

Current Policy Issues and Recommendations for Sustainable Management of NTFPs in the Northern Savannah Zones of Ghana

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Introduction

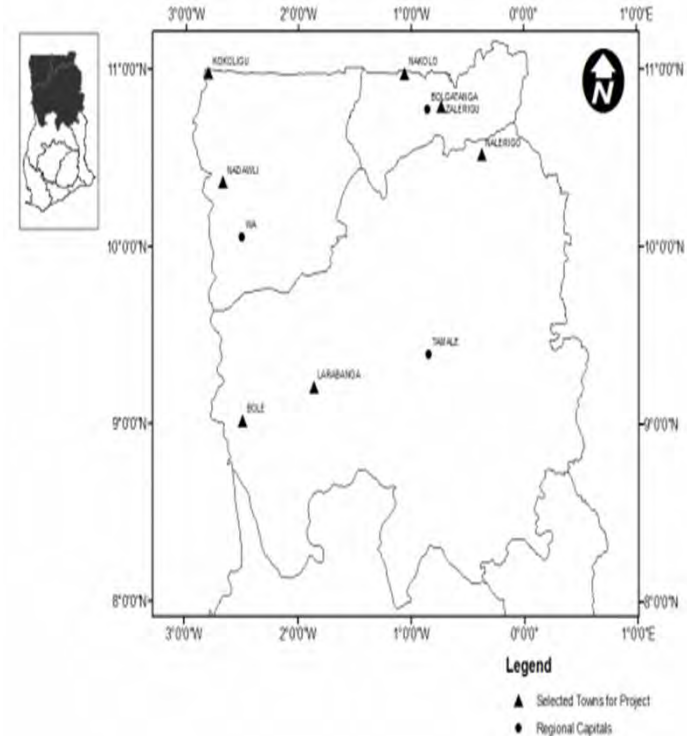
- Ghana has three principal land cover types namely; coastal savannah, forest and northern savannah.

- The Northern Savannah zone falls within the dryland Savannah zone occupying an estimated 40 % of the country

- The geographical limits: areas within 8°-11° N latitude and 0°-3° W longitude

- Administratively comprise of the Upper West Region, Upper East Region and Northern Region

Northern Savannah



Introduction

- Mean total annual rainfall varies from 1,000 mm to 1,200 mm
- Over 70% of the population in Northern Savannah Zones are engaged in Agriculture for subsistence

Introduction

- About 1.2 million people, representing 5 percent of Ghana's population, are food insecure.
- 59% of these are in Northern Ghana: 34% in Upper West region, 15% in the Upper East and 10% in the Northern Region
- About 507,000 (40%) people are vulnerable of becoming food insecure in the rural areas Northern Ghana
- Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) constitute a critical component of food security and an important source of income for the poor in the Northern Savannah Zones of Ghana

Landuse

- The forest cover area is categorized into two areas; forest reserves and off-reserves.
- There is an estimated 280 reserves in Ghana
- 214 of which are located in the high forest zone and the remainder in the savannah zone.
- Thus, Northern Ghana is large made up of off-reserve areas
- Off-reserve are lands outside the demarcated forest reserves which are mostly used for agricultural purposes

LandUse

- Resources off-reserves encompass a mix of property rights
- In Northern Ghana Off-reserve areas are governed by open access and common property rights

Methodology

Aim and Objective of the Study

- The results presented here is part of a study to determine factors affecting effective commercialization of NTFPs in Northern Ghana
- The specific objective was to determine the implication of current policies for sustainable management of NTFPs in Northern Ghana

Data Collection

- Data was generated through household surveys, market surveys and focus group discussions.
- These were complemented with key informant interviews with traders in various markets, opinion leaders, key institutions and traditional leaders in the various communities
- Review of relevant literature

Socio-economic Significance of NTFPs in Northern Ghana

- NTFPs constitute the second major source of income for rural people in the Northern Savannah Zones of Ghana
- They contribute to food security, especially, during the lean season or hunger period
- NTFPs are exploited by every rural household either as food or medicine or sold for income
- Majority of those who depend on the NTFPs as their source of income are women and poor households
- Access is becoming increasingly difficult

Commercial Exploitation of NTFPs

Ave. No. of HH Members engaged in NTFP Exploitation for a living	31%
Full-time employment Generated by the NTFP Sector	25%
Contribution to HH Income	10%

Contribution of NTFPs to HH Income

Type of Income Generating Activity	Average numbers of HH members involved
NTFPs	2.1
Agriculture	3.5
Others	1.2

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Brief Overview of Forest Policy in Ghana

- The Forestry Policy of 1948 laid the foundation for forest management in Ghana
- However, it laid undue emphasis on the exploitation of forests for timber leading to excessive exploitation and illegal harvesting
- Forestry institutions were largely inefficient due to inadequate funding
- Growing concerns and global trend in sustainability largely influenced the enactment of a new Forest and Wildlife policy in 1994

Brief Overview of Forest Policy in Ghana

- The 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy brought forth issues of sustainable management
- The 2011 forestry and Wildlife Policy lays additional emphasis on the management of off-farm forest resources and NTFPs with a much more clear focus, objectives and strategies

Management of Off-Reserve Resources

- Off-reserve non-timber forest resources are not under any particular management or protection
- They are mostly common pool resources for communities and largely under traditional customary management regimes
- Access is normally open to members of the communities
- Increased commercialization of NTFPs in recent times has led to restricted access to some resources by land owners

Key Issues for Policy Consideration

- Poor landuse planning has resulted in rapid loss NTFPs with consequent effects on loss of biodiversity and livelihoods
- There is general lack of awareness of policies on NTFPs by stakeholders including institutions mandated with the mangement of forest resource
- There is general lack of information and limited statistics on NTFPs
- There is no clear management regime and regulatory framework for the management of off-reserve areas, and by extension NTFPs

Key Issues for Policy Consideration

- Traditional authorities play a major role in the management of off-reserve areas in the Northern Savannah Zones of Ghana

Conclusion

- The Government of Ghana's 2011 Forestry and Wildlife Policy puts the Savannah Woodlands and off-reserve areas clearly into perspective
- However, in practice, management of forest resources is still largely skewed towards the timber sector and the high forest production zones to the neglect of off-reserve areas such as northern Savannah Zones
- There is obvious lack of capacity and appropriate structures on the ground to ensure effective management of off-reserve areas

Policy Recommendation

- There is the need for specific legislation targeted at a more appropriate management off-reserve areas in the Savannah Zones of Ghana taking into consideration contextual factors
- There is the need to promote research within the context of the Savannah Woodlands to ensure that there is adequate and reliable information for a more informed planning decisions relating to NTFPs
- There is the need for an improved legal framework and enforcement of the existing laws for enhanced protection of off-reserve areas in the Savannah Zone
- There is the need to enhance the capacity of the forestry Division for improved management of off-reserve forest resources as they constitute the largest forest sector in the Northern Savannah Zones

THANK YOU