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Planning
Commission

COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING (CAP) GUIDELINES



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COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING (CAP) GUIDELINES

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FOREWORD

The ultimate aim of development planning is the betterment of the lives of people and communities. This aim has driven development efforts over many decades and in many places. As a result, contemporary planning is keen on not planning for but planning by and with beneficiary communities. Human-centered planning approaches seek to involve individuals and communities in decision-making, planning, and implementation processes.

The national planning architecture is referred to as a “Decentralised Planning System” because it places much emphasis on locally driven efforts toward the realisation of the national development agenda. The laws backing this architecture, i.e. National Development Planning (Systems) Act 1994, (Act 480), are abundantly clear on community-level participation in national agenda setting.

Over the years, the National Development Planning Commission has strengthened the capacity of Metropolitan, Municipal,

and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to ensure that medium-term development plans entail community aspirations and needs. To achieve this, MMDAs resort to community engagements and public hearings to solicit and validate inputs from communities.

These measures will be deepened with the introduction of this Community Action Planning (CAP) Guidelines. This Guidelines has the potential to empower communities, unlock latent potentials, and channel aspirations into tangible and sustainable development actions. This paves the way for ensuring a future where community engagement becomes not merely a recognised practice but an integral and indispensable component of our shared developmental narrative.

I wish to express my gratitude to GIZ - REACH for collaborating with NDPC to prepare the Community Action Planning Guidelines. Gratitude is also extended to all stakeholders who provided technical inputs for the guidelines.

Winfred F. A. Nelson, PhD
Director, Development Coordination Division

STATEMENT FROM GIZ-REACH

The Resilience Against Climate Change (REACH) project is part of the Market-Oriented Value Chains for Jobs and Growth in the ECOWAS Region (MOVE). REACH works on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co-funded by the European Union, and implemented by the German Development Corporation (GIZ). As one of three interconnected components of the European Union Ghana Agriculture Program (EUGAP), REACH is focused on the North-Western region of Ghana. The project's primary objective is to drive coordinated efforts toward climate change adaptation, achieved through enhanced planning processes and the promotion of conservation agriculture practices.

As part of our commitment to fostering climate resilience and empowering local communities, this initiative, in collaboration with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), underlines the creation and implementation of this Community Action Planning (CAP) Guidelines. Developed with the insights of community members, planners, and stakeholders, these guidelines are designed to be a practical and inclusive tool that strengthens community engagement at every stage of the planning process. They aim to ensure that local voices drive sustainable development efforts, promoting an approach that is responsive to the unique needs, resources, and aspirations of each community. The CAP approach is to be facilitated by Planning Officer and expected to be used by development partners, NGOs,

CSOs, Government Agents, and any other entities who are into community-level interventions.

The CAP Guidelines equip communities with a structured, step-by-step process to assess their current challenges, map their assets, and co-create solutions that are both viable and resilient. By incorporating elements such as integrated planning, spatial data utilisation, and active community engagement, the guidelines enable communities to address pressing issues—from climate adaptation and disaster preparedness to resource management and socio-economic development. This methodology not only strengthens local capacities but also aligns these localised plans with national development objectives, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability that is essential for long-term success. CAPs developed should therefore be a source document to be looked out for and leveraged by development partners, NGOs, CSOs, Government Agents, and any other entities who are into community level interventions.

Together with NDPC, we believe these guidelines will serve as a cornerstone in the journey toward a more resilient and sustainable future for all. This endeavour reflects our shared vision of development as a partnership, where empowered communities actively contribute to building adaptive and sustainable frameworks, ensuring that development is as resilient as it is inclusive.

- GIZ- EU-REACH

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Annual Action Plan
AM	Assembly Member
CAP	Community Action Planning
CAPs	Community Action Plans
CLUM	Community Land Use Map
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPCU	District Planning Coordinating Unit
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPS	Global Positioning System
LUSPA	Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority
MTDP	Medium-Term Development Plan
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PPT	Plan Preparation Team
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPC	Spatial Planning Committee
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threat
TA	Traditional Authority
UC	Unit Committee



CHAPTER 01

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background

Communities face various challenges given their vulnerabilities, risk exposure, and adaptive capacity. Challenges can be environmental (e.g., climate change), health-related (e.g., the spread of pests and diseases), or infrastructural (e.g., lack of health facilities such as clinics). To address such challenges, various measures exist to reduce risk exposure and vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity. Such measures are most sustainable if developed by communities themselves with the assistance and guidance of professional planners. A sense of ownership can be generated as a prerequisite for lasting impacts when communities fully engage and participate in the planning and implementation process. This underscores the importance of community action planning processes to enable communities to plan for their collective future.

The Policy and Legislative Context

The formulation and implementation of Community Action Plans in Ghana are guided by a robust policy and legislative framework that underscores the importance of a decentralised national planning system for total development. The National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994 (Act 480) empowers the NDPC as the national coordinating body for the decentralised development planning system. This is further operationalised through the National Development Planning (System) Regulations, 2016 (L.I. 2232); which provides for the regulation of planning at all levels; including the mobilisation of efforts from the community

level to feed into the overarching intentions at the district level – and subsequently feed into development initiatives at the Regional and National levels. Complementing the NDPC’s mandate on the spatial, land use, and human settlements planning functions, the Land Use and Spatial Planning Act, 2016 (Act 925) designates the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) to support the NDPC in related functions including the formulation of guidelines for the regulation of physical development. Act 925 emphasises the significance of spatial planning and development, aligning with the goals of community-driven initiatives.

Even so, the imperative for local community participation in the planning processes, laying the foundation for the development of Community Action Plans to ensure inclusive and community-driven development at the District Sub-Structures is underscored by the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936). District Planning Authorities are therefore required to initiate the processes and provide technical support to the sub-structures - ensuring the effectiveness and adequacy of community-driven initiatives at the district level. In line with NDPC’s coordination mandate of the entire national development planning system, the development of the CAP guidelines provides for the standardisation of preparatory efforts in the development of community-driven initiatives, with the spatial component duly reflected at the local level.



Rationale for Community Action Planning Guidelines

The collection of community needs is a pre-requisite for the situational analysis of the MTDP preparation and is backed by L.I. 2232. Additionally, there is increasing interest in empowering communities to come out with their plans which increases ownership of plans and community support for implementation. Until now, conducting needs assessments and such local-level planning remains uncoordinated and disjointed in the planning space.

This CAP Guidelines represents the first edition of a harmonised framework for community-level planning. It streamlines the process of collecting community needs and aspirations, ensuring they serve as valuable input for the preparation of Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs).

The rationale of this guidelines are as follows;

- » Harmonise community needs assessment process
- » Promote integrated planning and operationalisation of synergies among planning strands at the local level.
- » Promote community mapping in the quest to address spatial challenges
- » Improves data collection and availability for planning purposes
- » Enhance data-driven community planning processes
- » Serve as reference material for civil society, the private sector, academia, and all other potential users.
- »

Community Action Planning (CAP) Methodology

The CAP methodology serves as a robust framework, built upon three foundational pillars that collectively contribute to fostering sustainable development, informed decision-making, and resilient communities. These pillars are Integrated Planning, GIS and Remote Sensing, and Community Engagement (see Figure 1).

1. Integrated Planning:

Integrated planning forms the foundation of the CAP concept. This approach brings together key elements of development and spatial planning at the community level. It involves systematic efforts such as data collection, analysis of needs and aspirations, and strategic planning. By addressing multiple aspects—like infrastructure, housing, environment, and economic development—communities can create comprehensive plans that meet their holistic needs. Integrated planning fosters collaboration among stakeholders, ensuring that resources are used efficiently, conflicts are minimised, and sustainable development goals are achieved.

2. GIS and Remote Sensing:

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing technologies introduce a vital spatial component to community action planning. These tools enable communities to gather, analyse, and visualise spatial data, offering clear insights into their landscapes. GIS supports mapping of land use, infrastructure, and environmental features, while Remote Sensing (through satellite and aerial imagery) provides real-time views of land changes. This data-driven approach helps in optimising land use, identifying environmental risks, and making evidence-based decisions. Cost-



effective solutions using open-access geospatial tools make these technologies accessible and sustainable for long-term planning.

3. Community Engagement:

Community engagement is at the core of the CAP concept, emphasising the importance of involving community members throughout the planning process.

By engaging residents directly, CAP ensures that plans are reflective of the community's real needs and aspirations. This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and empowers residents to influence decisions that affect their lives. Additionally, community engagement allows for the integration of local knowledge, traditions, and cultural values, enriching the planning process and ensuring it aligns with the unique context of each community.

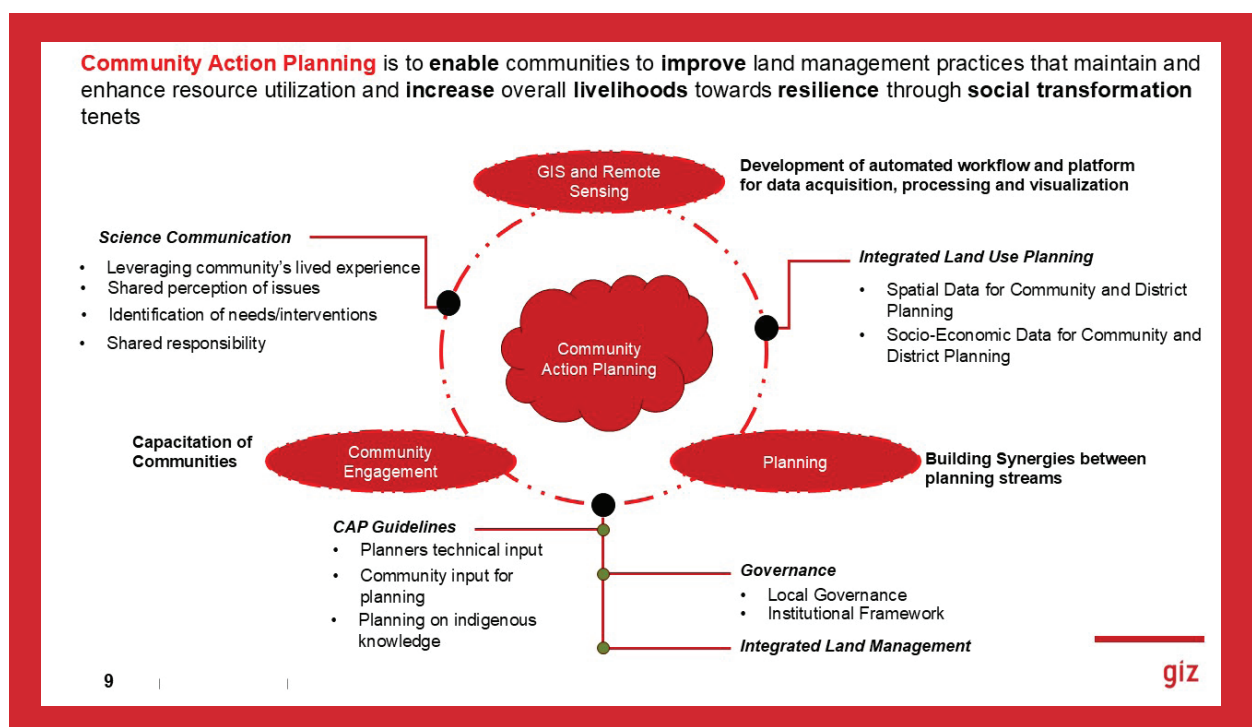


Figure 1: Community Action Planning Methodology

In essence, the objective of the CAP concept is a proof of power of holistic, community-driven planning, where integration, spatial insights, and community involvement converge to shape a vision of development that is both lasting and responsive to the evolving needs of communities. The output will be a well-documented Community Action Plan that is left with the communities to guide the course of planning over time in the community. Communities may use this document as a basis to solicit external support through proposal writing and a reference document for subsequent engagement with districts, philanthropists, NGOs/CSOs, and development partners. Actions identified through needs assessment and planning feed into the processes for the Medium-Term Development Plan preparation and subsequently the Annual Action Plans (AAP). Also, the spatial data collected is useful for subsequent plans, that is, Structure Plan and Local Plan at the community level and Spatial Development Framework (SDF) at the district level.

Use of the document

This document presents a set of guidelines to facilitate a step-by-step participatory process for community action planning. Given the importance of the spatial dimension of various challenges, this guideline is intended as a resource for both development and physical (spatial) planners. Moreover, the information collected during the process will contribute significantly to the development of Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs), Annual Action Plans, Spatial Development Frameworks, Structure Plans, and Local Plans.

Also, the document makes available different methods, protocols, and templates that can be used in its totality or adapted based on specific context and community dynamics. Though these may be largely on examples from climate change context, tools, methods, and templates are adaptable for other thematic areas. The document is a guide that underscores a conscious approach and effort to the attainment of the intent of community action planning. It is designed to accommodate thematic areas based on the intent of its use. Relevant facilitation tools for sensitisation and other aspects can be developed as required.

Documentation of the outcome of the community action planning process should be done using the CAP Documentation Templates. While this guideline is designed to support the needs assessment stage of the MTDP preparation and facilitate local-level planning for district-level input, its processes, methods, and protocols can also be adapted for developing Local Action Plans. This is per Regulation 11 of L.I. 2232, which outlines the steps for post-MTDP approval planning.



CHAPTER 02

CHAPTER TWO

The 6 Steps to a Community Action Plan

Introduction

The development of a community action plan (CAP) requires six major steps, (1) inception; (2) Situational Analysis; (3) Community engagement; (4) Plan Formulation; (5) Finalisation; and (6) Endorsement. All six steps are described in detail in the following paragraphs.

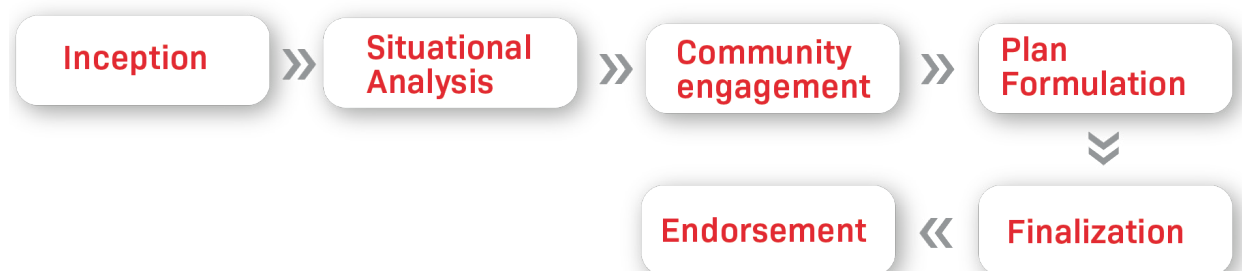


Figure 2: Community Action Planning Steps

(1) Inception

The inception stage is the first step in community action planning and is very crucial as it sets the foundation for the entire process. Two major activities should be carried out as part of the inception stage: the planning session and the community entry.

Planning Session:

Table 1: Planning Session Summary

Step	Objective	Output	Data/info	Actors
Planning Session	Outline of CAP-making processes for each community	Budget Workplan List of stakeholders Roles and responsibilities of the Plan Preparation Team (PPT) assigned. Data needs	Logistics Timelines Existing plans/ reports Local knowledge from substructures	DPCU Assembly members The Community Unit Committee members

The Planning Session could be held at the district level by the District Planning Coordinating



Unit (DPCU). The team responsible for community action planning should meet to decide on the process for preparing or updating existing Community Action Plans (CAPs). They are to review available data, including community characteristics including the culture, language, socio-economic and environmental conditions. Local leaders and key stakeholders (e.g., traditional authorities, and women's groups) should be identified and informed about the planning process.

The team should agree on dates for community engagement and validation, considering local calendars, holidays, and other constraints. They are also to organise the necessary logistics including the relevant data collection tools, transportation arrangements, and other materials.

Community Entry:

Table 2: Community Entry Summary

Step	Objective	Output	Data/info	Actors
Community Entry	Get the buy-in of community leadership	Agreement on processes	List of stakeholders	PPT
		Roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders assigned.	Language to be used in the community	Traditional Authority
		Community sketches (maps) developed		Opinion leaders
				Assembly Member(s)

On the agreed-upon day/time, a formal community entry should be carried out. This is to enhance the understanding of identified community stakeholders especially the traditional authority on the relevance of the CAPs and to attain their buy-in (see Annex 1 for a suggestion of a protocol to be used for the community entry). There should also be the identification of community representatives to be trained and empowered to support subsequent community activities. Community members should be encouraged to map out their community showing areas of interest and available facilities.



Sample 1: Community entry and data collection

(2) Situational Analysis

Situational analyses as part of community action planning processes should be carried out to appreciate the present state of the community and understand the status quo. Both primary and secondary data of the community are crucial for the situational analysis. Hence, two activities should be carried out at this stage: a field survey and a desk study.

Field Survey:

Table 3: Field Survey Summary

Step	Objective	Output	Data/info	Actors
Field Survey	Familiarisation with the community Data collection	Relevant data about the community collected	Spatial Data Survey data (Socio-economic)	PPT Community representatives / guides

The Plan Preparation Team (PPT) should visit the community to get familiar with the local environment. They could conduct a transect walk through the area, gathering data by observing and interacting with community members. This process could cover multiple routes to collect detailed spatial and socio-economic information (see Annex 2 for a sample questionnaire and a list of data needs).

- » Spatial data includes GPS coordinates for community facilities, land use, roads, water sources, and areas prone to flooding.



- » Socio-economic data covers population estimates, employment, age, gender, income levels, and community potentials.

If there are existing land use plans, the team should verify and update them with new information gathered during the walk, ensuring accuracy.



Sample 2: Indication of location of facilities through community mapping

Desk Analyses/Profiling

Table 4: Desk Analyses/Profiling Summary

Step	Objective	Output	Data/info	Actors
Situational analyses/ Profiling	Documentation of status quo	Community maps	Secondary/ existing data	PPT
		Community Profile		

After the field survey, the primary data collected on-site, along with secondary data like satellite images, should be analysed to create draft maps. These maps should be generated using GIS software (e.g., open-source software such as Quantum GIS - QGIS). The maps will help identify community challenges that have a spatial dimension, such as flood risks. The data from field visits and desk research, including reports and government archives, should be used to create a comprehensive profile of the community. Vulnerabilities like flood-prone areas or insufficient infrastructure could be mapped and layered for better understanding. The maps should follow guidelines set by the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) to ensure consistency (see Figure 3 for a sample map).

The community profile should include various factors such as social services, food security, population, infrastructure, governance, and the local economy. By comparing with other communities that have successfully managed similar challenges, the team could identify innovative solutions to address local issues.

As part of the profiling, the team should conduct preliminary assessments of needs in terms of facilities. This includes population projection to assess required facilities based on planning standards.

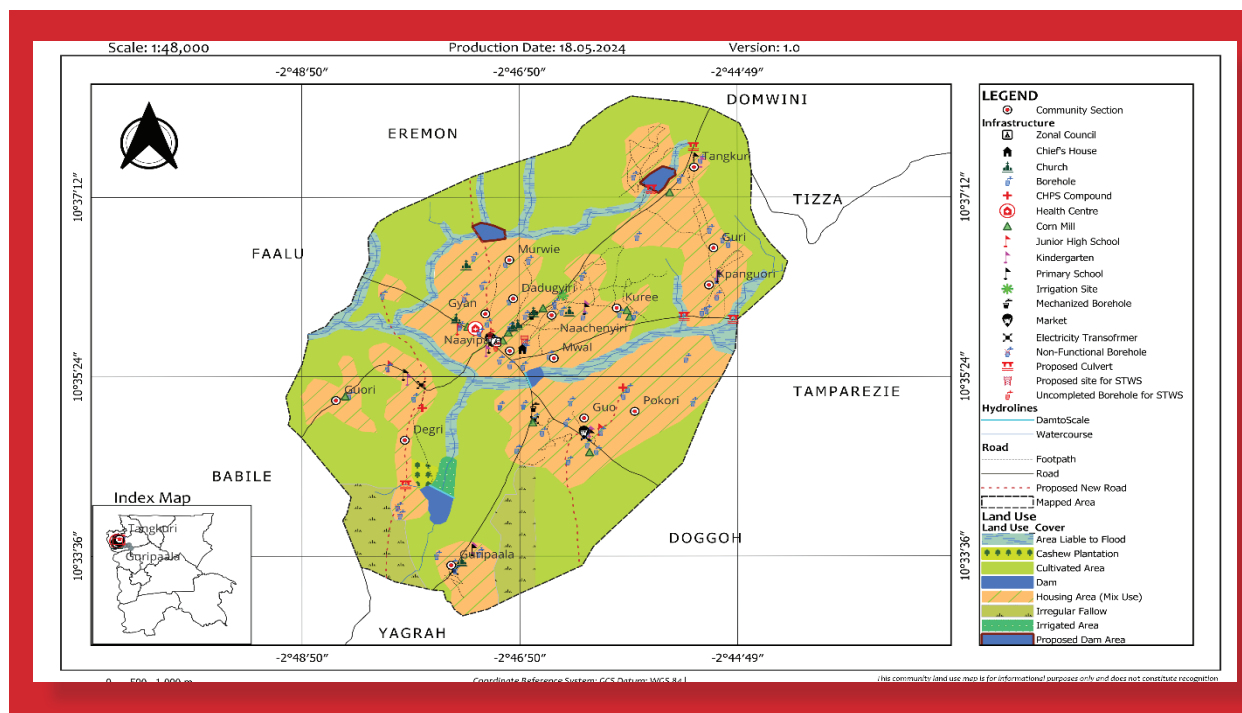


Figure 3: A sample composite Community Land Use Map showing resource areas, available facilities, and risk areas.

(3) Community engagement

Table 5: Community Engagement Summary

Step	Objective	Output	Data/info	Actors
Sensitisation	Enhanced understanding of topical issues	Stakeholders Sensitised	Thematic/ Composite Maps Factsheets Items for sensitisation	PPT



Step	Objective	Output	Data/info	Actors
Discussion and Formulation of actions	Awareness and collective identification of needs/problems and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Development of proposals to address identified challenges.	List of problems identified List possible solutions	Additional GIS Data	Community PPT
Sharing	Sharing results from groups	Shared list of community-generated priorities		Community PPT

Community engagement ensures that the action plan reflects local knowledge, addresses the community's specific needs, and promotes a sense of ownership. Engaging the community builds trust, encourages collaboration, and results in more effective and sustainable outcomes. It also empowers communities to play an active role in shaping their future development. Community leaders should work closely with the PPT to facilitate the engagement process. This includes mobilising participants and guiding the activity. For suggestions on the protocols, see Annex 4. The process follows three key steps:

a. Sensitisation:

The goal of sensitisation is to inform and engage community members about the objectives and challenges of upcoming projects. By educating residents and encouraging their participation, it helps build support and address concerns early on. Sensitisation fosters transparency, sets realistic expectations, and promotes community ownership of the plan, making collaboration during planning and implementation more effective. During sensitisation, the PPT should present findings from data analyses, observations, and situational analyses on key themes. Additional areas may be highlighted based on stakeholder priorities, such as those of the government or NGOs. See Annex 3 for details on methods for sensitisation.



Sample 3: The use of Wimmelbild for Sensitization

b. Discussion and Formulation of Action Plans:

Community discussions should be inclusive, culturally respectful, and tailored to the community's specific needs. The goal is to make decisions on the key issues identified during sensitisation. Engaging community members in these discussions allows them to share experiences, collaborate on solutions, and build resilience. These discussions could involve creating smaller groups to encourage focused interaction, especially considering power dynamics, gender, and cultural sensitivities. For example, forming groups for men, women, and youth (see Annex 4 for structured protocol) helps ensure everyone's voices are heard.





Sample 4: Group discussion (Women Group) facilitated by a planning officer

Each group should be encouraged to first share their personal experiences regarding the identified issues and brainstorm for solutions; keeping in mind best practices from other communities. Groups should be encouraged to think about the impact of potential solutions, assess risks, and propose actions, such as improving water management, disaster preparedness, or building local infrastructure. They should also reflect on how the community itself can contribute to these solutions by identifying local strengths and resources. This include leveraging on community activities such as festivals.



Sample 5: Documentation and harmonization of community issues and interventions facilitated by a planning officer

c. *Sharing/plenary:*

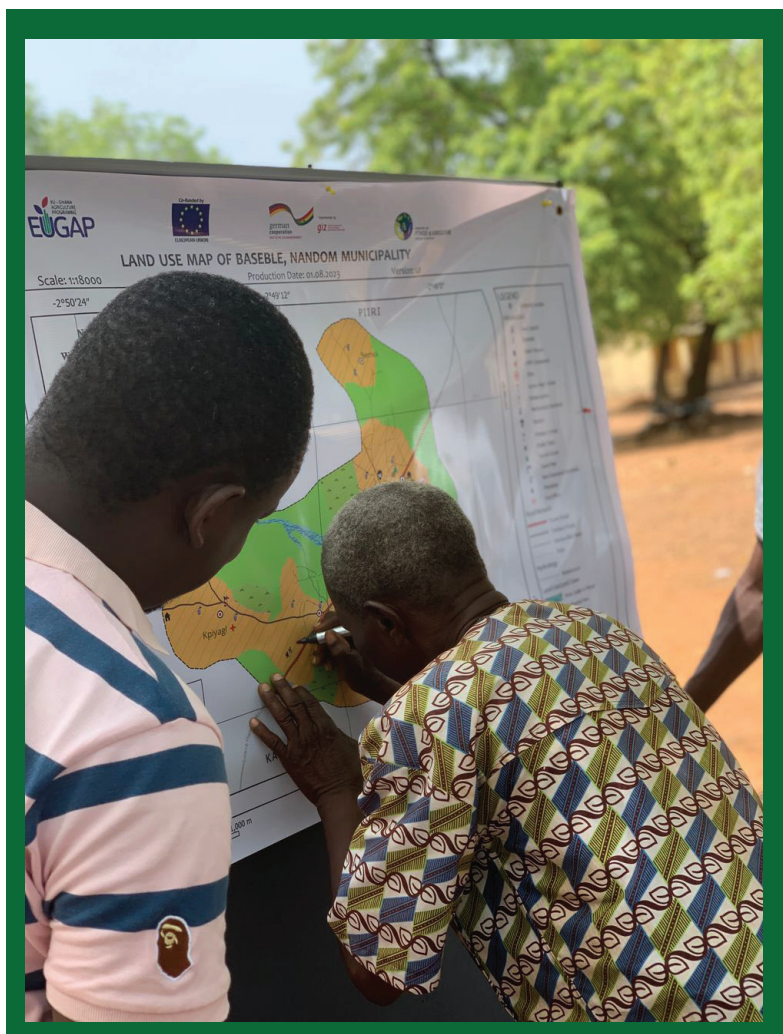
After group discussions, the entire community should reconvene, where group representatives would summarise their discussions. Each group's solutions should then be shared, as the community is encouraged to reflect, ask questions, and provide comments. A community-appointed individual would facilitate this step, with the PPT documenting the proceedings. Although all solutions are presented, the community must prioritise actions. See Annex 6 for suggested methods for prioritisation.



Sample 6: Presentation of Needs and Interventions

For solutions with a spatial component, maps should be used to mark intervention locations. For example, if the community chooses to restore degraded land, the area for reforestation should be marked on the map and agreed upon by all. When facilities (like boreholes or health centres) are proposed, planning officers could give technical advice on siting, using planning standards, accessibility guidelines, and landscape planning principles. The final Community Action Plan should cover a timeline of four years.





Sample 7 Indication of location of facilities through community mapping

(4) Plan Preparation

Table 6: Plan Preparation Summary

Step	Objective	Output	Data/info	Actors
Plan preparation	To develop content for community action plan	Draft community action plan (including community land use maps and a list of challenges/potentials and solutions with accompanying costs/budget and their sources)	Data from community Information on costs of actions/projects	PPT

After the community engagement, the Plan Preparation Team (PPT) should develop the Community Action Plan. This document should outline the major challenges and the community's suggested solutions. The Community Action Plan should be structured according to the guidelines (see Annex 8). A key element of the plan will be the updated community land use maps, which should be finalised with inputs from the engagements. The maps and land use plans should be reviewed by the Spatial Planning Committee to ensure they meet planning standards and zoning regulations. For example, if the community plans to build new schools, the infrastructure must comply with relevant guidelines.



Sample 8: Updates and finalization of plans by PPT.

Each solution should be assessed for feasibility and accompanied by an indicative cost estimate. For instance, if drought is a problem, the community action plan could propose installing boreholes and an irrigation system, with quotes provided for the costs. Additionally, the community action plan should undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to identify potential environmental impacts (details in Annex 9). Any significant findings from the SEA could be discussed during the validation stage if adjustments to the plan are needed. At this stage, decentralised units (e.g., Education, health, etc) should be consulted on the proposed interventions. This fosters further alignment of plans among decentralised departments. The PPT should document any areas of non-alignment to be shared with the communities during the validation stage. Requested interventions should also be reviewed through the lenses of planning standards and concepts like service provision, range, and thresholds of service and facility provisions. These concepts underscore the kind and level of facilities and infrastructure a particular community can feasibly have.



(5) Finalisation

The draft community action plan should be finalised and prepared for validation and community adoption.

Table 7: Finalisation Summary

Step	Objective	Output	Data/info	Actors
Validation	Validation of the community action plan	Inputs from the community for the finalisation of the community action plan if any		Community PPT
Community Adoption	Acceptance and adoption of the community action plan	Adopted community action plan		Community PPT

Validation: During the validation process, the draft Community Action Plan should be reviewed with the community and other stakeholders to ensure the proposed interventions align with their broader goals, values, and priorities. The PPT should present the plan, highlighting feasibility, costs, and limitations to manage expectations. The community participants should then be divided into smaller groups to critically assess the plan, discussing the potential impacts, feasibility, and constraints. Afterward, group representatives should present their feedback to the entire community, facilitated by the community leader. The PPT should take note of the comments for possible incorporation into the plan. If no significant changes are suggested, the community should accept the plan. If major revisions are needed, the PPT will adjust the plan accordingly.



Sample 9: Validation of Plan with stakeholders

Community Adoption: Community adoption is the final step in the preparation of the Community Action Plan (CAP), where the community should formally agree to support and implement the plan. This process involves consensus-building, with the community and other relevant stakeholders expressing their commitment to the plan based on available resources and capacities. In some cases, formal endorsement by community leaders and the establishment of by-laws could make the community action plan binding to all members. The full protocol for the validation exercise is detailed in Annex 7.

(6) Endorsement of Plans

Table 8: Endorsement of Plans Summary

Step	Objective	Output	Data/info	Actors
Endorsement of plans	Seek the statutory endorsement	Endorsed community action plan	Community action plan document	Community District Assembly

The prepared plans should be subjected to final consideration at the level of the District Assemblies. The DPCU should finally consider the plans developed after which the secretariat of the DPCU, SPC and the Coordinating Director will sign off the plans. Relevant stakeholders like the Traditional Authority, youth representatives of communities, and assembly members may as well sign the document. A copy of endorsed plans should be given to the community and made available or displayed at other places including the DPCU offices and Public Data Rooms of the Assemblies (per Section 47 of Act 925) where possible.



Sample 10: Validation of Plan with stakeholders



CHAPTER

03

CHAPTER THREE

Implementation of the Community Action Plan

Introduction

The primary goal of the comprehensive Community Action Planning process is to identify and implement transformative actions using participatory methods. While this goal is clear, it's crucial to emphasise that effective planning must not only focus on identifying solutions but also ensure that by the end of implementation, these solutions achieve the desired transformative outcomes.

Promotion of CAPs

Once the community action plan is finalised, promoting it and its key interventions is crucial to ensuring the community understands the initiatives and how they contribute to local development and align with the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). Various channels can be used for this, including district, regional and national institutional websites to reach wider audiences, development partner platforms for further promotion, and assembly meetings to present the plan to local authorities and representatives. Additionally, local notice boards in communities could offer a simple and effective way to keep residents informed about the plan.

Funding of CAPs

Once the plan is endorsed, it becomes a vital tool for attracting funding from various sources, including government agencies, NGOs, and international organisations, especially for large-scale interventions. The first step is therefore to explore what

communities can do themselves. These are interventions in the plan that only require communal efforts (for example, the tree planting and afforestation initiatives require less or no external support). Other interventions that are capital intensive and require external support, they could be prioritised at the council level, ensuring they are integrated into the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) and Annual Action Plan (AAP) for effective resource allocation. Government funding plays a significant role, but other organisations may also implement specific projects based on community proposals.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system plays a critical role in the success of the plan by ensuring continuous feedback and adaptation. It tracks the progress of implementing the plan and allows for necessary adjustments to keep it on course. The M&E system evaluates the broader economic, social, and environmental impacts, using data collected in the plan as a baseline for both short- and long-term evaluations.

Tailored specifically to the community, the M&E system fits local needs and becomes an integral part of the community's self-reflection and improvement processes. It catalyses change by aligning with local practices and driving continuous improvements. Additionally, the system assesses the effectiveness of CAP implementation, ensuring both past actions and future planning are informed by concrete results.

Lastly, M&E helps document successful



strategies and best practices that can be shared with other communities, fostering broader sustainable development efforts.

Review of CAPs

To help ensure the long-term success of community initiatives, it's desired to hold regular town hall meetings during the implementation phase. These meetings keep everyone informed and clarify

responsibilities. After the first year, a survey could be done to gather feedback from the community, while a more detailed review after five years will assess long-term effects like income, food security, and well-being. The results from these reviews should be shared in future town hall meetings, keeping everyone involved and encouraging feedback, fostering collective ownership and responsibility.



ANNEXES

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Community Entry Protocol

S/N	ACTIVITY	FUNCTION/DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Mobilisation of community (incl. opinion leaders)	Traditional heads are informed about the community entry and the appropriate date and time are agreed upon. Mobilisation is led by substructures especially the assembly members of the Area, and supported by community representative(s) on the PPT	Sub-District Structures
2	A visit to greet the community leaders	Upon the PPT's arrival in the community at the scheduled date and time, the Assembly member or Council Representative leads the team to visit the chief and/or landlord as part of the established protocol. This initial visit serves to introduce the community action planning process and provide an overview of the community's role. It also allows for the gathering of early insights into key issues. During this interaction, community leadership is sensitised about the objectives of the CAP through discussions rooted in local lived experiences. The PPT addresses any initial concerns or questions in smaller, more focused groups. A local interpreter, such as the community Rep on the PPT, Council Rep, Assembly member, or a linguist familiar with the community's dialect, may be enlisted to facilitate communication and ensure understanding.	Sub-District Structures and PPT
3	Meeting with other community representatives	The Traditional Head leads the PPT to meet the community representatives who would have gathered.	PPT, opinion leaders, and Community Members
4	Opening Prayer and other courtesies	A prayer or other community-specific courtesy is observed to start the session.	Community Member

S/N	ACTIVITY	FUNCTION/DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY
5	Introduction/ Welcome Address	A welcome address is given by the Traditional Head or a designated person after which the PPT will take turns to introduce themselves. The Traditional Head reiterates the purpose of the gathering. The introduction and welcoming enhance familiarity and rapport	Traditional Head/ Designated person and PPT
6	Discussions on challenges and the need for the CAP	Discuss challenges indicated in the earlier section of this protocol just to put the discussions into the right perspective¹. The PPT talks about the community-level interventions flowing from the discussions on the challenges and the need for CAPs at this point. DPO The Development Planning Officer talks about the importance of planning practices in the course of district planning and the aspect of Community Action Planning to enhance livelihood and environmental protection in the community. PPO The Physical planner throws light on land use mapping, stressing the need to collect data on community resources as a first step to community action planning. It should be made clear that there will be a guided process for the community to generate their community action plans; a document to guide their community development for the plan period.	Sub-District Structures Structures and PPT ²

¹ Introduce the discussion in relation to the community's own experience. Using climate change as an example, relate to changing rainfall patterns. (Potentially affecting food security), temperature rise, extinction of indigenous species, availability of water, migration, and reduction in livelihood options

² PPT. (To be constituted by the Assembly from the DPCU members and any other person as may be required).



S/N	ACTIVITY	FUNCTION/DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY
7	Questions and Answers	There is an open discussion on the issues raised to foster understanding. The council rep/assembly member may moderate this session for feedback and concerns. Efforts should be made to solicit comments and inputs from women, youth, and other vulnerable groups.	PPT
8	Rounding up and closure	A closing remark is taken from the Traditional Head on their understanding and support for the CAP The subsequent start of the processes is made known to the gathering. On behalf of the PPT, the Decentralised Structures (rep) or Lead Facilitator thanks the Traditional leaders for their participation and buy-ins for the CAPs and solicits their unflinching support during the implementation	Traditional Head, and PPT
9	Closing Prayer and other courtesies	A prayer or other community-specific courtesy is observed to close the session.	Community Member

Annex 2: Data Needs

Spatial Data	Survey Data (Socio-economic)
Location of Available Facilities	Demographics – Population – Religious groups – Ethnicity
Cultural relevant resources	Culture – Historical Information – Cultural significance and related benefits
Broad land uses	Economic – Agriculture – Local industries – Community trading patterns – Tourism potentials

Spatial Data	Survey Data (Socio-economic)
Risk areas (vulnerabilities)	Environment – Natural resources – WASH systems – Settlement patterns – Infrastructure (roads, telecom, dams, etc)
Degraded areas	Social – Education – Health (including disease prevalence)
	Governance – Chieftaincy systems – Local governance structure – Recognised groups – Conflicts

Note: To the extent possible, existing data from secondary sources should be used and validated during the interaction with the community.



Annex 3: Methods for community sensitisation

Method	Explanation
Community Meetings	Nature: Community meetings enable direct engagement with residents, providing essential information on issues like climate adaptation and fostering open discussions on community-specific challenges. How to Implement: • Schedule regular community meetings with the involvement of local leaders. • Present key information on relevant topics, such as climate change adaptation strategies. • Encourage input from diverse community members. • Facilitate open discussions and provide feedback on concerns raised. Benefits: These meetings build trust, raise awareness of important issues, and encourage active community participation, leading to more informed decisions and fostering development interventions effectively.
Storytelling and Traditional Knowledge Sharing	Nature: This approach leverages cultural narratives and ancestral wisdom to discuss development issues like climate adaptation, making the information more relatable and meaningful to the community. How to Implement: • Encourage community elders and members to share climate-related stories and traditional practices. • Integrate these narratives into discussions on current climate challenges. • Use storytelling during meetings or community events to pass down climate knowledge. • Highlight the connection between ancestral practices and modern adaptation strategies. Benefits: Storytelling enriches climate discussions with cultural depth, making solutions more relatable. It strengthens community bonds, reinforces cultural identity, and helps align modern adaptation efforts with traditional wisdom.

Method	Explanation
Community Champions	Nature: Community champions are influential individuals who promote climate adaptation and resilience efforts within their communities, leading by example and encouraging others to participate. How to Implement: • Identify individuals passionate about climate resilience. • Offer training on climate issues and adaptation strategies. • Provide ongoing support to help them spread climate messages. • Involve them in local discussions, workshops, and initiatives. • Use their influence to inspire broader community engagement in climate actions. Benefits: Empowering community champions fosters local leadership and enhances climate awareness. Their role as motivators increase participation, promotes shared responsibility, and strengthens collective action for climate adaptation.
Community Art and Theatre	Nature: Community art and theater provide creative avenues to engage people in climate adaptation, using performances and exhibitions to illustrate the impact of climate change and potential solutions. How to Implement: • Organise theater performances that dramatise climate-related themes, showing past, present, and future community scenarios. • Host art exhibitions to visually represent climate impacts and adaptation strategies. • Involve community members in the creative process to enhance participation and ownership. • Use these platforms to initiate discussions and encourage dialogue on climate adaptation. • Plan cultural events that make climate issues relatable and emotionally resonant. Benefits: Community art and theater make climate adaptation accessible and engaging, bridging language and literacy barriers. By appealing to emotions and offering a participatory platform, these mediums encourage deeper community involvement, inspire action, and foster a sense of connection to climate resilience efforts.



Method	Explanation
Pictorial Presentation through Maps	Nature: Maps serve as a powerful, visual tool for climate adaptation sensitisation, helping communities understand their climate vulnerabilities and the associated risks. They provide clear, tangible representations of the areas most affected by climate change and the available adaptation strategies. How to Implement: • Use community land use maps as part of sensitisation sessions to identify vulnerable areas and natural resources. • Facilitate interactive mapping exercises where residents mark areas of concern and share local knowledge. • Develop and present maps that show planned climate adaptation actions and how they relate to the community's needs. • Organise workshops or community meetings where residents can contribute to refining maps based on their lived experiences. Benefits: Maps make complex climate data more accessible, helping community members visualise their risks and understand the importance of local resources. This visual approach fosters active engagement, informed decision-making, and a sense of ownership, ensuring that the community is prepared to respond to climate impacts.

Annex 4: Protocols for community engagement

Sensitisation

SN	Activity/Description	Responsibility
1	Words of welcome	Assembly member
2	Prayer	Volunteer
3	Introduction of visitors and key members of the community	PPT
4	a) Introduction to CAPs b) introduction to relevant topics (e.g., climate change, economic challenges, health situation, migration, security) c) presentation of the draft map d) validation of draft map	PPT
5	Q&A session	PPT

SN	Activity/Description	Responsibility
6	a) Introduction of group work b) Formation of groups - Min. 3 groups: 1 group (men), 1 group (women); 1 group (youth aged 15-21); - Possibly add more groups based on ethnic attributes. - Keep groups below 30 people; if necessary, add more groups - To consider: Need 1 facilitator for each group	PPT

Discussion and Formulation

SN	Activity/Description	Responsibility
1	Introduction to exercise	Group facilitator
2	Brainstorming on challenges and solutions according to topics introduced during the front presentation above	Group facilitator

Sharing

SN	Activity/Description	Responsibility
1	Each group shares its findings including challenges and solutions	Group facilitator
2	Jointly the identified solutions are prioritised	Group facilitator
3	a) Summary of activity b) Outlook next steps c) Closing remarks	PPT, Assembly member
4	Closing prayer	Volunteer



Annex 5: Methods for discussion

Method	Explanation
Town Hall Meetings	Nature: Town hall meetings create inclusive platforms where the entire community can discuss climate adaptation openly. Held in central locations, they bring together a diverse group of residents, offering opportunities for dialogue about climate resilience and adaptation strategies. How to Implement: • Organise regular town hall meetings in accessible locations, ensuring all community segments are represented. • Facilitate discussions by presenting key climate information relevant to the local context. • Provide opportunities for residents to voice concerns, share perspectives, and propose adaptation ideas. • Use visual aids, such as maps or charts, to enhance understanding of climate risks and proposed actions. • Involve facilitators or community leaders to guide the discussion and encourage active participation from all attendees. Benefits: These meetings foster a sense of collective responsibility for climate challenges, promote informed decision-making, and ensure that community priorities are addressed in adaptation strategies. Town hall forums also enhance transparency, build trust, and enable residents to take an active role in shaping climate responses.



Method	Explanation
Focus Group Discussions	Nature: Focus group discussions are intimate, targeted engagements where smaller groups of community members gather based on shared interests, demographics, or expertise. These discussions allow for a deeper exploration of climate adaptation issues, to address localised challenges and perspectives. For example, farmers may focus on agricultural resilience, while youth might discuss innovative adaptation strategies. How to Implement: • Organise discussions around key topics (e.g., agriculture, youth, women, etc.) to ensure relevance. • Assign a facilitator for each group to guide the discussion and keep it focused. • Designate a spokesperson and a recorder within each group to summarise and report back. • Use flexible formats (structured questions, storytelling, or interactive activities) based on the group's preferences. • Validate data such as community land use maps and socio-economic information during the discussions to ensure accuracy and relevance. Benefits: Focus group discussions offer a safe, inclusive space for community members to contribute their insights and validate data, fostering a sense of ownership and active participation in climate adaptation efforts. The feedback gathered helps shape tailored, context-specific adaptation plans that address the unique needs of various community segments, promoting collaboration and empowering local voices in the decision-making process.



Method	Explanation
Community Forums	Nature: Community forums, held either in person or online, provide continuous platforms for residents to engage in climate adaptation conversations. These forums facilitate the exchange of information, experiences, and concerns related to climate challenges and possible solutions. Online forums offer flexibility and greater accessibility, enabling participation at one's convenience. They are moderated to ensure respectful, productive dialogue and the sharing of expertise, resources, and guidance. How to Implement: • Set up online forums (via social media, dedicated websites, or messaging apps) to ensure wider accessibility. • Regularly schedule in-person community forums in central locations for those without internet access or for localised discussions. • Employ skilled moderators to guide conversations, ensure relevance, and maintain a respectful tone. • Provide expert input and resources during forums to help guide discussions and answer community queries. • Create a platform for residents to share solutions, challenges, and encouragement, fostering collective problem-solving and support. Benefits: Community forums promote a sense of collective learning and empowerment, as members share knowledge and support each other. They foster a collaborative environment where residents become active contributors to climate adaptation efforts, helping to disseminate expert knowledge while building a resilient, informed community. The flexibility of online platforms ensures broad participation, while in-person forums provide an opportunity for more intimate and direct engagement.



Method	Explanation
Community Mapping	Nature: Community mapping visualises local climate vulnerabilities and adaptation opportunities. Residents actively mark key areas like flood zones or water sources on interactive maps, fostering engagement and ensuring local concerns are captured. How to Implement: • Host mapping workshops with physical or digital maps. • Engage participants in marking climate risks and resources. • Use local leaders or experts to guide and interpret the process. • Integrate mapping results into adaptation plans. Benefits: Mapping empowers residents, integrates local knowledge, and ensures context-specific adaptation strategies. It promotes ownership and enhances collaborative resilience-building.
Participatory Vulnerability Assessments	Nature: Participatory vulnerability assessments engage community members in identifying and prioritising climate risks. Residents collaborate to explore local vulnerabilities, impacts, and potential adaptation strategies, enriching the process with their knowledge. How to Implement: • Conduct workshops or community discussions where participants map out climate risks and concerns. • Use participatory tools like surveys, interviews, or focus groups to gather insights. • Involve local leaders to guide and validate the process. • Analyse findings to develop tailored adaptation plans. Benefits: These assessments empower communities by fostering ownership and collective responsibility. They provide a tailored, context-specific foundation for effective climate adaptation plans, promoting active participation and long-term resilience-building.



Annex 6: Methods for prioritisation

Methods	Explanation
Community Visioning	Nature: Community visioning encourages community members to dream and plan for their ideal future. It provides a long-term perspective and helps identify challenges that stand in the way of realising that vision. How to Implement: • Facilitate visioning sessions where community members describe their aspirations for the community in the future. • Discuss the key elements that would make the community more prosperous, harmonious, and sustainable. • Analyse how current problems and challenges hinder the realisation of the community's vision. • Prioritise problems that align with the community's desired future state. Benefits: Community visioning inspires a sense of purpose and direction. It helps prioritise problems that directly affect the community's path toward its envisioned future.
Budget Allocation	Nature: In cases where resources are limited, budget allocation exercises help determine how to distribute available funds among various problems. It ensures that the most pressing issues receive adequate attention. How to Implement: • Provide community members with a hypothetical budget, representing available resources. • Ask community members to allocate portions of the budget to different problems based on their perceived importance. • Calculate the allocations and prioritise problems based on the highest budget allocations. Benefits: Budget allocation exercises provide a practical way to address resource constraints and prioritise problems according to the community's financial capacity.

Methods	Explanation
Pairwise Comparison	Nature: Pairwise comparison allows community members to directly compare solutions and express their preferences. It helps identify solutions that are consistently ranked as more important. How to Implement: • Provide community members with pairs of solutions to compare and ask them to choose which solution is more important in each pair. • Collect data on the number of times each solution is chosen as more important. • Prioritise solutions based on the frequency of being ranked higher. Benefits: Pairwise comparison offers a participatory and democratic way to prioritise solutions. It ensures that the community's collective preferences are considered.
Community Scorecards	Nature: Community scorecards introduce quantifiable indicators to assess the performance of various aspects of community life. They help identify areas where improvements are needed. How to Implement: • Develop a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) related to different issues (e.g., healthcare, education, infrastructure). • Collect data or community feedback on the current status of each KPI. • Rate the performance of each indicator and identify those that receive the lowest ratings. Benefits: Community scorecards provide a structured way to measure and prioritise problems. They offer a data-driven approach to decision-making and resource allocation.
Voting and Ranking	Nature: Voting and ranking exercises provide a straightforward way for community members to express their preferences and collectively prioritise problems. How to Implement: • Provide community members with tokens, stickers, or voting cards. • Display a list of problems on a board or chart. • Ask community members to allocate their tokens or stickers to the problems they believe are most important or to rank the problems in order of priority. Benefits: Voting and ranking exercises are easy to understand and facilitate quick identification of the most pressing issues based on community preferences



Annex 7: Protocols for Validation

Presentation of Developed CAPs

SN	Activity/Description	Responsibility
1	Words of welcome	Assembly member
2	Prayer	Volunteer
3	Introduction of visitors and key members of the community	PPT
4	a) Brief Introduction to CAPs b) Review of outcomes from previous engagement c) Presentation of developed CAPs d) Presentation of Final Land Use map	PPT
5	a) Introduction of group work b) Formation of groups – groups established during community engagement can be maintained. ○ To consider: Need 1 facilitator for each group	PPT
6	Presentation and Discussion of group ideas/concerns to the PPT	Community Leader

Group Discussion

SN	Activity/Description	Responsibility
1	Introduction to exercise	Group facilitator
2	Reviewing proposed actions and critically analysing their impacts/feasibility/limitations.	Group facilitator
3	Outlining possible measures to the impacts/feasibility or limitations identified.	Group facilitator

Sharing

SN	Activity/Description	Responsibility
1	Each group shares their findings including impacts/feasibility and limitations of proposed CAPs and possible measures identified.	Group facilitator
2	a) Summary of activity b) Outlook next steps c) Closing remarks	PPT, Assembly member

3	Closing prayer	Volunteer
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Annex 8: Format (structure) of the CAP document

Refer to the CAP Documentation Template and Guide

Annex 9: Strategic Environmental Assessment

Refer to the CAP Documentation Template and Guide



The background is a solid red color with a pattern of overlapping, wavy, organic shapes in a slightly darker shade of red, creating a textured, liquid-like effect.

TEMPLATES

TEMPLATES

Template for the collection of the location of facilities and resources

Waypoint Number	Facility Name	Coordinates X	Coordinates Y

Template for the collection of socio-economic data

	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
1	Name of Community	
2	Do you have a Chief (Yes/No) if not who is the head of the community?	
3	What is the hierarchy of the Chieftaincy system of the community?	
4	Have you experienced any form of conflict (yes/No)	
5	Availability of Boreholes (Dams)	
6	What are the Available ethnic groups/tribes in the community?	
7	List of ethnic groups in the Community	
8	What are the types of religions in the community?	
9	Availability of CHPS Compound/Health Center (Yes/No)	
10	What are the prevalences of diseases recorded in the community?	
11	In your estimation how many are you in the community?	
12	What is the community trading pattern?	
13	Do you have tourist sites/potentials in the community?	



Template for community engagement

S/N	Nature of the Problem/ Development Issue	Effects on the Community/ Locality	Recommended solution/ Intervention/ Activity	Location/ Community	Community contribution	External support/ funding	Priority (Rank in order of 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th ...)
1							

*For each group no more than 3 problems/solutions should be identified; With three a minimum of three groups per community this results in 9 problems/solutions

CAP GUIDELINES

