

Role of NGOs in incentivising the adoption of Sustainable land Management (SLM) practices in north Ghana

AUTHORS

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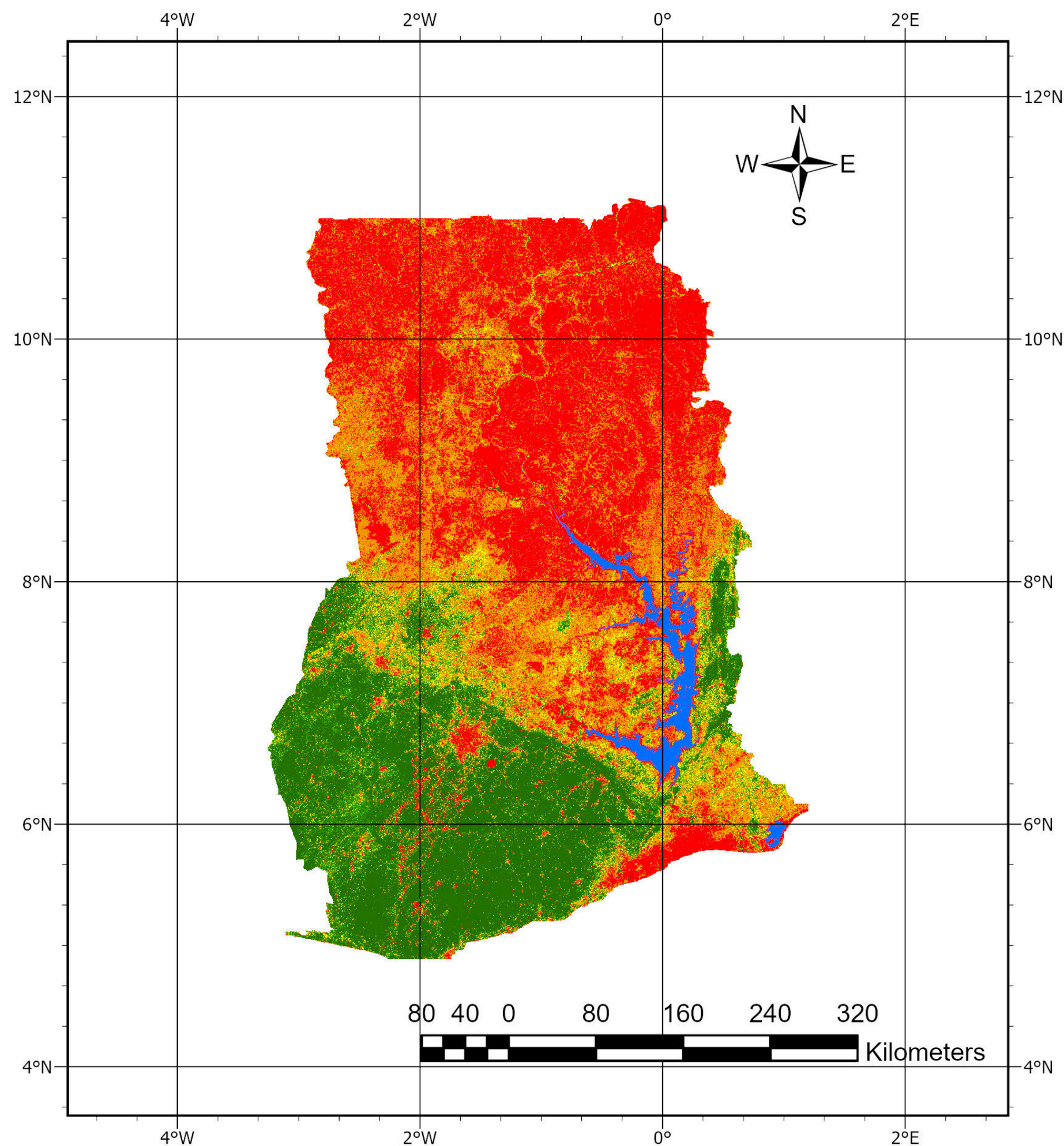
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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Land Management (SLM) is a holistic approach that integrates social, economic, ecological, and environmental dimensions to combat land degradation while enhancing agricultural productivity, food security, and livelihoods. In Ghana, where land degradation is particularly severe. Since the 1980s, government initiatives have addressed the issue, but research gaps and limited scaling of practices persist. The UNCCD highlights the critical role of NGOs in addressing desertification, and in Ghana, NGOs complement state efforts by promoting incentives that encourage SLM adoption specially for smallholder farmers, which have a central role. These incentives represent innovative mechanisms to stimulate the transition from unsustainable to SLM practices. These include **financial support**, **technical assistance**, and **market access**, compensating local producers for restoring natural capital seen as particularly effective.

LAND DEGRADATION IN GHANA



Land Degradation Classes

- Severely degraded land
- Moderate land degradation
- Minimal land degradation
- Lower risk of land degradation
- Minimal degradation potential

Main water bodies
Author's elaboration based on GIS analysis.
Coordinate Reference System (CRS): WGS 84 (EPSG:4326).
Date: August, 2025.

Source: Own creation based on Google Engine

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do NGOs incentivize the adoption of SLM practices?
- How do NGOs enhance women's participation in the adoption of SLM practices?
- What strategies can NGOs employ to strengthen incentives for the promotion and adoption of SLM practices?

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to analyse the role of 8 environmental NGOs based in Northern and Northeast Ghana in incentivising the adoption of SLM practices. A qualitative approach is employed, involving :

- Key Informant Interviews (KII)
- Participant Observation (PO).

RESULTS

INTERVIEWED NGOS

Ummy Relief Foundation	A nonprofit local organisation Since 2020 Based in Northern Ghana
HummingBird Foundation	A nonprofit local organisation Since 2024 Based in Northern Ghana
Centre for Ecological Agriculture and Livelihood (CEAL)	A nonprofit local organisation Since 2017 Based in Northeast Ghana
Eco-Restore	A profit local organisation Since 2019 Based in Northeast Ghana
The West Africa Centre for the Protection of Animal Welfare (WACPAW)	A nonprofit national organisation Since 2010 Based in Northern Ghana
Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems (RAINS)	A nonprofit national organisation Since 1993 Based in Northern Ghana
SNV Ghana	A nonprofit international organisation Since 1992 Based in Northern Ghana
Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)	A nonprofit international organisation Since 1953 (GROW2) based in Northern

Source: Own creation based on NGOs information



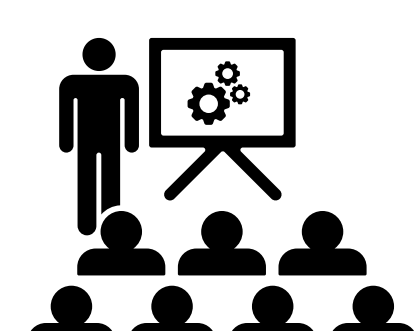
Community landscape risk assessment meeting by eco restore, Northeast Ghana.

Photo: Author, fieldwork 2025

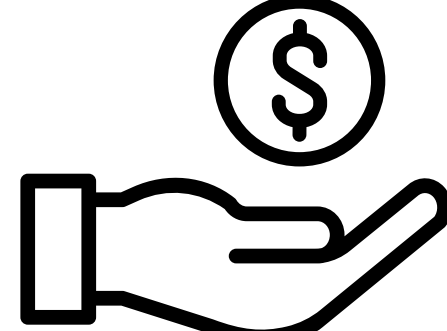
ROLES OF NGOS IN PROMOTING SLM



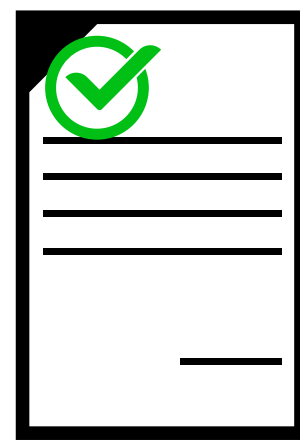
LAND ACCESS
ADVOCACY



TRAINING AND
CAPACITY
BUILDING



RESOURCE
MOBILIZATION



POLICY
ADVOCACY



MONITORING
SLM



COMMUNICATION

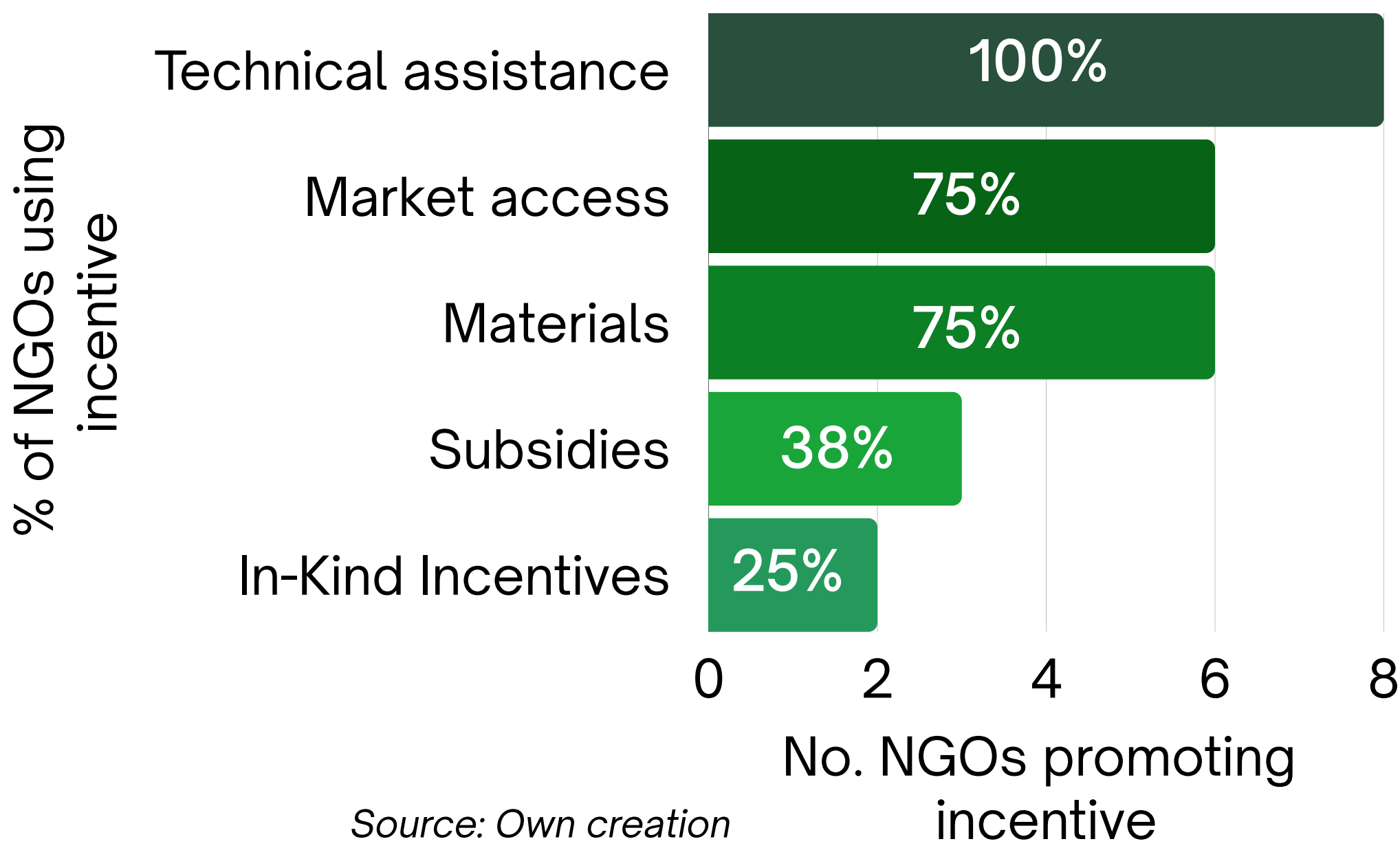
CONCLUSIONS

NGOs are powerful promoters of SLM practices, which have expertise in the local scale of the territories and have internal capacity to work close with communities assuming socioeconomic and cultural challenges.

FINDINGS

- Resource mobilization is a key aspect promoting SLM practices, which can limit NGOs's capacity to provide their incentives to communities.
- Every interviewed NGO include at least one criteria to achieve woman's participation in SLM practices.
- Community based approaches are implemented for the incentives by NGOs to extend SLM practices adoption.
- Enhance Stakeholders collaboration is needed to work better and have greater impacts.
- NGOs apply an bottom-up approach, they response to local needs instead to International and National policies and frameworks for SLM.

INCENTIVES PROVIDED BY NGOS FOR SLM ADOPTION

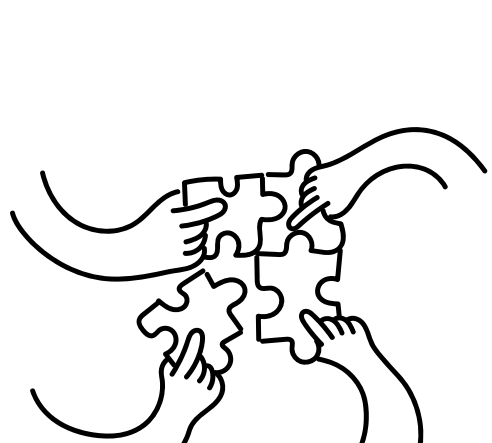


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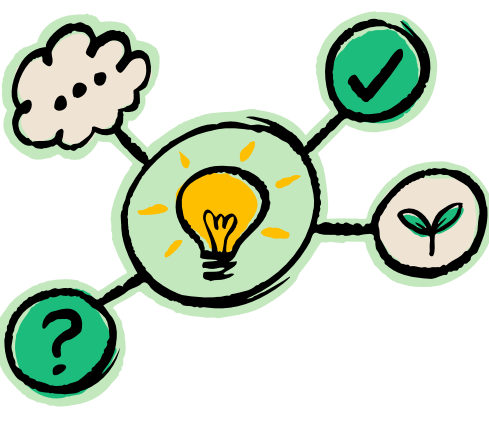
STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN SLM INCENTIVES



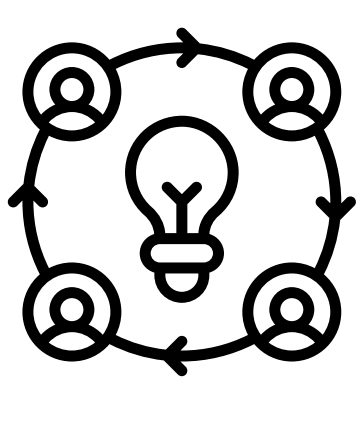
FUNDING
MOBILIZATION



STAKEHOLDER
COLLABORATION



NGO
INTERNAL
CAPACITY
BUILDING



COMMUNITY-
BASED
TRAINING
APPROACHES

GENDER-RESPONSIVE INCENTIVES FOR SLM ADOPTION



Chillies processing by women as a part of CEAL project, Northeast Ghana.

Photo: Author, fieldwork 2025

Women-Focused Projects

Gender-Friendly Tools and Technology

Gender-Inclusive Land Access Advocacy

Inclusive Training and Safe Spaces