

Enabling community-based monitoring with geospatial technology

Project details

The challenge

The project

Enabling continuous monitoring

Connecting with other initiatives

Project details

Title: Tech4Communities: Hybrid Community-Based Monitoring System (HCMS)

Project lead: Rainforest Alliance

Project partners: Sefwi Landscape Management Board, Olam Ghana, Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly

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The challenge

For landscape approaches, unlocking meaningful community engagement and participation can yield a number of benefits. One of the key challenges for many emerging landscape approaches is identifying suitable data and metrics to monitor progress, and hopefully improvement, over time. Primary data collection can prove costly, and conventional methods of data collection tend to provide a snapshot of performance over time. Empowering communities to own the monitoring process can lead to better and regular data collection. This coupled with existing data, can yield novel insights into the performance of a landscape.

The project

To explore the potential of such community engagement in landscape monitoring processes, the Rainforest Alliance has teamed up with Olam Ghana, the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly, and the Sefwi Landscape Management Board, to develop a hybrid community-based monitoring system (HCMS). The HCMS combines remote and on-the-ground data gather tools for data management and reporting at a landscape level for the Sui River Forest Reserve in North West Ghana, where high levels of deforestation and land degradation threaten the livelihoods of many cocoa smallholders.

Enabling continuous monitoring

The HCMS will leverage spatial data, satellite technology and community systems to undertake continuous, near real-time monitoring across the landscape, linking participatory approaches like community sketched maps to an online dashboard that will capture and visualise data. The monitoring system will

allow for cost effective tree mapping, facilitating land tenure registration and ultimately greater ownership of local communities in the landscape. It is hoped that the resulting business model and HCMS will both create the enabling conditions for the uptake of more sustainable practices within the landscape, while also improving the efficiency and value add of existing performance measurement tools in the forest reserve.

Connecting with other initiatives

The proposed system will build on current deforestation alert systems, as well as the LandScale monitoring framework to improve linkages between communities and Ghana's Measurement Reporting and Verification system. The project represents an exciting innovation in deforestation monitoring, and will share lessons learnt with other initiatives operating in this space.

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