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# Recommendations for Co-Management of HIA Landscapes:
## Outlining the Concept, Steps, and Process to Achieving Co-Management with a View to the Juabeso Bia HIA

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## Introduction

An HIA is a governance structure and target landscape which has been prioritized for the implementation of REDD+ and sustainable, climate-smart cocoa production activities.  It is an adaptation of the CREMA model that was developed to govern and manage forest resources in cocoa farming areas more effectively.  It was specifically designed to support forest protection, to transform cocoa production to a climate-smart system, and to enable sustainable sourcing of cocoa beans and other commodities from a landscape.

An HIA is a landscape of approximately 100,000 to 200,000 ha that includes communities, cocoa farmlands, forest reserves and national parks, and other natural resources like rivers.  The HIA model envisions a multi-tiered system of local governance which includes the traditional leadership, landowners, communities and cocoa farmers in a set of structures from the community CREMA level, to a set of Sub-HIA Executive Committees, to an over-arching Landscape Management Board (See Annex 1 for an explanation of the HIA structure and bodies.) The HIA spearheads localized decision-making and management planning about natural resources and agricultural systems with the implementation of sustainable activities, like climate smart cocoa farming).  This is supported by monitoring and enforcement on a broad scale and based upon traditional/local values and beliefs in concert with national laws and policies.

There has been considerable work over the past few years to develop and test HIA governance implementation; however much less attention has been given to how HIAs can effectively plan for and manage natural and agricultural resources in collaboration with the mandated national agencies, with particular reference to the Forestry Commission.

Therefore, the purpose of this document is to lay out a conceptual framework for, and argument in support of the *co-management* of resources in HIA landscapes and then to lay out a set of recommendations on how to implement co-management.

## Policy Context for Co-Management

HIA co-management is supported by Ghana's Collaborative Resource Management Policy (CRMP) (2004), which is captured under Ghana's Forest and Wildlife Policy (2012). Ghana's CRMP recognizes that the greatest threat to our natural resources is the conversion of natural habitats and ecosystems for agricultural activities. The two main mechanisms that enable and enact collaborative management under the policy are the CREMA model and the Protected Area Management Advisory Units/Boards.

As has been well documented and described already under the GCFRP implementation process, the CREMA philosophy and structure directly inform and underpin the HIA governance structure. At its core, HIA is both an expansion of the CREMA model and an approach that can incorporate CREMAs into its structure.

What is perhaps less well known is that the HIA concept of the Consortium has direct alignment with Protected Area Management Advisory Units (PAMAUs) or Protected Area Management Boards (PAMABs), which have been used to help manage some protected areas (national parks and wildlife reserves) in Ghana. PAMAUs and PAMABs are made up of representatives from all the various interest groups and bodies related to protected areas. They serve as platforms for exchanging ideas on natural resource management in protected areas, supporting its management, improving relationships, resolving conflicts, and supporting CREMA development, amongst others. Because protected areas can cover large areas, crossing districts and regions, the policy articulates that some protected areas may require multiple PAMAUs, with the PAMAB serving as the apex platform with membership from the various advisory units--PAMAUs.

The difference between the PAMAU and PAMAB structure, which sits within the scope of the Wildlife Division and has a unique focus on national parks and wildlife reserves, and that of the HIA is that the HIA landscape encompasses significant expanses of off-reserve lands (cocoa farms, food crops farms and other tree crop farms, etc) as well as forest reserves, and protected areas in some cases. For this reason, the HIA Management Board, Partners' Consortium and HIA Implementation Committee is an adapted version of the advisory units and boards.

Therefore, Ghana's Forestry Commission already has a policy context and precedent for co-management of natural resources within HIAs which can be applied to this context.


## What is Co-Management?

Whereas *community-based natural resource management* implies that the resources are managed solely by local communities, *co-management of natural resources* involves multiple stakeholders (central government, local authorities, local communities, etc.), such that neither the government nor the local communities are the *only* players involved in the management process. In this sense co-management encompasses community management but speaks to a collaborative process that involves all the main actors and stakeholders supporting the main actors.

In Ghana, co-management of an HIA is a governance agreement and plan involving the individuals and institutions of the HIA (both public and traditional) to manage their common resources in consideration of mutual concerns, priorities, goals, and capacities.  As such, co-management refers to both the landscape planning / land-use planning process, as well as the implementation of any such plans by the relevant stakeholders.  The success of co-management will depend on the legitimacy of the HIA system, on the respect shown by the people for their institutions, and on the openness of government agencies to collaborate. It also depends on the capacity of such institutions to respond to problems, and to achieve social and technical consensus through agreements and compromise.

## Why is Co-Management Necessary?

Co-management of the natural resources within HIAs is essential to the successful conservation and/or sustainable use of the forest, agricultural and riverine resources in HIAs. Though the government has held the management rights to natural resources for many decades, the original ownership of natural resources and the day-to-day use of natural resources primarily sits with the traditional leaders, communities and farmers who inhabit and work within the cocoa-forest landscapes of southern Ghana.  In addition, strong market pressures have also created many avenues and incentives for unsustainable use by a broad range of actors, not just people at the local level.  Therefore, any effort to change the *business-as-usual* scenario and to successfully protect and sustainably manage the resources necessarily requires a collaborative effort. According to the Nobel Prize winning sociologist, Elinor Ostrom, "There is no reason to believe that bureaucrats and politicians, no matter how well meaning, are better at solving problems than the people on the spot, who have the strongest incentive to get the solution right".

In addition, protected areas and forest reserves are typically surrounded by cocoa farms and other farming systems.  Illegal encroachment and illegal logging, as well as other pressures from expanding towns and road networks are a major threat to the forest and wildlife resources. For the past two decades, neither the Forestry Commission nor the Cocoa Board have been able to effectively tackle these problems.  If we recognize the interlinked *social*, *agro-ecological*, and *economic* pressures that now affect and threaten these natural systems, we must also recognize that an integrated and collaborative approach to management gives the best chance of effectively addressing all of these challenges at the appropriate scale and using the most effective means.

## Establishing Co-Management Agreements

To put HIA co-management into effect it will first require an agreement between the institutions, government agencies and other partners/stakeholders living or working in the area of the HIA.  This agreement must speak to the importance of the HIA and its resources, the vision and collective priorities that will guide key activities, recognition of all of the institutional actors and stakeholders, and articulation of their various roles, responsibilities and rights (benefit sharing). The agreement lays out a set of agreed rules and processes for decision-making

and enforcement, the expected results or impacts of co-management, and then gives guidance on how to monitor, evaluate and revise the co-management systems.

More specifically, an *HIA Co-Management Agreement* needs to include the following elements:

- the geographical limits of the HIA area and the set of natural resources at stake;
- the broad range of functions and sustainable uses it can offer in alignment with the HIA vision;
- a general description of the coordinated series of objectives, priorities and activities for the management of natural resources;
- the recognised institutional actors, including those of government and the HIA bodies;
- the broad *functions* and *responsibilities* assigned to each institutional actor;
- the broad *entitlements* and *benefits* granted to each institutional actor;
- the gaps in *roles*, *responsibilities*, *rights* and *benefit* which will need future clarification;
- the procedures for negotiating on-going decisions and managing eventual conflicts;
- the procedures for implementing and enforcing decisions;
- the expected high-level results / impacts at given times;
- a set of rules for monitoring, evaluating and eventually revising the co-management plans and agreements (follow-up protocol).

## Co-Management Planning

Once an agreement on co-management is put in place, then the institutional actors and stakeholders begin a planning process. Co-management planning begins by outlining the main HIA governance structures and the consortium partners who lead or participate in resource management. This should include touching base with the key partners and HIA leaders to confirm that the main governance structures and bodies are in place and capable of performing their roles and duties, and likely include an identification of gaps and needs.

The next step is to gather existing available information about the landscape, its main resources, the current management roles and regimes (including tenure), and the status and condition of the resources and the direct threats. Priority should be given to desk studies which tap into existing knowledge and the extensive resources which are already available. This can include available data, studies, maps, and reports on the state and trends of natural resources and any ecological, social, agronomic, or economic issues of relevance. The information gathering phase should not solely hinge upon new assessments as these can take up considerable time and resources and may not necessarily produce significantly different findings. Once the essential information is in place, then it is reviewed and consensus reached on the status of the natural resource, the management regimes, and socio-economic trends.

Actual planning begins through the organization of meetings of the institutional actors to agree upon the planning process and to outline the rules of this process, in particular for the negotiation phase. The various actors then begin to develop a more detailed vision of the desired future state of the HIA's natural

resources (management units), and then agreeing on the most appropriate strategy or pathway to achieve the common vision.  With such a vision in place, detailed and specific negotiation and planning begins to design and define the co-management arrangements for each natural resource management zone (e.g. forest reserve), with attention to roles, responsibilities, activities for collaboration, appropriate protocols and methods, reporting, and guidance for the continual planning and adaptive management process, including negotiations of disputes or conflicts.

The next step is to publicly share the draft co-management plan and seek input and validation from stakeholders and other key persons.  The co-management plan should go through a final revision and then stakeholders can collectively endorse the plan.

The final step is the begin to implement the co-management plan with available funding and resources, and adapt it over time in light of experiences, outcomes, and resources.

More specifically, the main steps are to:

1. Outline the HIA governance structures, the GoG agencies, and other stakeholders who will participate in or have a mandate for resource management;

2.  Gather existing/available information about the landscape, including information on the main resources, current management responsibilities and regimes (i.e. tenure), and the status/condition of the resources;

3. Hold a meeting with the various institutions, partners and actors to chart out the rules and steps of the planning and negotiation process;

4. Prepare draft vision/goals for the landscape, if not already written out, and draft a plan for how stakeholders can collaborate on management of the resources.  The draft plan should include:

    a. the various resources and management zones of the landscape;

    b. respective roles to play in light of different management regimes, rights, and tenure jurisdictions;

    c. how the different entities can collaborate in their efforts—where is there easy overlap, common interest, and geographical alignment. This can include collaboration on investments/implementation, collaboration on monitoring, collaborating on patrolling and enforcement, collaboration on reporting. Collaboration can also reflect different levels, for example remote sensing monitoring coupled with ground-level monitoring.

    d. recommendations to guide how partners should plan together, implement adaptive management together, communicate, resolve conflicts, and report as part of co-management.

5. Share the draft plan for input from all the key parties and integrate input and feedback;

6. Finalize and collectively endorse the plan.

7.  With available funding and resources, begin to implement the plan and over time adapt the plan in light of experiences, outcomes, and available resources.

## Co-Management Implementation

Implementation refers to the execution of the co-management activities, rules and procedures of the various stakeholders.  As the plan is turned into action, it will be necessary to clarify and reinforce, especially at the beginning, the rights, roles and responsibilities of the various organizations and actors in the HIA.  Monitoring and data collection are important elements of implementation so that stakeholders can review the process of implementation and make adaptations and innovations as necessary and understand what is happening and changing (for better or for worse) on the ground.  Through the monitoring and learning of lessons appropriate modifications are expected, resulting in adaptive co-management.

More specifically, implementation refers to:
*   apply and implement the HIA co-management plans, agreements and organisations/bodies that may be established for implementation;
*   clarify the entitlements and responsibilities of the HIA institutional actors, as necessary;
*   collect data and information on results and process, as specified in the follow-up protocols;
*   identify the main factors impacting upon natural resources and stakeholders; experimenting judiciously with innovations;
*   organize review meetings at regular intervals to evaluate results and lessons learned; modify the co-management plans, agreements and organisations, as necessary.

## Specific Issues for Co-Management in the Juabeso Bia HIA

As the Juabeso-Bia HIA continues to develop and grow, the opportunity to test a co-management planning process and then to implementation co-management within the HIA becomes increasingly likely.  Within the context of the Juabeso Bia landscape, there are a set of issues that either must be clearly understand by all stakeholders, require attention, and/or that present excellent co-management opportunities.   The following bulleted points reflect these priority concepts, action items and opportunities which should be noted and integrated into co-management efforts in the Juabeso Bia landscape.

*   Co-management is the underlying premise of the landscape management plan. It is not a separate issue.  The HIA Landscape Management Plan, which is developed from the Sub-HIA level up to the HIA, must be a co-management plan in conception, design and implementation.
*   A fundamental tenet of a co-management plan, which has relevance to the Juabeso Bia HIA, is to ensure that any HIA role on-reserve does not undermine or usurp the Forestry Commission's security and enforcement roles.

- Co-management should include the institution of a local-level (CREMA/Sub-HIA) and low-cost monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the HIA that covers both the on-reserve and off reserve zones;
- A priority co-management activity is to address the prevalence of farms that are illegally situated inside the forest reserves and national park. A core element of co-management should be to identify all farms on-reserve and collectively layout a plan to negotiate the removal process for all such farms;
- A priority co-management activity is to identify and understand traditional norms and systems that create impediments to cocoa rehabilitation or maintenance/conservation of shade trees on farms, then negotiate adaptation of traditional norms and practices which enable cocoa farm rehabilitation and shade tree management, and finally secure pilot permission to test the alternate norms.
- A priority co-management activity is to negotiate permission to test an on-farm tree tenure pilot in the HIA.

## Annex 1: HIA Structure and Bodies:

To get to scale, an HIA uses a nested structure that facilitates participation and improved decision-making about land-use and the management of natural resources at more local scales to link with higher level governance bodies so that activities and efforts radiate out across the landscape to enable broader geographic coverage and impacts.  An HIA starts from the community-level, and then moves up and outward to the sub-landscape level, before encompassing the full landscape.  Working within and across nested units is important as rural governance cannot be effective if a single body tries to work across to large of an area.
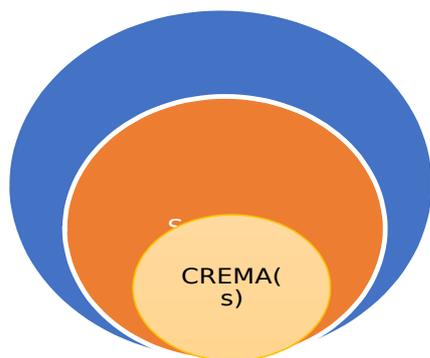


*Figure 1: Nested landscape governance bodies*

Structurally, governance nesting can start with CREMAs (the smallest scale).  Two or three CREMAs are then clustered to form a Sub-HIA.  An HIA may have anywhere from 2-6 Sub-HIAs encompassing the landscape.  Sub-HIAs are united by an over-arching HIA Management Board.  It is also possible to implement an HIA that only has the Sub-HIAs (and no CREMAs) which build up to the HIA level, or an HIA which has a combination of the two—some Sub-HIAs that contain CREMAS and some that do not.

Geographically, the boundaries of each governance level will be most effective when they align with customary jurisdictions and/or district boundaries. This ensures that the CREMA or Sub-HIA is directly aligned with the traditional authorities who own the land and hold the traditional resource-use rights.  For example, following Paramountcy, Divisional Chieftaincy, and Omanhene boundaries as they fall within the administrative districts of the HIA. These nested governance bodies, with their expanding scale and reach, then put in place local rules (which can be gazette as by-laws by the district), implement activities, and draft a management plan focused on key "sustainability" goals across the HIA, and align all this to the activities and resources of the Consortium partners.

Figures 2-4 demonstrate how the different bodies of the HIA and the partnering Consortium fit together.  Figure 2 shows a theoretical cocoa forest landscape that has been developed into an HIA that encompasses seven CREMAs which are clustered into 3 Sub-HIAs, and a fourth stand-alone Sub-HIA that has no CREMAs.

Figure 3 zooms in to show a single Sub-HIA with two CREMAs.  The two CREMA are governed by a CEC, which is made up of representatives of each CRMC. Moving to the Sub-HIA scale, representatives of each CEC are selected to serve on the Sub-HIA Executive Committee SHEC. The purpose of the SHEC is to connect the Sub-HIA to the financial resources and activities of the Consortium. In general, in the process of developing an HIA, CREMAs can either be identified and brought on-board if they already existing in the landscape, developed as part of the landscape governance development process to bring together groups of communities (typically ranging from 5-20), or the CREMA level can be skipped

8

if none exist and the Sub-HIA will be relatively small, is easy to unify, and can stand alone.

If there are multiple companies investing and buying cocoa (or other commodities) in the landscape then each company could choose to "adopt" a single Sub-HIA as the primary focus of its sustainability initiative / climate-smart cocoa package, in concert with the activities of the FC and Cocobod.
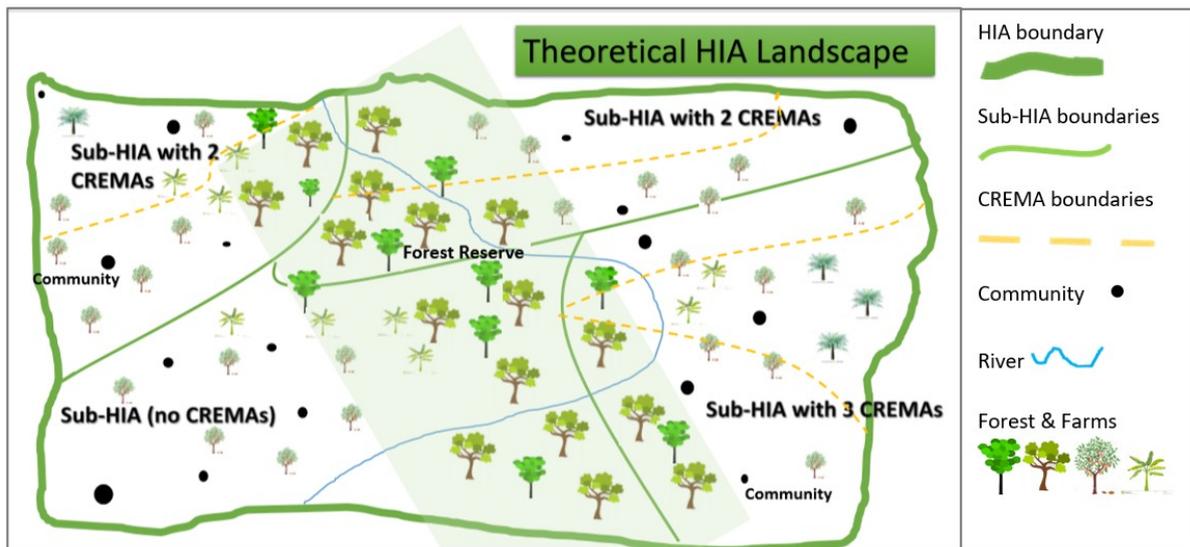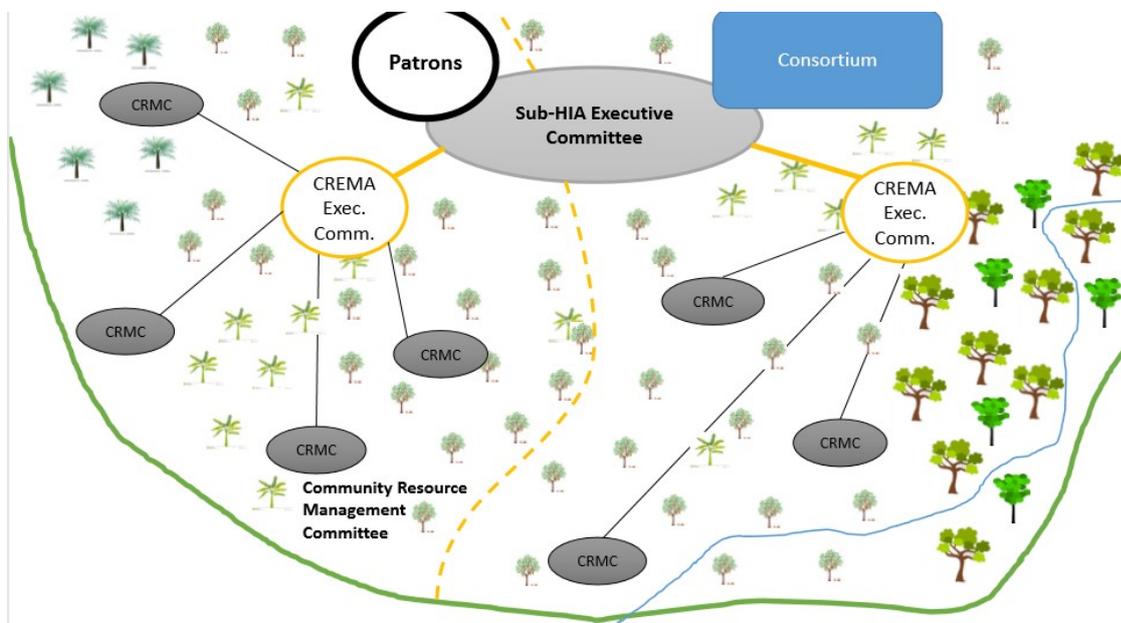


*Figure 2: Representation of an HIA*



*Figure 3: Representation of CREMAs and Sub-HIA in an HIA*

Figure 4 shows how the entire structure fits together. CREMA and/or non-CREMA areas are united into Sub-HIAs, and then representatives of Sub-HIA SHECs are elected to sit on the HIA Management Board, with appropriate guidance and oversight by Traditional Authorities at each level. The figure shows the types of stakeholders that make-up the Consortium, and it shows an Implementation Committee that is meant to connect the HMB and the Consortium and oversee the day to day affairs and operations in the HIA, as appropriate. The figure also reflects some of the HIA's foundational documents, including the Framework Agreement and constitutions.
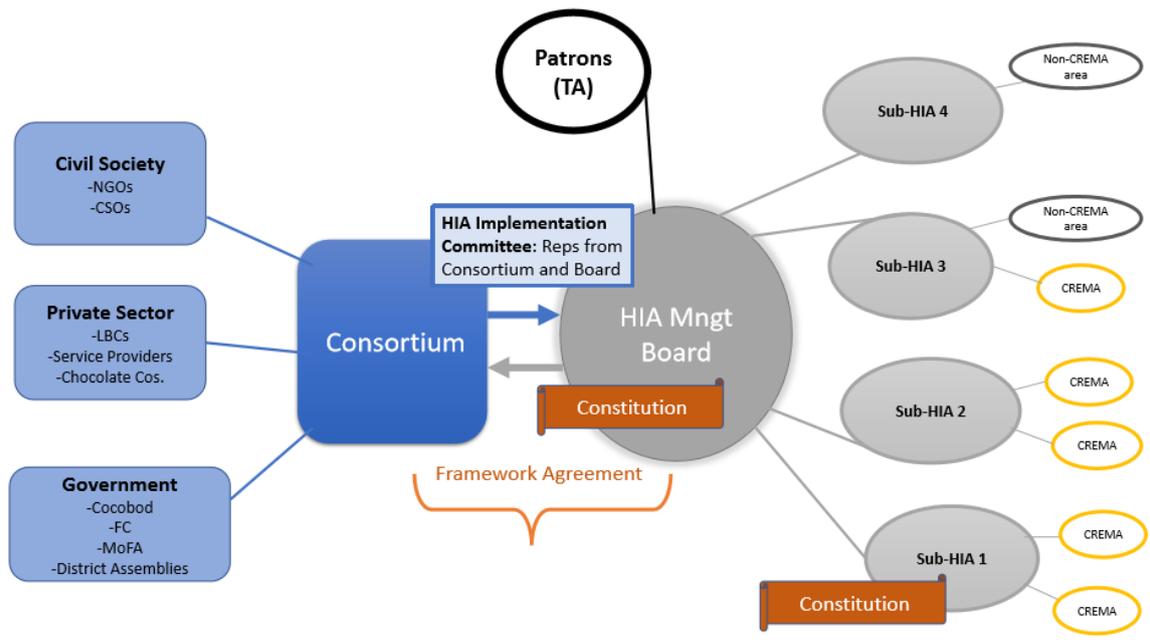


*Figure 4: Detailed diagram of HIA governance bodies and Consortium with key documents*