Management of Ghana's Modified Taungya System (MTS): challenges and strategies for improvement

Thomas F. G. Insaidoo
Dr. Emmanuel Acheampong
Dr. Mirjam A.F. Ros-Tonen

IUFRO-FORNESSA Congress, Nairobi, Kenya
25-30 June 2012
Presentation outline

• Background
• Research objectives
• Study sites
• Methods
• Findings
• Conclusions
Background

• Deforestation $\rightarrow$ timber deficit

• 2001: National Forest Plantation Development Program: MTS plus other reforestation schemes

• Strategy to restore forest cover + timber deficits + create livelihoods
Research objectives

Provide insight into

• Essential features of the MTS
• Governance arrangements
• MTS performance & management challenges
• Options for improving the implementation of the MTS
Study sites
Methods

• Desk study
• Interviews key informants (forestry officers, farmer leaders)
• Focus group discussions
• Field observations
MTS - key features

- Reforestation scheme
- Co-management arrangement between FC and communities
- Farmers grow food crops between seedlings (1-3 yrs until canopy closure)
- Farmers receive 40% share of timber benefits in return for tree planting and maintenance
- ‘Modified’ because no timber benefits under the old taungya system (suspended in 1980s)
MTS – 2 modes

National MTS

- Coordinated by the FC

Community Forestry Management Project (CFMP)

- Coordinated by the Forest Plantation Development Centre (FPDC) of the MLNR
- Funds to pay farmers for peg cutting and tree planting and for income-generating activities
- Stronger focus on building social capital

Findings
MTS - governance arrangements

• Farmers form taungya group and elect taungya committee members (leaders)

• Duties, rights & benefits spelled out in BSA (MTS agreement)

• Responsibilities:
  - FC → seedling provision, extension, supervision
  - Farmers → labour for tree planting/maintenance & fire prevention
  - Stool → provide secure access to land
  - Community: help in prevention of fire and theft

• Benefit-sharing agreement: 40% FC, 40% farmers, 15% stool landowner / traditional authority, 5% community for timber revenues; 100% farmers for food crops
MTS performance
– case 1: MTS Plots in Tano-Offin and Tain II reserves (under national MTS) established 2002 – 2004

- Good quality stand (good stocking rate, straight boles, few weeds)

Reasons:
- High commitment of participating farmers
- Regular visits of field officers during plot establishment
MTS performance
– case 2: MTS plots in Tano-Offin and Tain II reserves established 2005 - 2009

• Poor stands (randomly planted, more open spaces, low stocking rate, choked with weeds)
• Poor maintenance

Reasons:
• Lack of trust in benefits because there was no signed agreement
• Irregular visits of field officers
• Lack of benefits from food crops after canopy closure
MTS performance
– case 3: MTS plots in Yaya reserve established 2002 – 2004 / 2005-2009 – under CFMP

- All plots: relatively good stands (good stocking rate, pruned trees with straight boles, low level of weeds)
- Tree farms well maintained
- Causes:
  - Strong organisation of farmer groups
  - Design of local bylaws
  - Regular visits of field officers of FC & MOFA
  - Funds of African Development Bank for extension services and income-generating projects
MTS management challenges

• Time lapse in income from canopy closure to timber harvesting
• Insecurity due to lack of signed agreement
• Lack of benefit-sharing arrangement among individual farmers (only on group basis)
• Timely provision of seedlings
• Distance from village to MTS plot
• Farmers not allowed to plant cassava (staple crop)

Prejudice farmers’ commitment and MTS performance
Options for improving the implementation of the MTS

- Find ways to generate income between canopy closure and timber harvesting (thinning, loans/advance payments, NTFPs, PES/REDD+)

- Seedling production at community level for income and timely seedling provision

- Speed up the documentation process
- Design benefit-sharing arrangement at individual level
Options for improving the implementation of the MTS – cont’d

- Design planting schemes that include cassava and NTFPs (e.g. rattan, black pepper and aworomo (Thaumatococcus danielli))

- Improve guidance and extension services

- Improve protection against fire and timber theft
Conclusions

- The MTS addresses important societal issues (reforestation of degraded forest areas, employment creation, generation of legal supplies of timber, provision of farming land for food cropping).

- Governance matters: at local level (social organisation, bylaws) and multi-scalar level (multi-sector partnerships).

- Donor support and regular guidance positively affect MTS performance;

- Collaboration between the FC and the Agricultural Extension Division of MOFA in the implementation of the scheme should be institutionalised.
THANK YOU