opportunities that REDD+ provides and ensure that it delivers on its objectives, rights-based approaches are required for the implementation of REDD+. For Ghana, a rights-based approach to REDD+ implies tenure security, equitable benefit sharing, gender equity and non-discrimination against vulnerable groups.

Ghana’s REDD+ Programme
Ghana seeks to implement her REDD+ programme in a phased, programmatic approach. The initial REDD+ programme will focus on the High Forest Zone (HFZ) and later scaling up to cover other ecological zones such as the Savannah Zone (SZ). Proposed measures and interventions targeted at addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation will be linked with the production and supply chains of major commodities and defined by clear ecological boundaries. Two priority sub-national programmes are the Ghana Cocoa-Forest REDD+ Programme, and Shea Landscape REDD+ Programme.
Challenges to realizing effective REDD+ implementation

Insecure tree tenure
Naturally occurring timber trees in off-reserve areas are vested in the President. This implies that farmers and other land users, who nurture and manage such trees, do not own them and are subsequently alienated from appropriating economic benefits the trees generate.

In the case of planted timber trees, the planter or owner exercises ownership rights over the trees once they have registered with the Forestry Commission. However, there is no legally robust framework for tree title registration, leaving the planter without fully secured property rights.

Inequitable benefit sharing
Farmers’ decision to retain and nurture naturally-occurring timber trees ensures the stock of tree resources in off-reserve areas (particularly, farmlands).

Nonetheless, the constitutionally-prescribed benefit sharing arrangement pertaining to timber trees does not recognise the contribution and efforts of farmers. Their management rights are not recognized. Consequently, they are alienated from appropriating economic benefits derived from the trees.

Marginalization of vulnerable groups
Gender inequality: under traditional or customary laws and practices, women are granted very limited access and control rights to land and trees. This significantly limits their participation in decision-making and negotiations for benefits.

Tenant farmers/sharecroppers: the management right of tenant farmers/sharecroppers who nurture and tend naturally-occurring timber trees is not recognized. Also, ownership right of tenant farmers/sharecroppers who plant timber trees is not recognized by the landowners. This discourages conservation of trees on farmlands.
Addressing the challenges: REDD+ beneficiaries

Who should receive REDD+ benefits and on what basis?

REDD+ benefits should be allocated on the following bases:

- **Legal rights**: benefits should be allocated to actors with legal rights to trees and forests (statutory or customary).

- **Contribution to emission reduction**: benefits should be allocated to actors who take actions to achieve verified emission reduction.

- **Facilitation**: benefits should be allocated to actors who have proven effective as facilitators and/or played essential roles in facilitating emissions reduction activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Basis for allocating benefits</th>
<th>Benefit sharing rationale</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Forestry Commission**                | • Coordination of REDD+ implementation  
• Monitoring of illegal logging, forest fires  
• Support and monitor implementation of Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA) landscape management plans  
• Supply of tree planting materials  
• Provision of training and supervision of on-farm tree management  
• Exercise control and management rights over on/off-reserve forest  
• Training of security services and Bench (Judiciary) in processing and prosecution of deforestation and forest degradation related offenses and infractions  
• Recruitment and provision of logistics for Forestry Commission (FC) Rapid Response Team  
• Liaise with EPA, Minerals Commission in the fight against illegal mining within the programme area | • Facilitation  
• Legal rights |
| **COCOBOD**                            | • Coordination of REDD+ implementation  
• Training and supervision of farmers in adopting climate smart agriculture/commodity production systems  
• Support and monitor implementation of HIA landscape management plans. | • Facilitation |
| **Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies** | • Local government development agents  
• Support for development and implementation of HIA landscape management plans  
• Support monitoring of illegal logging and forest fires | • Facilitation |
| **Traditional Authorities, Landowners** | • Custodians of forest lands  
• Assist with conflict and dispute resolution  
• Exercise use and control rights over forest lands  
• Support implementation of HIA landscape management plans | • Legal rights |
| **Farmers**                            | • Integrate and manage (nurturing, tending) on-farm trees  
• Undertake climate smart agriculture/commodity production systems that reduce emissions in the production of cocoa, shea, etc.  
• Exercise use, control and management rights over on-farm trees | • Legal rights  
• Contribution to emissions reduction |
| **Local Communities**                  | • Support forest conservation activities (e.g. forest fires prevention, illegal logging monitoring and reporting)  
• Exercise forest use rights. | • Legal rights  
• Facilitation |
### What are equitable benefit sharing options for REDD+?

Equitable sharing of benefits can incentivize actors to adopt sustainable land use practices that reduce emissions and enhance carbon stocks. The following benefit sharing schemes can be adopted in the REDD+ programme area (GCFRP):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit sharing scheme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Management regimes/systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Modified Taungya System benefit sharing** | • Forestry Commission (40%)  
• Farmers (40%)  
• Landowners (15%)  
• Forest fringe Communities (5%) | • Incentivises direct contribution of farmers in REDD+ implementation  
• Contributes to improved livelihood of participating farmers  
• Incentivises indirect contribution of landowners and local communities in implementation REDD+ | • Forest reserves |
| **Commercial Forest Plantation Development benefit sharing** | **Forest reserve**  
Private entity: (90%)  
Landowner: (6%)  
Forestry Commission: (2%)  
Local Communities: (2%)  
**Off-reserve**  
Private entity: (67%)  
Landowner: (33%)  
Forestry Commission: (-)  
Local Communities: (-) | • Fosters private sector participation in REDD+ | • Forest reserves  
• Off-reserves (in areas other than cocoa-forest landscapes or cocoa farmlands) |
| **Cocoa-Forest Landscape benefit sharing** | • Forestry Commission/COCOBOD (50%): To undertake key emission reduction activities.  
• Farmers (30%): To subsidize cocoa yield insurance for participating farmers.  
• Landowners/Local Communities (20%): To support community development projects | • Incentivises direct contribution of farmers in REDD+ implementation  
• Supports key emission reduction activities  
• Incentivises indirect contribution of landowners and local communities to REDD+ implementation | • Cocoa-forest landscapes  
• Cocoa farmlands |
Addressing the challenges: Legislative reforms

Tree tenure reform and security

Vest ownership of trees in farmers (in case of farmlands), families (in case of family lands), and stools (in case of stool lands).

Ownership and management rights should serve as basis to claim or negotiate benefits derived from the trees (e.g., timber right fee, SRA). For economic exploitation of the trees, pay ‘property use fee’ to Office of Administrator of Stool lands for onward distribution as stipulated by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

Develop a legal framework for decentralized land and tree title registration that supports identification of farm boundaries, mapping of trees and their properties (species, number, etc.) on farm/farmlands, and supports issuance of registration certificates.

This would require amendment to the Concession Act, 1962 (Act 124) section 16 (4)

This would require amendment to Timber Resources Management Regulations, 1998 (L.I. 1649) section 13 (b); Timber Resources Management (Amendment), 2003 (L.I. 1721) section 13 subsection 12 (b)

This would require:
- Expedition of the documentation framework for planted trees;
- Forestry Commission forging collaboration with Customary Land Secretariat to prompt prospective landowners during land title registration process to obtain tree registration certificates for planted trees.

Gender equity

Make deliberate provisions to ensure women’s participation in REDD+ projects, as well as adequate representation in REDD+ decision-making and implementation.

Protection of rights of tenant farmers/sharecroppers

Formalize management rights of tenant farmers/sharecroppers who nurture or plant trees.

Develop a legal framework that enjoins landlords to stipulate in their formalized tenancy contract, a mutually agreed fair sharing arrangement for benefits that the trees generate.

Make deliberate provisions to ensure women’s participation in REDD+ projects, as well as adequate representation in REDD+ decision-making and implementation.

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Note from the authors:
This Brief is a synthesis of key messages from two main reports produced under the IUCN ‘Promoting rights-based approaches to strengthen the conservation, governance and sustainable management of landscapes Phase II’ Project (2014-2017) and the ‘REDD+ Benefits: Facilitating countries and communities in the design of pro-poor REDD-Plus benefit sharing schemes’ project (2013-2015). Namely: (i) Incentive and Benefit sharing models in Ghana and opportunities for scaling up at landscape levels; with particular reference to Modified Taungya System (MTS) and Commercial Forest Plantation Development (CFPD, by T. Blomley; and (ii) Benefit sharing discourses in Ghana and proposals for a REDD+ benefit sharing mechanism, by E.G. Foli and W.K. Dumenu.

The opinions given herein belong solely to the authors and do not represent the views or policies of the organization(s) mentioned in this work.