



Tropentag, September 10-12, 2025, hybrid conference

“Reconcile land system changes
with planetary health”

Role of NGOs in incentivising the adoption of sustainable land management practices in northern Ghana

JULIETA LOAIZA LÓPEZ¹, EEFJE AARNOUDSE², SABINE SCHLÜTER³

¹*Cologne University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Spatial Development and Infrastructure Systems, Germany*

²*University of Bonn, Intern. Centre for Sust. Dev., Germany*

³*TH Köln - University of Applied Sciences, Institute for Natural Resources Technology and Management (ITT), Germany*

Abstract

Sustainable land management (SLM) practices encompass a holistic approach that integrates social, economic, ecological, and environmental considerations to achieve production objectives that are socially acceptable. SLM is increasingly recognised as a viable pathway to address land degradation in sub-Saharan Africa. The adoption of SLM practices and technologies is crucial improving agricultural productivity, ensuring food security, and enhancing the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

Ghana is one of the countries with elevated levels of Land Degradation, particularly in the Northern Region, where 50.16 % of land is classified as degraded. To address this issue, since the 1980s, the Government of Ghana has implemented various land management projects. Research on the determinants of farmers' adoption of SLM practices has increased over the past two decades. However, empirical studies on SLM projects are still needed to bridge knowledge gaps to scale up and intensify the adoption of these technologies (Yeboah, 2021).

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) assigns NGOs a key role in implementing projects to combat desertification and promote sustainable land management (UNCCD, 1994), aligning with SLM's emphasis on multi-level, multi-stakeholder partnerships (FAO). In Ghana, NGOs have increasingly complemented governmental efforts, delivering services and promoting development initiatives, which provides a particularly interesting illustration of the complexities and challenges of state-civil society relations. Particularly in Northern Ghana, NGOs have helped to fill development gaps through donor-funded projects.

This study aims to analyse the role of NGOs based in Tamale in incentivising the adoption of SLM practices in Northern Ghana. A qualitative approach is employed, involving Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Participant Observation (PO) to explore NGO strategies and outcomes, related to the support on gender-sensitive incentives, specially making sure women are prioritised, in the promotion and implementation of sustainable land management (SLM) practices.

Keywords: Gender sensitivity. , incentives, Northern Ghana, sustainable land management

Contact Address: Julieta Loaiza López, Cologne University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Spatial Development and Infrastructure Systems, Deutzer Ring 5, 50679 WG 2.1 Köln, 50679 Cologne, Germany, e-mail: julietaaloaizalopez@gmail.com