



Coconut Oil Production: A Solution to Empower Women and Protect Biodiversity

By empowering women and organizing farmers to produce fair trade and organic Virgin Coconut Oil, the project aims to curb deforestation and durably manage natural resources, by and for the most vulnerable communities.



Funded by:

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Partners

Created in 2001, Noé is a non-profit organization whose mission is to safeguard biodiversity around the world. Noé's **Man & Nature program** aims at developing green value chains in and around Protected Areas. This program operates by providing technical and financial support to local NGOs that implement projects combining community development with biodiversity conservation.

Team on the ground

Noé supports the association **WAPCA (West African Primate Conservation Action)** in Ghana. Created in 2001, WAPCA aims to conserve **Endangered primate species in Western Africa**. As of 2012, WAPCA has been working with the local communities and the **Ankasa-Tano CREMA** to preserve the Kwabre-Tanoé forest.

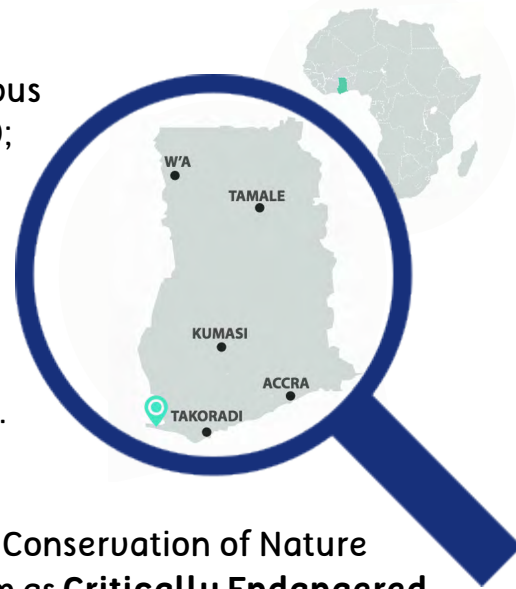
SFC (Savannah Fruit Company) is a Ghana based company focused on the sustainable production and export of high-quality oil to international edible and cosmetic markets. SFC practices socially and environmentally responsible business and ensures the maximization of value addition at source.



The Kwabré-Tanoé forest and its exceptional biodiversity

The transboundary tropical rainforest is home to **four amazing primates** that are on the verge of **extinction**:

- Miss Waldron's Red Colobus (*Piliocolobus waldronae*);
- White-naped Mangabey (*Cercocebus lunulatus*);
- White-thighed Colobus (*Colobus vellerosus*);
- Roloway Monkey (*Cercopithecus roloway*).



The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed two of them as **Critically Endangered** although it is considered by most that Miss Waldron's Red Colobus might sadly already be extinct.

The Kwabre-Tanoé swamp-forest supplies numerous **ecosystem services to the local communities** which rely on Nature for their livelihoods.

Lacking sustainable income-generating activities, local communities struggle to manage their own natural resources over time.

The fate of the Kwabre-Tanoé forest is at stake, and unless action is taken, the local communities will become increasingly vulnerable and numerous species will be facing extinction.

85%

of the original cover of the Upper Guinean Rainforest has disappeared due to logging, clearing for agriculture, mining, and charcoal production (Landscapes of West Africa, 2016).

20–30%

would be the increase in agricultural production if women had the same access to agricultural resources as men (FAO, 2014).

10%

is the proportion of aid for agriculture, forestry, and fishing that goes to women (FAO, 2011).

A comprehensive solution to halt biodiversity loss

WAPCA, in partnership with Noé and SFC, develops coconut value chain on the outskirts of the Kwabre-Tanoé forest by setting up processing centres and supporting small-scale farmers towards the protection of the forest:



Sustainable and fair development:

Green value chains certified Organic and Fair for Life ensure benefits to the producers as they commit to:

- Sustain healthy ecosystems with organic agricultural practices;
- A minimum floor price and an additional premium, fair working conditions, and respect of human rights;
- Improve the local impact by investing in a 'Fair Trade Fund'.

Women empowerment:

West African women face disproportionate challenges: land tenure, discrimination, sexual exploitation... Giving women the means and opportunity to improve their income by forming UCO processor groups, grants them the ability to lift themselves out of poverty, along with their families and communities.



Biodiversity Conservation:

The Conservation Agreement signed between the community-organization (Ankasa-Tano CREMA) and the company (SFC) states the commitment of the CREMA to preserve the forest, whereas SFC supports them with a Conservation Premium.

Impact of the project

At least **300 coconut farmers** and **30 women processors** trained and certified Organic and FFL, benefiting from an increased income;

1 Virgin Coconut Oil processing centre built;

13,300 ha of forest protected and sustainably managed by the communities and **30,000** trees planted;

2 funds created to support projects:

- A Conservation Fund for conservation actions (patrols, reforestation, etc.);
- A Fair Trade Fund for community projects (education, social protection, sanitation).

How can CREMAs contribute to biodiversity conservation ?

Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) are a community-based governance mechanism where communities are responsible for the management of natural resources. The CREMA holds the power to manage its natural resources after submitting a constitution to the local government authority.

The example of the Ankasa-Tano CREMA

In 2014, 12 communities concerned about the illegal logging in the forest decided to face the problem together:



The CREMA membership is composed of all members of the participating communities;



Each community elects a **CRMC: Community Resource Management Committee** to determine activities and policies for the CREMA at the community level;



A member of each CRMC is selected to sit on the **CEC: Community Executive Committee**. The CEC is held accountable for the implementation of CREMA policies, including patrols, reforestation and awareness raising.



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Contact us

Savannah Fruits Company

info@savannahfruits.com
www.savannahfruits.com

Cécile RENIER

Noé, Programme manager Ghana
cecile.renier@manandnature.org
www.manandnature.org

Andrea DEMPSEY

WAPCA, Programme manager
andrea.dempsey@wapca.org
www.wapca.org