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Info Brief

South-South Cooperation

GHANA AND ECUADOR

Experiences and Lessons Learned from South-South Knowledge Exchange between Ghana and Ecuador

BACKGROUND

As one of the leading countries on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) in Africa, Ghana has demonstrated considerable leadership to address the drivers of deforestation and deforestation, which constitute one of the most compelling climate change challenges in the country. The country's economic growth and achievements have come at a significant cost to its forests. Having lost over 60% of its primary forest cover from 1950 to the turn of the last century (2.7 million hectares) the future of Ghana's forests is an issue of major concern.

To operationalize the REDD+ Strategy (completed in 2016) and the implementation of other Warsaw framework elements, Ghana is embarking on a number of strategic programmes and initiatives, including those supported by the **Government of Italy through the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea** such as the development of a Green Climate Change Proposal for the Northern Savannah of Ghana and the development of a Ghana REDD+ Investment Plan (GRIP). The partnership with Italy is focused on supporting REDD+ implementation in critical countries (**Global Italian initiative on REDD+ National Implementation - GIORNI**).

Ecuador on the other hand, is a global leader in REDD+ implementation and has completed the implementation of the elements of Warsaw framework for Results Based Payments/Results Based Financing and recently became the first country to receive REDD+ investment finance from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Ecuador works on reducing its impact on climate change as agreed in the Paris Agreement and demonstrate tangible progresses towards commitments under the NY Declaration on Forest.



Ghana delegation visiting Ecuador. Photo: Government of Ecuador

Key Lessons Learned

The importance of strengthening capacities of subnational institutions through different capacity building mechanisms to clarify concepts and build awareness and understanding of REDD+ processes.

Community Forest Management - engagement of local communities, local governments and civil society, which promotes and facilitates the implementation of REDD+ activities

Fostering a common understanding of REDD+ among the sectorial ministries that are involved in the implementation of REDD+, thus, inter-institutional coordination is fundamental, which involves permanent dialogues

Gender and safeguards cross-cutting elements that are integrated in the national REDD+ strategy or action plan, as well as to sectorial plans determined to support REDD+ implementation.

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AN EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION

The Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS) has entered into this partnership (GIORNI) with UNDP to undertake a range of climate change and REDD+ forest-related joint and coordinated activities at the global, regional and national level and to build the capacity of the countries in terms of understanding REDD+ implementation, leveraging investment and greening domestic investments for REDD+. Two of the three countries targeted in this partnership-**Ecuador and Ghana** -engaged into an exchange to further gain knowledge on their respective REDD+ visions, their linkages to REDD+ financing and to explore how to bring in potential investors from the private sector around the discussion table to leverage investment.

UNDP SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

One of the objectives of UNDP's Climate and Forests team is to support countries with the design and implementation of national policies and measures to reduce deforestation and manage forests sustainably, hence contributing to the mitigation of climate change and advancing sustainable development. An effective tool for achieving this is through learning exchanges with other countries that may lead to adapting lessons on transformational approaches of the forest sector and improve on institutional arrangements for REDD+. In this context, UNDP has provided technical backstopping to undertaking a learning exchange with Ecuador - an ideal learning destination with an inspiring model on how to access results-based payments. While Ghana has transitioned from readiness to implementation phase, Ecuador is a technical and operational country example, that can share its experience on how to develop and implement a financial strategy to engage proactively in resource mobilization to implement REDD+.

The lessons learned, and experiences shared during the knowledge exchange, allowed the Ghanaian delegation to better appreciate the institutional context and political instruments that drive and determine national forest sector development and have learned how to better assess and advocate for the value of forests and forestry as part of national socioeconomic development. More specifically, Ghana learned from Ecuador how to make the forest sector as one of the transformational tools that supports sustainable national development.

FORGING A NEW PARTNERSHIP

The lessons learned will be a stepping stone to move forward Ghana's National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) implementation, sustainable agriculture and results-based payments phase to secure Ghana's sustainable forest management goals. The partnership between Ghana and Ecuador has been translated into a **Letter of Intent** signed at the end of the knowledge exchange and will be further expanded into a **bilateral MOU (to be signed at COP24 in Poland during a GIORNI event promoted by IMELS)** aimed at facilitating the building the capacities of Ecuador and Ghana on REDD+ implementation, jointly exploring public-private partnerships and promoting agreements with international

Knowledge Exchange Objectives and Outcomes

As an integral part of the GIORNI project between UNDP and the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, a **South-South Knowledge Exchange took place from Sept 24th-28th 2018** to share experiences and build the capacity of the countries (Ecuador and Ghana included) in terms of understanding REDD+ implementation, leveraging investment and greening domestic investments for REDD+. The knowledge exchange to Ecuador included the participation of high-level government officials including, CEO of Forestry Commission; Executive Director, Cocoa Health & Extension Division, Ghana Cocoa Board; Director of the Climate Change Directorate at Forestry Commission and REDD+ Coordinator; Director Tropenbos Ghana and UNDP officials. The visit created an excellent opportunity to share knowledge and enter a Joint Cooperation Memoire. The experience from Ecuador is further digested to be adapted to context, traditions and available options in Ghana to help create a knowledge base and strategic direction for accessing Results Based Payments. Both countries with the direct support of UNDP identified and agreed upon specific areas of cooperation (See Figure I).

Figure I: Areas of Cooperation between Ghana and Ecuador



corporations involved in sustainable commodities supply chain (cocoa, palm oil, coffee). A fundamental aspect of the engagement between Ghana and Ecuador is ensuring appropriate mechanisms of cooperation especially related to approaches to capacity building, collecting, documenting and sharing experience at the policy and advocacy levels, which will be done through testing different approaches to SSC (South-South Cooperation). The role of UNDP in this partnership is focused on facilitation and brokering the transfer of knowledge, ideas, expertise, products, services and resources.

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