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## Improving the Livelihood of the Rural Population in the Ashanti Region in Ghana through the Implementation of an Improved Taungya System with Teak and Albizia

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### Abstract

The agricultural landscape in the Ashanti Region of Ghana is dominated by mainly small scale subsistence farming with annual crops like maize, manioc, yam, beans, etc. An eventual surplus is sold on local markets to gain income. The yield and income of the farmers are constantly threatened by degradation of land and soil due to annual fires and non-diversified agricultural systems. An alternative to the traditional unsustainable farming system is the establishment of agroforestry systems which enable permanent agriculture, diversify production as well as risks and offer chances for an improved market access. The Institute for Worldforestry of the Federal Research Centre for Forestry and Forest Products, Hamburg, is cooperating with a Ghanaian timber plantation company and the German Foundation for Forest Conservation in Africa. The purpose of this cooperation is to improve the livelihood of the local rural population within the surroundings of the plantation sites and simultaneously safeguard and expand the plantation sites in an economically and ecologically sustainable way. A tree “outgrower” programme based on the Taungya System has been developed and is being introduced to farmers in the surroundings of the plantation sites. Farmers interested in the programme become trained in workshops in order to attain necessary working skills. They are offered teak (*Tectona grandis*) and albizia (*Albizia falcataria*) seedlings for free which they plant on their land together with their preferred staple crops. In addition, seedlings of genetically improved fruit trees (orange, mango, oil palm, cashew) are provided and preferably planted on the outer boundaries of the farm land. The task of the farmers is to prepare and maintain the farming system. All harvest products (crops, fruits, timber) belong to them. Thus, farmers have the opportunity to develop a permanent income. The timber company has the right to be the first bidder for the timber when maturity is reached after assumed 10 to 15 years. Further investigations will evaluate the effects of the programme in regard to sustainability, improvements of the rural livelihood and income generating.

**Keywords:** Agroforestry, Ghana, taungya, teak