

**A Briefing Document On**

**Collaborative  
Resource Management  
in Ghana**

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## Background

The economic and political changes that arose with the advent of colonisation and more recently accelerated human population growth have placed wildlife and other natural resources in an increasingly precarious position and Ghana faces a number of challenges in the area of natural resources management and maintenance of the integrity of her environment.

## The Challenge Ghana Faces

The challenge that Ghana faces has the following components:

- The greatest threat to wildlife in Ghana is not through over exploitation by hunting but by the ongoing conversion of habitat used by wildlife. Wildlife and environmental security in Ghana is threatened as people clear land and convert habitat for agricultural activities or often just to secure tenure over land for some future use. The attitude is that un-cleared land is unused land. It has no value and cannot be secured by the individual until it is cleared.
- The wildlife legislation in Ghana is now dated. It was developed in a period where laws were passed

to protect wildlife and where the enormous value of wildlife outside of protected areas was not a consideration. Unfortunately laws do not protect wildlife - people protect wildlife. The current legislation does not provide sufficient incentive for farmers to care for and protect wildlife on their properties. The result is that wildlife for most farmers is considered a pest that in many cases is directly competing with their agricultural activities. In addition to this the responsible authority for wildlife (the Wildlife Division) is limited in financial and personnel terms to adequately enforce current legislation.

- More recently Ghana has sought to find ways of accelerating rural development to stimulate economic growth and reduce rural poverty. Environmental security is often overlooked as being the key to ensuring these objectives in the long term. Environmental security can only be achieved when policy and legislation recognise that providing the incentive to farmers for proper land management and the sustainable use of natural resources is the key.

In addition to the above components there are several important facts about wildlife in Ghana that need consideration:

- The trade in wildlife as bushmeat in Ghana is estimated to be worth US \$200 to \$300 million per annum. A recent study of an area next to one of Ghana's Protected Areas estimates the value of wildlife as US\$140 000 for an area of only 30sq km.
- The trade in wildlife as bushmeat is an integral part of Ghanaian culture. It is not realistic, feasible or desirable to stop people using wildlife.
- Wildlife exists in a variety of habitats and some species (such as grasscutter) can thrive in cultivated areas. Wildlife does not have to compete with agriculture but it can be a complimentary landuse that benefits both farmer and wildlife.
- Strategies of protein replacement by encouraging livestock production to replace wildlife use are potentially very damaging for wildlife as livestock will compete directly with wildlife for food and may encourage further habitat clearing.
- Strategies involving the farming of wildlife species such as grasscutter are not necessary or viable

alternatives outside of urban areas. They involve high initial and maintenance costs and are not applicable to all species. They involve technology not readily available, raise issues of animal health and do little to secure habitats.

- Protected Areas that have been established as wildlife refugia are under siege due to widening socio-economic and cultural demands

### **Collaborative Wildlife Management in Ghana**

To address the challenges of wildlife management the Wildlife Division has developed a Collaborative Wildlife Management Policy, which gives more practical meaning to the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy. In line with the policy collaborative wildlife management systems have been developed to ensure a more active participation of local communities, civil society groups and other stakeholders in wildlife management in Ghana.

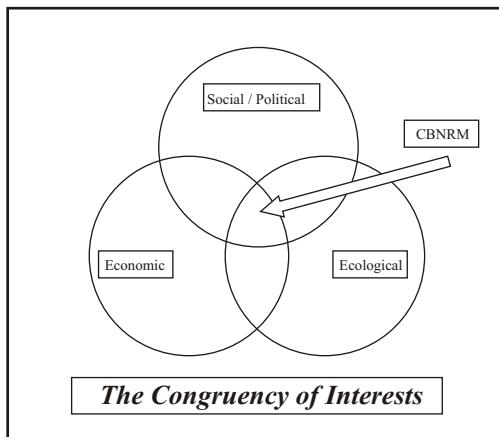
The primary institutional mechanisms for implementing collaborative wildlife management both in and outside Protected Areas are the Protected Areas Management Advisory Units/Boards and the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) approach. CREMA constitutes

the key wildlife management system in areas outside of Protected Areas.

## **The CREMA Approach**

### The Underlying Philosophy -Creating the Win Win Scenario

- *The underlying philosophy of the CREMA approach as the case is with all CBNRM approaches is that - if natural resources are given “value” and communities are given the “authority” to “manage” then they will have the “incentive” to sustainably manage and conserve natural resources.*
- *From a rural development perspective it results in improved livelihoods and human well being.*
- *From a conservation perspective it secures habitats, protects endangered species and may enhance the security of Protected Areas.*
- *From a political perspective it strengthens democratisation and accountability at local levels.*
- *From an economic perspective it strengthens local economies and diversifies income at community and household levels.*
- *It establishes a congruency of socio-political, economic and ecological interests. (See diagram)*



The CREMA approach is based on a set of guiding principles. These principles are detailed in a policy for *“Collaborative Wildlife Management and the Establishment of Community Resource Management Areas”* prepared by the Wildlife Division in September 2000, this policy states the Wildlife Division's perspective on the use of wildlife outside of protected areas. The nine principles enunciated in the policy define the following sentiments:

- People will manage wildlife and other resources when they are provided sufficient incentive to do so. This incentive is primarily an economic incentive and direct financial benefit provides one of the

strongest incentives for farmers.

- People who live with and are responsible for the management of natural resources must be the primary beneficiaries of that management effort. Natural resources are in competition with agricultural resources because natural resources are “owned” by others including the state and benefits from the use of natural resources are not realised by those who live with them. In addition to this there is a tendency to “tax” and regulate the use of natural resources while similar constraints do not apply to conventional agriculture.
- Natural resource management is a legitimate form of land use. Traditionally, uncleared land that is rich in natural resources is considered as unused. This perception encourages deforestation and habitat modification reducing natural resource management options.

Using these principles the CREMA approach is to:

- Create a financial incentive for farmers to use and manage natural resources on sustainable basis by devolving management rights and responsibilities to them. If farmers realise financial benefits from natural resources they will look after them.

The challenge is how this can be done where farms are small, resources are unevenly distributed and the resource in the case of wildlife is mobile and often not confined to a single land holding. In addition to this there may also be complicated land tenure relationships that have a direct bearing on land management. To address this challenge the CREMA approach is to:

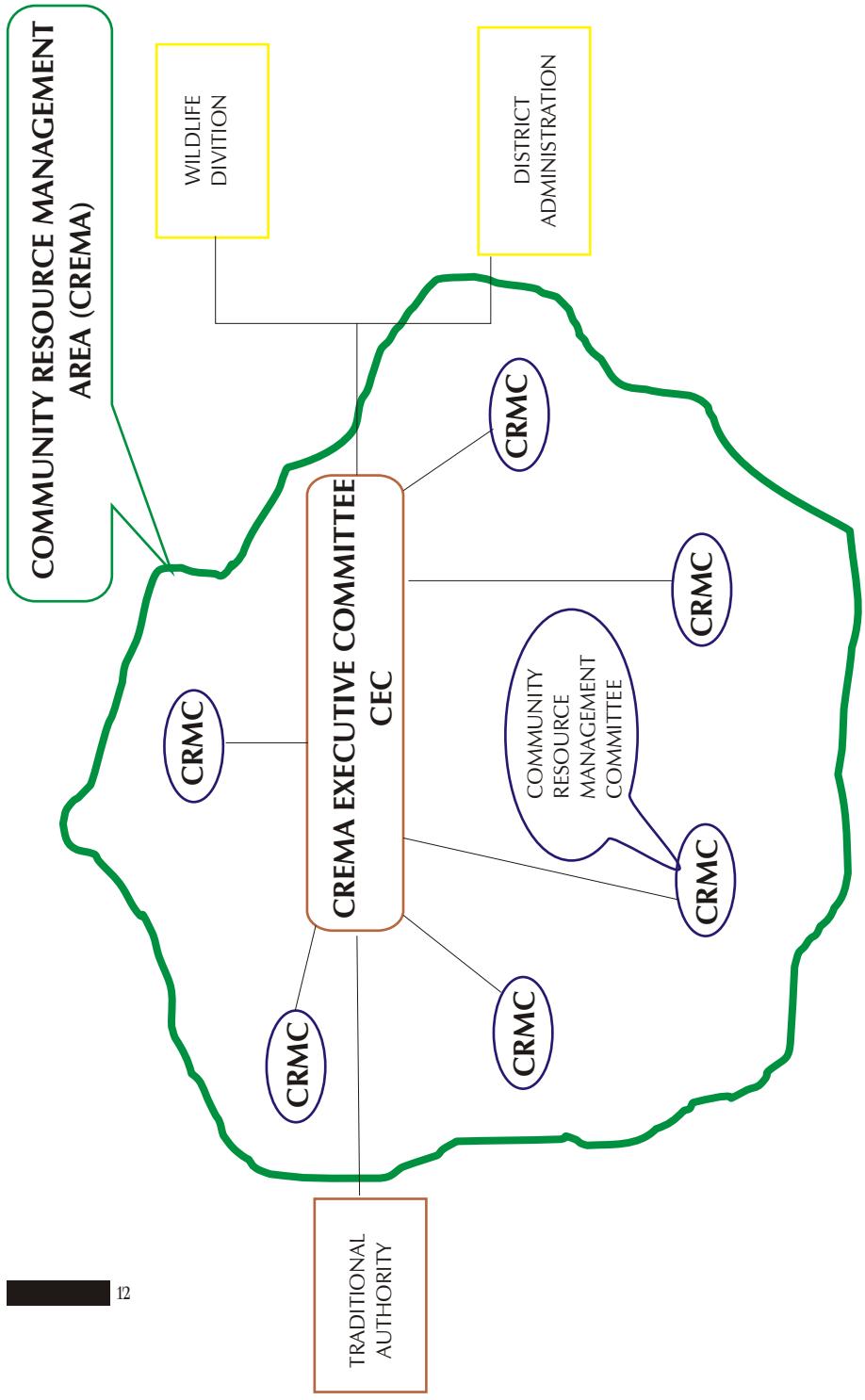
- Develop an organisational structure that is based on existing decision-making structures (such as occurs under the *Odikro* of the traditional authority hierarchy) and is consistent with local land tenure relationships. This organisational structure has two elements a) the primary level called the Community Resource Management Committee and b) the secondary level called the CREMA Executive Committee. Together these two levels of organisation represent the CREMA which can be defined as: *a geographically defined area endowed with sufficient resources where communities of farmers have organised themselves for the purpose of sustainable resource management.* (See diagram)
- In developing the organisational structure of the CREMA the constituent members develop a

constitution that would be backed by a District Assembly bye-law. The constitution has two very important functions. Firstly it establishes the function of the organisational structure and clearly states the rules and responsibilities of the members. Secondly the constitution establishes the farmers as a “body corporate” that the Wildlife Division will be able to recognise in order to devolve authority to and hold accountable.

There are obviously several questions about the CREMA approach and some of these are:

*What are the benefits of the CREMA approach?*

## ORGANISATION STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNITY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREA



The establishment of a CREMA offers several benefits some of which have been referred to earlier in this document. However, provided the programme is properly implemented it will provide the following benefits:

- Improved environmental security and land use practices by farmers.
- Improved incomes for farmers leading to greater food security and poverty alleviation.
- Improved security for state Protected Areas as surrounding communities develop their CREMAs.
- Greater participation by all sectors of the community in decision-making processes establishing good governance.
- Greater understanding by farmers of the importance of natural resources in farm management.
- Strengthening of local decision making structures and the ability of communities to make collective decisions.
- It empowers communities to control access to resources by external user groups and individuals.
- Improved linkages between communities, the Wildlife Division, District Assemblies and Traditional Authorities.

- It provides the opportunity for the Wildlife Division to initiate a process that could see wildlife and natural resource management develop into a significant industry in Ghana.
- It provides opportunities for the development of secondary and tertiary industries at a local level in such activities as tourism and tourism support services.

*What are the drawbacks and limitations to the CREMA approach?*

There are potential drawbacks to the programme but these relate mostly to cases where there are difficulties in implementation and facilitation:

- Failure to correctly identify local decision-making structures could result in a powerless CREMA.
- Communities that are deeply divided over other issues may not be able to develop sufficient consensus to form a CREMA.
- The CREMA approach is a “process” and especially in the early stages requires time, technical support and funding for that support.

### *What is the role of the Wildlife Division?*

Clearly the Wildlife Division is a catalyst for this programme. It is also the agency through which the devolution of management authority must occur. In the early stages of developing the CREMA programme the Wildlife Division has a critical role to play through the Community Liaison Officers and technicians and the Community Resource Management Unit in Accra. At later stages the Division will serve a monitoring and advisory role. Over the next two years the Division needs to identify potential CREMAs concentrating on areas adjacent to Protected Areas.

### *What happens if the CREMA approach is not implemented?*

If the CREMA approach is not implemented and Ghana continues to rely on the existing legislative framework:

- The current trend of habitat modification will continue unabated.
- Wildlife outside of Protected Areas will gradually disappear, although some species such as giant rat and grasscutters will survive for some time.
- The Protected Areas will increasingly become *ecological islands* and eventually surrounding communities will siphon off their resources.
- This increased pressure will increase the need for the

Wildlife Division to divert funding into law enforcement and the Division will have less funding available for park development and maintenance. This will result in lower tourism interest and lower income for the Division.

In developing the CREMA approach there are three important questions:

- Is there a sufficient resource base to warrant a viable programme?
- Does the community have the ability to organise and develop enforceable rules?
- Is there an enabling policy and legislative environment?

### **Protected Areas Management Advisory Units/Boards**

Protected Area Management Advisory Units Boards, with representation from all the identifiable interest groups serve as focal points/platforms for stimulating and exchanging ideas on natural resources management in a Protected Area and on lands, owned and used by the surrounding communities. Protected Areas can cut across districts and even regions and in that case it may be necessary to establish more than one advisory body for such a Protected Area.

Where there is need for more than one, each advisory body will be known as the Protected Area Management Advisory Unit (PAMAU). The Protected Area Management Advisory Board will then serve as an apex body with membership from the various PAMAU's to look at the Protected Areas as the single entity that it is supposed to be.

The objectives of the Board are to:

- identify and integrate local peoples' concern into the management of the Protected Area in a cohesive and productive manner;
- assist in integrating the development of the Protected Area into the District Planning System (where this is feasible) and in line with the overall decentralisation programme;
- win local support for practical, effective and harmonious management of the Protected Area;
- advise on the formulation of conservation linked poverty reduction/enterprise development ventures and support for the ventures;
- promote appropriate traditional natural resource management practices;
- Facilitate an increased understanding of functional and productive traditional knowledge; and

- resolve conflicts and handle other matters that may arise.

The functions of the PAMABs could be to:

- ▶ assist in the implementation of PA management plans;
- ▶ oversee the development and protection of sacred, cultural and other sites that are important or treasured by the local people;
- ▶ identify “harvestable” resources and determine resource allocation levels and mechanisms for monitoring the allocations;
- ▶ assist in the determination/generation of benefits and the benefit sharing arrangements;
- ▶ allocate license rights to the local people for the “harvestable” resources of the reserve;
- ▶ assist in the establishment of channels of communication with the view to properly educating the local communities about the reserve and conservation in general
- ▶ assist in the development and implementation of Protected Area Outreach programmes
- ▶ Assist in the formation of Community Resources Management Committees (CRMCs) at village level;

- ▶ mobilise local labour when necessary for some activities as and when required and
- ▶ bring to bear on PA management traditional technical knowledge and productive traditional practices that would help address existing and emerging challenges that defy contemporary knowledge

The Core membership of PAMAB would be:

- Wildlife Division
- Forest Services Division (where necessary)
- Traditional authority
- District Assembly
- CRMCs
- other actors whose services might be found as germane to the goal and objectives of the Protected Area.

### **Concluding Comment**

In the global arena where there is considerable debate around issues such as deforestation and the trade in “bushmeat” with the subsequent depletion of wildlife and other resources, the approaches offer an encouraging alternative to the doom and gloom scenarios proffered by

many conservation and other organisations. They provide a homegrown solution based on the experiences of other African countries adapted and developed for Ghana's own situation and needs. If the approaches are successfully implemented they would serve as models for other countries in West Africa.

It is quite certain that the wildlife Division cannot carry the task particularly of establishing CREMAs across Ghana alone and would need the involvement of interested Non Governmental Organisations and other civil society groups to play a part.