

Introducing the -

Nature & Development Foundation

- a new part of the solution to an old problem



Our Vision

The Nature & Development Foundation (NDF) has a vision that it is possible to bring a halt to further degradation of the forest resources and loss of biodiversity across West Africa. NDF believes that ways exist to balance the needs of development with sustainable land uses that do not threaten forest biodiversity or which need not threaten the forest resources and forest dependent livelihoods of the region.

Our Mission

NDF's mission is to help build a society in which human development and nature conservation complement each other. NDF believes we can realise our vision, which we believe others share, through the pursuit of the following key approaches:

- **Mobilising key players**, such as industry, local communities, consumer markets and governments in relevant countries in West Africa to create the conditions and solutions that can drive sustainable natural resource utilization on the ground.
- **Creating partnerships with key organisations**, such as industry and governments in relevant countries in West Africa plus other strategic civil society organizations in policy dialogue and developing market mechanisms to act as stimuli for positive change.
- **Engaging in activities around other land-uses impacting the forest landscape** in West Africa, focusing on sustainable forms of land use in appropriate locations.

Our strengths

NDF is currently active in Ghana and we aim to increase our activities in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia in the life time of

this strategy. Within the next three years, the focus in these three countries will be to interact with the broader land use sector, ensuring basic legal compliance by industry, encouraging responsible forest management and commodity production in general as well as interaction with other actors who influence the forest landscape. We aim to work with key partners to achieve leadership as an organisation with respect to our work in responsible forest management, natural resources management, rural development and governance in the region. NDF currently has a broad range of skills ranging from forest management and social responsibility, through to high conservation values and the legal framework for forestry.

Our ambition

We will begin to bring these skills and expertise to bear in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia within this strategic planning period. From our decade of experience in Ghana we know that in these countries there is significant forest cover, strong timber trade linkages with Europe, US, China and India; a history of deforestation and illegal logging; and forest enterprises operations in these two countries willing to engage. We are also aware of the growing investment in commodity productions such as cocoa, rubber, mineral exploitations that, if not carried out in a responsible manner, will have negative consequences for the development of local people and the maintenance of ecosystem integrity.



NDF & WWF – how we evolved

The Nature & Development Foundation (NDF) was legally established in November 2013 in Ghana. It is a non-profit organisation limited by guarantee.

NDF was born out of the long presence of WWF in Ghana and across the West African region. WWF has been operating in West Africa for several decades. The West Africa Regional Office was based in Abidjan since the mid-70s until the civil war in Cote d'Ivoire forced WWF to close its office in Abidjan in 2005. Since 2009 the WWF team in Accra has focused on forest and trade related



activities as a part of the WWF international programme – Global Forest & Trade Network (GFTN). In the past decade the team has built up a set of global expertise and has successfully worked closely with governments, communities and leading companies within and outside the region.

In 2013 WWF decided that a new local NGO would be better equipped to work on forest and related conservation issues across the region long term and determined to assist in the development of a new NGO. Offering support, such as use of the WWF name and logo, a new and local NGO was born – the **Nature & Development Foundation (NDF)**.

NDF is proud of its WWF heritage and will continue its association with WWF as the organisation develops further. For this strategic planning period NDF will have access to the WWF network. In 2014 NDF signed a licensing agreement with WWF International and will continue to use the WWF logo and name as appropriate in future communications.

West Africa's forests in peril

Forests and nature are important for the people of West Africa. Besides its biodiversity, the forests of the sub-region are indispensable for the cocoa industry, water supply and energy for local people. The vision to establish NDF is borne out of the inspiration to ensure that nature and natural resources, including forest, watersheds, oceans, wildlife and the wild places are used responsibly to sustain the livelihoods and businesses that depend on their continued existence. At the same time, the integrity of the remnant resources must be maintained or enhanced to ensure benefits to society through either utilitarian or non-utilitarian means. Considering the

growing investment and economy of the West Africa sub-region, regional organizations, such as NDF, working with strategic partners (both local and international) are best placed to engage, advocate and initiate programmes. These programmes can support government, local people and businesses to make responsible choices in the use of the region's natural resources.

Pressures on forests & key commodities

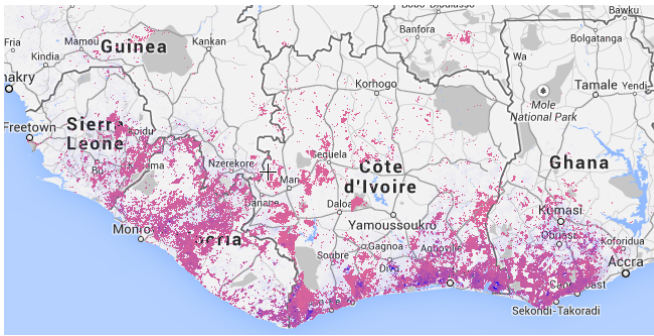
The forest of the West African sub-region is succumbing to pressures from different sectors of the economies. Increasingly, there is growing competing interest for land for the production of commodities - mostly agriculture, timber and mining within the same landscape. Furthermore, government policies affect the decisions of individuals to either adopt best management practices or to produce in ways that is inimical to the long-term sustainability of the resource being exploited as well as to the environment and society in general.

Outside of the sub-region trade and trade policy is evolving in ways that both encourage and discourage responsible production of commodities. The forests of the region face a range of pressures and dynamic processes that will determine their future survival.

The remnants of the Guinean Moist Forests spread across West Africa are at a cross roads. In some countries in the regions the forests have been liquidated over two centuries of unrelenting deforestation. This process has speeded up in the past two decades. Today the region's remaining forests, despite their cultural, environmental and economic value, have reached a point of near no return.

Key threats to the forests of the sub-region

- Unsustainable agriculture is the leading cause of forest degradation
- Small scale mining and its impact on safe drinking water and soil condition for agriculture commodities
- Unsustainable wood removal, including fuel wood and logging
- Devastation of wildlife through bush meat
- Climate change and the associated impacts on agriculture



Deforestation across the three countries (in purple) 2002-2012

NDF's future scope & activities

NDF believes it is well placed to engage and partner organisations at all scales to ensure that these competing land uses and decision making processes are conducted in ways that the forest is valued and conserved where feasible. NDF understands that it must not limit itself to working only with those in the forest industries itself, but that it must engage more widely in multiple sectors and processes if it is to achieve its mission.

NDF intends to focus on activities in the following thematic areas in the next three years. These focal areas are based on analysis of the key trends in the West African forest and other terrestrial sectors and our own ability, today and tomorrow to working on them to realise our mission.

The NDF intends to build on this work engaging forest sector actors in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Ghana and our response to the challenge is focused in a number of specific areas.

#1: Improving the environmental performance of the forest products sector in West Africa

Responsible forest management and trade is the contemporary strategy for achieving conservation gains in the productive forest of West Africa. NDF will seek to work with its current participants in order to set a good precedence in West Africa within the next three years.

NDF aims to utilize its influence to continue the process of transformative change in timber production. NDF plans to strategically select and engage with companies in order to transform their practices with a one-on-one, hands-on approach while managing the associated risks. NDF plans to engage with companies to transform the market and drive credible certification in production forests in West Africa in order to set industry leadership in responsible forest management.

2: Building capacity of communities on the forest fringe

The significance of communities in natural resources politics is pronounced where communities, represented by their chiefs literally own all forest estates. Any solution or conservation gains in the forest sector that do not consider community education and aspiration is a mirage.

NDF in collaboration with participating companies will engage communities around the concessions of these companies. This will involve Social Responsibility Agreements, developing complaint procedure for communities, and explaining general rights and responsibilities within the forest laws of Ghana. NDF will collaborate with other organizations to implement specific activities that will ensure sustainable production of cocoa around forest concessions.

NDF can be a strategic partner for donors with specific interests in :

- **responsible forestry**
- **agriculture**
- **commodity production**
- **wood consumption**
- **legality**
- **capacity building for primary producers and communities**

3: Forming partnerships across West Africa to promote responsible forest management

Like-minded organizations working on forest conservation and sustainable forest management are assets for NDF in the sub-region, we cannot succeed without them.

NDF will aim to mainstream legal and responsible forest management and trade through sector wide engagement that increases the uptake of best practices. Specifically, this will focus on disseminating WWF GFTN tools and knowledge to the numerous SMEs in the forest sector in Ghana who have weak capacity to readily adopt legal and responsible forest management requirements.

4: Influencing the developing Plantation and Wood Fuel sectors

Plantation forestry has increasingly become a significant part of the politics of Ghana where successive governments have committed huge sums of money to reforestation as a means of generating employments and ensuring food security.

Currently, NDF is involved in providing support to one of the biggest plantation establishment in Ghana in ensuring social engagement and maintenance of ecosystem integrity. NDF will use this experience to support other willing companies in establishing responsible plantations. This form of engagement could be done under the scope of the WWF New Generation Plantation project.

#5: Engaging on REDD+

REDD and REDD+ is a promising area and NDF involvement will become inevitable in order to ensure that this vital source of revenue for companies and communities is made available and tied to improved forest management and land use practices.

NDF will develop a communication strategy which takes into consideration threats as well as benefits of REDD+ to help disseminate information about REDD+ in targeted areas.

6: Promoting wildlife education

Wildlife populations are falling and are especially low in the forest reserves in Ghana. There is an imperative reason to conserve the remnant population as wildlife has the potential of attracting tourists. NDF will be involved in the development of educational packages for communities and forest concessions to broaden their understanding of wildlife, its value and the impacts of unregulated hunting or exploitation.

7: Advising on land use planning at all levels

Experience and research over the years have shown that not much impact is achieved in solving any environmental problem by limiting work to that particular environmental problem. For example we cannot solve forest degradation by only working with timber companies.

NDF will work with communities and cocoa farmers as well as other land uses that affect the forest. The essence is that most of the environmental problems occur at a landscape level and therefore one land use affects another land use.

NDF's current partners

NDF has a broad range of international donors and partners. These include:

- **European Commission via WWF UK** – supporting FLEGT processes in Ghana
- **FAO** - Supporting the implementation of the public procurement policy on timber and timber products in Ghana
- **ITTO** - Empowering civil society organizations and other non-state actors to contribute effectively to forest law compliance in Ghana
- **Nordic Development Facility** - Supporting the establishment of integrated charcoal kiln retorts for sustainable production of charcoal
- **African Plantation for Sustainable Development** - Provision of support services for APSD in the establishment of responsible greenfield plantation



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Centre for African Wetlands
University of Ghana Zoology Department
PO BOX 67 Legon
Accra
Ghana
+233 302 518 710
+233 302 518 709

Ghana Registration Number CG077262013

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