

EvSum534

FOREST INVENTORY PROJECT, GHANA

[The Project](#) - [The Evaluation](#) - [Overall Conclusion & Success Rating](#) - [The Main Findings](#) - [Lessons](#)

The Project

The Ghana Forest Inventory Project (FIP) was implemented between October 1985 and March 1989 at a cost to ODA of £1.15m. Its main objectives were to provide the data for the formulation of a sustained yield policy and to establish an inventory unit. FIP was succeeded in 1989 by the ODA Forest Inventory and Management Project (FIMP).

The Evaluation

The evaluation was carried out in May 1991 by an economist and a forester. The fact that FIP had ended only two years earlier, and the existence of FIMP, made it difficult to assess the developmental impact of the project.

This report was used in the "Forestry Evaluation Synthesis Study", EvRpt541. (See EvSum541 for a summary.)

Overall Conclusion & Success Rating

The project was judged to be *partially successful*. The national inventory was successfully completed and the Inventory Unit was strengthened. The overall findings were influential in supporting forest policy and management reforms, and the inventory provided new information on the ecology of forest reserves. There were, however, some shortcomings in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project. The project was not cost-effective, nor were the institutional achievements sustainable as designed.

The Main Findings

- The precise objectives, outputs and statistical precision of the inventory, and the use of the results for forest management, were inadequately considered and defined, and remain disputed. A major confusion was whether reserve-level statistics were intended in addition to national statistics.
- The inventory provided national data of adequate statistical precision, as well as valuable new ecological information. The information on individual reserves or Forest Management Units is not sufficiently precise to provide a base for management planning due to the inventory design adopted. No reserve Working Plans were produced as intended.

- Inadequate computer equipment and expertise in the early part of the project, and the delayed provision of GoG funds and counterpart staff hampered progress. Reporting and analysis was delayed, and some of the data was under-exploited.
- FIP findings were very influential in general terms, and lent support to reforms aimed at curbing the over-exploitation of certain timber species. The fact that FIP ended up as part of a wider sectoral reform process, and was followed by a World Bank/ODA implementation project, was crucial. The detailed contribution of FIP to either national policy or reserve management was, however, limited and less than it could have been.
- The project succeeded in establishing a well staffed, trained and equipped Inventory Unit. This would probably not be sustainable in the absence of FIMP.
- The project was not cost-effective. Its national contribution could have been achieved at lower cost.
- The project should have a very positive indirect environmental impact, provided that the improvements in the management of the reserved forests are effective and sustainable.

Lessons

- Inventory projects can make a significant contribution to improved forest policy provided they are part of a wider sectoral reform process which includes assistance for implementation.
- If inventories do not have precise objectives, and if the outputs and use of the data for management and policy are not clearly specified at the outset, the project is likely to make a reduced contribution and will not be cost-effective.
- If forest inventory projects are not appraised and reviewed by inventory specialists major design problems may remain unidentified.
- Forestry projects need to be implemented with adequate specialist consultancy support (e.g. in computing, statistics, and planning) and, if possible, should be staffed by TCOs with specialist pre-appointment training.
- If adequate priority is not given to computer equipment, and to computing and statistical expertise, delays in data processing and analysis can reduce project achievements.
- Procurement and communication delays can be costly in terms of reduced project effectiveness.
- If projects are not subject to a rigorous mid-term review, preferably including independent experts, design and implementation flaws are less likely to be identified and remedied.
- If sustainability is not explicitly considered from the outset any institutional achievements are unlikely to be sustainable.