

SNV

Connecting People's Capacities

GHANA

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Mission Statement

SNV is dedicated to a society where all people enjoy the freedom to pursue their own sustainable development.

Our advisors contribute to this by strengthening the capacity of local organizations.

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Foreword

In 2005, SNV-Ghana continued to strengthen its program along the directions set out in 2004. It has been a year of growth, both in terms of our internal capacity to meet the demands for our advisory services, and in terms of our partner base, which includes clients and strategic partners. In the course of the year, the number of advisors increased from 25 to 50, providing services to 123 clients.

To facilitate the development of pro-poor tourism, we signed agreements with the Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City, and with the World Bank. To strengthen the public reform agenda at the district level, and to facilitate the development of systems to support districts in medium-term development planning, we began collaborating with the Ministry of Public Reform, and with the National Development Planning Commission respectively. To facilitate the development of the Ghana Environmental Sector Study, we signed an agreement with the Royal Netherlands Embassy, while other areas for future collaboration include water and sanitation, the school feeding program, and HIV/AIDS. These are some examples of partnerships we entered in 2005.

With our current client base, strategic partners and in-house capacity, in 2006 we will focus on consolidation. Moreover, to ensure the relevance of our work in addressing poverty, quality control will have a high priority.

I am indebted to the entire team of SNV-Ghana, advisors and support staff, for working tirelessly to meet our targets for the year under review. I am also grateful to our clients and strategic partners for their collaboration, based on mutual respect and trust, which is the foundation for success of capacity development work. Finally, I would like to thank the Board of Directors of SNV and the Regional Director, for providing us with the resources and the opportunity to innovate and expand the program.

After two exciting and professionally rewarding years with SNV-Ghana, I moved to a regional position with SNV in January 2006. As Regional Director East and Southern Africa, I will be based in Nairobi, Kenya. I am pleased to handover my responsibilities to Peter de Haan, a highly qualified manager and leader, with a strong development background and enthusiasm to work in Ghana.

I wish my colleagues and Peter all the best in meeting the challenges we set for 2006.



Warko Behonegne
Country Director
SNV-Ghana

SNV-Ghana in 2005

1.1. SNV-Ghana: mission and services

SNV is a Netherlands-based, international development organization that provides capacity development services to local partners in over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe to support their fight against poverty. Its clients include private, governmental, and civil society organizations, and coalitions or networks of organizations.

In Ghana, SNV has been active since 1992, with offices in Accra, Ho, Takoradi and Tamale. In these offices we operate with multidisciplinary teams consisting of national and international advisors. Our added value is that our experts combine their thematic expertise with skills in organizational development, partnership building and institutional strengthening.

Our services are concentrated in five thematic areas that we believe are crucial to sustainable development: Local Governance, Private Sector Development, Natural Resource Management, Tourism and as crosscutting theme: Gender. In order to consolidate and focus our efforts, our interventions are embedded in the Ghana Growth & Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), while we cooperate with partners on the achievement of (some of) the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



SNV's vision on capacity development

Capacity development is about contributing to the emergence of strong organizations that serve the interests of the poor and have the power to change structures that sustain poverty. In other words, capacity development is not only enhancing the ability to perform, but also about creating an enabling environment for change.

1.2. Main achievements and new developments in 2005

The main objective of SNV-Ghana in 2005 was to expand its program through the acquisition of new clients and the recruitment of new advisors. We were successful in both. The number of advisors increased from 25 to 50, while our client base grew from 55 to 123. Our regional coverage expanded with a now fully operational Northern Portfolio in Tamale, from where we also undertake cross-border activities in collaboration with our teams in Burkina Faso, and possibly Benin.

Some of our other achievements include a new partnership with the World Bank, our intensive involvement in the Ghana Development Market Place and our relationship with the Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City on the development of a national tourism policy. On behalf of the Royal Netherlands Embassy, we have started to facilitate an assessment of the environmental sector.

New programs in which SNV-Ghana is participating are the multi-donor supported Ghana Research and Advocacy Program, and the cooperation with UNDP on the localisation of the MDGs.

Finally, SNV-Ghana is preparing to take part in the School Feeding Program and the NT 10 Water Program, which will both receive substantial funding from the Netherlands Government.



1.3. Human and financial resources

By the end of 2005, as a result of an intensive recruitment strategy, SNV-Ghana had 50 advisors. They include 34 national and 16 international advisors. The recruitment led to a significant increase in direct advisory days (the total number of days that are being spent on direct support to clients), from 2,524 in 2004 to 5,097 in 2005. On average, staff members spent 62% of their time on advisory days.

Our budget for 2005 was € 2,267,000, whereas our actual expense was € 2,756,235. We exceeded our budget for the year mainly due to the expansion of our portfolios. During 2006, we will focus on consolidation, with a budget of € 3.156.600.

1.4. Learning and quality control

In SNV-Ghana, the culture of learning and questioning is being encouraged throughout the portfolios to improve the quality of our work. One of the major learning events was the advisory practice reflection retreat in June 2005. In addition, we organized an induction for new employees and several practice area meetings were held to boost our knowledge and strategic visioning. Our monthly informal learning sessions ("under the tree") are meant to share ideas on current SNV practice or developments in Ghana. The resource centre was also updated with new learning materials, while portfolio-based resources centres were established and stocked.

Through participation in regional and international network meetings, we gained new insights in development policy and practice. Some examples are: the regional practice area meetings, the SNV gender conference in Niger, the SNV learning platform West-Africa, the Association of Women's Rights in Development 10th Annual Forum in Bangkok. We also produced and shared knowledge by developing tools and best practices, and by disseminating case-studies and research findings.

Measuring results was high on the agenda in 2005. Does our work really contribute to poverty reduction? In order to assess our effectiveness and impact, we used the corporate client satisfaction measurement instrument to measure the output of our advisory services. 86% of our clients were satisfied with the quality of our work. The resource centre also provided tools and support to monitor and evaluate the progress individual advisors were making with their clients and partners and to capture internal knowledge and experiences. These include trimester reports, documentation formats and case-studies.

SNV-UNDP partnership

In recognition of the global SNV-UNDP partnership that was launched in October 2004, SNV- Ghana signed two Activity Agreements with UNDP in 2005.

Strengthening local actors in MDGs and GPRS processes

SNV and UNDP in Ghana initiated a joint program to create awareness of the MDGs among national and local actors and to improve development planning through the localization of the MDGs. At the national level, several meetings and brainstorming sessions have been held with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) to identify ways to incorporate the MDGs and GPRS indicators in existing planning processes. As a result, the guidelines for the preparation of District Medium Term Development Plans (MTDP) have been enriched with tools to analyze development indicators, translate them to concrete actions and set targets. At the local level, SNV and UNDP organized sensitization meetings with all stakeholders. SNV advisors started supporting the district assemblies and their partners in the preparation of their Medium Term Development Plans. The expected outputs of this process are pro-poor Development Plans with clear development targets and appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Supporting gender mainstreaming in the UNDP organization and programs

In 2005, SNV collaborated with UNDP to equip UNDP staff with the requisite knowledge, skills and processes for gender mainstreaming in office procedures and policies, as well as in all programming activities. The project took off with a training needs assessment, a gender audit and a gender sensitization workshop. Programs staff also received basic training in Gender analysis and planning. As a result, staff has become generally more gender-sensitive and appreciative of gender issues in their everyday lives and work. Another result, in terms of organizational change, has been the review of HR policies and procedures, the development of a Gender Communications Strategy and the drafting of a Gender Policy and Strategy for UNDP Ghana.

SNV is aware of the fact that if donor and international organizations lack internal capacity to address gender issues, efforts to improve gender equality will be less effective and sustainable. In this line, the experience has been rewarding in its potential to ensure more gender sensitivity in development cooperation through UNDP.

SNV in Northern Ghana

Development challenges

Northern Ghana, comprising the Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions, is significantly poorer than the rest of the country. Consequently, there is a high presence of NGOs, both local and international, acting either alone or jointly with government institutions in service provision and infrastructural development. Donor investment is also quite significant in northern Ghana. However, the issue of adequate capacity of most of these development actors to effectively design and implement development programs to address the needs of the people in a sustainable manner remains a challenge. Our decision to establish the Northern Portfolio Office in Tamale at the beginning of 2005 is informed by this need to support organizations get stronger and work better to meaningfully address poverty in northern Ghana.

SNV's intervention strategy

The Northern Portfolio developed a number of themes for 2005. Under Local Governance, the team focused on supporting district assemblies in developing their Medium Term Development Plans for 2006. This was specifically chosen as an entry point and to establish contacts with district assemblies and development partners in the three regions. The localisation of the MDGs is another theme, linking up with the corporate and national SNV/UNDP partnership. The Northern Portfolio made the choice to intervene in the educational sector. We formed a partnership with the Northern Education Network (NNED) and the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) to carry out a baseline inventory on the situation of girls' participation in primary education.

Within Private Sector Development, the market chain approach was adopted, involving a Sub-Sector Analysis of specific market chains in order to develop up-grading strategies. Provisional market chains chosen were the shea nut and butter chain and the honey chain, while Micro Finance was selected as a supportive theme. Within Natural Resource Management, explorations have started on dryland management and Pro-Poor Tourism in the eastern part of the Northern Region (around Mole National Park) and on district-based land use negotiations and planning.

Major activities and achievements in 2005

1. Today, the Northern Portfolio has 9 advisors. In order to get the advisory practice started, a number of clients were selected, concurrent with the strategic positioning and choices. By December 2005 we had signed activity agreements with 18 clients.
2. The portfolio team was firmly put on the local map through a successful launching event in November, with the Regional Minister as the guest of honour, and with over 100 people in attendance, both from other portfolio teams and from leading NGOs and development partners in the region.
3. The portfolio team is starting to collaborate with some strategic partners: Canadian International Development Agency, UNICEF, IBIS, Regional Coordinating Councils and the Tamale Institute for Cross Cultural Studies (TICCS).
4. Cross-border collaboration was established with the SNV team in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), by providing services to a joint client (the Ecowas project for the Oncho Free Zone) and the development of the shea nut/butter chain. Further exploration in the region has started with the exchange between SNV-Ghana and SNV-Benin.





Thematic Areas

Local Governance

The Local Governance practice area is linking up with both the decentralisation and democratisation processes in Ghana. Local governance aims for a properly functioning local government (district assemblies) at the heart of the development process, but at the same time goes beyond that in fostering partnerships and dialogue between district assemblies, civil society and the private sector at the district level. It is based on the premise that, in order for local government to be effective, it needs to be responsive and sensitive to the requirements of its citizens in the provision of services, and be held accountable for their performance to citizens and civil society.

During the year under review, a team of 18 local governance advisors, based in four portfolio teams, provided services that were aimed at enhancing the organizational performance of district assemblies, improving collaboration with civil society and the private sector, and enhancing accountability. Two portfolios signed MoU's with the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) and new interventions have started in the field of education and water and sanitation (see next page).

In 2005, the number of clients in local governance increased from 40 to 55 and includes RCC's, district assemblies and decentralized departments, NGOs, civil society organizations and a number of national institutions.

Examples of our work at the district level included:

- Providing capacity development services in the fields of participatory district development planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The advisors in our Western Portfolio supported districts in mainstreaming the MDGs in their Medium Term Development Plans;
- Providing advice on project management, financial management and gender mainstreaming;
- Supporting district assemblies in designing strategies for internal revenue mobilization;
- Facilitating local stakeholder platforms and

collaborative research in the fields of service delivery, conflict management and accountability;

- Support the localization of MDGs in collaboration with UNDP (see page 5).

To link practice and policy and to influence processes at the national level, SNV-Ghana started to support the Decentralization Secretariat in the implementation of the National Decentralization Action Plan (NDAP) and the National Development Planning Commission in the preparation of Guidelines for the preparation of the Medium Term Development Plans. Two new important partners are the Ministry of Public Sector Reform and the Office of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF). We also signed a MoU with the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), aimed at strengthening advocacy capacities and monitoring and evaluation tools of the anti-corruption process.



In 2006, the Local Governance advisors will intensify their work with district assemblies towards the preparation of pro-poor and equitable Medium Term Development Plans. Subsequently, SNV-Ghana will provide advice on resource mobilization strategies, accountability, financial management and on strategies to improve the delivery of quality basic services. With regard to service delivery, our support will focus on strengthening partnerships and

accountability relations between local government, sector departments, private and public providers and users. Our interventions in the water and sanitation and education sectors involve all portfolios. In 2006, thematic inter-portfolio teams will be set up to improve coherence and impact.

We expect to strengthen our alliances with civil society organizations to move decentralization forward. This means that our participation in networks (for example the Growth and Poverty Forum) will increase and that we will analyse and share best practises. At the regional and international level, the Impact Alliance and the Africities 2006 summit will provide fora for sharing experiences and access to information on development.

Support for the provision and management of basic services

"Pro-poor service delivery.....the challenge is formidable, because making services work for poor people involves changing not only service delivery arrangements, but also public sector institutions." (WDR, 2004)

As part of our focus on strengthening local governance, during the year under review we looked at pro-poor service delivery outcomes. In 12 districts, this has manifested itself through the provision of advisory services in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of local Medium Term Development Plans. They are seen as a key mechanism for the improvement of equitable access, quantity and quality of basic services like education, health, water, sanitation, and electricity.

In particular, SNV-Ghana has embarked upon the formulation of intervention strategies for two key service delivery areas, namely education, and water and sanitation. Freedom from illiteracy and illness are seen as priority triggers for poverty alleviation.

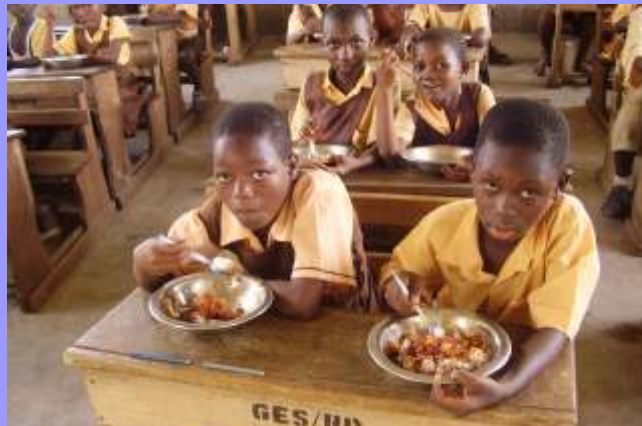
Water and sanitation

In an effort to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation, SNV-Ghana was selected for the launch of a water and sanitation intervention in partnership with the Dutch Development Cooperation Directorate (DGIS). A situation analysis has been compiled to assist with an assessment of current institutional arrangements in the sector, as well as shortcomings effecting the achievement of sustainable service delivery. This has informed the development of a country intervention strategy.



School feeding pProgram

The Ministry of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) and Regional Cooperation Ghana has prepared a school feeding program based on locally grown food. The Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation is willing to fund half of the actual food costs. The program started as a pilot in 10 schools in 2005, and will be expanded to 7 schools in each district in 2006, with a gradual expansion over the next few years. SNV-Ghana participated in a preparatory mission from the Netherlands, and in meetings with the NEPAD taskforce in charge of preparing the program. We foresee a role in capacity development at the district and regional levels to manage the program and to link and facilitate the participation of the various Ghanaian and Dutch organizations involved.



Gender equality in education in northern Ghana

In 2005, SNV-Ghana, in collaboration with Northern Ghana Network for Education Development (NNEDE) and the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF), carried out a research on gender parity in education in the three Northern regions of Ghana. The purpose of the research was to establish a credible baseline on the status of girls' education, particularly gender parity in education as a key target of both the MDG's and the global "Education For All" Campaign. The findings are used by NNEDE to influence the formulation and implementation of strategies for improved participation and success of all children, especially girls, in education. Through the research, we gained understanding on how social relations in- and outside school shape gender inequalities. The main challenge is to develop an Education Strategy that aims at changing behavior and practices.

During 2006 it is expected that most teams will engage in one or more of these programs to contribute to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals for these two sectors.



CASE

Creating an enabling environment for stakeholder participation:
A new approach in dealing with the effects of small-scale gold mining in the Mpochor Wassá East District

Context

Small-scale gold mining is a major economic activity for most of the communities in the Mpochor Wassá East District. Generally, it is considered a harmful activity due to the negative effects it has on the miners and on the inhabitants of the communities. It happens regularly that the miners encroach on people's farms and destroy their crops. The technique used in small-scale mining operations results in the creation of large open pits, which cause accidents and deaths in the communities and collect water, which breeds mosquitoes. Wastewater from the small-scale mining operations spills over and pollutes sources of drinking water. Above all, small-scale mining operators usually tend to be hostile towards the communities where they operate, sometimes endangering the lives of the inhabitants.

Due to these problems, there is the strong perception in government and civil society that small-scale gold mining must be prohibited. Using security forces, local authorities tend to drive miners out of their districts. However, the fact remains that a large number of people living in these communities depend on small-scale mining for their livelihood. Therefore, the more the local authorities try to stop their operations, the more aggressive the operators become, and the more they tend to move to remote locations where it is difficult to monitor activities. With the situation aggravating, the negative impact of small-scale mining is worsening.

Collaboration between SNV-Ghana and the Mpohor Wassa East District Assembly

In October 2002, the Mpohor Wassa East District Assembly (MWEDA) showed interest in collaborating with SNV (Western Portfolio) in managing the negative effects arising from small-scale gold mining operations in several communities in the district. MWEDA pointed out that it had little control in dealing with the miners due to the absence of records on their activities. As a result, they felt incapable to resolve conflicts between miners on one hand and communities and some large mining companies on the other hand. Another concern was the influence of delinquent behaviour of some of the miners on the local youth. The district assembly recognized that it was a major governance issue because of its impact on the environment, the local economy, and the natural resources and on the population as a whole. The attempts made by the MWEDA authorities to alleviate the problem were uneventful.

After several exploratory visits to the communities affected by the small-scale gold mining operations by SNV and MWEDA, it was decided to first analyse the situation. The Environmental Management sub-committee of MWEDA played the lead role. SNV facilitated with the analysis and provided advisory support in designing appropriate interventions. When evaluating the results of the exercise, the group realized that to initiate sustainable interventions, other relevant stakeholders should be involved. This led to the inclusion of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Mines Department in the core-working group. In time, this working group, which is generally known as Joint Action on Small Scale Mining (JASSCAM), evolved to a solid team with a common goal. With SNV facilitating the process, the working group managed to win the confidence of both community members

and miners. As a result, the representatives of the miners also joined JASSCAM. The process not only identified the most pronounced negative effects of small-scale mining, but it also generated interest and commitment to work together in alleviating conflicts and addressing the problems.

The main conclusions of a stakeholders meeting were that it would be difficult to almost impossible to impose a total ban on small-scale gold mining, but that it may be feasible to minimize negative effects through design interventions. To regulate mining activities, JASSCAM would start several pilot experiments, whereas the district assembly would continue working on other problems identified.

The pilot experiments will focus on three main issues, namely:

1. To regulate the operations of small-scale mining within acceptable standards
2. To reducing pollution of water bodies as a direct result of small-scale mining
3. To limit destruction of farmlands by small-scale mining



Results

Through the intervention of SNV-Ghana, progress was made in addressing capacity constraints on the part of the district assembly and other organizations that have been attempting to regulate small-scale mining.

- The conclusions gathered from the stakeholder forum helped MWEDA in dealing with small-scale mining activities. Instead of using their authority as a district assembly to eliminate mining without negotiation, the assembly can now discuss problems with all stakeholders involved, which includes the small-scale mining operators. The assembly has improved its interaction with civil society towards a more collaborative approach.
- In general, the perception of stakeholders has shifted from a pessimistic view to a more optimistic and consultative line of thinking. Interests and points of conflict have been identified and commitment to collaborate has been clarified. The level of aggression on the part of the miners has now given way for a more cooperating spirit with a willingness to contribute in addressing the issues.
- Our multi-stakeholder approach is greatly appreciated, because it brings all actors to the negotiating table, to contribute towards achieving the desired results. JASSCAM, as a platform, has become a lasting structure and the level of coordination among the stakeholders has increased, while recently, the assembly approved a budget for JASSCAM activities.

Strategy

In 2005, the Market Access for the Poor Practice Area, focused on market chain development. Our portfolios selected their specific market chains to focus on. These include cassava, honey, mango, shea, pineapple and oil palm. Our advisors worked with a range of actors in the market chains as information brokers, creating fruitful contacts and exchanges between actors, and challenging them to add value to the chain through collaboration and cooperation. For our advisors, this new approach provides a better understanding of the market, improves knowledge, experience and the quality of advice to clients who are working in the same chain, towards the same goal and with similar challenges and needs. In the end we are hopeful that this approach will provide an opportunity to focus and work towards demonstrable results and impacts.

Clients

The choice for market chain strategy has resulted in an increase in the client/partner base. First we needed to have a better understanding of the dynamics around the chains, including the roles of other development organizations already engaged. Then we needed to bring on board our existing clients. Our list of clients and partners therefore includes sector associations, private sector support institutions, non-governmental organizations, producers, processors and some government agencies. Based on the lessons we have learnt while working with these clients we intend to extend our services to strategic private sector organizations that are playing critical roles in the chains.



Our strength

Our strength in market chain development lies in our experience in organizational development, process facilitation, creation of joint platforms, information brokerage and knowledge of key private sector issues. In that regard we have complemented the efforts of other development organizations and government agencies whose interventions are more direct, with funds and logistics. That is why we continue to be valued by our partners and clients even though we no longer provide funds.

The way forward

In the coming year we intend to consolidate our efforts in market chain development by clarifying and refining our engagement strategies at portfolio levels, linking the chains to important markets and opportunities while working with clients and partners to keep a vigilant eye on the weak links in the various chains.



Strengthening the sugarloaf pineapple chain through the cooperation of development partners

Context

The Mfantseman District is predominantly a pineapple growing area in the Central Region. Farmers cultivate on an individual basis and sell to customers from the urban areas. Competition for pineapples between local traders and exporters and the use of local middlemen and retailers make farmers vulnerable in the negotiating process. Apparently, farmers do not have reliable sources of market information and they also have a low appreciation of issues in the pineapple industry that would enable them to influence the pricing systems.

The Mfantseman Pineapple Growers Association (MPGA) is an umbrella body established to advocate for better markets. However, the association lacked the organizational capacity and knowledge of the marketing dynamics of the pineapple industry to be able to coordinate activities of its members and to improve pricing. This has enabled the buyers to exploit the individual farmer-buyer negotiations by using the low shelf life of the fruits as the bargaining chip, thereby leaving the farmers with low returns on investment. Fruits are bought from a low of €1,600 per fruit for grade 1 and €500 per fruit for grade 6 in the main growing season. Most farmers are unable to cover their cost of production, leading to a worsening of their financial situation and hence their inability to pay back loans to creditors.

Another important actor in the farming industry is the Ministry of Food & Agriculture (MoFA) - Mfantseman Directorate. Though well positioned to strengthen the pineapple chain and influence the trade in pineapples in the district, the MoFA agents lacked the expertise and capacity to assess the challenges that actors are facing.

In 2005, SNV-Ghana became involved in strengthening the sugarloaf pineapple chain through two complementary processes. First, we signed an Activity Agreement with MoFA to advise them in the field of business development services in order to improve their support to farmers and farmers-organizations. In the same period, MoFA approached us to facilitate the development of a marketing strategy for the MPGA. This was done in close collaboration with the Market Oriented Agricultural Program (MOAP) of GTZ, the German Development Service (DED) and MoFA.

Our Capacity Building Services

To facilitate the development of a marketing strategy for pineapple farmers

The Mfantseman Pineapple Growers Association comprises 47 community societies with a membership of 3,860 farmers made up of 1,700 men and 1,860 women members. Collectively registered members cultivate an estimated 4,368 acres of pineapples in the district. The major constraint of the association was the ability to source for alternative profitable markets that will ensure higher prices for their produce. SNV-Ghana, in collaboration with the MOAP partners, organized a Sugarloaf Pineapple Stakeholder workshop to analyze the pineapple value chain consisting of inputs supply, production, harvesting, marketing and consumption. In order to understand the challenging needs of farmers in the marketing of pineapples, a one-day workshop was organized to undertake a comprehensive inventory of the marketing activities of farmers and the umbrella association. Participants were selected from a cross section of farmer association executives, pineapple marketers, trader-farmers, MoFA, as well as GTZ and DED. SNV advisors designed the analytical tool that was used to analyse the existing marketing distribution channels of farmers. SNV-Ghana was the lead facilitator in the identification and analysis of the marketing channels and related issues and also documented the marketing inventory information.

To strengthening MoFA's business development services

The MoFA-Mfantseman District has eleven (11) operational areas, each with an Agricultural Extension Agent (AEA). AEAs have traditionally played a major role in increasing productivity through technology transfer and the provision of agricultural inputs and advisory services, in addition to support to farmer-based organization (FBO) development. MoFA also play a credit mediation role for a number of projects/programmes for farmer-based organizations to access donor and government funds. As a result of the non-payment of credits by farmers, MoFA has been constrained in disbursing available funds for fear of non-recovery of the loans. Our response to MoFA's request to address the challenges in the poor credit repayment led to a training of trainers program for 14 MoFA field officers in business development and effective credit utilization. This knowledge will enable MoFA staff to provide on-site training and coaching to farmers to use the credit facility in a business-oriented manner.



Results Achieved

A clear role for the Pineapple Growers Association

The marketing channels in the pineapple chain and its features have been analyzed and documented. Whereas sales to fruit processors were the least exploited, traders and retailers constituted 80% of all pineapple sales; Blue Skies purchases represented 10% and other customers accounted for the remaining 10%. The significant factors that influenced fruit pricing in these marketing channels have been identified and includes fruit quality requirements, packaging, transportation and certification requirements. The degree of influence of each factor varies from one distribution channel to the next. Blue Skies emerged as the most profitable marketing channel in spite of the fact that they operate with only 76 farmers in three communities. Clearly, the association's role in marketing and price negotiations was non-existent in all sales channels and therefore their influence was almost insignificant. Pricing negotiations are always between the individual farmer and the buyer, hence there is no standard price for fruits except sales to Blue Skies which was pegged at €2,200 per kilogram. Another surprising outcome was that farmers never used market information in any of their price negotiations.

The leadership of the Mfantseman Pineapple Growers Association are preparing the development of a system where the association will be able to organize fruits from members and make bulk sales to customers. They also want to achieve a stable pricing system for all members as well as develop relationships with more exporters and fruit processors.

Improved quality of MoFA services to Farmer-Based Organizations (FBO's)

MoFA staff has acquired knowledge on participatory facilitation skills, business development and effective credit management. They subsequently trained three FBO's that have acquired new knowledge and developed awareness and attitudinal change to efficiently manage the FABS (Food & Agricultural

Budgetary Support) credit and grow their agri-businesses and profit from it. The analysis of pineapple production costing has generated a high level of awareness on the capital that farmers invest in pineapple production. This awareness will enable farmers to cost their products appropriately and to make informed decisions in their pricing negotiations with customers to reverse losses. They have also gained the awareness of the important role of planning cash flows to be able to pay back the credit into a revolving fund for the benefit of other FBOs.

MoFA is now in a position to link agricultural extension advisory services to business development and marketing needs of the farmers. An initial program to benefit eleven (11) FBOs involved in the pineapple, cassava and oil palm product chains is ongoing. SNV-Ghana is committed to providing backstopping to the AEA's who are facilitating the trainings.

Lessons learned and conclusions

It is noteworthy that though SNV-Ghana began this engagement process with the pineapple association, the resulting partnerships with GTZ, DED, and MoFA provided a platform for information sharing, analysis, in-depth discussions, and strategizing. Moreover, this created an opportunity for sharing tasks and costs of activities that would eventually lead to improvement in market access for pineapple farmers.

These high-key partnerships are useful in avoiding duplication of programs and are in line with our vision of connecting people's capacities to reduce poverty. The facilitation process enabled us to obtain useful firsthand information on the sales dynamics of the sugarloaf pineapple industry.

Furthermore, it is evident that MoFA has a vast potential of frontline staff with regular engagement with actors in the market chains. With the appropriate skills and resources, MoFA could be supported to upscale the drive to provide market access for the poor in the sugarloaf pineapple chain and thereby help reduce poverty levels.



Supporting innovative MSMEs to access capital, the case of the Ghana Development Marketplace (GDM)

Context

In Ghana, micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) form almost 96% of the registered companies in the private sector, with MSMEs employing 53% of the Ghanaian labour force, contributing to over 22% of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP). One of the critical challenges hindering the growth of MSMEs is access to capital for start-ups and the associated costs. As far back as the late 90's financial institutions classified MSMEs as high risk corporate clients (survivalist enterprises). MSMEs, on the other hand, argue that banks have cumbersome lending procedures and requirements and they are therefore unable to meet their financial needs. Although some strides have been made through favourable macro economic measures, other areas of concern remain, such as inappropriate managerial skills, and lack of technical skills and experience. Empretec Ghana Foundation, one of our main clients, was established 15 years ago to provide non-financial support to MSMEs in the form of training, business counselling and mentoring.

The Global Development Marketplace is a World Bank initiative for developing countries to contribute to their Poverty Reduction Strategies. In 2005, The Ghana Development Marketplace selected a special theme "Innovation!, Entrepreneurship! and Jobs!" in line with Ghana's vision to make the private sector the engine of growth. The objective was to enhance access to capital for start-up enterprises with innovative business ideas, but unable to find resources to move their ideas from dream to reality.

SNV-Ghana was one of the many stakeholders implementing The Ghana Development Marketplace (GDM). The GDM was launched with a competitive process in November 2004, and ended with a successful event in June 2005. Twenty-one MSMEs won awards to start or expand their enterprises, involving a total amount of \$300,000. These 21 MSMEs were selected from 1005 applicants in seven sectors: waste management/environment and agro-forestry, ITC, general management, education, agribusiness, arts and crafts and small scale minerals.

Capacity building services by SNV-Ghana

In line with MDG 8, SNV-Ghana signed a strategic partnership agreement with the World Bank Group in March 2005, to support the GDM through advisory

services and capacity building. The objective was to build capacities of the participating MSMEs to prepare them for the GDM competition.

SNV-Ghana played various roles in the GDM process during 2005. The SNV advisors supported the assessment of 1005 proposals and the facilitation of a stakeholders Business Forum on Access to Funding for MSMEs with over 200 participants. In collaboration with Empretec Ghana Foundation (EGF), a local capacity builder in enterprise development, we designed a capacity building program for 111 finalists in the fields of entrepreneurship and business planning and development. Through a hands-on approach, participants applied knowledge and produced a twenty-page business plan. Participants were also supported with presentation skills to convince an eminent grand jury, divided into teams to interact with participants during the GDM award event. Finally, a platform was created for all 111 participants to interact with financial institutions on the need to design SME friendly products and services for start-ups. At the end of the process, SNV and Empretec designed post-award support services to the GDM winners, including periodic business health checks, client accounting and book-keeping services (CABS) and a mentoring program with successful businesses.

Critical success moments

- Apart from the awards that the winners received, the direct impact of the GDM program on poverty reduction has been recognized. The 21 successful MSMEs are expected to create about 3250 new jobs.
- Some non-winners have accessed capital from participating financial institutions.

Effects of the GDM

- The effective organization and the results of the GDM illustrate the benefits of the partnership between the Worldbank and SNV-Ghana. While the Worldbank provided the funding, SNV provided the advisors with their knowledge and expertise in private sector development. This successful partnership contributed to the signing of another MoU to collaborate in the tourism sector in Ghana.
- The GDM has not only been recognized as a success in Ghana. SNV-Ghana assisted the World Bank in designing a regional pilot program for West Africa, incorporating lessons learned from this initial activity.
- In November 2005, the winners decided to create a GDM network to share information on challenges, successes and to support each other in the implementation of their projects. This group has become a catalyst for public-private partnerships to support innovative start-up enterprises.
- The GDM created more awareness among financial institutions to target innovative businesses and support them with creative products.



Pro-poor and Sustainable Tourism

SNV is one of the few international development organizations supporting tourism development in Ghana as an integral part of its efforts to contribute to poverty reduction. Sustainable tourism is more and more seen as a vehicle for (local) economic development and environmental conservation. Making tourism sustainable is more than just controlling and managing the negative impacts of the industry. Tourism is in a special position to benefit local communities, both economically and socially, and to raise awareness and support for the environment.

At the national level, SNV-Ghana aims to support the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable tourism development. In relation to this, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City. In 2005, this partnership resulted in the development of a pro-poor oriented National Tourism Policy.

At the local level, our interventions focus on strengthening community based eco-tourism and natural resources management. In 2005, SNV-Ghana and the World Bank launched a stakeholder forum around community-based tourism. Within this partnership, SNV-Ghana provides technical advice on tourism components in World Bank programs, such as the Northern Savannah Biodiversity Conservation Program, the Community Based Rural Development Program and the Small and Medium Enterprise Support Program.

An ongoing activity is to build capacity for tourism in Elmina as part of a Cultural Heritage & Local Economic Development Project funded by the European Union and the Netherlands Culture Fund. In the Northern Region, we provided advice to the Ghana Tourist Board on the development of tourism circuits. Support for tourism development is also gaining more attention in the Eastern and Western Regions. Clients here include the Ghana Wildlife Society, the Wildlife Division, and local authorities.

In 2006, SNV-Ghana will be involved in two regional initiatives; the Multi-destination Marketing Program, in collaboration with United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and the Coastal Tourism Program, supported by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UNWTO, and Global Environmental Facility (GEF).



Contributing towards the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable tourism development

Context

Ghana's tourism industry is still in the early stages of development. Since the 1960s, tourism has largely been dominated by the public sector until Government relinquished all interests in its tourism enterprises during the early 1990s. Since then, the private sector has been expected to lead the tourism industry to greater heights. To some extent, this has happened. Over the past 10 years, many tourism indicators have shown a consistent trend of growth; in terms of contribution to GDP, in contribution to foreign exchange earnings, in employment created, in the number of visitors, in total tourism receipts, number of hotels, number of rooms, number of beds, hotel occupancy rates, number of restaurants, car hire companies, and tour and travel operators. The tourism sector is currently the fastest growing sector of the Ghanaian economy, and is considered to be the fourth largest source of foreign exchange earnings (estimated at US\$650 million in 2004), and contributes approximately 5% to the country's GDP. In terms of its contribution to formal employment, the tourism industry employs an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 people directly and indirectly.

Although the tourism sector experienced substantial growth since 1996, the private sector has not been able to take full control of the opportunities offered, partly because of challenges that have not been adequately addressed by public policy. These challenges relate to insufficient government support due to inadequate knowledge and awareness of tourism (its requirements, socio-economic benefits, financial returns, etc) among policy and decision

makers. In addition, there is an absence of comprehensive and conducive policy guidelines, and investment incentives. Most tourism-related legislation is outdated (stemming from the 1960s and 1970s), and is therefore incompatible with modern tourism requirements. The legal mandate for management and administration of tourism resources is fragmented; i.e. spread over various ministries, departments, and public agencies. Many tourism attractions are still underdeveloped and generally do not provide sufficient value-for-money. Ghana is considered a high-cost tourist destination. Air fares, visa, and hotel accommodation costs are high compared to other similar destinations. So far,



local communities have not benefited much from tourism. In addition, Ghana has not managed to adequately protect its natural environment. Ghana has no clearly defined image abroad as a tourism destination through the lack of a marketing strategy. Domestic tourism is still limited. Investment in tourism enterprise development is limited due to lack of access to long-term finance. The private sector financial institutions so far do not consider tourism a viable sector and, therefore, provide only short-term loans at relatively high interest rates. There is currently no specific government fund for tourism infrastructural development.

So, in spite of the substantial growth of the tourism industry recorded over the past 10 years, the true wealth-creating and poverty reducing potential of the sector is not really fully grasped by policy-makers. Unless tourism is seen as strategically important to the development of Ghana and the necessary plans, policies, actions and resources to support this sector are put in place, tourism will remain a missed opportunity. It is with this in mind that SNV-Ghana supports the Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City. One of the main objectives of this collaboration is to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable tourism development by putting in place a pro-poor

oriented tourism policy coupled with an implementation strategy and supportive legislation.

The partnership and our role

SNV-Ghana has signed a MoU with the Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City. It is the Ministry's mandate to develop, promote, and regulate tourism in Ghana. Although many studies and analyses have been realized in the tourism sector by experts or consultants, no comprehensive national policy document has ever been drafted. The Ministry approached us to assist them in developing a national tourism policy, one that would provide clear guidelines for the sustainable development of a viable tourism industry. Both parties recognized the potential that sustainable tourism development has for poverty reduction through income generation and employment creation. By collaborating in drafting the national tourism policy, a perfect opportunity arose to try and develop a policy that incorporates pro-poor considerations. The role of SNV-Ghana has been that of facilitating the policy formulation process (design of participatory process, co-facilitation of workshops, collecting information, bringing in external experts) in close collaboration with the Ministry, as well as providing technical inputs for inclusion in policy drafts. Due to several mutations and lack of tourism experts, the Ministry needed specific knowledge about pro-poor tourism, which was provided by SNV-Ghana. Because of the absence of international donors and NGO's in the sector, SNV-Ghana also covered most of the costs (workshops, external experts, and materials) related to this process. The Ministry, through its Chief Director, was in charge of the overall coordination of the process, took care of all communication aspects, ensured the availability of relevant staff, and covered transport costs and allowances for participants during the various consultations.

The process

The formulation process commenced with a jointly organized tourism stakeholders' workshop on policy and regulatory enhancement for Ghana's tourism industry. Then, we were asked to prepare a "Zero Draft", collecting best practices on tourism policy and incorporating the outcomes of the stakeholders' workshop as well as other existing plans, strategies, and reports. A working group was established to review the zero draft and to come up with a first draft policy document for public discussion. The working group comprised the Ministry, the national tourism body, private sector representation and SNV-Ghana.

This first draft was presented at three consultative workshops, each catering for a particular zone in Ghana. During these workshops, a cross-section of stakeholders from all regions discussed the draft and

provided inputs. These inputs were used to review the first draft leading to the second draft, which was produced by the working group with the assistance of a national consultant conversant with national policy formulation processes.

The second draft was presented at a national consultative forum hosted by the Ministry, and facilitated by the national consultant and an expert brought in through the World Tourism Organization (WTO). Inputs from this national forum were used to review the second draft resulting in a third draft.

The third draft was then circulated to selected key stakeholders for written comments. These comments were discussed by the working group and used to produce the Fourth and Final Draft National Tourism Policy. This is to be submitted to cabinet for consideration.

Anticipated outcome

The process is not finished, but if cabinet approves the draft national tourism policy then Ghana will be among the few countries in the world with a pro-poor tourism policy that specifically links tourism development to poverty reduction and environmental conservation. A policy that builds on the recognition that tourism has a role to play in contributing to the achievement of some of the MDGs as stipulated in Ghana's PRSP.

From a poverty reduction point of view, the policy proposes a number of strategies and actions that aim to open up more opportunities for greater involvement in, and benefits from, tourism by local entrepreneurs and communities (e.g. through creation of direct employment, supply of services to the industry, supply of goods to the industry, operating own tourism enterprises, access to infrastructure built in support of tourism development), as well as aim to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on local communities (e.g. loss of access to resources, cultural intrusion, etc).

Next steps

The draft policy needs to be accompanied by a Cabinet Memo. This will be the next step and should contain an overview of the likely economic, legal, social, environmental, personnel, and financial implications if the policy were to be implemented. Finally, new legislation needs to be drafted. This will be started once Cabinet has approved the policy and sanctions its implementation. SNV-Ghana will remain part of these processes, while aiming to keep the relevant stakeholders involved.

Natural Resource Management and Environment

Conventionally, natural resources in Ghana were managed in isolation from the rural communities. Management of wildlife habitats focussed on biodiversity conservation and that of forest reserves on timber production. What has generally been overlooked in the conventional approach is that the majority of rural people require a wide array of natural resources for their daily survival, with bush-meat as the primary source of protein. Consequently, this approach has failed to guarantee sustainable utilization of natural resources, and has resulted in large-scale forest degradation and destruction, the local extinction of many animal species, and the depletion of wildlife that was once abundant throughout the country. To slow down the process of resource degradation and increased poverty, the management of forests and wildlife outside protected areas must be integrated in the process of rural development, by gradually shifting management responsibilities from central Government to the rural communities. At the same time, however, protected area management should be strengthened to safeguard core breeding areas for biodiversity conservation, to raise the revenue base through eco-tourism, and to boost wildlife numbers to enhance dispersion into neighbouring communal areas.

In light of the above, interventions in the Natural Resource Management (NRM) sector by SNV-Ghana generally focus on community-based approaches by devolvement of management authority in off-reserve areas, and collaborative approaches and the strengthening of adaptive management within protected areas.

By far the most important partner for three out of four of our portfolios was the Wildlife Division (WD) of the Forestry Commission, the central Government agency responsible for managing Ghana's protected areas. In close collaboration with the WD, our advisor based in Ho initiated a program centred on Kalakpa Resource Reserve in the Volta Region. The program aims at alleviating tension between the original landowners, illegal settlers and the WD, by seeking re-settlement areas outside the reserve, and by facilitating the establishment of a Protected Area Management Advisory Board (PAMAB) with representation of all relevant stakeholders (see case 1). The same advisor has also been active in facilitating collaborative approaches for Kyabobo National Park. In terms of natural resource management, our advisors in Takoradi have mainly been providing technical advisory services to Kakum

National Park in the Central Region. Services involved the development of alternative livelihood strategies for local communities situated along the perimeter of the park, improving the functioning of the PAMABs, the development of a tourism strategy and enhancement of customer care and satisfaction by training of front line staff. Additional services provided to the WD by our advisor based in Accra involved the strengthening of protected area management by introducing adaptive management using monitoring feedback to 11 protected areas in Ghana, which included several wetlands. This activity started in 2004 and will continue until standardized systems to monitor patrol effort, illegal activity and wildlife trends are properly operating in all of Ghana's protected areas. Some of the other ongoing activities included the facilitation of the establishment of a standardized marine turtle monitoring system, currently operating along segments of the entire coastline, and facilitation of the introduction of sustainable wildlife utilization in Community Resource Management Areas.

Our NRM advisors based in Tamale followed our regional dry-land management strategy, focussing on the position and roles of pastoralists and collaborative approaches to natural resource management in off-reserve areas, which includes eco-tourism. Together with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), they supported a local NGO with the establishment of community-managed areas along the Sissili River. Furthermore, in close collaboration with the Northern Savanna Biodiversity Project funded by the World Bank, the Ghana tourist Board and several district assemblies they initiated activities that should eventually lead to the development of community-based eco-tourism in areas bordering on Mole National Park. Cross-border activities with our advisors from Ouagadougou included support to the management of rangelands and protected areas in the Oncho Freed Zone, a project funded by ECOWAS and executed by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

Environmental Governance

Next to treating Ghana's natural resources as a source of wealth for most notably the rural poor, the country's so-called brown environment, e.g. waste management, urban sanitation, air and water pollution, etc. increasingly receives attention. Ghana is urbanizing and industrializing at a rapid pace, and the population is growing. With it, many shortfalls arise in the supply of environmental infrastructure, such as sewerage systems, treatment plants and solid waste collection, and in the planning of human settlement and economic activity. Whereas sectoral ministries traditionally address the green environmental concerns, Ghana has a relatively young Ministry of Environment and Science, which is to operate more crosscutting and is to mainstream

environmental concern in physical and development planning and to promote environmental awareness in the country. Donors have supported this ministry and several of its agencies and departments in implementing their mandates, but it is recognized that the sector's capacity is insufficient to address Ghana's challenges. A more concerted and coherent capacity enhancement is required.

In partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Science, SNV-Ghana began the Ghana Environment Sector Study (GESS) in the course of 2005. The GESS is financed by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, which has entered into a contract with SNV-Ghana and into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Environment and Science, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as non-financing partners. The GESS is a process of capacity assessment of the entire sector, and is to conclude with a set of collectively designed recommendations in support of the sector's capacity.

Concluding Remarks

While the development industry battles over the pros and cons of general budget support and the sector-wide approach, which may work in places with an enabling political climate but not in others, SNV simply provides advice in several thematic areas. The strength of this approach lies in the understanding that development is a slow process, aiming at long-term sustainability, but therefore without the highly attractive short-term tangible benefits frequently provided by conventional projects. Although we evidently wish to measure results in terms of poverty reduction to evaluate the various approaches to development aid, it simply cannot be done objectively. Moreover, measurements in terms of macro-economic indicators frequently used by bilateral and multi-lateral donors tend to give a false sense of success, because they do not portray what is actually happening at the poorest levels of society. We are convinced that fair trade, decentralization and improved governance will accelerate 'development' as perceived by western society; however, with the generally low priority given to the environment by many developing nations we are also convinced that natural resource management ought to be high on the agenda of any serious agency active in development work. Along the same lines as a healthy mind requires a healthy body, a prerequisite to development is a healthy environment. Moreover, the mere fact that most rural people in Ghana require natural resources such as bush-meat for their daily survival, should be sufficient to understand that poverty can only be tackled when it is approached from different angles.





Collaborative Resource Management in Kalakpa Resource Reserve

Background

Kalakpa Resource Reserve is located in the Volta Region in Eastern Ghana. It is one of the last intact examples of Guinean bush savannah in the country. Due to illegal hunting, wildlife populations have been declining steadily, with low densities of buffalo, and several smaller antelope and monkey species remaining.

Inside Kalakpa, roughly 2000 people are residing, landowners as well as (illegal) settlers that currently are not willing to leave the area. For an extended period there has been tension between the Wildlife Division, which is responsible for managing the reserve, and the residents, who are involved in activities that are not compatible with conservation (i.e. burning, poaching, livestock grazing). These activities have resulted in land degradation, low wildlife densities and the local extinction of numerous animal species. Due to poverty, the residents have no alternatives but to use the limited resources in the reserve. Tension with the landowners results from the lack of full payment of compensation for the land by the Ghanaian Government. Because it is a protected area without facilities in terms of schooling, piped water or boreholes, health care etc., a planning process must be started to resettle these people outside the reserve, including the development of facilities in the new settlement areas.

Our involvement

The Wildlife Division has requested SNV-Ghana to facilitate in the planning process. SNV-Ghana started with initiating discussions between the residents and the Wildlife Division. Open communication lines are required to build up trust and understanding. Furthermore, we will support the work on improvement of conditions in new settlement areas outside the reserve. Here, people should be able to benefit from government services, such as water provision and health care. Employment opportunities, partly based on sustainable resource use in the reserve, should provide income for residents. SNV-Ghana is facilitating this planning process through the preparation of an action plan, by soliciting broadly based acceptance, and by brokering for infrastructural development and support of the planning process from all relevant actors.

Progress

During an awareness-raising workshop, where 2 representatives (opinion leaders) from each settlement were invited (23 in all), four different organizations, including SNV-Ghana, addressed the following issues:

- The objectives of collaborative resource management
- Legislation
- The role of communities in the decision-making process, and,
- Potential benefits from sustainable resource utilization in and around the reserve.

Following the workshop, the participants visited three different ecotourism sites in the Volta Region, to learn about the benefits that conservation can bring to the community.

Furthermore, after the identification of the main actors, the planning process was started. Because this process is complex and involves many different stakeholders, it is bound to last for many years.

Lessons learned

During the initial phase of this long-term program, we learned that setting up proper communication channels is the first important step towards success. We also noticed that it is important to take community members serious, and not disregard them as being 'ignorant'. Local residents on their part should learn that financial compensation is not the key factor, but that long-term perspectives for development and employment are more important.

Prospects

We are currently in the process of collecting base-line information on resource utilization and the socio-economic situation of residents in the reserve. Furthermore, through awareness creation, we will work towards the establishment of a Protected Area Management Advisory Board (PAMAB), with representatives of all relevant stakeholders. The PAMAB will eventually be responsible for providing advice to the management team of Kalakpa Resource Reserve. In due time, the PAMAB may become the major partner for SNV-Ghana in supporting the local communities and in conserving the natural resources of the reserve.



Gender and Organizational Development

SNV envisions a society where women and men, organizations and institutions are strengthened to contribute to gender equitable development. Our vision is carved from our commitment to the national policy for poverty reduction which includes gender equality, women's leadership and respect for women's rights. The Gender Practice Area focuses on developing female leadership and legal frameworks for the promotion of women's rights. These are necessary conditions for successfully mainstreaming gender equality into all programs, activities and internal systems and processes of organizations.

In 2005, we focused on consolidating existing partnerships and increasing the number of strategic partners. To increase our reach and the effectiveness of our support to SNV-Ghana and its clients, we expanded the gender team with two advisors.

At the national level, we facilitated the strategic planning process of the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) and the Management Development and Productivity Institute (MDPI). We participated in meetings of the Gender Mainstreaming Technical Committee to integrate gender in the GPRSII. We supported Abantu and the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) in activities to prepare women for District Assembly Elections in 2006. Finally, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the multi-donor Ghana Research and Advocacy Program (G-RAP). We've been working with gender focused international and national organizations such as the UN Program for Gender Equality, Action Aid, WILDAF Ghana and the Ark Foundation.

Since gender is a cross-cutting theme, we collaborated with other practice areas to improve gender mainstreaming in their programs and activities with clients. In the field of Environment and Natural Resource Management, we worked with Green Earth, Friends of the Earth, Rural Development Youth Association (RUDEYA), Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ECASARD) and the Land Administration Project. Main advisory services to these clients included organizational assessment from a gender perspective, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, gender awareness training and leadership. Furthermore, we supported local governance advisors in promoting women's leadership in district assemblies and joint action

platforms and in studying opportunities for SNV-Ghana in girl's education in the Western and Northern Regions. Findings from this research will guide the two portfolios in deciding on a strategy to engage with gender and education issues.

In 2006, we will formalize the collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and its women's wing, the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD). Women's rights and women's leadership and the building of alliances to move these forward will be very important. Another priority is the upgrading of gender capacities within SNV-Ghana through the organization of gender training.



Building capacities of research and advocacy organizations

Introduction

In 2005, SNV-Ghana signed a tripartite agreement with IBIS Ghana and the Ghana Research and Advocacy Program (G-RAP). This partnership is one of the successes of the year in terms of resource mobilization. Our advisory services are funded by the program and four of our clients have access to funds for the implementation of their lobby and advocacy activities, which SNV is unable to provide. The partnership also demonstrates the benefits of a model where strategic partners share resources, knowledge and expertise and thus improve their performance.

G-RAP is a pooled funding mechanism designed to support the institutional development of research and advocacy organizations (ROA's) in Ghana. Participating donors include DFID, CIDA, DANIDA and the Royal Netherlands Embassy. Ibis Ghana is an independent Danish Development Organization, involved in education and capacity building programs and an important partner of SNV-Ghana. In the partnership, G-RAP provides Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) grants of up to \$10,000 per ROA to support an organizational development program facilitated by SNV-Ghana and IBIS.

Objectives and approach

The partners believe that by strengthening research, advocacy and lobbying capacities of ROA's, these organizations will contribute more effectively to the formulation of pro-poor policies and to advocate on behalf of the poor and socially excluded in Ghanaian society. Moreover, the establishment of alliances and networks between ROA's is expected to increase their impact and autonomy from Government and donors. SNV-Ghana is in particular concentrating on gender issues. Some of the ROA's benefiting from the ICB grants are women's rights organizations that are working towards female leadership and women's empowerment, like Abantu for Development, Women in Law and Development (Wildaf) and the Ark Foundation. Since gender is central in our work, we are able, through G-RAP, to strengthen these gender organizations and to enable them to lobby for gender balanced policies.

SNV-Ghana and IBIS are using the Organizational Development (OD) approach to deliver capacity building services. This means that a complete OD process is being followed from an initial

organizational assessment to the implementation of a capacity building plan and the evaluation of the program. Each RAO has its specific needs and capacity building program and is coached by one of the facilitators. In 2005, we supported twelve RAO's in the assessment process and provided advisory services in the field of communication, public relations, gender analysis, advocacy and strategic planning.

Output

The process has offered the RAO's opportunity to build on their strengths and to work on their challenges. They have learned new tools and have developed action plans.

Lessons learned

- The process brings on board OD experts and this enhances the sharing and transfer of knowledge and skills. In a labour market where skills shortages are acute (OD competence) the joint approach of IBIS and SNV-Ghana ensures a constant supply of competent facilitators guaranteeing a quality client-centred service.
- The integrated approach of G-RAP, providing technical assistance, core-funding and institutional capacity building at once, seems a solid approach with sustained results.

Way forward

The institutional capacity building is an ongoing process, with the second round of funding due in April 2006 with more organizations receiving funding support for organizational development. This means that more human resources will be required from SNV-Ghana.

Now that the RAO's are prepared to take action and set up lobbying programs, SNV-Ghana and IBIS will focus on strengthening of alliances and networks between ROA's.

Epilogue

My predecessor, Worku Behonegne, has been in Ghana for two years. During this relatively short period, he was able to initiate and manage an unprecedented growth of SNV in the country. Supplementary to the growth in numbers of staff, there has been a sharp increase in the number of client organizations and an improved geographical coverage. SNV is now well established in most parts of the country, and has a broad range of clients in both the public and private sectors.

It is not expected that the growth in numbers of staff will continue. Rather, we will be focusing on the continuous improvement of our services delivery. As in previous years, SNV-Ghana will contribute to the development of capacities of existing organizations. We believe that this is the right way to reduce, and eventually eradicate, aid dependency.

The Government of Ghana has recently released its Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2006 - 2009. This strategy aims at accelerating the growth of the economy as a means to fight poverty. The same economic growth is necessary to pay for the cost of improved basic services delivery. SNV-Ghana is committed to both the reduction of poverty and the improvement of basic services delivery and will continue to support the Government of Ghana in its' efforts. As always, we will emphasize the need for a focus on equity and sustainability.

The fact that SNV does not implement its' "own" projects or programs, has some important implications. Most importantly, when you work as an advisor, it is impossible to control the outcome of your work. In the end, it is always up to the client organization to decide what it will do with the advice that is given. In order to increase the effectiveness of our advisory work, we will focus on monitoring and evaluating our effort. What does the client do with the advice and what do we finally achieve in terms of income generation and basic services delivery? How can we combine our efforts within both the public and private sectors in order to achieve an optimal result? What kind of skills and knowledge do our advisors need in order to be able to serve their clients? By learning continuously from what we do, we also strive to increase the effectiveness of our work.

It is almost 30 years since I first came to Ghana as a young and impressionable student. Over the years, I have returned more or less regularly for brief stays. Since that first visit, the country has undergone dramatic change, and most of this change has been positive. It takes some effort to imagine Ghana in the late 1970s, and how far it has come since then. The people of Ghana have shown an impressive ability to move ahead, whilst maintaining social stability. I am therefore most happy to come back to Ghana once more, and I am looking forward to live and work in the country.

Peter de Haan
Country Director
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