



Food and Agriculture  
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United Nations



International Institute  
for Environment  
and Development



# Roles and Responsibilities of Forest and Farm Producer Organisations (FFPOs) and Forest Fringe Communities (FFCs) in Ghana



A simple guide for farmers, farmer cooperatives, plantation developers,  
and community members for Legal Tenure and benefit rights.

## Preface

Sustainable forest management in Ghana can only succeed when farmers, producer organisations, traditional authorities, private developers, and government institutions work together with transparency and accountability in regard to each other's roles and responsibilities. This guidebook, ***Roles and Responsibilities of Forest and Farm Producer Organisations (FFPOs) and Forest Fringe Communities (FFCs) in Ghana***, has been developed to clarify these important roles in simple, practical terms.

This publication is produced by Knowledge for World Conservation (KWC) under the Restoration for Resilience and Recovery (3R) of Sustainable Agri-Food Systems Project, with support from partners of the Forest and Farm Facility programme – the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**, the **International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)**, and the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. These organisations in their functions are committed to strengthening local institutions, promoting inclusive governance, and ensuring that forest and farm landscapes contribute to resilience, recovery, and equitable development.

It is undeniable that Forest and Farm Producer Organisations (FFPOs) and Forest Fringe Communities (FFCs) play very important role in Ghana's forest and agri-food systems. They represent farmers in negotiations, facilitate benefit-sharing arrangements, monitor forest activities, and promote sustainable production practices. At the same time, traditional authorities allocate land and safeguard customary rights, while private operators endeavour to meet regulatory standards, respect agreements, and comply with environmental and social safeguards. When each stakeholder understands and fulfills their responsibilities, conflicts are reduced, benefits are shared fairly, and investments become more sustainable.

This guide presents these roles and responsibilities in clear language, supported by graphical illustrations. It explains expectations in areas such as corporate social responsibility, compensation processes, record keeping, legal compliance, sustainability standards, and inclusive participation of women and the youth. It also outlines the consequences of failing to meet agreed obligations and reinforces the principle that rights must always go hand in hand with responsibilities.

We hope this guide serves as a practical tool for dialogue, cooperation, and accountability among stakeholders. It is envisaged that in the long term, Ghana's forest and farm stakeholders can build trust, secure livelihoods, and protect forest resources for present and future generations when we strengthen collective responsibility and promote transparent engagement.

## Acknowledgement

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We also extend our appreciation to Forest and Farm Producer Organisations (FFPOs), community groups, traditional authorities, farmers, plantation developers, and forest fringe community members who shared their experiences and practical insights. Their contributions ensured that this guide reflects real challenges and opportunities on the ground.

Finally, we acknowledge the contributions of field facilitators, the illustrator and communication specialist who worked to translate complex tenure and benefit-sharing frameworks into simple language supported by illustrations and infographics. Their efforts have made this guide accessible and practical for the farmers and communities it is designed to serve.

To all who contributed in diverse ways, we express our sincere gratitude.

## List of Acronyms

<b>CRMCS</b>	Community Resource Management Committee
<b>EUDR</b>	European Union Deforestation Regulation
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
<b>FFCs</b>	Forest Fringe Communities
<b>FFPOs</b>	Forest and Farmer Producer Organisations
<b>FSD</b>	Forestry Services Division of Forestry Commission
<b>iiED</b>	International Institute of Environment and Development
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union of Conservation of Nature
<b>KWC</b>	Knowledge for World Conservation
<b>3R</b>	Restoration for Resilience and Recovery
<b>SRA</b>	Social Responsibility Agreements



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# 1

## Who Are FFPOs?

### Forest and Farm Producer Organizations (FFPOs)

These in forestry and agriculture include:



**Tree and Timber producer groups**



**Cocoa cooperatives**



**Women and youth producer groups**



**Community-based organizations**



# 2

## Who are Forest Fringe Communities?

**A forest fringe community is a community that fall within five kilometers (5 km) radius around a forest reserve or in off-reserve areas, a community within a timber harvesting operational area.**



# 3

## Roles of Traditional Authorities



### Traditional Authorities (chiefs and family heads):



Allocate land with rights under customary law



Participate and witness benefit sharing negotiations (e.g., SRA)



Lead communities in negotiations with companies and Government



Ensure protection of sacred forests and cultural sites



Mediate land and resource disputes



Develop and support community by-laws and management plans



# 4

## Roles of FFPOs and Cooperatives



### FFPOs and cooperatives do:



Represent farmers in negotiations and policy discussions



Keep records of farms and trees for members



Support in SRA negotiations, signing and implementations



Support compensation processes for affected members



Train farmers on sustainability and legal compliance



Monitor benefit-sharing and community projects



# 5

## Roles of Farmers and Community Members



### Farmers and community members among others:



Protect forests and trees on their land



Prevent bushfires and illegal logging



Participate in CRMCs and forest monitoring



Keep farm and tree records



Attend community meetings and decision-making processes

<sup>2</sup> CRMCs stand for Community Resource Management Committees. They are a decentralized, community-based natural resource management framework designed to give local people greater authority and responsibility in managing wildlife and natural resources.



# 6

## Responsibilities of Private Sector Actors (Timber Companies and Plantation Developers)



### Private companies:



Obtain consent from landowners and communities



Follow environmental and social safeguards



Negotiate fair benefit-sharing agreements



Respect agreements for registered trees and farms



Ensure traceability and legal sourcing



## Community and Farmer Responsibilities in Benefit Sharing and Compensation



**Participate in SRA negotiations**



**Provide accurate farm boundaries and information**



**Report damage to farms or trees**



**Monitor how SRA benefits are implemented and used**



**Demand accountability on use of funds and execution of projects as scheduled**



**To ensure transparency, a democratically selected local SRA committee (LSRAC) should represent the community**



**The LSRAC should comprise of at least the Chief or Odikro or his representative, the Assembly member, a member of the (Town) Development Committee, women's group and any other other person suggested by the community**



**SRA negotiations can centered around:**

- **Use of proceeds from SRA to support projects initiated by the district assembly**
- **Setting aside a component of the SRA funds for administrative cost incurred by the committee**
- **Implementation of joint projects where neighboring communities are in close proximity**
- **Ensuring that benefits from SRA are dispersed according to the negotiated agreements**
- **Where feasible, SRA items and or services to be provided should be specified and quantified as well as roles and regulations. Timelines for implementation may also be stated**



# 8

## Company responsibilities in benefit sharing and compensation



### Private companies:



Identify communities to benefit from the timber operations from the district FSD



Share harvesting plans with communities



Prevent damage to farms and trees



Negotiate, sign and implement SRA with communities



Pay compensation and agreed benefits



# 9

## Responsibilities towards legal compliance and sustainability



### All stakeholders are responsible to:



Follow national forest and land laws and regulations



Respect international forest codes and treaties towards legality and sustainability (e.g. FLEGT/VPA, EUDR.) supported by Ghana



Include women and youth in all manner of forest decision making and implementation processes



Make information and land services (e.g. registration, dispute resolution etc.) publicly available and accessible



# 10

## Consequences of Not Fulfilling Responsibilities



Farmers face punitive fines, lose their land, loss of investments, face customary or legal (court) sanctions



Traditional leaders face legal sanctions for land fraud



Companies lose permits or face prosecution for illegal logging or failure to compensate communities



## Key Messages for Traditional Authorities, Community Members, Farmers and FFPOs



**Rights and benefits come with roles and responsibilities.**



**Cooperation between communities, government, and companies is essential.**



**Registration, documentation and record keeping on lands and benefits protect everyone.**



**Sustainable forest management secures livelihoods for future generations.**



**Authorities lead by example and manage land responsibly to prevent dispute.**



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