

**Report on feasibility assessment for Proposed Densu Delta Ramsar wetland
education centre**

Prepared by:

Emmanuel Nii Attram Taye

Preamble

This report is a second report covering the undertaking of further feasibility assessments for the proposed Densu delta Ramsar wetland education centre. The report covers the outcomes of a stakeholder engagement meeting, meetings with chiefs and community leaders in the Densu delta area and visitations to school in the Densu area. During community visits, it became apparent that despite efforts to curb the destruction of the wetland in favor of settlement and industry, encroachment and degradation continue to occur. The ongoing degradation of the wetland makes this initiative a necessity now more than ever. Fortunately, the communities and leaders have embraced the initiative and declared their support. What remains is to increase awareness creation and education efforts as a first step using various means and media.

Stakeholder engagement meeting

The meeting sought to collaboratively identify and plan the activities, particularly the next steps towards the establishment of the Centre. The meeting aimed to prioritize proposed actions and establish a clear vision for the Centre, which aligns with the conservation needs of the wetlands and surrounding communities.

The meeting brought together stakeholders from government and private sector organizations as well as community representatives to develop a shared vision that reflects the conservation priorities for the wetlands and surrounding communities.

A swot analysis was carried out to explore the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from the stakeholder's perspective. Eager participants shared valuable insights and experiences.

A key issue that was discussed at length during the meeting was the sighting of the wetland centre. This saw contributions from various angles and perspectives. It was agreed that a site visit would be organized for stakeholders present prior to concluding the matter with a decision.

In attendance at the meeting was a popular cartoonist Tilapia, who was kind to graphically capture the situation at the Densu wetland with the captivating carton image below.



The minutes from the stakeholder meeting is attached, providing more details on the proceedings of the meeting.

Visit to Solo Forest and waterfall

During the stakeholder meeting (minutes of the meeting is attached) the Solo Forest was mentioned as among suitable sites for the centre. The team thus embarked on a trip to visit the forest to review its suitability for siting of the centre. We were joined by the assembly

member of the area Mr Emmanuel Aryeetey who was present at the stakeholder meeting. We explored the forest with its adjoining mystical water source.

It was shown than the waterfall in the forest is a source of water for domestic use for the surrounding communities.

Interactions with the caretaker revealed that parts of the forest have been sold and the trees removed for settlement. He called for help in ensuring the conservation of the forest against encroachment and degradation and welcomed the idea of establishing the centre in the forest, noting that the presence of the centre will help conserve the wetland and the forest which falls within the Densu catchment area.

Meeting with chiefs and opinion leaders

The primary objective of the meeting was to present the proposed sites for the centre to the community leaders, solicit their comments, and seek their consent or feedback. Additionally, the meeting aimed to reinforce their commitment to the initiative and ensure their continued buy-in and support.

A detailed overview of the proposed locations was shared, highlighting the strategic importance, accessibility, and suitability of each site. The stakeholders provided valuable feedback regarding the suitability of the sites, noting specific considerations for environmental, logistical, and operational factors.

Efforts were made to reaffirm the importance of stakeholder involvement and collaboration in the successful implementation of the project.

The leaders expressed their support for the initiative, acknowledging its potential to address key community and developmental goals. They asked that as part of establishing the centre,

the ecotourism potential of the wetland and adjoining marine areas be developed to provide livelihood opportunities for the youth in the community.

Overall, the meetings successfully fulfilled the objectives of presenting the desired sites, gathering stakeholder feedback, and reinforcing support for the initiative. While certain concerns require further investigation, the stakeholders demonstrated a strong commitment to the project, providing a solid foundation for moving forward. Future engagements will focus on resolving outstanding issues such as the responsibility of running the centre, sources of funding and the benefits to the community, and ensuring smooth progress toward implementation.

School visits

The timing of the undertaking coincided with the vacation period for many schools. The team was however able to visit the hill star school after their examination and prior to vacation. We also had interactions with the administrators of other schools in the delta ahead of the next academic term.

It is worth noting that some of the students of Hill Star that we interacted with formerly had now advanced along the academic year and some had graduated and gone of to senior high school. Those who remain which were part of the group from the previous year remember much of what we discussed to our delight. Their enthusiasm to see us spurred the conversation and raised a curiosity in the new ones which were experiencing us for the first time.

We explained the importance of conserving the wetland and touched on the need for conservation along the flyway. We had a question-and-answer session offering further

explanations on wetlands conservation. Finally, we tried to identify some common birds that are observed around the school.

As part of the World Wetlands Day celebration, outreach efforts extended beyond classroom engagement to include students from two local primary schools. This collaborative initiative, organized with support from the Ghana Wildlife Society and the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, introduced students to the practical use of scoping equipment and guided them in identifying common bird species. The event also served as an educational platform to raise awareness about the ecological importance of wetlands and the biodiversity they support.



Mr Acquah (site manager for Densu wetland) giving a talk during the stakeholder engagement meeting.



Figure 1: Mr Emmanuel Taye explaining the purpose of the SWOT analysis prior to the breakout session.



Figure 2: Care taker of Solo Forest giving the team a warm welcome.



Figure 3: The caretaker explaining the mystery behind the waterfall in the forest

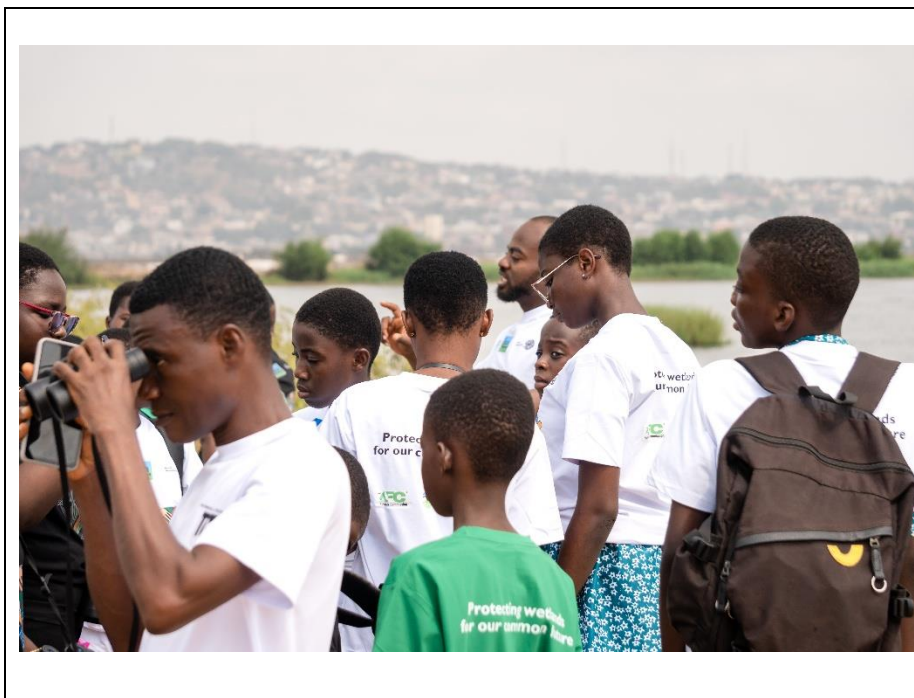


Figure 4: Field activities with school children to mark the celebration of World Wetlands Day

