

The Role of Sustainable Financing Models for Smallholder Tree Growers in Ghana

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Abstract : The call for tree planting has long been set in motion by the government of Ghana. The Forestry Commission encourages plantation development through numerous interventions including formulating policies and enacting legislations. However, forest policies have failed and that has generated a major concern over the vast gap between the intentions of national policies and the realities established. This study addresses three objectives; 1) Assessing the farmers' response and contribution to the tree planting initiative, 2) Identifying socio-economic factors hindering the development of smallholder plantations as a livelihood strategy, and 3) Determining the level of support available for smallholder tree growers and the factors influencing it. The field work was done in 12 farming communities in Ghana. The article illuminates that farmers have responded to the call for tree planting and have planted both exotic and indigenous tree species. Farmers have converted 17.2% (369.48ha) of their total land size into plantations and have no problem with land tenure. Operations and marketing constraints include lack of funds for operations, delay in payment, low price of wood, manipulation of price by buyers, documentation by buyers, and no ready market for harvesting wood products. Environmental institutions encourage tree planting; the only exception is with the Lands Commission. Support availed to farmers includes capacity building in silvicultural practices, organisation of farmers, linkage to markets and finance. Efforts by the Government of Ghana to enhance forest resources in the country could rely on the input of local populations.

Keywords : livelihood strategy, marketing constraints, environmental institutions, silvicultural practices

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