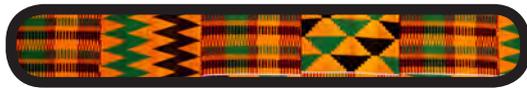




EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BASELINE SOCIAL SURVEY
AND COMMUNITY MAPPING

Atebubu & Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration



GHANA



A Living Laboratory for Community and Ecological Resilience

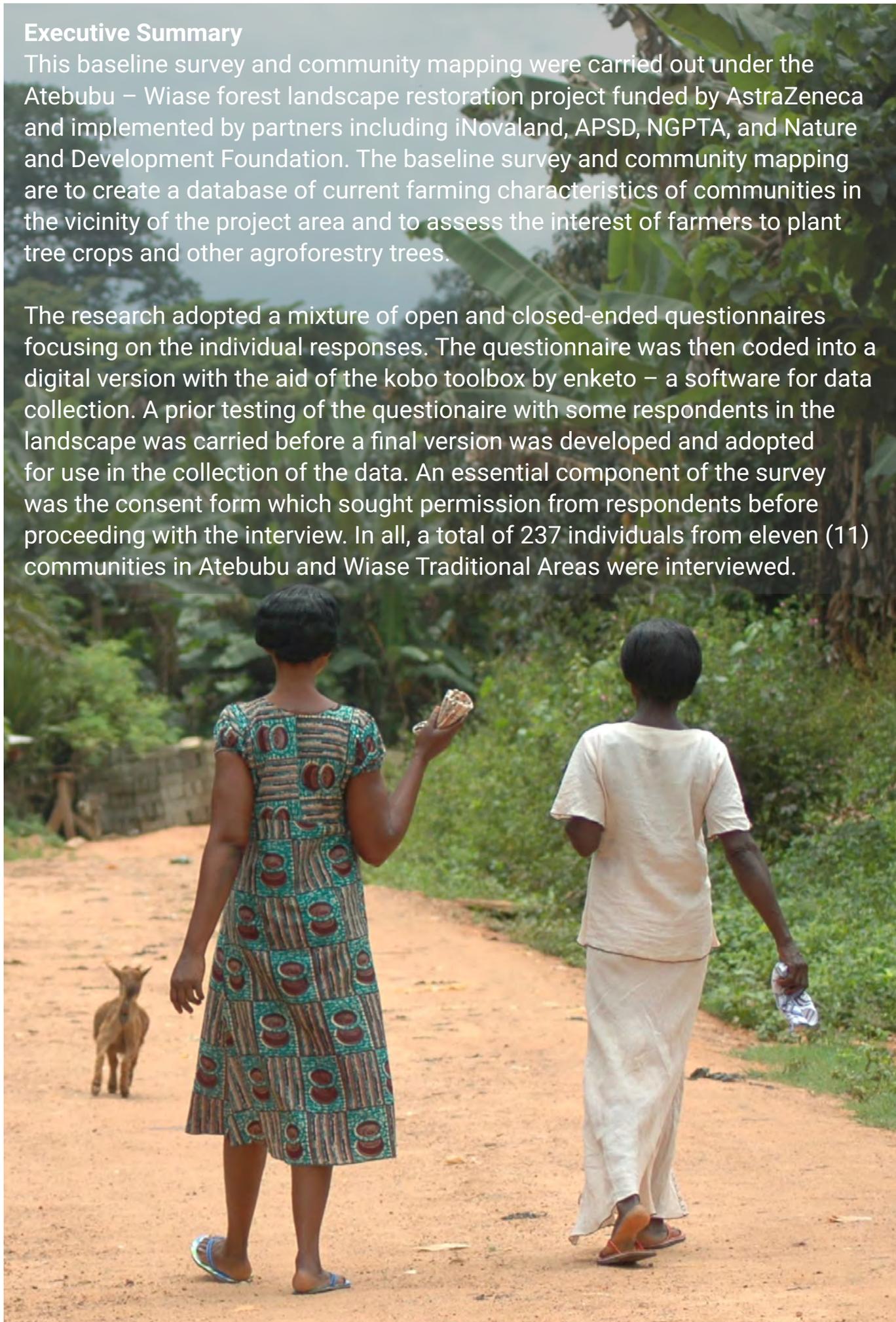


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Executive Summary

This baseline survey and community mapping were carried out under the Atebubu – Wiase forest landscape restoration project funded by AstraZeneca and implemented by partners including iNovaland, APSD, NGPTA, and Nature and Development Foundation. The baseline survey and community mapping are to create a database of current farming characteristics of communities in the vicinity of the project area and to assess the interest of farmers to plant tree crops and other agroforestry trees.

The research adopted a mixture of open and closed-ended questionnaires focusing on the individual responses. The questionnaire was then coded into a digital version with the aid of the kobo toolbox by enketo – a software for data collection. A prior testing of the questionnaire with some respondents in the landscape was carried before a final version was developed and adopted for use in the collection of the data. An essential component of the survey was the consent form which sought permission from respondents before proceeding with the interview. In all, a total of 237 individuals from eleven (11) communities in Atebubu and Wiase Traditional Areas were interviewed.



Atebubu and Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration Project Funded by AstraZeneca

Survey findings:

Below are the key findings of relevance to the project objectives.

Respondents

The majority (72%) of respondents were male, only 28% were female. Many women will not speak until their husbands were around due to gender-power dynamics and cultural systems. This system has the tendency of restricting the participation of women in the project activities as married women may need the consent of their husbands to participate.

Education

The study revealed that about 62% of all respondents have some level of education while 38% do not have any form of education. Of those who have some level of education, 99% of them attained Primary or Middle School or Junior Secondary School status but have a dependency of an average of six persons.

Education level has implication for the trainability, method of training and adoption of project interventions.

Farming

The study also revealed that 82% of the respondents are farmers, with an average farm size of 4.6 acres (1.9 hectares) and a generally low yield per acre. The opportunity for the project is that there are already many in the landscape already engaged in some level of farming and are highly likely to engage in interventions that will improve their farming business.

It is also important to mention that the low level of farm productivity has implications for household income and the craving for more land to farm. To change the attitude and improve the living standard of the local people, farming must be done as a business, and yield per hectare must increase significantly.

Regenerative agriculture that improve agronomic practices must be adopted by farmers to improve yield.



The interview team and some respondents in Kokofu.



Community Baseline Report

This publication is a summary of the "Community Baseline Report" prepared by Nature and Development Foundation, based in Accra.



Food Crops

Of the farmers, more than 96% are into food crops (maize, yams, plantains, tomatoes, garden eggs, pepper, and beans among others. The experience and views of respondents suggest that many crops have poor yield when grown under shade in a conventional rural agricultural practice. This requires the project to pay attention to the type of agroforestry trees to introduce.



Indigenes or Migrant Farmers

73% of respondents consider themselves indigenes. In the Wiase traditional areas, for example, grandparents or parents of some respondents may have migrated from other localities either nearby or a little farther from the landscape, but their status as second-, third-, or fourth-generation migrants has given them the assumed status of indigenes.

Many more people in Wiase Traditional Area than in Atebubu consider themselves as indigenes. The status of farmers as indigenes or migrants has implications for access to land especially for growing tree crops that are perennial. For people who consider themselves indigenes, access to extra land to plant trees or other agroforestry crops under this project will not pose a problem. For migrants who are interested to participate, high level of effort is needed by project implementers on discussions around the granting of land access to interested farmers to partake in the project.

Interactions with chiefs and landowners will need to be carefully considered to ensure project success.

Production Costs

49% of respondents identified production cost as the utmost hurdle to farming as a business while 19% are of the view that inconsistent and erratic rainfall is the most challenging part of farming.

These factors generally affect production, yield, and farmer income. They also affect farmers' readiness to participate in project interventions. It is also significant to note that 61% of respondents think the availability of land for farming is the least challenge to farming in the landscape except farmers in communities such as Garadima and ByeBye close to the existing eucalyptus plantation. For these farmers, they now must travel farther distances from their communities to access new land for tree crop establishment. These farmers appeared aggrieved and so the project needs to adopt more innovative ways, including the involvement of the paramount chief and local chiefs when engaging them.

Investment

Over 80% of respondents depend on personal resources as the main source of investment into their farm production with a few indicating money lenders and prefinance from off-takers as sources. This has implication on the size of land that can be prepared and planted by the farmer as well as the price per unit that the off taker who advanced funds will be willing to pay.

Existing Plantations

In terms of existing tree plantations, about 50% of respondents had some form of tree crop mostly cashew plantation. This is due to the increased engagement of farmers by the Ministry of Agriculture on the Planting for Export program of the government of Ghana. About 98% of respondents indicated their willingness to set up tree crop plantations if they get the needed support. Of this number, 73% prefer cashew while 44% will like to plant mango. Only about 13% indicated they will plant timber trees.

The reasons many people selected cashew and mango include profitability, guaranteed markets, relatively faster maturity, and resistance to drought.

These findings fit in well with the agroforestry component of the project as a means of increasing community resilience and adaptation to climate change.

Support

On the question of the kind of support required to establish tree crop plantations, several responses were received. The highest number requested for financial support (36%) followed by seeds/seedlings (31%) and then fertilizers, weedicides, and pesticides (18%). Those who mentioned financial support indicated that having funds at their disposal will make it possible to secure all other inputs necessary.

Although this request may be genuine, the researchers think that the project should avoid giving cash support to farmers as this is likely to be abused.

The project could elect to prepare lands for the planting of the agroforestry crops and supervise the planting of same.



Survey Recommendations

Based on the survey findings, the following recommendations are made for the consideration of the project and other stakeholders.

Cultural Values

While ensuring that the cultural values of the local people on gender roles are respected to avoid unintended household conflicts, this project should design some community training on gender to create awareness and behavioral change on gender stereotyping. This may require introducing some gender-focused activity or gender as cross-cutting action in all project interventions to ensure increased acceptance of gender equity and parity in the project outcomes. This is one of the ways to reduce the high incidence of poverty among rural women.

Woodlot Targets

It is recommended that the project consider reducing the woodlot target as only about 13% of respondents indicated their willingness to plant timber trees and other long gestation period crops.

Timber trees such as teak are potential additional sources of income, but the current pricing regime of teak, and the long maturity period are huge disincentive to the planting of more timber trees. To encourage diversification of trees planted, the project must adopt the approach of including a minimum number of timber trees for every plot of mango, cashew or citrus established to increase diversity.

To encourage the proportion of longer rotation timber trees in a forest landscape restoration programme, there should be clear and favorable marketing policy facilitated by government and other stakeholders.

Community Training

Any intervention introduced by the project should take into consideration, the low level of education of people in the landscape by simplifying knowledge transmission methods to reach most of the potential beneficiaries. It is best to adopt transfer of knowledge on forest landscape restoration, climate change etc. by demonstration or informal community training sessions rather than through classroom training.

Project should also develop simplified methods for farmers to keep data and report on activities.



Land

Because of the perennial nature of tree crops, there might be different tenure arrangements to grow such crops especially for people who consider themselves migrants. For farmers who do not have their land but are willing to plant tree crops, the project may have to first speak to the Chiefs to facilitate a favorable tenurial arrangement.

Improving Livelihoods

There is generally low yield/hectare of food crops grown, a reason farmers crave more lands and the persistency of poverty. If the project has some latitude of funding, there is the need to establish a livelihood improvement project such as increasing yield through collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture to increase the number of extension officers to support farmers who participate in the project. Other options will be establishment of Village Savings and Loans Scheme for participating farmers.

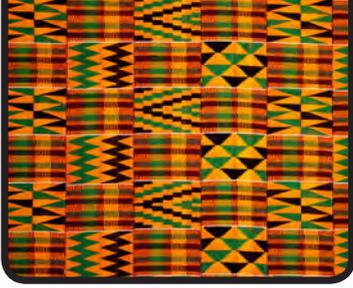
Tree Crops

It is recommended that the project establishes a nursery of tree crops in nearly the same proportions as the preferences of farmers for such tree crops according to this survey. These should be supplied to interested farmers to plant. The area planted should be mapped and monitored over time. The project has a target in terms of the area planted or the number of trees planted. It is therefore recommended that either a minimum area should be required of interested farmers or a minimum number of tree crops should be planted by each farmer.

Land preparation

Since land preparation for farming is the costliest activity in the landscape, it is recommended that the project support farmers in plot preparation if the farmer dedicates a certain agreed minimum area to the growing of tree crops.





**Atebubu & Wiase
Forest Landscape
Restoration**



The living lab for community and ecological resilience is developed within the framework of the Circular Bioeconomy Alliance (<https://efi.int/cba>) established by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales under his Sustainable Markets Initiative. The Alliance aims at catalysing investments for creating resilient landscapes and sustainable markets - Powered by Nature.



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Disclaimer: The information presented in this publication has been sourced from a range of sources and is presented solely to help participants of project partners.

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