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“Filling gaps and removing traps  
for sustainable resource management”

## Maximizing Landscape Restoration to the Benefit of Smallholder Farmers in Forest Agro-Ecological Zones in Ghana

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### Abstract

Ghana is one of the countries in the world with high rates of deforestation. In fact, Ghana's deforestation rate, which stands at 2% per annum, is higher than the average decline for Africa and West Africa, which are 0.62% annual and 1.17% annual, respectively. Now there is a strong emphasis on landscape restoration. Taking a cue from the cocoa sector in Ghana where the bulk of Ghana's enviable world record in cocoa production is planted by smallholder farmers, it has been argued that plantation development and indeed landscape restoration can better be served by small-scale farmers as against large-scale developers. It is against these backgrounds that this study was conducted to analyse factors that affect the adoption and non-adoption of landscape restoration schemes by smallholder farmers. The study also identified best governance practices for enhancing landscape restoration. Data for the study was collected over a period of three months in two communities in the forest transitional zone of Ghana using mixed methods. The results showed that smallholder farmers genuinely care about tree planting, but are challenged by factors such as pest and diseases, wildfires, lack of capital and high transaction cost but low returns as factors affecting the adoption of plantation in Ghana. Moreover, respondents prioritised efficiency (efficient use of financial resources), equity (equal access to land by all persons) and effectiveness as the three most important governance issues to be considered in smallholder forest plantation development. Policy makers in Ghana should consider a mix of recommendations including giving farmers access to credits and markets; pest and disease control and good governance to trigger the needed participation in landscape restoration schemes by smallholder farmers in Ghana.

**Keywords:** Agro-ecological zone, landscape restoration, smallholders